INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

Xerox University Microfilms
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

εἶναι AND EXISTENCE IN ARISTOTLE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

William Samuel Jacobs, A.B., M.A.

The Ohio State University

1974

Reading Committee:

Marvin Fox

Charles Kielkopf

Robert G. Turnbull

Approved By

Adviser
Department of Philosophy

Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. The texts used were: Categories and De Interpretatione ed. by L. Minio-Paluello (Oxford, 1949), Prior and Posterior Analytics ed. by W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1965), Metaphysics ed. by W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1970), De Anima ed. by W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1961), De Partibus Animalum ed. by A.L. Peck (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), and Physics ed. by W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1966).

VITA

January 19, 1948	Born - Brooklyn, New York
1968	A.B., University of Rochester, Rochester, New York
1968-1970	Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy Ohio State University
1970-1973	Teaching Associate, Department of Philosophy Ohio State University
1973-1974	Instructor, Department of Philosophy Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Ancient Greek Philosophy

Professors Marvin Fox and Robert G. Turnbull

Table of Contents

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to attempt to decide whether Aristotle uses the Greek verb εἶναι ('to be') in a sense comparable to the sense of the English verb 'to exist' or the existential quantifier of the predicate calculus. In order to answer this question, I will examine both Aristotle's treatment of existential assertion and his use of the Greek verb εἶναι. After careful analysis I conclude that Aristotle does not use the verb εἶναι in such a way that it would be correct to understand his usage as carrying the meaning of either the English verb 'to exist' or the existential quantifier of the predicate calculus.

In order to understand the nature of the problem, let us note that ancient Greek and modern English differ in a quite significant way with respect to their lexical resources. In ancient Greek, the single verb εἶναι ('to be') must cover all those occasions where in modern English we can use either of two verbs - 'to be' and 'to exist'.

The importance of this difference between the two languages is revealed when we consider the many functions that the verb 'to be' performs in modern English. Among its many senses, 'to be' can be used as the logical copula (e.g., 'All men are mortal') or as an auxiliary verb in certain tenses (e.g., 'John is running') or in the existential sense (e.g., 'X is'). It is only in this last sense that the verb 'to be' has the same meaning as the verb 'to exist'. In this

last mentioned sense, I am not using 'to be' as a link between two terms (i.e., as the logical copula) or as a part of a more complex predicate (i.e., as an auxiliary verb for a participle), but rather by itself, as if the verb 'to be' in its own right were an active verb just like 'runs' or 'walks'.

No doubt part of the reason why the English verb 'to be' can carry this existential sense is that we already possess a second verb 'to exist' that has this meaning. However, ancient Greek lacks such a second verb and since it does lack such a second verb, one which is exclusively confined to assertions of existence, it is only natural to ask whether even the Greek verb εἶναι carries the existential sense.

The question as to whether the Greek verb εἶναι can be used in an existential sense comparable to the English verb 'to exist' is beyond the scope of the present inquiry. Any answer to that question would demand a review of the entire Greek corpus. What is at issue in this dissertation is a much smaller question - whether Aristotle ever uses the verb εἶναι in a sense comparable to the existential sense of the English verb 'to be'.

In response to this question, I think the answer must be negative. I base my conclusion on two considerations. The first is an examination of how Aristotle actually asserts that some thing does or does not exist. The second is an examination of a series of significant texts in which numerous previous commentators have alleged that Aristotle uses the verb εἶναι in an existential sense. Through carefully examining these passages, I show that Aristotle is not using

the verb εἶναι in such a manner.

In Chapter One I present an account of Aristotle's treatment of the notions of existence and nonexistence. I argue that because Aristotle believes that all propositions are subject-predicate and that predication is primarily to be viewed as an ontological rather than as a linguistic relationship, it follows that for Aristotle for something to have literal predications made of it or for something to be literally predicated of something else shows that that thing exists. The basis of this explanation is simply that should the subject or the predicate not successfully denote - should there not be a thing which is the subject or a thing which is the predicate - then we do not have a literal predication.

Thus for Aristotle existence is not something which can be asserted of a thing but rather existence is something which we show about a thing by means of our literally talking about the thing. This makes the notions of existence and nonexistence metalinguistic - rather than being something which you assert in the object language existence is something which you assert in the metalanguage. For Aristotle, to say that a given word can be used to make literal predications implies that that word successfully denotes. On Aristotle's view, talk about existence is really talk about what we can talk about.

But consider the use of the existential sense of the verb 'to be' in a sentence like 'Cats are' (where this means 'Cats exist') or the formula by which it would be symbolized in the predicate calculus by means of the existential quantifier - viz. $(\exists x)\phi x$ (where 'ϕ' means

'...is a cat'). Such sentences (or formulae) are not metalinguistic but rather object language assertions about what exists. However, the very possibility of such assertions is precluded by the theory of existence and nonexistence which Aristotle holds. Hence it would appear that Aristotle cannot use the verb εἶναι in a sense comparable to the existential sense of the English verb 'to be' simply because sentences involving such a sense of the verb εἶναι would be inconsistent with his treatment of existence and nonexistence.

In Chapters Two and Three I provide further evidence that the theory of existence and nonexistence presented in Chapter One is Aristotle's actual view. Chapter Two consists of an analysis of Categories x $13^{b}12$-$^{b}35$ and De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}25$-28. With regard to the first passage, I show that despite the almost universal agreement of the commentators, Aristotle's discussion does not concern the problem of the truth and falsity of propositions with nonreferring subjects. Rather, Aristotle's problem is the applicability of certain sorts of predicates to the subject of the proposition. Concerning the second text I show that Aristotle is not, as John Ackrill, Manley Thompson, and many others claim, asking whether a proposition with a nonexistent subject is true, but rather the passage deals with the truth or falsity of an accidental predication. By so interpreting these two passages, I am able to save my claim that for Aristotle literal predications carry certain ontological implications.

Chapter Three is an analysis of Posterior Analytics II.i in which I attempt to decide what the four questions of II.i mean. I

argue that the εἰ ἔστι ('if it is') question should be understood as seeking whether or not there is a literal predication involving a given word. Read in this way the question of a thing's existence fits perfectly with my interpretation of Aristotle's theory of existence and nonexistence.

Not merely do Chapters Two and Three confirm the analysis in Chapter One, but also, since each of the texts discussed has been read by previous commentators as involving an existential use of the verb εἶναι, reading these passages in the ways that I propose shows that contrary to the views of my predecessors these texts do not support rendering εἶναι as 'to exist'. Though I am personally convinced that none of Aristotle's myriad uses of the verb εἶναι require an existential sense, obviously such an exhaustive analysis of each occurrence of the verb εἶναι or its cognates in the Aristotelian corpus would be overwhelming. Thus, rather than attempt such a Herculean task, in Chapter Four I offer a long, detailed analysis of Aristotle's own discussion in Metaphysics V.vii of how we use the verb εἶναι and its cognates. Since Metaphysics V.vii is the "dictionary" discussion of how we use 'is', should Aristotle there fail to offer us the existential sense of the verb 'to be' it would strongly suggest that Aristotle does not recognize such a use of the verb 'to be'. In fact nowhere in Metaphysics V.vii does Aristotle mention the existential sense of the verb 'to be'.

As my analysis in Chapter Four shows, Metaphysics V.vii is neither a discussion of some entity called "being" nor an analysis of

existence but rather merely a careful treatment of four senses of the verb 'to be', viz. the use of 'to be' according to what is accidental, the use of 'to be' according to what is essential, the use of 'to be' to signify that something is true, and the use of 'to be' according to what is stated as potential and as actual. As I show, for each of these four senses of the verb 'to be' Aristotle supplies a semantic rule which describes that sense. Thus, since in what is probably his most important discussion of the senses of 'to be' Aristotle does not mention the existential sense of the verb 'to be', my thesis concerning Aristotle's use of the verb εἶναι has been confirmed.

To sum up - I prove my general claim that Aristotle does not use the verb εἶναι in such a way that it would be correct to understand his usage as carrying the meaning of either the English verb 'to exist' or the existential quantifier of the predicate calculus in two ways. First, by analyzing Aristotle's theory of existential assertion I show that there is a significant divergence between Aristotle's account of existence and the notions of existence conveyed by the English 'to exist' or the predicate calculus' $(\exists x)$ quantifier. Second, by considering several texts in which Aristotle might be expected to use an existential sense of the verb 'to be' and showing that he in fact does not so use the verb εἶναι, I confirm the absence in Aristotle of such a usage.

Chapter One

Existential Assertion in Aristotle

This chapter is an attempt to present an account of Aristotle's treatment of the notions of existence and nonexistence. I am not claiming that my account is to be found explicitly in the pages of the Aristotelian corpus. Nevertheless I do assert that it is as much a part of Aristotle's philosophy as his theory of substance or the doctrine of the mean.

My account is the result of piecing together three strands of Aristotle's thought. The first is the set of ontological assumptions which must be made in order to explain Aristotle's doctrine of immediate inference. The second is Aristotle's treatment of all sentences as subject-predicate. The third is Aristotle's theory of predication, in particular the emphasis which he places upon treating predication in terms of what the predicate term denotes being ascribed to what the subject term denotes.

In Section I, I briefly discuss each of these three doctrines in so far as it relates to the general topic of this chapter. Section II is a presentation of the theory of existence which these doctrines imply. Finally in Section III, I discuss how Aristotle handles the problem of nonexistence. Throughout this chapter I will stress the contrast between the way in which Aristotle handles the notion of

existence and the predicate calculus' existential quantifier. I will try to show that if Aristotle is granted certain assumptions his treatment of existence and nonexistence emerges as a consistent solution to a difficult philosophical problem.

I

At some point in almost every elementary logic course the differences between classical Aristotelian logic and modern Boolean logic are drawn. Foremost among the advantages that are claimed for the latter is that it has a wider scope than Aristotelian logic. Aristotelian logic, it is argued, makes certain existential assumptions which modern logicians avoid. Most particularly, it is pointed out that whereas Aristotle interprets such propositions as 'All S and P' and 'No S are P' as presupposing that the classes designated by the terms 'S' and 'P' are nonempty, modern logicians do not. Though this enables us to discuss inferences involving propositions dealing with unicorns, hippogriffs, etc., it has the unfortunate consequence of invalidating certain inferences which Aristotle condones.[1]

To use the standard example, let us consider Aristotle's square of opposition. According to Aristotle, we can infer from the truth of the universal affirmative proposition 'All S are P' not merely the falsity of the particular negative 'Some S are not P' but also the truth of the particular affirmative 'Some S are P' and the falsity of

---

[1]In the course of this chapter I will use certain words to which modern logicians have assigned precise meanings in rather loose pre-analytic ways. My justification for this procedure is simply that the motivations and problems underlying these contemporary distinctions are foreign to Aristotle.

It should also be noted that there is no word in Aristotle comparable to our notion of a class. However, since in this day and age it is difficult to avoid using the term, in order to explain Aristotle's theory I have permitted myself the luxury of this anachronism. No error need occur so long as it is borne in mind that the use of 'class' is purely for explanatory purposes.

the universal negative 'No S are P'. Modern Boolean logic condones on only the contradictoriness of 'All S are P' and 'Some S are not P'; it rejects both the alleged subalternation of 'All S are P' and 'Some S are P' and the alleged contrariety of 'All S are P' and 'No S are P'. Similar inferences which are endorsed by Aristotle such as those between the universal negative and the universal affirmative and particular negative or the relationship of subcontrariety between 'Some S are P' and 'Some S are not P' are also sacrificed on the Boolean interpretation.[2]

In order to allow these inferences, Boolean logic is forced to add additional premises expressing certain existential assumptions. Thus it is pointed out that though both 'All S and P' and 'No S are P' can be true vacuously <u>if</u> there do not exist any S's, the moment the premise that there exist S's is added, the two propositions become genuine contraries - i.e. they both can be false together but they cannot both be true. In order to sanction the other immediate inferences of the traditional square of opposition, similar existential assumptions must be made. In fact, if we are to sanction all of the traditional theory of immediate inferences, we must assume that both the terms S and P and their complements non-S and non-P successfully

---

[2]For the sake of historical accuracy it should be noted that though Aristotle recognizes the relationship later dubbed subcontrariety, he does not actually so name it. So long as we bear this in mind, the later terminology can be faultlessly used.

denote.[3]

Through adding the appropriate existential assumptions will validate the inferences of Aristotle's square of opposition, the point remains that for modern logicians the original four categorical propositions, viz. 'All S are P', 'No S are P', 'Some S are P', and 'Some S are not P', do not themselves make these existential assertions.[4] For example, Strawson finds it necessary to conjoin the two propositions 'There exists at least one thing which is an S' and 'There exists at least one thing which is not a P' to 'All S are P' in order for us to have a proposition which will allow us to make the inferences which Aristotle's universal affirmative proposition is supposed to warrant. Similar additions must be made to each of the other three categorical propositions. Thus the modern logician claims that even though Aristotle is mistaken concerning the actual existential assumptions

---

[3]Again, for the sake of historical accuracy it should be noted that not only does Aristotle not use the expression 'immediate inference' but not even all those relationships later called immediate inferences are found in Aristotle. For the purposes of this chapter, the use of the phrase 'immediate inference' is totally innocent so long as we are aware that it is simply an anachronistic way of speaking of certain sorts of logical relationships. Concerning the second point, Aristotle does not recognize inferences such as obversion, contraposition, and inversion. At best, he merely hints at obversion and contraposition. However these brief suggestions are sufficient to commit Aristotle to the ontological implications discussed in this chapter. Furthermore these later logical doctrines can be interpreted as an elaboration of those relations which Aristotle does explicitly mention. For an examination of these points, cf. Lynn Rose Aristotle's Syllogistic (Springfield, Ill., 1968) Chapter IX.

[4]Though modern logicians read both particular propositions as implying that the subject and predicate terms denote, they also understand both particular propositions as not implying either that the complement of the subject denotes or that the complement of the predicate denotes.

made by the four standard-form categorical propositions, nevertheless by using relatively complex propositions the Aristotelian square of opposition can be preserved in Boolean logic.[5]

Several approaches can be taken to the divergence of Boolean and Aristotelian logic over the issue of existential import. The first is simply to dismiss Aristotle's views as erroneous. After all, don't we know that even great thinkers make occasional blunders? Whatever advantage such an approach might have, it clearly has the overwhelming disadvantage of being an extremely inadequate elucidation of Aristotle's position. Though of course we might ultimately be forced to adopt such an explanation, such a move should only be made in desparation after we have rejected every alternative solution.

Another approach is that taken by such writers as the Kneales. They ascribe Aristotle's error to his inadequate understanding of ordinary discourse. They argue that Aristotle was seduced by everyday conversation into believing that all categorematic terms in propositions must designate nonempty classes. Thus Aristotle is accused of having erroneously assumed that all categorematic terms successfully denote.

The Kneales offer an example in order to show the plausibility of Aristotle's purported assumption. Thus they write that

---

[5]For details cf. P.F. Strawson Introduction to Logical Theory (London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., University Paperbacks, 1963), p. 173.

> If after hearing the conversation of Mrs. Gamp someone said that Mrs. Harris was wise and another said that she was not, a third who also believed in the existence of a person called Mrs. Harris might properly say that the two remarks were in contradiction. When it had been established that there was no Mrs. Harris, there would no longer be any point in talking about the relation of the two remarks, since both were based on the assumption of her existence and ceased to serve any useful purpose as soon as that assumption was abandoned.[6]

Through this approach is obviously superior to the first in that it at least makes an effort to understand Aristotle, it is still inadequate since it presupposes Aristotle's having confused the tacit assumptions of existence involved in ordinary discourse and the existential import of various propositions. Though of course it is possible that Aristotle might have made such an error, it is rather questionable scholarship to ascribe such a mistake to him save on the basis of firm evidence. In fact these authors have failed to offer any such evidence. Instead writers who adopt this approach simply note the ease with which the tacit existential assumptions involved in the use of a proposition and the actual existential assertions made by a proposition can be confused.[7] Though this would explain why Aristotle might have been misled into making such an error, it fails to support the claim that Aristotle did make such an error.

Since neither the first nor the second approach is a very

---

[6]W. and M. Kneale The Development of Logic (Oxford, 1962) p. 59.

[7]In addition to the Kneales, cf. Irving Copi's examination of the existential assumptions made by Aristotelian (which is not necessarily Aristotle's) logic in Introduction to Logic (New York, 1972) p. 170-171.

adequate explanation of why Aristotle believed that all categorematic terms in propositions denote, it is only natural to attempt to discover just such an explanation. If properly pursued, I think it will offer us an entirely different approach to the notion of existence from the treatment which we find in modern logic. In what follows, this is what I shall attempt to do.[8]

In order to understand the different treatment of existence in Aristotle and in modern logic, let us consider the different approaches both take towards the assertion 'All S are P'. Aristotle would argue that the surface grammar accurately reflects the structure of the assertion, namely that of a subject-predicate proposition in which 'S' is the subject term and 'P' is the predicate term. These two terms are linked by means of a form of the copula 'to be' and the word 'all', which indicates the quantity of the proposition, shows that the predicate term applies to the whole of the subject term.[9]

The modern logician, familiar with the work of Frege and Russell, will render 'All S are P' quite differently. Arguing that the surface grammar does not accurately reflect the true character of the asser-

---

[8]In his book Aristotle's Syllogistic (p. 99-101), Lynn Rose may briefly hint at part of a solution similar to my own. Unfortunately he barely develops his suggestion.

[9]Several of my colleagues have protested my claim that the surface grammar of 'All S are P' is subject-predicate, arguing instead that it is obviously a universally quantified if-then proposition. Such responses clearly rest not on our pre-analytic notion of logical form but rather on various post-analytic prejudices. Whether or not 'All S are P' can be adequately treated as a subject-predicate sentence need not deter us from recognizing the obvious - namely that on first impression it seems to be a subject-predicate sentence. Concerning this point, cf. below p. 35-36.

tion, he will claim that what is implicit in the ordinary grammatical form must be made explicit. He might even say that he is exhibiting the logical form of the assertion 'All S are P'. In order to accomplish his aim, the modern logician will symbolize 'All S are P' in the predicate calculus as '$(x)(Sx \supset Px)$'.

The implications of this symbolism are profound. Since each of these results sharply conflicts with some strongly held position of Aristotle's, it is almost incredible that any Aristotelian scholar could uncritically adopt the predicate calculus notation in order to express Aristotle's intention. First, the usual predicate calculus translation treats both the universal affirmative and universal negative propositions as if-then conditionals and both the particular affirmative and particular negative propositions as conjunctions. Aristotle, on the other hand, firmly maintains that in all four standard-form categorical propositions the predicate term 'P' is predicated of the subject term 'S'.

Second, predicate calculus notation does not handle 'all' and 'some' in the Aristotelian way. For Aristotle, the relation of a universal proposition to a particular proposition is treated like the relation of a whole to one of its parts. In contrast to this, the universal and existential quantifiers of the predicate calculus treat 'all' and 'some' in terms of the satisfaction of a propositional function.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is the way in which the predicate calculus symbolization treats the apparent subject of the proposition as if it were a disguised predicate. As a result of this

symbolization, it becomes impossible to speak of a relationship between the grammatical subject and the grammatical predicate which depends upon treating these two in terms of their apparent roles. By rendering 'S' as a predicate, 'S' simply no longer stands in relation to 'P' in the way that it would if 'S' were the subject term and 'P' were the predicate term. I can no longer speak of 'S' as having 'P' predicated of it; I can no longer say of 'S' that it is 'P'.

Treating the apparent subject 'S' as a disguised predicate creates a new, quite different problem for us: to what sorts of things could we ascribe these disguised predicates? Only by arguing that the grammatical subject is not a real subject does there even appear to be any difficulty in determining the subject of a predication like '...is P' - and having rejected the claims of grammatical subjects like 'S' to be real subjects, we discover that there is no other candidate which readily fills the role.

I will not discuss the fact that various advantages are alleged for the predicate calculus symbolism. Most especially, its proponents claim that it solves the thorny problem of the denotation of 'S' in the proposition 'All S are P'. Whether these advantages are real is for separate treatment.[10] However, for the moment, the crucial point with which I am concerned is that the three results of the predicate calculus treatment which I have just noted make it impossible for us to use the predicate calculus and still discuss existence in

---

[10]But see below, p. 35-36.

Aristotle's terms.

These consequences might not be serious save for one crucial point, namely that Aristotle's treatment of existence turns on the relation of a thing to the things predicated of it. Since Aristotle's analysis of the notion of existence depends upon grammatical predicates belonging to grammatical subjects, the results of rendering the four standard-form categorical propositions into predicate calculus notation are devastatingly obvious. Whatever advantages might accrue to interpreting 'All S are P' as '$(x)(Sx \supset Px)$' and 'Some S are P' as '$(\exists x)(Sx \cdot Px)$', understanding Aristotle's treatment of existence is not one of them.

Though this sketch has dealt with several significant differences between Aristotle's logic and the modern predicate calculus, in order for us to understand Aristotle's theory of existence we still need to discuss his theory of predication. In particular, we must treat his belief that all propositions are of the subject-predicate form and his views concerning the nature of predication.

As has long been recognized, Aristotle's analysis of λόγοι ('sentences') is to a large measure due to Plato's discussion in the Sophist.[11] In this dialogue, the Eleatic Stranger claims that every singular sentence is composed of an ὄνομα ('noun' or 'name') and a ῥῆμα ('verb'). The Stranger asserts that while an ὄνομα in order to be an ὄνομα must be an ὄνομα of something, a ῥῆμα indicates an action.

---

[11]Cf. W.D. Ross Aristotle (London, 1923) p. 26; D.J. Allan The Philosophy of Aristotle (Oxford, 1970) p. 101-102; John Ackrill Categories and De Interpretatione (Oxford, 1963) p. 73 and p. 118; F.M. Cornford Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London, 1935) p. 305 ff.

Only by interweaving ὀνόματα ('nouns' or 'names') with ῥήματα ('verbs') do we obtain λόγοι ('sentences').[12]

The upshot of Plato's analysis is that it would forbid treating 'Pegasus sits' or 'Zeus runs' as λόγοι. For Plato, in order for something to be a sentence it must have an ὄνομα and that ὄνομα must, to use the contemporary jargon, refer. On Plato's view a purported λόγος with a nonreferring subject is not really a λόγος at all, since a nonreferring subject is not a subject. Thus there is no problem in determining the truth values of λόγος with nonreferring subjects since such purported sentences are not actually sentences at all.

In De Interpretatione Aristotle follows Plato's treatment by distinguishing between nouns and verbs. A noun (ὄνομα) is '...a sound meaningful by convention, without a time reference' none of whose parts is meaningful. On the other hand a verb (ῥῆμα) involves such a temporal reference and '...is always an indication of something being said of something else'.[13] By themselves, since verbs mean something but have no meaningful parts, they are ὀνόματα in a broad sense of that word. In addition to nouns and verbs, Aristotle recognizes that such words as 'not-man' or 'not-runs' differ significantly from what we would normally call a noun and a verb. Because of their vagueness, Aristotle labels such words indefinite nouns and indefin ite verbs.

A λόγος ('sentence') is a meaningful sound, some of whose parts are separately meaningful. However not all λόγοι can be used to make

---

12 συμπλέκων τὰ ῥήματα τοῖς ὀνόμασι Sophist 262 D 4.

13 De Interpretatione ii 16a19-20 and iii 16b7.

assertions. Rather there are several different uses of language, most of which involve sentences which are neither true nor false. Thus Aristotle divides all λόγοι into those which are propositions (ἀποφαντικός; Ackrill: 'statement-making sentence'; literally: 'capable of being asserted') and those which are not.

Aristotle writes that while

> On the one hand every sentence [λόγος] is meaningful ...on the other hand not every sentence is a proposition [ἀποφαντικός] but only those in which truth or falsity belong. But truth and falsity do not belong in all sentences. For example, a prayer is a sentence but it is neither true nor false. For the present such sentences will be dismissed since their study is more appropriate to rhetoric or poetry and the proposition [ἀποφαντικός] is the subject of the present inquiry.[14]

It is upon those sentences which are propositions that Aristotle rests his account of existence. Other λόγοι, though meaningful, simply are not literal fact-asserting sentences. In virtue of the different roles played by these other sentences, they do not make the existential assertions which literal indicative sentences make.[15]

Before proceeding I would like to contrast Aristotle's account of truth vehicles and assertion with Strawson's, in order to show the fundamental way in which the two differ. As the above quotation makes

---

[14] De Interpretatione iv $16^{b}33$-$17^{a}7$.

[15] The divergence between Plato and Aristotle on the treatment of λόγοι is probably more one of appearance than one of reality. It can be resolved rather easily if we treat Plato's Sophist discussion as one of λόγοι which are indicative sentences whereas Aristotle's discussion covers all phrases and sentences regardless of grammatical type.

clear, for Aristotle truth and falsity belong to the sentence. Whether or not the sentence is actually ever uttered (or, if one prefers, whether or not the sentence is actually ever used to make a statement) is irrelevant to its being true or false. Propositions (ἀποφαντικός; more literally: 'assertable sentences') are simply a subclass of the class of sentences - they are that group of sentences which are capable of being asserted. Regardless of whether a sentence is interrogative or imperative or an indicative sentence containing a nondenoting subject or a nondenoting predicate, this does not imply that the sentence is either meaningless or violates some sort of linguistic rule. Rather, all that it implied is that the sentence is incapable of being asserted. It is only when both terms denote that the sentence is true or false.

For Strawson, on the other hand, the situation is quite different. Sentences themselves are neither true nor false. Rather, certain sorts of sentences can, under certain circumstances, be used to make statements and it is these to which truth and falsity belong. For Strawson, certain existential presuppositions must be satisfied in order for us to successfully use a sentence to produce a statement which is true or false. However, a statement is not a type of sentence and hence it cannot be regarded in the same way as Aristotle's ἀποφαντικός. For Aristotle, an indicative sentence containing a nondenoting subject or a nondenoting predicate is still a sentence even though it will not be an assertable sentence; for Strawson, an alleged statement with a nondenoting subject is not really a statement at all.

Though the full impact of Aristotle's and Strawson's different

approaches will only become clear in the next section, one thing is obvious - namely that since Aristotle's account of existence depends upon the existential import of sentences which are truth vehicles, Strawsonian statements inhibit our understanding Aristotle's theory of existential assertion. In short, Strawson's failure to treat sentences as truth vehicles renders his defense of Aristotelian logic irrelevant to the logic of Aristotle.

Aristotle's discussion of propositions (ἀποφαντικαί) makes clear the existential import which he finds in such assertions:

> But of propositions, some such as those affirming something of something or denying something of something [τὶ κατά τινος ἢ τὶ ἀπὸ τινος] are simple propositions, others such as a composite sentence are compounded out of these.[16]

Similarly, since a proposition must either be an affirmation or a denial, Aristotle's remarks on these relationships are also revealing:

> An affirmation is a proposition affirming something of something [τινος κατά τινος]. A denial is a proposition denying something of something [τινος ἀπὸ τινος].[17]

> But since an affirmation means something is affirmed about something, the subject is either a name [ὄνομα]

---

[16] De Interpretatione v 17a20-22.

[17] De Interpretatione vi 17a25-26.

It should be noted that in his edition, Ackrill's translation of the word ἀπόφασις as 'negation' in this and the next quotation (as well as in several other places) is questionable. Aristotle's contrast is between κατάφασις and ἀπόφασις, between affirming that X belongs to Y and denying that X belongs to Y, not the linguistic vehicles, i.e., the affirmation 'X belongs to Y' and the negation 'X does not belong to Y'. Negation is a linguistic, not an ontological, relation.

> or a thing without a name [ἀνώνυμον; literally: 'non-name'] and the affirmation must be one thing and about one thing.... Thus every affirmation and denial is either by means of a name and verb or by means of an indefinite name and verb. Unless there is a verb there is no affirmation and denial.[18]

In each of these passages the pattern of Aristotle's analysis is clear. Affirmation and denial indicate relationships said to hold between two things. In an affirmation, one thing is being asserted to belong to something else; in denial one thing is being asserted not to belong to something else. Affirmation and denial are not solely or even primarily linguistic. Though every affirmation and denial must be composed of a noun or indefinite noun and a verb or indefinite verb, what is being asserted in the affirmation or denial is not a linguistic relationship. Aristotle's attentions are not focused upon the linguistic vehicle but rather on what this linguistic vehicle indicates about the relation of two things in the world.

In order to appreciate this last point, that Aristotle is primarily concerned with the things which words are used to denote rather than with the words themselves, we need only turn to his account of two concepts crucial to his philosophy, namely homonymy and synonymy. When a given word is used to denote the same kind of thing, the things are synonymous; when a given word is used to denote different kinds of things, the things are homonymous. It is only in a secondary sense that we speak of words as synonyms or homonyms.[19]

---

[18] De Interpretatione x $19^{b}5$-12.

[19] With regard to this interpretation of the terms συνωνύμως and ὁμωνύμως cf. Ackrill Categories and De Interpretatione p. 71-72 and

To use Aristotle's own example, the things to which the Greek word ζῷον refers are synonymous when the definitory formulae for the word are the same and homonymous when the definitory formulae for the word are different. Since the word ζῷον means either animal or portrait, it denotes synonymous things when we use the word to denote both oxen and men, while when we use the word to denote both animals and portraits those things are homonymous.[20]

One final example will make the ontological implications which Aristotle finds in the use of words clearer. In Greek the word λευκός means both the color white and the clearness of a sound. Thus I can say that a body is λευκός and that a sound is λευκός. But when I ascribe the property of being λευκός to a body I am saying that the body is a body having such and such a color while when I say that a given musical note is λευκός I am asserting of the note that it has the property of being easily heard. Aristotle's attention is not upon the word λευκός but rather upon what the word is telling us about the world.[21]

Thus predication is not to be understood as the ascription of words to words but of things to other things. Hence, to be a ζῷον in the sense in which oxen and human beings are animals implies being a certain sort of thing, i.e., a living body possessed of sensation,

---

and Jaakko Hintikka 'Aristotle and The Ambiguity of Ambiguity' Inquiry Vol. II (1959) esp. p. 140.

[20]Categories i $1^{a}1$-12.

[21]Topics I.xv $107^{a}37$-$^{b}5$.

while being a ζῷον in the sense in which a picture is a ζῷον implies being a different sort of thing, i.e., being composed of certain marks organized in a certain way on a suitable medium. A thing which is not a living thing simply cannot be a ζῷον in the first sense; a thing which is not composed of organized marks on a suitable medium simply is not a ζῷον in the second sense.

Armed with the recognition that Aristotle considers all propositions to be subject-predicate propositions and his emphasis upon what is being asserted rather than upon the linguistic vehicle used to make the assertion, we are prepared to explain the treatment which existence receives in and the alleged existential assumptions made by Aristotle's logic.

II

Before I draw the consequences of the points which I have just discussed, let us consider how the notion of existence is treated in Principia Mathematica. It is by contrast with this example that Aristotle's analysis can best be appreciated. Though of course almost all contemporary logicians would significantly modify many of Russell's doctrines, I think that even most of these critics will readily grant that the first order non-modal predicate calculus still prevents our expressing the claim that every individual possesses a necessary character. Since for Aristotle this claim is fundamental to his ontology (and hence his logic), the predicate calculus notation is at the outset inimical to understanding Aristotle's beliefs. Thus, despite my remarks being confined to Russell, they still shed considerable light on the way in which the predicate calculus suggests certain views.

To Russell existence was in no way related to the subject of a predication. Rather he treated existence in terms of the predicate calculus' existential quantifier. This device was used to indicate the satisfaction of a propositional function - it tells us that for some given predicate, there is at least one individual in the world to which this predicate applies. The individual to which the predicate applies is not actually even mentioned in an existentially quantified proposition.

Russell nicely summarized the effects of handling existence by means of the existential quantifier:

> ...if $\phi\underline{x}$ is sometimes true, we may say there are $\underline{x}$'s for which it is true, as we may say "arguments satisfying $\phi\underline{x}$ exist." ...[T]hough it is correct to say "men exist," it is incorrect, or rather meaningless, to ascribe existence to a given particular $\underline{x}$ who happens to be a man. Generally, "terms satisfying $\phi\underline{x}$ exist" means "$\phi\underline{x}$ is sometimes true"; but "$\underline{a}$ exists" (where $\underline{a}$ is a term satisfying $\phi\underline{x}$) is a mere noise or shape, devoid of significance.[22]

Russell's remark reveals the clear dependence of the existential quantifier analysis upon the sharp separation of universal from particular. Every thing in the world can be distinguished into two components - its being a certain sort of thing and its being a particular thing. The thing's being this kind of thing is expressed by the predicate while its being this thing, i.e., this particular individual, is allegedly expressed by a logically proper name which refers to a particular.

Thus let us consider the proposition 'John is a man'. For Russell this would be represented as an expression of the form 'ϕa' where 'ϕ(_)' is a predicate meaning '...is a man' and '$\underline{a}$' is a logically proper name naming a particular, viz. John. On the proposed notation, there is no necessary linkage between the individual named by '$\underline{a}$' and the general character 'ϕ(_)'. The individual we are speaking about might just as well be characterized by 'ψ(_)' or 'χ(_)' or...(where 'ψ(_)' is '...is a horse', 'χ(_)' is '...is a cow', etc.). In P.M. there is a complete separation of the this-ness of a thing, i.e., its

---

[22] Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy (London, 1919) p. 164-165.

being this type of thing.[23]

Another way of illustrating this point is by means of Russell's account of referring expressions. Russell's sharp distinction between names and definite descriptions involves separating the particular John (gotten at by the logically proper name '<u>a</u>') from his being a man (gotten at by the predicate '$\phi(\_)$'). True names, i.e., logically proper names, do not in any way characterize the individual. In order to restrict proper names to those names which only refer but do not characterize an individual, Russell developed his doctrine of disguised definite descriptions. Thus, during at least one stage of his development, Russell argued that the paradigmatic way of referring to an individual is by pointing to it and saying 'this' or 'that' - and this of course tells us nothing about what this is.

Russell and Aristotle are both agreed that there is a sense in which whenever we talk literally there is something about which we are talking. For Russell this becomes the claim that while names name, definite descriptions do not. Whereas a logically proper name must be the name of something, there is no such restriction on definite descriptions. Thus in the proposition 'The ϕ is ψ' the use of the definite description 'The ϕ' requires that there be one and only one ϕ; whether or not there is at least one ϕ and at most one ϕ in no way affects the meaningfulness of the definite description. Hence for Russell it is quite meaningful to say 'The present King of France does

---

[23]Cf. Russell's discussion of propositional functions in <u>ibid.</u> Chapter XV.

not exist'.

Russellian logically proper names, on the other hand, must name. It is meaningless to say '_a_ exists' or '_a_ does not exist' (where '_a_' is a logically proper name) because a logically proper name shows that of which it is the name exists. In short, both '_a_ exists' and '_a_ does not exist' are without significance. To quote Russell:

> ...if "_a_" is a name, it _must_ name something: what does not name anything is not a name, and therefore, if intended to be a name, is a symbol devoid of meaning, whereas a description, like "the present King of France," does not become incapable of occurring significantly merely on the ground that it describes nothing...[24]

The Russellian treatment of logically proper names and definite descriptions is only one aspect of the more general point that by separating the character of a thing from its being this particular thing, _Principia Mathematica_ allows us to talk about things that are ϕ without committing ourselves to the existence of any thing which is ϕ. Whereas names name, expressions for characters do not. A logically proper name if it is to be a logically proper name must name; a predicate may or may not hold. For Russell we can meaningfully assert $\sim(\exists x)\phi x$ thereby denying of all the individuals in the world that any one of them is a ϕ. However this in no way affects the meaningfulness of talk about things which are ϕ. It is not a condition of intelligibility that a predicate ϕ hold for some individual, viz. $(\exists x)\phi x$, simply because '$\phi(\_)$' does not name. On Russell's analysis we can

---

[24] _Ibid._, p. 179.

speak about men or horses or centaurs or...without thereby implying that there exist men or horses or centaurs or... Thus, for Russell, what carries ontological commitment are individuals which do not possess necessary characters. Whereas in the predicate calculus it is necessary that every individual have some character or other, it is purely contingent what character any individual has. In short, in virtue of the division between the what-ness and the this-ness of a thing, in the predicate calculus there is no reason why any individual should be one sort of thing rather than another.

It is this last point that lies at the root of the $(\exists x)$ quantifier treatment of existence. Once strike at this claim that the character of this individual is distinguishable from its being <u>this</u> individual, i.e., deny the separability of the this-ness of a thing and its what-ness, and the whole ability to talk about a general character without committing ourselves to the existence of a thing of which this is the general character vanishes. However, so basic is this presupposition which Russell makes concerning the separability of the individual from its character that just as so often happens with fundamental assumptions, Russell and his followers frequently overlooked the fact that it was an assumption at all.

But it is a supposition to claim that the individuality and the character of each of the particular things of the world are independent of one another in this way - and it is at this central claim that Aristotle's ontology strikes. Aristotle's treatment of existence follows almost directly from his refusal to separate the what-ness of a thing from its this-ness. It is from this that the various other

points over which Russell and Aristotle disagree ultimately spring.

As it is almost otiose to note, the bottom level things of Aristotle's world are primary substances such as this man or that particular horse. Such things are never mere individuals which might be characterized in any which way. Rather they are always individuals of a certain kind. Unlike the Russellian world in which there is no logical reason why the particular which is now a man cannot at some moment past have been a dog and at some future instant be a chair, Aristotle's individuals cannot undergo such changes and remain the same individual.

The reason for this difference is that for Aristotle the substantial form of an individual is related to the thing's being <u>this</u> individual in such a way that an individual cannot change its substantial form. Instead of Russell's way of referring to a particular by a demonstrative which fails in any way to specify what sort of thing the individual is, for Aristotle individuals are never merely particular but always individuals possessing necessary characters. Aristotle's own term for an individual, viz. τόδε τι (literally: 'this what'), reveals his divergence with the predicate calculus. An individual is always a this-what, never merely a this.

But this inseparability one cannot even display in the predicate calculus notation where particulars may indiscriminately unite with any predicate whatsoever and still remain the same particular. The whole thrust of Aristotle's ontology is to deny this and to insist that an individual's being a <u>this</u>, i.e., a particular, and its being a <u>what</u>,

i.e., a certain kind of thing, are logically inseparable. In other words, the a and the ϕ are so joined that if ϕ is the substantial form of a, a cannot cease to be ϕ. In order to express this indissolubility, let us adopt the shorthand 'this-ϕ' to indicate that the this-ness of an individual and the individual's being ϕ are joined.[25] This kind of inseparability cannot even be symbolized in the first-order non-modal predicate calculus. Hence my rejection of the use of the $(\exists x)$ quantifier in the explanation of Aristotle's treatment of the notion of existence - the existential quantifier simply suggests something which Aristotle rejects and prevents Aristotle's expressing something which is crucial to his whole theory of existential assertion, namely the logical inseparability of a particular thing and its being a certain sort of thing.

Let us now turn to Aristotle's treatment of the notion of existence. If I am correct, Aristotle believes that for something to have literal predications made of it or for it to be literally predicated of something else shows that it exists. In the object language, the existence of something is shown - and it is shown in the object language simply by our being able to talk about it (i.e., predicate of it or predicate it of other things) in the object language.

What I mean by this is not that the literal predication asserts that that thing exists since what a literal predication asserts is that the subject does or does not belong to the predicate. To regard the

---

[25]For example, cf. Metaphysics VII.iii $1029^{a}27$-28 and Categories v $3^{b}10$ ff.

literal predication as also asserting that both the subject and the predicate denote would be a use/mention confusion. In the same way as Russellian logically proper names show that they name, so Aristotelian categorical terms show that they denote. In fact, it is a consequence of the claim that existence is shown in the object language that existence cannot be asserted in the object language. Since there is no literal predication unless both the subject and the predicate denote, the fact that a sentence makes a literal predication reveals that both the subject and the predicate are categorical terms.

By treating existence in this way, Aristotle does not mean that to be the subject or to be the predicate of a literal predication implies that the subject and the predicate successfully denote. If I am correct Aristotle does not regard existence as something which you even assert in the object language but rather concerns the semantics of the object language - namely that every categorical term in the object language denotes. Nor does Aristotle mean that there is a presupposition (where this is understood à la Strawson) that the subject and the predicate successfully denote. If such presuppositions are construed as object language assertions, then the difference between such a position and the one which I have been presenting is obvious. On the other hand, if such presuppositions are construed as metalinguistic assertions about what is an object language assertion, then it differs from Aristotle's position in the way discussed in Part I, viz. Aristotle has no presuppositions about which sentences can be used to make statements simply because he believes that all assertable sentences show that their subjects and predicates denote. Least of all is it

the case that Aristotle is making an object language assumption that the subject and the predicate successfully denote. Whether or not the exact details of my account are correct, one thing should by now be quite clear - namely that Aristotle's existential claims are not mere assumptions but rather the result of other beliefs which he holds. Against each of these positions, what I am claiming is that the way in which Aristotle understands propositional form and predication implies that literal predications not only assert that the predicate does or does not belong to the subject but also show that both the subject and the predicate successfully denote.[26]

Aristotle's theory follows from his claim that the subject-predicate form is the form of all propositions and that words are primarily tools for speaking about things in the world. Grant these two points and he will argue that unless both the subject and the predicate of a literal predication designate nonempty classes, then it is not the case that you are predicating something of something else and hence it is not the case that you have a literal predication. Thus whenever we predicate a predicate of a subject we also show that there are things in the world denoted by these words.

To use two examples, suppose we assert that 'All dogs are mammals' and that 'Some men are not white animals'. In the first proposition,

---

[26]One consequence of the analysis I am proposing is to render such expressions as 'denoting term' pleonastic - a term which fails to denote is simply not a term, just as a Russellian logically proper name which does not name is not a logically proper name. One can speak of subjects and of predicates which do not denote but in fact this is simply to speak of subjects and of predicates which are not categorical terms.

the characteristic of being a mannal is being predicated of all those things which are dogs. In other words, we are asserting of this-dog, that-dog,...that to each one of these belongs the property of being a mammal. Since being a mammal is being a warm-blooded, hairy animal, a nonexistent thing can be neither a dog nor a mammal in the sense in which my dog Fido is both. Similarly, the second proposition claims that some of the things that are men, i.e., either this-man or that-man or...,are not white animals. Since, for Aristotle, being a white animal is to be an ensouled body possessed of sensation which is also white, nothing which does not exist can be either a white animal or a man. Since to be a white animal and to be a man is to exist in a certain way, that which does not exist can be neither a white animal nor a man.

From this it should now be clear why Aristotle condones the subalternation of a universal and particular proposition of the same quality. Since the universal proposition (e.g. 'All S are P') predicates P of some number of existing things (i.e. this-S, that-S, etc.) while the particular proposition only predicates P of at least one of these things (i.e., either this-S or that-S or...), the truth of the particular propositions will follow from the truth of the universal proposition simply because the former only asserts part of what the latter asserts. If the latter is true, the former must be true as well.

The interpretation which I have been offering finds support from the way in which Aristotle repeatedly expresses propositions like 'All S are P' and 'Some S are not P'. Instead of writing them in a way which leaves the reference of 'S' problematic, Aristotle normally

writes these propositions as 'P belongs to all S' and 'P does not belong to certain S'. Though this may appear to be a minor point, it is quite significant in that it suggests that Aristotle is not treating 'S' along the lines of a general term but rather as a way of speaking of all or some of the individual S's. 'All S' refers not to S-ness or the essence of S but rather simply to this-S, that-S, etc. 'Certain S' refers to at least one member of this list. On such a reading, propositions such as 'P belongs to all S' really asserts that this-S is P, that-S is P, etc. - assertions which clearly fit the pattern of predication upon which I have focused.

In passing it might be noted that it is by expressing 'All S are P' as 'P belongs to all S' that Aristotle solves the problem of the denotation of 'S'. In a way somewhat similar to Frege and Russell, Aristotle avoids such items as general terms by discussing 'S' in terms of the individual things which are S. This simply avoids that which leads to the problem - i.e., treating the term 'S' as having a denotation different from the things which are S. Similarly Aristotle avoids the Frege-Russell solution by refusing to allow their separation of the individuality of a thing from its general character. However, the full development of this treatment of universal and particular propositions demands separate discussion.

The standard predicate calculus treatment does not interpret 'All dogs are mammals' and 'Some men are not white animals' as having the existential implications which Aristotle believes these propositions have. In part this is due to the transformation of the former sentence,one in which the grammatical predicate is being predicated of

the grammatical subject, into an if-then conditional. This dissolves the linkage between the subject and the predicate which showed that both successfully denote. In part, the different treatment is due to the predicate calculus' separating the general character and the particularity of the individual thing. Since the real subjects of predication are particulars which are not necessarily characterized in some specific way, we are able to talk of dogs or mammals or...without committing ourselves to the existence of a single dog or mammal or... Thus, because the real subject of a proposition may or may not possess any given character does not involve committing ourselves to the existence of individuals characterized in specific ways.

As I noted earlier, both Russell and Aristotle agree that there is a sense in which to talk literally about something implies that there is something about which we are literally talking. For Russell, who is willing to separate the this-ness and the ϕ-ness of an individual, this principle reduces to the doctrine of logically proper names and definite descriptions; for Aristotle, who is unwilling to condone this division, it becomes the claim that both the subject and the predicate successfully denote.

However, the explanation which I have thus far provided is not complete. As I already pointed out, in order to validate all of the arguments of the traditional theory of immediate inferences we need to assert not merely that the subject and the predicate themselves designate nonempty classes but also that there be at least one thing which the subject term does not denote and one thing which the predicate term

does not denote. In other words, I have not yet shown that if 'S' and 'P' are the two terms of a categorical proposition, we thereby commit ourselves to saying that 'non-S' and 'non-P' are also terms.

Fortunately the explanation of these further existential claims is not difficult to find. In fact, the assertion that if 'S' and 'P' are the categorical terms of a categorical proposition, then the complements of 'S' and 'P' are also categorical terms follows directly from (1) the fact that 'S' and 'P' successfully denote and (2) the rejection of there being something which is true of everything or something of which everything is true. The former point has already been amply defended; the latter point is the implication of Aristotle's repeated claim that τὸ ὄν ('being') and τὸ ἕν ('one') are not genera.

Without worrying here why Aristotle refuses to allow τὸ ὄν and τὸ ἕν to be genera, the result of this denial is clear. Since Aristotle considers ὄν and ἕν to be the only possible candidates for the roles of universal predicate and universal subject - after all, everything which is, is one and everything which is one, is - his failure to allow τὸ ὄν and τὸ ἕν to be genera amounts to a rejection of their being categorical terms. Thus, since no categorical term either applies to everything or has everything applied to it the complement of every categorical term will also successfully denote.

The etymology of the Greek word for term supports this - ὅρος literally means a boundary or a division. Aristotle conceives of terms as dividing up the world. A term which either applies to every thing or to no thing would not divide up the world in any way. It is for this reason that both a term and its complement denote - for if a

boundary is to be a real boundary there must be things on both sides of the division.

To summarize the results of this section: Aristotle's claims regarding the existential import of categorical propositions - namely that the subject, the predicate, the complement of the subject, and the complement of the predicate denote - follow directly from his understanding of propositional form and predication. Once it is recognized that the predicate calculus embodies approaches to both of these points quite different from that of Aristotle, then it becomes clear why I have argued that the predicate calculus cannot adequately express Aristotle's doctrine of existence.

III

Up to this point I have only discussed Aristotle's treatment of existence. However, no theory of how we assert existence can possibly be complete without an explanation concerning how we deny the existence of a thing. When it is remembered that the most common charge against Aristotle's logic is just that it restricts the scope of reasoning to those things which exist, the importance of this part of his theory of existential assertion rises.

As much as we might feel the need to satisfy this desire, to that extent we will be saddened by Aristotle's failure to discuss adequately the problem of sentences which speak of nonexistent things. Whereas there is much material in the corpus from which we can reconstruct Aristotle's treatment of the notion of existence, he is almost always silent when it comes to discussing nonexistence. For example, in the whole corpus there is hardly any mention of nonexistent things like centaurs, gods, tragelaphoe (goat-stags), or hippogriffs. Forewarned as to the limited resources at our disposal, I nevertheless think that we can reconstruct both how Aristotle asserts that something does not exist and how he construes sentences which purport to be about non-existent objects. Let us proceed to these tasks.

With respect to the first question, the answer should be obvious. Since, as I have already argued, our being able to use a word either as the subject or as the predicate of a sentence which makes a literal predication shows that that word denotes something, the converse will also clearly be true, viz. that if a word cannot be either the subject or the predicate of a sentence making a literal predication then it

follows that the word does not successfully denote anything. Thus the ability or inability to make a literal predication implies the existence or the nonexistence of that about which we are allegedly speaking.[27]

For this point, fortunately, there is abundant evidence. Aristotle's repeated use of expressions like εἰ ἔστι and ὅτι ἔστι, generally rendered 'if it exists' and 'that it exists', really concern whether it is capable of being part of a literal predication. Thus, for example, in Posterior Analytics II.i Aristotle offers four questions for which we seek answers: (1) the that (τὸ ὅτι), (2) the because (τὸ διότι), (3) if it is (εἰ ἔστι), and (4) what it is (τί ἔστι). Though the standard reading of the third and fourth questions explain them in terms of the contrast between existence and essence, this is quite unlikely since this distinction does not even enter philosophy until the middle ages.[28] Rather the contrast drawn between the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions is between querying whether a word can be used to make a literal predication, thereby implying that that which the word purportedly denotes is something and the question as to what this something is.

Though this way of handling assertions of existence and nonexistence nicely fits the analysis proposed in Section II, there still

---

[27]For a full exposition of these points cf. Chapter Three in which Posterior Analytics II.i is analyzed.

[28]As I show below in Chapter III, the introduction of the essence/existence distinction into Aristotle is irreconcilable with Aristotle's metaphysics.

remains the problem of understanding sentences which purport to be about nonexistent objects. If, as I argued, to be the subject or to be the predicate of a literal predication is to show that that term designates a nonempty class, then how are we to construe sentences like 'The centaur is an animal with the body of a horse and the torso, arms, and head of a human being' or 'All tragelaphos (goat-stags) have horns'? For though it is surely the case that we wish to say that such sentences are in some sense true, it is equally clear that no one wishes to assert the existence of centaurs and tragelaphos.

Discovering Aristotle's solution is by no means easy. In fact, the only passage of which I am aware that sheds any light on Aristotle's answer to the present difficulty occurs in Posterior Analytics II.vii. There, in the midst of a series of ἀπορίαι ('difficulties') concerning definitions and demonstration, he writes:

> Furthermore how will one prove the what-is [τί ἐστι; often rendered 'essence']? For it is necessary that by knowing what a man is [τί ἐστι ἄνθρωπος] or what any other thing is, one will also know that it is [ὅτι ἐστι; as I have already indicated this really means that it is capable of being a term in a literal predication]. For of that which is not [τὸ μὴ ὄν], no one knows that it is [ὅτι ἐστι] though on the one hand ⟨one can know⟩ what the word or the name ⟨tragelaphos⟩ means [ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν σημαίνει ὁ λόγος ἢ τὸ ὄνομα] but on the other hand it is impossible to know what is [τί ἐστι] a tragelaphos.[29]

Though it is always risky deciding which views in an ἀπορία are really Aristotle's, in this case Aristotle does seem to accept the

---

[29]Posterior Analytics II.vii 92[b]4-8.

claim that though we can know what the word 'tragelaphos' means, we cannot know what a tragelaphos is. At very worst, in considering the implications of this position upon the treatment of sentences which purport to be about nonexistent objects, we are pursuing a line of thought which Aristotle found reasonably plausible.

The key claim in the quotation above is that whereas we can know the meaning of the word or the name (or noun) of that which is not, it is impossible to know of that which is not what it is. Taking the second point first, Aristotle's claim is that since knowledge is always knowledge of something, the fact that there is no such thing as a tragelaphos implies that it is impossible to know anything about a tragelaphos. Hence no one can know what a tragelaphos is since no one can know anything about a tragelaphos. This much fits perfectly with both the earlier discussion of the ontological implications of predication and several other brief comments which Aristotle makes.[30]

However, the present passage makes an important additional point, viz. that '⟨one can know⟩ what the word or the name ⟨tragelaphos means'. Thus, even though we can know nothing about tragelaphoe we can still know the meaning of the word. Even though there is no thing in the world to which 'tragelaphos refers, 'tragelaphos' still means something. In the case of 'man', not only does the word have a meaning but also, since it refers to something, we can ask what are these things to which we are referring. However, in the case of 'tragelaphos!

---

[30]E.g., De Interpretatione xi 21[a]32-33 (discussed below in Chapter Two, p. 79-81).

there is no such referent and hence there is no thing about which we can ask 'What is it'? Unlike the case of 'man', there is simply no "what" about which we can know anything.

Even though in the case of tragelaphoe there are no things in the world for us to know anything about, there is still the word 'tragelaphos' whose meaning we can know. This suggests a way of handling sentences which purport to be about nonexistent things without surrendering any of the points thus far developed - namely construe such sentences as being about words rather than about the things to which alleged reference is being made. In other words, instead of construing sentences containing the word 'tragelaphos' as being about tragelaphoe, we can interpret them to be about 'tragelaphos'.

As noted previously Aristotle's primary concern is not as such with the linguistic vehicle with which an assertion is being made but rather with that about which the assertion is being made. However, this does not prevent his occasionally shifting his attention and concentrating upon the words rather than upon what these words are being used to get at. What I am suggesting is that in the case of sentences which purport to be about that which is nonexistent, this very shift takes place so that instead of such sentences being understood as being about things, Aristotle construes them as being about words.

This suggestion allows us to say that there is a sense in which a sentence like 'All unicorns are one-horned white horses' may be correctly affirmed. However, this sense is not where the sentence is interpreted as being about actual flesh and blood unicorns. No literal predication could be about real unicorns since there simply isn't any-

thing in the world which is a one-horned white horse. Nevertheless there is still the word 'unicorn' and that word does have a meaning. This allows understanding 'All unicorns are one-horned white hourses' as a metalinguistic assertion in which we are discussing the meaning of the words, i.e., '"Unicorn" means "one-horned white horse."' Similarly a sentence such as 'All unicorns are horses' which depend on only part, not the whole, definition of 'unicorn' could be construed as '"Unicorn" means in part "horse."' In the same way sentences containing a nondenoting predicate can be construed metalinguistically, e.g., 'All one-horned white horses are unicorns' becomes '"One-horned white horse" means "unicorn."'

The advantages of such an analysis are that it allows us to acknowledge those assertions about nonexistent things which we would normally like to acknowledge without committing ourselves to the existence of that which is nonexistent. Aristotle's "trick" is to interpret such sentences as not actually being about the nonexistent things at all.

Before closing this section, one cautionary note is in order. Several people who have read an earlier draft of this chapter have argued that the theory which I am ascribing to Aristotle commits Aristotle to the claim that questions of existence can be settled <u>a priori</u> simply by examination of our language. After all, if we use a word to make a literal predication, then that which the word allegedly denotes exists, while if we cannot use a word to make literal predications then that which the word allegedly denotes does not exist. In fact, the theory which I have presented in this paper makes no such

claim at all.

Quite the contrary, all that this theory of existential assertion concerns is how we should understand certain sorts of sentences. Whether or not unicorns and cats exist (or, in Aristotle's terms, whether or not 'unicorn' and 'cat' are capable of being used in a literal predication) is not to be settled by examining our use of 'unicorn' and 'cat' but by sense observation. In short, how we construe a sentence, the linguistic question, can be answered only by answering questions about the furniture of the world by means of our sense experience.

Should experience reveal that unicorns do not exist (viz. that 'unicorn' is not capable of being used in a literal predication), then all sentences about unicorns will have to be treated as metalinguistic claims about 'unicorn'. Similarly, should experience reveal that cats exist (viz. 'cat' can be used to make literal predications) then sentences about cats can be construed as object language sentences about cats. Thus the objection that the theory presented in this paper forces Aristotle into settling questions of existence by examination of our language is simply to misunderstand the theory which I have offered.

I do not claim that my proposal is to be found explicitly in Aristotle. Nevertheless construing assertions about nonexistent things as metalinguistic assertions clearly would fit neatly with the previous analysis and can find some support from the suggestion of Posterior Analytics II.vii. Frankly, I would be happier were I able to find better text support either for this proposal or some alternative. However,

it is definitely far better to propose such a tentative solution as this, rather than leave the problem completely unanswered. At least on this analysis, Aristotle's limited suggestions can be used to complete his theory of existential assertion.

Conclusion

Before closing, I would like to make three brief remarks concerning the consequences of the argument I have proposed in this chapter. The first is simply that the theory I have offered casts doubt on whether Aristotle would even understand the question 'Does X exist'?, where 'exist' carries its normal contemporary meaning. Aristotle's reaction would be one of puzzlement. His response might well be 'Of course X exists. You're talking about it, aren't you'? In order for the question 'Does X exist'? to be significant (again, with the proviso that 'to exist' have its present meaning), we presuppose the distinction between the essence and the existence of a thing - a distinction which does not even enter philosophy for centuries.

My second remark is a corollary of the first, namely whether it is ever adequate to translate Aristotle's use of the verb εἶναι or any of its cognates by the English 'to exist'. Since the English sentence 'X exists' means something quite different from Aristotle's '"X" can be used to make a literal predication', introducing the word 'exists' into a translation distorts the meaning of the original text.

My third point is simply that what I claim to have accomplished in this chapter is to have adequately explained Aristotle's actual views concerning existential assertion. Though this theory is definitely more plausible than generally believed, I have not made any claim as to whether or not it is correct. The answer to this further question turns on the acceptability of other Aristotelian doctrines which lie beyond the scope of the present analysis.

Chapter Two

Aristotle and Nonreferring Subjects

In the previous chapter I argued that for Aristotle every subject and every predicate in a literal predication designates a nonempty class. However, certain commentators have denied this view by arguing that in two passages - Categories x $13^{b}12$-35 and De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}25$-28 - Aristotle implies that the subject of a proposition might not refer. In this chapter I will show that neither of these passages really mention such a view and that in fact both are concerned with quite different issues.

In Section I, I discuss the standard interpretation of both the Categories and De Interpretatione passages. In Section II, I treat the Categories x $13^{b}12$-35 text and show that rather than being a discussion of the truth and falsity of a sentence with a nonreferring subject it is really concerned with the applicability or inapplicability of certain predicates to the subject. In Section III, I show that De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}25$-28 does not ask whether 'Homer is a poet' implies 'Homer exists' but rather whether it is true or false to predicate the accident of being a poet of Homer.

I

The two passages which presently concern us come from two rather unrelated discussions. The first, Categories x $13^{b}12$-35, forms the concluding section of a discussion of types of opposition. The second, De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}25$-28, is merely a tangential comment made after a discussion of certain predications.

Categories x is part of that section of the Categories, namely chapters x through xv, often labelled the Postpraedicamenta. Though critical opinion has been divided as to the authorship of these chapters, this problem does not affect the present discussion since my sole reason for treating the Categories x passage is to remove a possible objection to the theory I have offered in Chapter One. Though I am inclined to accept the authenticity of the Postpraedicamenta, should they prove to be spurious my account of Aristotle's theory of existence remains acceptable.

Categories x begins with a brief listing of the four types of opposites and then proceeds to discuss each successively: the opposition of relatives (e.g. double and half), the opposition of contraries (e.g., odd and even or white and black), the opposition of possession and privation (e.g., blindness and sight), and finally the opposition of things that are opposed in the manner of affirmation and denial (e.g. Socrates' being seated and Socrates' not being seated).

The distinguishing feature of this last sort of opposition is that only in this kind of opposition must one opposite be true and the

other be false. Part of this criterion is trivially true. Since the other three sorts of opposition only involve uncombined terms, they do not involve sentences and hence are neither true nor false.

> But in general, of things said without any interweaving at all, none are either true or false and all these opposites are said without interweaving.[1]

However, Aristotle goes further and remarks that not even in those cases where the first three sorts of opposites are combined into sentences are these sentences so opposed that always one is true and the other is false. The focus of our concern is Aristotle's explanation of why predicating either contraries or possessions and privations of subjects does not yield sentences which are opposed in the manner in which affirmations and denials are opposed.

The normal interpretation of Aristotle's explanation is in terms of nonreferring subjects. Thus, according to John Ackrill's translation, Aristotle writes

> It might, indeed, very well seem that the same sort of thing does occur in the case of contraries said <u>with</u> combination, 'Socrates is well' being contrary to 'Socrates is sick'. Yet not even with these is it necessary always for one to be true and the other false. For if Socrates exists one will be true and one false, but if he does not both will be false; neither 'Socrates is sick' nor 'Socrates is well' will be true if Socrates himself does not exist at all. As for possession and privation, if he does not exist at all neither is true, while not always one or the other is true if he does. For 'Socrates

---

[1]Categories x $13^{b}10$-12.

> has sight' is opposed to 'Socrates is blind' as possession to privation; and if he exists it is not necessary for one or the other to be true or false (since until the time when it is natural for him to have it both are false), while if Socrates does not exist at all then again both are false, both 'he has sight' and 'he is blind'. But with an affirmation and negation one will always be false and the other true whether he exists or not. For take 'Socrates is sick' and 'Socrates is not sick': if he exists it is clear that one or the other of them will be true or false, and equally if he does not; for if he does not exist 'he is sick' is false but 'he is not sick' true. Thus it would be distinctive of these alone - opposed affirmations and negations - that always one or the other of them is true or false.[2]

On the crucial points, the translations of E.M. Edghill and H.P. Cooke are basically the same as John Ackrill's.[3] All three see Aristotle's explanation as involving nonreferring subjects. Each translator correctly understands Aristotle to be arguing that if ϕ and ψ are contraries, predicating ϕ and ψ of some individual (e.g. Socrates) need not result in two propositions, one of which is true and the other of which is false. However, the translators' explanation of this point is questionable. They argue that in the case of contraries, Aristotle's point is that should Socrates not exist, then both propositions - 'Socrates is ϕ' and 'Socrates is ψ' - are false due to the subject's failing to refer.

Each translator is also correct in understanding Aristotle to be

---

[2] Categories and De Interpretatione p. 37-38.

[3] Categories translated by H.P. Cooke (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) p. 93-95 and Categories translated by E.M. Edghill in Richard McKeon ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941) p. 33.

> opposition which is expressed by means of an affirmative and a negative statement is always of necessity an opposition about the same thing in the same subject, whether this subject actually exists or not. Hence, such an opposition is not conditional but absolute, that is, it is not dependent on the contingency of its subject.[4]

As we shall see in a moment, those commentators who discuss both Categories x and De Interpretatione xi not only adopt this same analysis of Categories x, but do so in the full recognition that it creates a prima facie contradiction with their interpretations of De Interpretatione 21^a25-28.

Turning now to the second passage with which we are concerned, in De Interpretatione xi Aristotle worries first about the negating of an ambiguous proposition and then shifts to concern over the circumstances under which it is permissible to move from asserting two predicates separately to asserting them together. In the Ackrill translation, near the end of this discussion in lines 21^a25-28, Aristotle remarks:

> For example, Homer is something (say, a poet). Does it follow that he is? No, for the 'is' is predicated accidentally of Homer; for it is because he is a poet, not in its own right, that the 'is' is predicated of Homer.[5]

The Oxford translator E.M. Edghill offers a similar reading:

> Take the proposition 'Homer is so-and-so', say 'a poet'; does it follow that Homer is, or does it not? The verb 'is' is here used of Homer only incidentally,

---

[4]The Theory of Opposition in Aristotle (Notre Dame, Ind., 1940) p. 81.

[5]Categories and De Interpretatione p. 59.

> the proposition being that Homer is a poet, not that he is, in the independent sense of the word.[6]

Both of these translators quite clearly see the issue as whether or not 'Homer is', 'is' being used in the sense of 'exists', follows from 'Homer is a poet'.[7]

Commentators have treated this passage similarly. Ross cites it as evidence that Aristotle '...is aware of the distinction between the existential and the copulative "is".'[8] Similarly G.E.L. Owen on at

---

[6]On Interpretation in McKeon The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 54.

[7]Cooke's Loeb edition is somewhat confusing. Initially he adopts the same reading as Edghill and Ackrill - that the question in $^{a}26$ concerns the existence of Homer.

> For example, take 'Homer is something' - 'a poet' will do for our purpose. But can we say also 'he is'? Or will that be incorrectly inferred?

However, then Cooke appears to adopt what I will argue is the correct reading of $21^{a}26$-28.

> 'Is' was used incidentally here. For our statement was 'he is a poet', and 'is' was not predicated of him in the substantive sense of the word.

So as to leave no doubt concerning the meaning of these lines, Cooke adds a footnote claiming that by the substantive sense of 'is' Aristotle 'Otherwise ⟨means⟩ the sense of existence. For the word 'is' expresses exists in addition to being the copula'. If 'otherwise' here means 'in other words', then contrary to appearances, Cooke's view is really the same as those which I have already cited. However, if 'otherwise' means 'in other places' then Cooke has (1) correctly un understood the real point of lines $21^{a}26$-28 but (2) misunderstood the καθ' αὑτό use of 'is' since nowhere, despite what various commentators have alleged, does the καθ' αὑτό use of 'is' have the meaning of 'exists'.

[8]Aristotle, p. 28.

least one occasion points to these lines as clear proof that for Aristotle the καθ'αὑτό ('essential' or 'according to essence') use of ἐστι ('is') is the existential use of the verb 'to be'. Thus Owen writes that τὸ καθ'αὑτὸ ὄν ('essential being', the word ὄν being Aristotle's umbrella word to cover all uses of ('to be')) is '...a phrase which can certainly be applied to existential statements (e.g. at De Interpretatione 21^a28)...'[9]

John Ackrill does go so far as to note that his reading of 21^a25-28 would contradict his reading of Categories x 13^b12-35. Thus, in his discussion of the latter passage, Ackrill asks:

> Does Aristotle maintain that the nonexistence of the subject always makes an affirmative statement false and a negative one true, or does he have in mind only singular statements? How, in any case, is this view to be reconciled with the contention at De Interpretatione 21^a25-28 that 'Homer is a poet' does not entail 'Homer is'?[10]

In the same vein, Nicholas White writes that in Categories 13^b12-35 Aristotle suggests that '...when Socrates is not in existence, no "affirmative" statement about Socrates is true', this '...might, however, conflict with De Int 21^a24-28...'[11]

As one final example, let me cite Manley Thompson's discussion.

---

[9] 'Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology' in Renford Bambrough ed. New Essays on Plato and Aristotle (London, 1965), p. 82. The other place where Owen refers to De Int. 21^a24-28 is p. 77.

[10] Categories and De Interpretatione, p. 111.

[11] 'Origins of Aristotle's Essentialism' Review of Metaphysics Vol. XXVI, No. 1 (1973), p. 62.

Confronting the apparent contradiction later noted by Ackrill and White, Thompson argues that the resolution of the problem lies in seeking the καθ' αὑτό use of 'is' in 21[a]25-28 as being '...the substantive sense of the word...[meaning] the same as 'is a substance".'[12] Thus Aristotle is not baldly contradicting himself since he is not denying that 'Homer is a poet' implies 'Homer exists'. In fact, 'Homer exists' must follow from 'Homer is a poet', for '...if Homer did not exist, i.e., if he was simply nonbeing, it would not be true to say that he is anything.'[13] Rather, according to Thompson, Aristotle's point is to deny that 'Homer is a substance' follows from 'Homer is a poet'.

Though this interpretation may resolve the apparent contradiction between Categories x and De Interpretatione xi, it is prima facie mistaken. First, there is the obvious point that 'Homer is a poet' does imply that 'Homer is a substance', just as much as 'Homer is a man' implies that 'Homer is a substance', since being a poet is being a certain sort of man. However, an even deeper objection is that Thompson's claim that the καθ' αὑτό use of 'is' is '...clearly..."is" in the substantive sense of the word and means the same as "is a substance"' contradicts Metaphysics V.vii 1017[a]22-27, where Aristotle says that the verb 'to be' can be said καθ' αὑτό in each of the categories, i.e., not merely 'is a substance' but also 'is a quality', 'is a quality', etc.[14]

---

[12]'On Aristotle's Square of Opposition' in J.M.E. Moravcsik ed. Aristotle (Garden City, New York, 1967), p. 56.

[13]Ibid., p. 56.

[14]As I am about to argue, since neither Categories x 13[b]12-35 nor De Interpretatione xi 21[a]25-28 concerns existence at all, there is no contradiction.

In what follows I shall argue that all of these interpreters are mistaken in seeing in these lines of Categories and De Interpretatione any mention of an existential or substantival sense of the verb 'to be'. In this way, it will be shown that there is no contradiction between either of these passages and the argument I advanced in the previous chapter.

II

In this section I shall argue that the real point of Categories x $13^{b}12$-35 is not the claim that when the subject of an affirmation does not refer, the proposition is false, but rather that when a predicate is affirmed of a subject to which it is inapplicable, the resulting assertion is false. Clearly such a reading would fit perfectly with my general claim that in order for us to have a literal predication at all, both the subject term and the predicate term must successfully denote.

Briefly, what I see Aristotle to be arguing in $13^{b}12$-19 is that when a given pair of contraries are predicated of a subject of which they are inapplicable, both propositions are false and in $13^{b}20$-27 that when a possession and its corresponding privation are predicated of a subject of which they are inapplicable, both propositions are false. In $13^{b}27$-35 Aristotle concludes that the case of affirmation and denial is different simply because regardless of whether or not the predicate is applicable to the subject either the affirmation of this predicate of this subject or the denial of this predicate of this subject will still be true. In none of these three cases does Aristotle make any mention of the nonexistence of that to which the subject purportedly refers.[15]

My discussion will be divided into three parts. First I shall

---

[15]Aristotle does not even mention the opposition of relatives in $13^{a}37$-$^{b}35$. The reason is simply that since pairs of relatives will clearly always be true or false together, no one would think that they might be similar to the opposition of things opposed as affirmation and denial.

discuss the notion of applicability in so far as it pertains to contrariety and possession and privation. Second I shall show how the applicability of a predicate to a subject might account for the differences between, on the one hand, the truth and falsity of predications involving contraries and possessions and privations and, on the other hand, the opposition of affirmation and denial. Third, I will argue that the Greek of $13^{b}12$-35 in fact can and should be read as making this very point about applicability.

In order to fully appreciate my proposal, we must first review the role which the notion of applicability plays in Aristotle's earlier discussions of contrariety and of possession and privation. Rather than being of only slight importance, applicability is in fact fundamental to the explanation of both concepts. Aristotle's discussions of contrariety, both here in Categories x and elsewhere in the Metaphysics and Topics,[16] repeatedly stress the fact that the basis of the notion of contrariety is not just any sort of difference, but rather difference with respect to some thing. Thus, even if X and Y are not opposed as relations, it does not follow from the fact that X is different from Y that X and Y are contraries. Rather, only when there is some thing Z which either is capable of receiving X or is capable of receiving Y and Z cannot be both X and Y at the same time, are X and Y said to be contraries.

Let us consider how this applies to several of Aristotle's examples

---

[16]Cf. Metaphysics V.x and X.iv and Topics II.ii.

of contraries such as odd and even, well and sick, white and black, and just and unjust. Each of these pairs of contraries properly belong only to a certain kind of thing. Thus being odd and being even properly belong only to number, being well and being sick to living things, being white and being black to a physical surface, and being just and being unjust to a human being. Aristotle divides contraries into those which do not have intermediates (e.g. odd and even) and those which do (e.g. white and black). In the former case, every thing which is capable of receiving the property odd or the property even must be either odd or even. However in the latter case, a physical surface need not be either white or black. Rather it can also be some intermediate color such as grey or brown. Sometimes, as in the case of colors, these intermediates have names; sometimes, as in the case of being just and being unjust, they do not. In this event we can only designate the intermediate state as being neither one extreme nor the other.

Thus consider the first two pairs of contraries, both of which lack intermediates. Even though every integer must either be odd or be even and every living thing either be well or be sick, it does not follow that every integer either be well or be sick nor that every living thing either be odd or be even. In fact, except in an accidental way, it is impossible for an integer to be well or to be sick and it is impossible for a living thing to be odd or to be even. The reason is clear - living things simply are not capable of receiving the properties of being odd or of being even and integers simply are not capable of receiving the properties of being well or of being sick.

Hence saying that the number five neither is well nor is sick does not show that being well and being sick are not contraries since the number five simply is incapable of receiving either of these properties except in an accidental way. The same remark applies mutatis mutandis for some living thing such as Socrates and the properties of being odd and being even. Thus Aristotle writes that

> For...those contraries of which there is no intermediate, it is necessary for one or the other of these always to belong in that which it naturally comes to be or of which it is predicated. For of these cases where nothing was intermediate, it was necessary for one or the other to belong to that capable of receiving them, as with sickness and health and odd and even.[17]

In the case of contraries which do have intermediates, there is no necessity that that which is capable of receiving either contrary possess one contrary or the other simply because that which is capable of receiving either contrary might instead possess some intermediate. However, the necessity that the recipient either be one of the extremes or be one of the intermediates remains. Thus a physical surface need not either be white or be black since it might also be brown or be gray or be some other color. Nevertheless every physical surface must be some color or other.

But just as in the previous case, contraries are contrary only with respect to that which is capable of receiving them. Hence, no physical surface either is well or is sick; nor is any physical surface

---

[17] Categories x $12^{b}27$-32.

just, unjust, or the intermediate state neither just nor unjust. However, saying that this physical surface neither is well nor is sick does not show that being well and being sick are not contraries. Rather it shows that physical surfaces simply are not capable of receiving these properties except in an accidental way.

> Of these for which there is a certain intermediate, it is at no time necessary that one or the other belong to everything. It is not necessary for either white or black to belong to everything which is capable of receiving them... For of these, nothing prevents a certain intermediate from belonging.[18]

Turning now to the opposition of possession and privation (or, to render the Greek ἕξις and στέρησις more literally: 'having' and 'lacking'), it will be clear that similar considerations of applicability determine whether it is necessary for one or the other to belong. Aristotle's discussion makes clear certain features of the relation of a possession to its privation. Let X and Y be a possession of Z and its privation. Then: (1) Nothing can be both X and Y at the same time. (2) Neither X nor Y can be essential to Z in the sense that if Z ceases to have either X or Y, then Z ceases to be. (3) At some time t, it becomes necessary for Z either to have the possession X or the privation Y. (4) If at some time Z loses X, then at no later time can Z reacquire X. (5) if at some time Z has the privation Y, then at all later times Z will have the privation Y.

Let us see how these considerations apply to Aristotle's standard

---

[18] Ibid., $12^{b}32$-35.

example of a possession and a privation, namely being sighted and being blind. Nothing is ever both sighted and blind. Nor is being sighted or being blind essential to those animals which possess these properties - after all, blind men are still men. Though in the case of human beings we are born either sighted or blind, other species such as dogs are neither sighted nor blind at birth. However there does come a point in time when the puppies eyes' open - and at that moment the puppies must either be sighted or be blind. Finally, if a sighted animal becomes blind, it can never regain its sight.

More clearly even than in the case of contraries, the opposition of a possession and its privation depends upon the nature of that to which the possession and the privation belong. Not only will everything fail either to be sighted or to be blind because of those cases where both simply do not belong at all, but there are other cases where both properties fail to belong simply because the recipient has not yet reached the stage where it would either acquire the possession or suffer the privation.

Thus the fact that this table or that tree neither is blind nor is sighted, does not show that being blind and being sighted are not opposed as possession and privation. Not even will the failure of that which is capable of receiving the possession and its privation always to possess either sight or blindness show that being sighted and being blind are not opposed as a possession to its privation. Rather what it shows is that a thing must possess either the possession sight or the privation blindness only when the thing is both capable of receiving the possession and its privation and has reached the proper stage

of its development. As Aristotle puts the point

> For it is not even necessary for one or the other of them [i.e., the possession and its privation] always to belong to that which is capable of receiving them, since if it is not yet natural for it to have sight, it is said neither to be blind nor to have sight.[19]

Turning now to Aristotle's discussion of the opposition of things which are opposed as affirmation and denial, it should be clear from Section I that any adequate elucidation of $13^{b}12$-35 must turn upon correctly explaining why affirming contraries and affirming possessions and privations of a subject need not always result in one true and one false proposition but might instead yield two false propositions. I shall now show how Aristotle might, without resorting to nonreferring subjects, use the notion of applicability to account for the features mentioned in $13^{b}12$-35.

Aristotle states that the distinguishing feature of things that are opposed as affirmation and denial is that always one will be true and the other false. Suppose that S is a subject and (since Aristotle's own example is a pair of contraries having no intermediate) let X and Y be a pair of contraries having no intermediate. Now if we predicate X and Y of S, we will obtain two propositions, viz. 'S is X' and 'S is Y'. Two situations can obtain - either X and Y will be applicable to S or they will not. If the former, then necessarily one of the two propositions will be true and the other will be false. In such a case,

---

[19] Ibid., $13^{a}4$-6.

the opposition of contraries will be similar to the opposition of affirmation and denial. However in the latter case, the case where the pair of contraries is not applicable to the subject, neither proposition will be true. Both 'S is X' and 'S is Y' are false when X and Y are irrelevant to S. Thus Aristotle's explanation of the difference between the opposition of predicated contraries and the opposition of affirmation and denial can easily be accounted for without any mention of nonreferential subjects, simply by means of the notion of applicability.[20]

Aristotle's remarks on possession and privation can be construed in a similar way. Suppose that S is a subject and X and Y are a possession and its privation. Predicating X and Y of S will yield two propositions - 'S is X' and 'S is Y'. Three situations may obtain. First X and Y may simply be inapplicable to the sort of thing that S is. In such an event, both propositions will be false. Second, X and Y are applicable to the sort of thing that S is, but because S has not yet reached the proper stage of its development, S is neither X nor Y. Again, in this case, both 'S is X' and 'S is Y' will be false. Only in the third case, where S is the sort of thing to which X and Y

---

[20]Aristotle does not mention the case of contraries with intermediates simply because in the light of his previous statements it is obvious that the predication of both contraries might be false. For example, consider the case of the colors white and black. Not only will both 'S is white' and 'S is black' be false when S is neither a physical surface nor an object containing one, but even if S is the appropriate sort of thing both propositions can be false simply because S might be some other color. In fact, Aristotle's specific failure to mention in $13^{b}12$-19 the case of contraries with intermediates constitutes evidence in favor of my hypothesis (cf. below p. 70).

are applicable and S has reached the appropriate stage in its development so that it must either be X or be Y, will it be necessary for one of the two propositions to be true and the other of the two propositions to be false. Once more it is clear that no introduction of the notion of a nonreferential subject is necessary in order to yield pairs of propositions both of which are false. All that we need mention in order for the opposition of predicated possessions and privations to diverge from the opposition of affirmation and denial is the notion of applicability.

However, in the case of the opposition of thing which are opposed as affirmation and denial, the applicability or inapplicability of the predicate to the subject in no way affects the fact that necessarily one of the pair of assertions be true and the other be false. For supposing that S is the subject and P is the predicate, we must consider two cases - where S is capable of receiving P and where S is incapable of receiving P. In the first case, then either (1) P holds of S in which case 'S is P' is true and 'S is not P' is false or (2) P does not hold of S in which case 'S is P' is false and 'S is not P' is true. Thus, if S is capable of receiving P, then always one proposition will be false and the other will be true.

In the second case where S is not capable of receiving P, P will never hold of S and it will follow that the assertion 'S is not P' will always be true and the assertion 'S is P' will always be false. Thus again, one proposition will be true and the other proposition will be false. Hence the capability or incapability of the subject to receive the predicate is irrelevant to affirmation and denial being opposed in

such a way so that necessarily one proposition is true and the other proposition is false. Once again, no mention of nonreferential subjects need be made in order for us to explain Aristotle's point.

But though the explanation I have just offered shows how Aristotle might account for the distinctive feature of the opposition of affirmation and denial without introducing the notion of nonreferential subjects, it does not show that Aristotle's explanation in 13^b12-35 does actually turn upon the notion of applicability. In order to demonstrate this further point, we must make specific reference to the text of 13^b12-35. It is to this task that I now turn.

The crux of any analysis of these lines will be the translation and interpretation of a number of occurrences of the genitive singular participial form of the verb εἶναι ('to be'), often accompanied by the genitive of Σωκράτης ('Socrates'). The standard reading of all of these remarks is in terms of Socrates' existence. However, this is by no means necessary - in fact, these clauses can clearly be given the sense of suggesting the applicability or inapplicability of the predicate to the subject simply by understanding ὄντος ('being') as an elliptical way of expressing a condition concerning the relevance to the subject of a certain range of predicates. Thus after each occurrence of ὄντος I would argue that Aristotle would understand the condition τοῦ δεκτικοῦ ('being capable of receiving'). Thus in the case of a pair of contraries the clause ὄντος μὲν γὰρ Σωκράτους (literally: 'For of Socrates being') really means 'For if Socrates is capable of receiving the contraries' while in the case of a possession and its

privation the ὄντος condition serves to mean 'If he is capable of receiving either the possession or its privation'. Hence, let me propose the following translation of $13^{b}12$-35:

> It might, indeed, very well seem that such happens [i.e., necessarily it will always be the case that one proposition will be true and the other proposition will be false] in the case of those contraries said with interweaving [κατὰ συμπλοκήν] - 'Socrates
> 15 is well' being contrary to 'Socrates is sick' - but not even as concerns these is it necessary always for one to be true and the other to be false. For, on the one hand, if Socrates is capable of receiving the contraries [ὄντος μὲν γὰρ Σωκράτους; literally: 'For of Socrates being'] one will be true and one will be false, while on the other hand, ⟨if Socrates⟩ is not capable of receiving the contraries [μὴ ὄντος δὲ; literally: '⟨of Socrates⟩ not being'] both will be false; for neither 'Socrates is sick' nor '⟨Socrates⟩ is well' will be true if Socrates himself is not at all capable of receiving the contraries [αὐτοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὅλως τοῦ Σωκράτους; literally: 'of Socrates himself not being at all'].
>
> 20 As for privation and possession, neither are true if it is not at all capable of receiving the privation and possession [μὴ ὄντος τε ὅλως; literally: 'not being at all']. Even being capable of receiving the privation and possession [ὄντος δὲ; literally: 'being'] not always will one or the other be true. For 'Socrates has sight' is opposed to 'Socrates is blind' as privation and possession. Even being capable of receiving the privation and possession [ὄντος τε; literally: 'being'] it is not necessary for one or the other to be true or false, since until when it
> 25 is natural to have ⟨the possession or the privation⟩, both are false. But if Socrates is not at all capable of receiving the privation and possession [μὴ ὄντος δὲ ὅλως τοῦ Σωκράτους; literally: 'of Socrates not being at all'] then again both are false, both 'he has sight' and 'he is blind'.
>
> As for affirmation and denial always, if it should be capable of receiving the predicate or if it should not be capable of receiving the predicate [ἐάν τε ᾖ ἐάν τε μὴ ᾖ; literally: 'if it should be or if it should not be'] one will be false and the other will

30 be true. For consider 'Socrates is sick' and 'Socrates is not sick'. If he is capable of receiving the predicate [ὄντος τε αὐτοῦ ; literally: 'Of his being'] it is evident that one of them will be true while the other will be false and if he is not capable of receiving the predicate [μὴ ὄντος; literally; 'not being'] likewise, for if he is not capable of receiving the predicate [μὴ ὄντος ; literally: 'not being'] 'he is sick' is false while 'he is not sick' is true. Thus only of these is it distinctive that always one of these is true while the other will
35 be false - just as many as are opposed as affirmation and denial.

As will be clear by comparison with the Ackrill translation I quoted earlier, my translation is fundamentally similar to his except for my interpretation of the crucial clauses in which Aristotle states why certain predications of contraries and certain predications of possessions and privations will fail to produce one true and one false proposition. As my translation suggests, these crucial clauses can be read as signifying whether or not the subject is capable of receiving the predicate.

But is my translation tenable? Though it may strain the Greek by reading into Aristotle's terse prose more than the text literally says, at very worst the strain is minor. In each case, the literal rendering of the Greek can be understood as elliptical for my less literal translation. However, would a native Greek have understood the clauses in the way that I suggest? Seeing how Aristotle has previously repeatedly indicated the condition of applicability, I think that it is clear that a native speaker would have readily supplied the ellipsis that I suggest - viz. τοῦ δεκτικοῦ ('being capable of receiving').

If the mere tenability of my translation is conceded, then two

specific considerations favor my reading. The first, stemming from the particular text itself, is that the example which Aristotle uses in his discussion of predications involving contraries is a pair of contraries having no intermediate. On the traditional reading, Aristotle's choice of example has no significance; on my interpretation to use a pair of contraries having an intermediate would be inconceivable. The only reason why anyone might be led to believe that predications of contraries are opposed like affirmations and denials is because it appears to be the case that for some subject that subject must possess either one contrary or the other. But since contraries with intermediates lack this necessity (e.g. this physical surface need not be either white or black, it might be some other color) no one would even consider the opposition of predications of contraries with intermediates as similar to the opposition of affirmation and denial.

The second is simply the relative plausibility of understanding Aristotle's discussion in terms of a notion which he has just discussed, viz. the ability of a thing to receive a certain property, versus the relative implausibility of interpreting Aristotle as introducing a notion, viz. nonreferential subjects, which he has never previously mentioned. In addition to this merely contextual point, the philosophical content also strengthens my proposal. Whereas the notion of applicability is quite clear and unproblematic, the question of the truth-value of a proposition with a nonreferring subject has been the source of much debate. Certainly these considerations of content and

context do not bar the standard interpretation, but nevertheless they do suggest that the traditional approach has misread the text.

However the most telling consideration in favor of my proposed reading is simply that it is perfectly consistent with the account of Aristotle's theory of predication which I advanced in Chapter One - an account for which there is an abundance of textual evidence. Hence I conclude that my proposal for reading $13^{b}12$-35 in terms of the notion of the ability of the subject to receive the predicate, rather than the traditional reading in terms of the notion of a nonreferring subject, is correct.

III

In this section I will argue that De Interpretatione $21^{a}25$-28 does not ask whether 'Homer exists' follows from 'Homer is a poet'. However, in order to understand what Aristotle is actually asserting, we must pay close attention to the context of chapter xi in which these remarks are made.

At $20^{b}31$ Aristotle begins a discussion concerning when it is and is not permissible to compound predicates. To use his own example, it is true to say of a man that he is an animal or that he is two-footed or in combination, that he is a two-footed animal. Or again, a man can be said to be white or to be a man or, via compounding, to be a white man. But we cannot allow this in all cases, since if we do not restrict the circumstances under which two separate predicates of one thing can be combined into a single predicate, i.e., the move from 'X is Y' and 'X is Z' to 'X is YZ', various problems arise.

Aristotle offers us two difficulties. The first ($20^{b}35$-36) concerns the use of an adjective which can be both predicated of the subject of a sentence and used as a modifier of the direct object. Consider 'Jones is a cobbler' and 'Jones is good'. Even if both of these statements are true, they do not imply that 'Jones is a good cobbler'. In saying'Jones is good' we are speaking of Jones qua man, i.e., Jones is a good man. Since being a good man is not necessarily related to being a good cobbler, 'Jones is a good cobbler' may be false.

Aristotle's second difficulty ($20^{b}37$-$21^{a}3$) is that the unrestricted

combination of predicates will lead to redundant predications. Consider a man who is white. In such a case, it is true to say 'The man is white' and 'The man is a white man'. But 'The man is a white white man' is unacceptable. Similarly 'Socrates is Socrates' and 'Socrates is a man' are both permissible. However, if we allow the unrestricted combination of predicates, we are forced to permit the clearly absurd sentence 'Socrates is a Socrates man'.

Hence at $21^{a}5$-7 Aristotle concludes that the unrestricted combination of predicates is unacceptable.

> Now then, if someone will say that predicates can always be combined, it happens that there will be many absurdities. And how one must decide, we will now say.[21]

First he notes in $21^{a}7$-10 that neither an accidental predicate asserted of a subject nor two accidental predicates of a given subject which are asserted of one another will combine and from a single predicate. Consider 'Man is musical and white' - we cannot say 'Man is musical white'. Even if it were true to say 'The white is musical', 'musical' and 'white' will not form one predicate since being musical is an accident of being white. In the same way 'good' and 'cobbler' do not combine since what they denote are only accidentally, not essentially, related to man. But we do combine 'animal' and 'two-footed' since 'Man is a two-footed animal' predicates according to the essence, not according to an accident.

---

[21] De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}5$-7.

Next, in 21[a]16, Aristotle notes that 'as many as inhere [ἐνυπάρχει] in the other' cannot be combined into a single complex predicate. It is for this reason that one can neither repeatedly predicate 'white' of what already contains it nor say either 'Man is a man animal' or 'Man is a two-footed man' since being an animal and being two-footed inhere in the essence of man.

If Aristotle had stopped at this statement his views would clearly be false since we do say that particular men are two-legged. However, he is aware of cases like these. Hence he adds:

> But it is true to say [something which inheres in the essence] or the particular instance and singly, for example the particular man is a man or the particular white man is a white man.[22]

However, Aristotle has second thoughts - we cannot always do this. There are two cases - first are the cases where the terms being added imply a contradiction. Whenever a contradiction does follow because the thing being added contradicts something which already inheres in the essence, the statement is not true but false. In an example reminiscent of Phaedo, Aristotle argues that it is simply false to say that a dead man is a man since to be a man is to function in a certain way. Just as a dead finger is only ὁμωνύμως, homonymously, a finger, since it cannot function in a certain way, so a dead man is only a man ὁμωνύμως. But there is a second alternative - 'whenever it [i.e., the added term] should not inhere' - in which case we will not have a con-

---

[22] Ibid., 21[a]18-20.

tradiction and the predication is true. In this second case, Aristotle is conceiving of sentences like 'The white man is a man'. Since being white is not essential to being a man, the sentence is true.

Now come the crucial lines immediately preceding the text with which I am concerned. At $^{a}24$ Aristotle repeats what he has just said - the ἤ ('or') with which he begins his remarks is virtually equivalent to 'in other words'.

> Or whenever, on the one hand, it [i.e., the added term] should inhere [ἐνυπάρχῃ], the sentence is always not true; whenever, on the other hand, it [i.e., the added term] should not inhere [μὴ ἐνυπάρχῃ], ⟨the sentence is⟩ not always true,...

Aristotle's point is quite straightforward. Remembering the technical sense Aristotle assigns ἐνυπάρχειν, i.e., 'to inhere in the essence of a thing', the first alternative simply notes that when we speak of combining a subject with something which contradicts its essence, it is always false. The second alternative is the case where the added term does not inhere, i.e., it does not predicate something essential and hence it merely predicates an accident. Since it only predicates an accident, the assertion will not always be true.

The reason $21^{a}24$-25 is another way of saying what is said in $21^{a}21$-24 in that the crucial point in the examples in $21^{a}21$-24 was to note how the adjective modifying the subject (e.g. 'dead' in 'The dead man is a man' and 'white' in 'The white man is a man') was related to the subject. In the first case, we had the adjective contradicting the essence of what it modified, in the second it merely denotes an acci-

dent of the thing modified. Thus Aristotle realizes that the crucial issue to worry about is predication of the essence and predication of an accident.

That $21^{a}25$-28 should be understood as an example relating to $21^{a}24$-25 and, in particular, as an explication of the second alternative, is clearly implied by Aristotle's beginning his examples by ὥσπερ ('just as'). This word suggests that we are being given an elucidation of something which has just been said. Hence, as I read $21^{a}25$-28, Aristotle is merely continuing the remark which he has just made - $21^{a}25$-28 is really an example of a statement which involves predication of something which does not inhere and hence is 'not always true'. In other words, it sheds light on $21^{a}24$-25 by giving us an example of what is an accident. Thus the full passage reads:

> Or whenever, on the one hand, it [i.e., the added term] should inhere [ἐνυπάρχῃ], the sentence is always not true; whenever, on the other hand, it [i.e., the added term] should not inhere [μὴ ἐνυπάρχῃ] ⟨the sentence is⟩ not always true, just as Homer is something, such as a poet. Therefore, now, also is or not? For according to what is accidental [the] 'is' should be predicated of Homer, for it is the case that he is a poet, but not according to what is essential [the] 'is' should be predicated of Homer.

Aristotle's worry is the following. Take Homer and something which does not belong to him essentially. Being a poet will do. Since the property of being a poet <u>does not</u> inhere in Homer's essence, i.e., since Homer is essentially a man and since his essence would not change if he ceased being a poet and became a shoemaker or a shipbuilder,

Homer's essence neither is nor includes the property of being a poet. Instead, it is only an accident of Homer that he is a poet - and, since Homer could just as well have been something else besides a poet, 'Homer is a poet' need not have been true. Since Homer's being a poet is not essential but merely accidental to Homer, it is possible for Homer either to be a poet or not be a poet. And this is the real point of the question 'Therefore, now, also is or not?' It is not a query about whether Homer does or does not exist. Rather it is a straightforward question - since this property of being a poet is only an accident, i.e., it does not inhere in the essence of Homer, it is true that Homer is a poet? Rendered slightly less literally, Aristotle's question is really 'Therefore, now, also is it the case or is it not the case?' Or again, since Greek usage permits using ἐστί ('is') in interrogatives to mean 'is it true?', the passage may read 'Therefore, now, is it also true or not?'[23]

It is in this context that 21[a]26-28 is to be understood. That in these lines Aristotle is not talking about being or is but about 'is', is abundantly clear - the τὸ before ἔστιν in [a]27 and again in [a]28 can serve no other function.[24] And if it is remembered that lines [a]26-28 are meant as an explanation - note that the sentence begins with γάρ ('for'), the standard Aristotelian device for introducing reasons -

---

[23]With regard to this use of ἐστί cf. Metaphysics V.vii 1017[a]31-35, Metaphysics Vi,iv, and Metaphysics IX.x.

[24]For similar uses of τό in De Interpretatione cf. De Int. i 16[a]17-18, ii 16[a]21, 26, etc.

they clearly must refer back to whether or not 'Homer is a poet' is true or false.

If the reader has followed me this far, I think my conclusion is obvious. Since (1) Aristotle is concerned with 'is', not being or is, (2) the property of being a poet is an accident of a man, not part of his essence, (3) Aristotle is worrying about the sentence 'Homer is a poet', and (4) Aristotle now says that in the sentence 'Homer is a poet' 'is' is being used according to accident, not according to essence, it necessarily follows that this remark of Aristotle's simply points out that 'is' is being used to predicate something which is an accident of Homer rather than being used to predicate either the whole or a part of his essence, i.e., something which inheres in Homer. Hence, rather than making any reference whatever to existence or to substance, the κατὰ συμβεβηκός predication of ἔστιν refers to what 'is' in the sentence 'Homer is a poet' does not do - namely predicate of Homer either his essence or part of his essence.

Such a reading as I have proposed would be perfectly consistent with the conclusion Aristotle offers to his discussion of those cases where the predications were said of a particular instance and singly.

> Thus in as many predications as have no contrariety within, if definitions [λόγοι] instead of nouns [ὀνομάτων; also 'names'] we should say, then if it should be predicated according to what are their essences and not according to what is accidental, concerning these it will be true to say of the particular instance and singly.[25]

---

[25] De Interpretatione xi 21[a]29-32.

If (1) we take any sentence which involved a predication which does not contradict what is inherent in the subject and (2) which should be a predication of what is essential, not of what is accidental, the replacement of nouns by their definitions will mean that what we will be saying of the particular instance will be true. Consider the sentence 'The particular man is rational'., Since (1) predicating being rational of a particular man does not contradict what is inherent in the particular man and (2) 'rational' does not predicate the accidental but rather the essential of the particular man, if we should replace the word 'man' by its λόγος, viz. 'being a rational animal', our predication will be of the particular instance and our assertion will clearly be true.

Nor would the afterthought with which Aristotle closes chapter xi lend any support to a rival interpretation of 21[a]25-28.

> But just because that which is not is an object of opinion, it is not true to say that it is something. For opinion of it is not that it is, but that it is not.[26]

Manley Thompson had read these lines as evidence in favor of his reading the καθ' αὑτό meaning of εἶναι as 'is a substance'. Hence he wrote

---

I have differed from Minio-Paluello by reading a common after ἁπλῶς in [a]31. As I have interpreted [a]29-32, it is the conclusion of the discussion in 21[a]18-28. My reason for doing so is the obvious parallelism between the phrase with which Aristotle opens his discussion in [a]18-19 ἀληθὲς δ' ἐστὶν εἰπεῖν κατὰ τοῦ τινὸς καὶ ἁπλῶς ('But it is true to say of the particular instance and singly') and [a]31-32 τὸ τὲ καὶ ἁπλῶς, ἀληθὲς ἔσται εἰπεῖν (as I have rendered it above: 'it will be true to say of the particular instance and singly').

[26]21[a]32-33.

> ...[T]he fact that a non-existent Homer may be the object of opinion, as he would be if we were to construct a myth about him, does not mean that it is true to say Homer is something. The assertions 'Homer is merely the object of opinion' and 'Homer is a mythical being' are about Homer only in the sense of denying that he is in fact anything. While we might say that 'Homer is a poet' is true in fiction, what is true in this case is true of the myth and not of Homer. And the myth does exist, even though not per se as a substance does.[27]

However, surely Aristotle's point is not merely that myths are not οὐσίαι ('substances'). Of course, to use Thompson's example, that Homer is a part of a myth is in and of itself sufficient indication that the mythical Homer is not the same as the flesh and blood man; simply because it is a myth, it is about something which is not.

However, contra Thompson, this does not in any way imply that the focus of Aristotle's closing remark is that to think about what is contrary-to-fact, such as a myth, is to think about what is not a substance. Rather, the point is simply that that which is not is not, by virtue of our thinking about it, something which is.

That this is the case can be seen most clearly when we realize that Aristotle's remark about that which is not is not restricted to things which might erroneously be thought to belong to the category of substance, but rather concerns items in every category. For example, let us consider that object of opinion, the greeness of my hair. Since my hair is really a shade of brown, its being green is something which is not. Nevertheless, I can opine about my green hair. For example,

---

[27] 'On Aristotle's Square of Opposition', p. 57.

I can imagine that it would then match the color of the grass outside my house or that it would then be a different color from my girl friend's hair. However, and this is the point, all of this opining would concern that which is not simply because my hair is not green but brown. In order for Thompson's interpretation to be correct he must maintain that Aristotle is cautioning us lest we think that the nonexistent greeness of my hair is a substance. However, no one familiar with the doctrine of the categories would ever be misled into thinking that the greenness of my hair was a substance.

Hence, Aristotle's closing words, that τὸ μὴ ὄν ('that which is not') is not opined as being something ('that it is'), but rather as its not being something ('that it is not'). Aristotle, quite plausibly as my green hair example shows, speaks of that which is not in the same way as he speaks of that which is, i.e., in all of the categories. Thompson's interpretation overlooks this point.

That the reading of 21[a]25-28 which I have proposed is correct can be further confirmed by comparing it to Metaphysics V. vii, a text in which Aristotle offers us four semantic rules governing the verb 'to be'. The first two senses there discussed are the very same senses with which I have been concerned in this section - namely the use of the various cognates of εἶναι to indicate either that which is accidental or that which is essential. On any interpretation of the use of τὸ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὄν in De Interpretatione 21[a]25-28 other than the one I have presented in this section, De Interpretatione xi and Metaphysics

V.vii become irreconcilable.[28]

Before closing, I think it obligatory to consider the analysis of John Ackrill. In his edition of De Interpretatione Ackrill considered the very treatment which I have here proposed, only to reject it. Thus Ackrill writes that

> It is clear that the accidental predication of which Aristotle speaks in this paragraph [21a18-33] is 'accidental' in the second sense of the two senses distinguished above; it is incidental or indirect predication. Aristotle's example is not a happy one. But when he says that in 'Homer is a poet' the 'is' is predicated accidentally of Homer ('because he is a poet, not in its own right') his point evidently is not that 'is' gives an accidental as opposed to essential property of Homer, but that it attaches to Homer only indirectly, qualifying him only qua poet.[29]

In other words, Ackrill is conceding that his interpretation of 21a25-28 forces him to be dissatisfied with Aristotle's example. However, rather than accept the interpretation I have proposed for these lines, Ackrill advocates a theory whereby the text claims that 'is' is being linked to 'Homer' only via the direct object 'poet' and not unqualifiedly as in 'Homer is'.

Aside from the intrinsic awkwardness of such an interpretation - one which does not even fully please the author - the crucial problem which we must consider is why Aristotle's '...point evidently is not that 'is' gives an accidental as opposed to essential property of Homer...', i.e., what basis Ackrill has for rejecting the much simpler

---

[28]Cf. Chapter Four in which I analyze Metaphysics V.vii.

[29]p. 148.

and more straightforward explanation. Unfortunately, we are left ignorant as to what are these evident grounds.

Are they that such an interpretation cannot be reconciled with the rest of chapter xi and, in particular, the lines immediately preceding $21^{a}25$? If so, my proposal that lines $21^{a}25$-28 are simply meant to be an illustration of $21^{a}24$-25, i.e., of something which does not inhere in the essence of something else, not only dissolves this difficulty but in fact shows that the interpretation which Ackrill rejects is correct. However, if this is not the alleged ground for Ackrill's dismissal, then the basis of his rejection is not the least bit evident. In short, Ackrill's rejection of an analysis of $21^{a}25$-28 in terms of 'is' giving '...an accidental as opposed to an essential property of Homer...' appears to be inadequate.

In summary - I have shown that the κατὰ αὐτό ('essential' or 'according to essence') and κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('accidental' or 'according to accident') uses of εἶναι in <u>De Interpretatione</u> xi $21^{a}25$-28 refer to the use of the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is essential and that which is accidental. In so doing, not only have I shown that <u>De Interpretatione</u> $21^{a}25$-28 does not contradict the account of Aristotle's theory of predication which I offer in Chapter One, but I have also interpreted it in a manner consistent with <u>Metaphysics</u> V.vii.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that despite the claims of most major translators and commentators, neither Categories x $13^{b}12$-35 nor De Interpretatione xi $21^{a}25$-28 provide any support for the claim that Aristotle believes that the subject of a sentence might not refer. I have argued that the most plausible interpretation of each passage - both in terms of the immediate context and in terms of other related passages throughout the corpus - is quite different from the traditional reading. In this way I have refuted a potentially serious objection to the account which I advanced in Chapter One.

Chapter Three

The εἰ ἔστι Question in Posterior Analytics II.i

In Posterior Analytics II.i Aristotle presents four questions for which science seeks answers: τὸ ὅτι, τὸ διότι, εἰ ἔστι, and τί ἔστι. The common rendering of these four questions as (1) that S is P, (2) why S is P, (3) if S is, and (4) what is (the definition of) S has led various commentators to conclude that the εἰ ἔστι question involves the existential use of the verb 'to be'. However, in this chapter I hope to show both that reading the εἰ ἔστι question in terms of existence is rather dubious and that the εἰ ἔστι question really concerns whether a word can be used to make a literal predication.

In Section I of this chapter I will briefly discuss the above-mentioned interpretation of the εἰ ἔστι question in terms of existence in order to show how widely it is accepted. In Section II, I will make several general comments concerning the structure and interpretation of Posterior Analytics II.i. In Section III, I will consider the illuminating discussion of Father Joseph Owens. I will first consider Owens' fatal objection to reading the εἰ ἔστι question as 'if it is' (where 'is' carries the force of 'exist'). Second I will consider Owens' own proposal and third I will show how it fails. Finally, in Section IV, I will modify Father Owens' suggestion in such a way that it both preserves Owens' insights and at the same time accords with the analysis of existential assertion which I offered in Chapter One.

Though in no way do I claim to solve all of the many difficulties posed by Posterior Analytics II.i and its succeeding chapters, I do think that the reading I will propose provides a more intelligible rendering of Aristotle's remarks than previous interpretations.

I

In order to contrast the discussion of Posterior Analytics II.i which I will offer in Sections III and IV, let me briefly sketch the position which I am opposing.

As I have already noted, the common interpretation of the four questions asked in Posterior Analytics II.i reads them as: (1) that S is P, (2) why S is P, (3) if S is, and (4) what is (the definition of) S. Perhaps this view emerges most clearly in Tredennick's Loeb translation:

> There are four kinds of questions that we ask, and they correspond to the kinds of things that we know. They are: the question of fact, the question of reason or cause, the question of existence, and the question of essence. (1) When we ask whether this or that is so, introducing a plurality of terms (e.g., whether the sun suffers eclipse or not), we are asking the question of fact. The proof is that when we have discovered that it does suffer eclipse our inquiry is finished; and if we know at the outset that it does so, we do not ask whether it does. It is when we know the fact that we ask (2) the reason; e.g., if we know that the sun suffers eclipse and the earth moves, we ask the reasons for these facts. That is how we ask these questions; but there are others which take a different form: e.g., (3) whether a centaur or a god exists. The question of existence refers to simple existence, and not to whether the subject is (say) white or not. When we know that the subject exists, we ask (4) what it is; "what, then, is a god?" or "a man?"[1]

G.R.G. Mure's understanding of the four questions is basically the same as Tredennick's. Thus, in Mure's Oxford translation he renders the four things which we seek as

---

[1]Cambridge, Mass., 1966), p. 175.

> (1) whether the connexion of an attribute with a thing is a fact, (2) what is the reason of the connexion, (3) whether a thing exists, (4) what is the nature of the thing.[2]

These two translations clearly see the issue in the third and fourth questions in terms of the contrast between whether a given thing exists, i.e., the existence of the thing, and what a given thing is, i.e., the essence of the thing. In other words, the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι questions are understood in terms of the time-honored distinction between the existence of a thing (that it is) and the essence of the thing (what it is).

In his discussion of the passage, W.D. Ross leaves no doubt that he also sees the issue in these terms. For Ross, the εἰ ἔστι question involves the existential use of the verb 'to be' and asks of some thing whether it is:

> Aristotle begins [Posterior Analytics II] by distinguishing four topics of scientific inquiry, τὸ ὅτι, τὸ διότι, εἰ ἔστι, τί ἐστι. The difference between τὸ ὅτι and εἰ ἔστι turns on the difference between the copulative and the existential use of 'is'; the two questions are respectively of the form 'Is A B?' and of the form 'Does A exist?' If we have established that A is B, we go on to ask why it is so; if we have established that A exists, we go on to ask what it is.[3]

Though the interpretation of the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι questions in terms of the contrast between the existence and the essence of a thing

---

[2]In McKeon The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 158.

[3]W.D. Ross Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics (Oxford, 1965), p. 75-76.

is widely accepted, I do not think that it is correct. In order to see why, let us begin our examination of Posterior Analytics II.i.

II

In order to understand what the third question really means, let us consider the other questions first. In particular, let us examine the structure of Posterior Analytics II.i in order to see how Aristotle relates the questions to one another.

Posterior Analytics II.i begins by noting that the number of things we seek corresponds to the number of ways in which we know. Then Aristotle lists these four things which we seek: τὸ ὅτι , τὸ διότι , εἰ ἔστι , and τί ἐστι . The first two questions are rather easily understood.

> For whenever on the one hand we should seek whether this is so or that is so, introducing a number ⟨of terms⟩, for example whether the sun suffers eclipse or not, the that [τὸ ὅτι] we seek. An indication of this is that when we discover that it suffers eclipse we cease. On the other hand, whenever we should know the that [τὸ ὅτι], we seek the reason [τὸ διότι]. For example, if we know that the sun suffers eclipse and that the earth moves, we seek the reason [τὸ διότι] it suffers eclipse or the reason [διότι] it moves.[4]

The crucial phrase in this passage is εἰς ἀριθμὸν θέντες ('introducing a number ⟨of terms⟩'). Aristotle is indicating that the first two things which we seek - τὸ ὅτι and τὸ διότι - only concern us when we are investigating what in some way introduces multiplicity. The obvious sense, especially in the light of the examples, is that Aristotle intends 'introducing a number' to refer to the fact that in the first two questions we are treating two terms. The ὅτι question

---

[4]Posterior Analytics II.i 89^b25-31.

asks whether it is a fact that S is P (e.g., that the sun is capable of being eclipsed). The διότι question will provide the reason for this fact. Aristotle does not actually here give us the reason for the fact that the sun suffers eclipse or the fact that the earth moves, but from the pattern he offers in the case of a lunar eclipse, he envisages one fact (e.g. that the earth by its movement has blocked off the light of the sun) as the reason for another fact (e.g., that the moon suffers eclipse).

In turning to the third and fourth 'things we seek' (the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions), the significance of the phrase εἷς ἀριθμὸν θέντες emerges. By means of a μὲν...δὲ...construction Aristotle opposes the first pair of questions in 89^{b}25-31 (which involve a multiplicity of terms), to the second pair of questions in 89^{b}31-35 where the things that we seek are of 'another kind' (ἄλλον τρόπον). Since the first two objects of inquiry introduced number or complexity by involving two terms, the second pair's opposition shows that it fails to introduce number or complexity. This would imply, in agreement with the traditional reading, that the third and fourth questions only concern single things.

Themistius' paraphrase is quite clear that the opposition between the ὅτι/διότι and the εἰ ἔστι /τί ἔστι pairs is between two terms which are compounded together and single things.

> We seek either about something simple and uncompound [περὶ ἁπλοῦ τινος καὶ ἀσυνθέτου] or about a compound and in a premise.... Now there are four (things we seek) : εἰ ἔστι , τί ἔστι, εἰ ὑπάρχει τόδε τῷδε ['if this belongs to that'], διὰ τί ὑπάρχει ['through what

> ⟨this⟩ belongs ⟨to that⟩']. The former two are about simples [περὶ τῶν ἁπλῶν], the latter two are about compounds [περὶ τῶν συγκειμένων].[5]

Eustratius and Philoponus note the same distinction between the two pairs of questions.[6] However, this only locates the problem - it does not tell us what Aristotle claims we seek to know about these single items.

The actual text in which the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions are posed in quite condensed. Aristotle writes

> Now on the one hand, these things [the ὅτι and διότι questions] are so. But some things which we seek are of another kind. For example, if it is or is not [εἰ ἔστιν ἢ μὴ ἔστι] a centaur or a god. I mean if it is or is not unqualifiedly [εἰ ἔστιν ἢ μὴ ἁπλῶς] but not if it is white or not. And knowing that it is [ὅτι ἔστι], we seek what it is [τί ἐστι]. For example, we then seek what is a god or what is a man [τί οὖν ἐστι θεός , ἢ τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος;]?[7]

We already know that both the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions only concern single items. On the basis of the examples which Aristotle

---

[5]Themistius Paraphrase of Posterior Analytics 42.4-5,.13-14 ed. by M. Wallies in Commentaria in Aristotlelem Graeca Vol. 5 (Berlin, 1900).

[6]Philoponus in Analyt. Post. 336.19 ff. esp.336.19-21 ed. by M. Wallies in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca Vol. 13 (Berlin, 1909); Eustratius in Analyt. Post. 12.22-25 and 14.27-31 ed. by M. Hayduck in Commentaria in Aristotlelem Graeca Vol. 21 (Berlin, 1907).

[7]Posterior Analytics II.i 89^b31-35.

In this and the next three translations I have rendered εἰ ἔστι as 'if it is' not that I believe that εἰ ἔστι means 'if S exists' but rather simply in order not to beg any questions concerning the meaning of the εἰ ἔστι question. For my own interpretation of the meaning of the εἰ ἔστι question, cf. below p.105-110.

offers us, we also know that there is some sense in which these two questions only concern things which are purported to be οὐσίαι ('substances') and not things from the accidental categories. Aristotle specifically excludes the εἰ ἔστι question from covering 'white'.

If we allow our eyes to wander to chapter ii, we can learn another very important fact - the way in which Aristotle relates the search for the answers to all four questions to the search for middle terms.

> But what we seek, whenever on the one hand we should seek the that [τὸ ὅτι] or the if it is unqualifiedly [εἰ ἔστιν ἁπλῶς], is whether there is or is not a middle term. Whenever, on the other hand, knowing either the that [τὸ ὅτι] or if it is [εἰ ἔστι] - i.e., either the partial or the unqualified - again the through what [τὸ διὰ τί] or the what is [τὸ τί ἐστι], then we seek what is the middle.[8]

Aristotle is grouping the four questions of Posterior Analytics II.i in the following way: the ὅτι and εἰ ἔστι questions only seek whether there is a middle term. If there is a middle term, we know that there will be affirmative answers to these questions. Only when we know that there is such an affirmative answer can we then go on and know what this middle term is. The middle term will be what accounts for the answers to the ὅτι and εἰ ἔστι questions. The middle term accounting for the ὅτι will be the answer to the διότι; the middle term accounting for the affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question will be the answer to the τί ἐστι question. Hence the answers to the διότι and τί ἐστι questions will be the actual middle terms; the answers to the ὅτι and

---

[8]Posterior Analytics II.ii $89^{b}37$-$90^{a}1$.

εἰ ἔστι questions will only indicate whether there are such middle terms.

These lines also provides an important clue to unravelling the problem of what Aristotle means in Posterior Analytics II.i by εἰ ἔστι. Aristotle indicated by example that while 'centaur' and 'god' were appropriate items for the εἰ ἔστι question, 'white' was not. This he explained by saying that εἰ ἔστι κένταυρος and εἰ ἔστι θεός were ἁπλῶς, while εἰ ἔστι λευκός is presumably not. The passage I have just quoted indicates that the opposition of the ὅτι ἔστι and εἰ ἔστι questions is the opposition of ἐπὶ μέρους to ἁπλῶς. This is confirmed in 90^{a}2-5, where Aristotle elaborates on the relationship of the ὅτι ἔστι and εἰ ἔστι questions to the ἐπὶ μέρους /ἁπλῶς distinction:

> But I mean the that [τὸ ὅτι] or if it is [εἰ ἔστιν] as partial and unqualified [ἐπὶ μέρους καὶ ἁπλῶς]. On the one hand, as partial is whether the moon suffers eclipse or whether the moon waxes. For in such questions we seek if it is something or if it is not something [εἰ ἔστι τι ἢ μὴ ἔστι τί]. On the other hand, as unqualifiedly [ἁπλῶς], if moon or night is or is not?[9]

---

[9]Posterior Analytics II.ii 90^{a}2-5.

There is a disagreement on the correct text for 90^{a}2. Ross reads τὸ ὅτι ἔστιν ἐπὶ μέρους καὶ ἁπλῶς, while both Bekker and Tredennick read τὸ ὅτι ἢ εἰ ἔστιν ἐπὶ μέρους καὶ ἁπλῶς. In his critical apparatus, Ross does not indicate the existence of any mss. which follow Bekker's text. However, since Bekker is using A, B, and C as his codices for the whole organon and his critical apparatus indicates that in manuscripts A and B ἢ εἰ ἔστιν is missing, it would appear that, at least according to Bekker, ἢ εἰ ἔστιν is to be found in C. It is unfortunate that Tredennick does not indicate the source of his reading.

However, one point clearly stands out - the sense of the text demands the Bekker-Tredennick reading. If we follow Ross we must allow that in 90^{a}2 ff Aristotle distinguishes two senses of the two senses of

III

In his book The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics Father Joseph Owens offers one of the few illuminating discussions of Posterior Analytics II.i and, in particular, of the meaning of the εἰ ἔστι question.[10] Though, as I have already indicated, Owens' analysis suffers from a serious defect, certain of his insights are correct and form the basis of my own interpretation.

In Metaphysics VI.i Aristotle briefly remarks on the relation of the εἰ ἔστι and the τί ἔστι questions to the study of οὐσία ('substance' or, as Owens prefers, 'Entity'). Aristotle notes that since all of the special sciences are only concerned with a particular sort of being and a particular genus (περὶ ὄν τι καὶ γένος τι), they do not study unqualified being or being qua being (περὶ ὄντος ἁπλῶς οὐδὲ ᾗ ὄν). Similarly the special sciences do not establish the τί ἔστι (the 'what-is') of the things with which they deal, but either they make the τί ἔστι evident by perception or they assume the τί ἔστι by hypothesis. Since more or less strict demonstration (ἀποδείκνυμι) only occurs once the τί ἔστι has been revealed, it follows that neither the οὐσία nor the τί ἔστι are demonstrated and that they must be made evident by some other procedure. At this point Aristotle adds

---

the ὅτι ἔστι question - one which is ἐπὶ μέρους and one which is ἁπλῶς. Unfortunately this conflicts with what Aristotle has twice indicated in the previous lines - namely that the distinction between ὅτι ἔστι and εἰ ἔστι is to be based on distinguishing ἐπὶ μέρους from ἁπλῶς. Ross himself notes the problem.

The obvious resolution is to see $90^{a}2$ ff as an amplification of the distinction which Aristotle has just drawn. In this case the Bekker-Tredennick reading is to be preferred.

[10](Toronto, 1963), p. 287-296.

> And likewise whether if the genus with which they deal is or is not [εἰ ἔστιν ἢ μὴ ἔστι τὸ γένος] they say nothing, because through the same thinking [διανοίας] both the τί ἐστι and the εἰ ἐστι are made evident.[11]

In other words, just as the special sciences do not reveal the τί ἐστι of the things with which they deal by scientific demonstration, neither do they answer the εἰ ἐστι question by demonstration because both the τί ἐστι and εἰ ἐστι questions are answered by the same kind of inquiry. Thus, presumably, the science of ὂν ᾗ ὄν ('being qua being') and οὐσία, will answer both the τί ἐστι and εἰ ἐστι questions.

As Owens' writes

> The same type of intellection treats the 'what-it-is' and the 'if-it-is'. The science of Entity, which demonstrates the 'what-is' in regard to the things dealt with by the other sciences, must also treat the 'if' question in regard to them.[12]

The details and problems of the science of ὂν ᾗ ὄν do not here concern us. Nor is Owens' discussion of the science germane to my present inquiry. However, in order to understand Aristotle's claims concerning the science of ὂν ᾗ ὄν Owens attempts to understand precisely what Aristotle means by the τί ἐστι and εἰ ἐστι questions. In turn this leads to his analysis of Aristotle's major discussion of these questions in Posterior Analytics.

The major insight of Owens' analysis is his recognizing that the

---

[11] Metaphysics VI.i $1025^{b}16$-18.

[12] Owens The Doctrine of Being, p. 288.

distinction between the τί ἐστι and εἰ ἐστι questions is not the same as the distinction between the essence of a thing and the existence of a thing. Initially Owens merely notes that it is anachronistic to read the τί ἐστι/εἰ ἐστι distinction in this way:

> After seven centuries of metaphysical thought in terms of essence and existence, the modern interpreter is naturally inclined to understand the two questions in the light of this distinction. The 'what-it-is' should inquire about the essence of the thing. The 'if-it-is' should be the question 'Does it exist?'
>
> In applying this interpretation to the Aristotelian text, one may be excused for exercising considerable caution. The composition of the treatises antedates the express formulation of this distinction in the Latin terms by sixteen centuries. It is not impossible that Aristotle may have had such a distinction in mind without possessing the vocabulary to enunciate it precisely. But that fact will have to be shown.[13]

However, later Owens concludes that understanding the contrast between the τί ἐστι and εἰ ἐστι questions in terms of the distinction between the essence and the existence of a thing can not be reconciled to Aristotle's texts:

> The essence of a thing may be fully known without any knowledge of whether the thing exists or not. The notion of a 'mountain of gold' can be fully understood without knowing whether such a thing has ever actually existed. Or - to take an example in the category of Entity - the essence of an Aristotelian separate Entity might be treated without knowing whether it exists or not. But the Stagirite never raises such a question. The problem in this form is simply not present in the Metaphysics.[14]

---

[13] Ibid., p. 289.

[14] Ibid., p. 292.

To contemporary ears, the claim that understanding what a thing is does not in any way imply that the thing is seems obvious. The adoption of the essence/existence distinction implies that what a thing is has nothing to do with whether or not it exists. To be a human being is to be a rational animal; to be a centaur is to be an animal with the body and legs of a horse and the torso, arms, and head of a man. It is merely a contingent fact about the world that there exist human beings or that there do not exist centaurs. The fact that there do not exist such things as centaurs, gods, and golden mountains in no way prevents our understanding what each of these three things is. In fact, to deny this and to say that the distinction between what a thing is and that a thing is is illusory - or, what is the same point, to say that we cannot know what a thing is unless we also know that the thing is - seems paradoxical. And yet Aristotle's entire metaphysics does this very thing.

For Aristotle, to be a human being is to be composed of various things (e.g. flesh, blood, bone, and hair) organized in a certain way. Similarly, it might be thought that to be a centaur is also to be various things (e.g., flesh, blood, bone, and hair) organized in a certain (albeit different) way. Whereas there are things organized in the appropriate man-ish way, there are no things organized in the appropriate centaur-ish way. When we claim to know what a man is we are claiming to know how these various things (e.g., flesh, blood, etc.) are organized; but what are we claiming to know when we claim to know what a centaur is? Because there are men, we can truly say 'Men are rational animals'; but because there are no centaurs, nothing has the

body and legs of a horse and the torso, arms, and head of a man. Hence the sentence 'Centaurs are animals with the body and legs of a horse and the torso, arms, and head of a man' does not even assert anything, since there is no thing which is a centaur.

For Aristotle, the distinction between essence and existence cannot even be drawn since everything which is a certain sort of thing is and nothing which is not is a certain sort of thing. Merely indicating that something is a certain sort of thing implies that the thing exists because if it did not exist, it could not be a certain sort of thing. Hence, contrary to what the essence/existence interpretation implies, Aristotle is committed to the claim that we do not know what it is to be a centaur or a god or the golden mountain simply because there is no thing which is a centaur or a god or the golden mountain. We cannot know what these purported things are simply because there is no thing for us to know anything about. And rather than being paradoxical, it seems quite reasonable to say that we cannot know what sort of thing a centaur or a god or the golden mountain is simply because there is no thing for us to know anything about. In short, the essence/existence distinction directly conflicts with Aristotle's metaphysics.

In order to understand what Aristotle means by the εἰ ἔστι question Owens' directs his attention to the principal example which Aristotle presents, namely that of the lunar eclipse. The fact that the moon is eclipsed is explained by the screening of the moon by the earch. According to Owens, Aristotle's explanation and example show that

> ...the 'if-it-is' in the case of demonstrables emerges as a generic or quasi-generic knowledge of what later, through the addition of the specific difference, becomes the 'what-is' of the thing.[15]

What Owens means by contrasting the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions as the difference between a generic or quasi-generic knowledge of a thing and a specific knowledge of that thing is the difference between knowing that something is a Being and knowing the kind of nature of that Being. What an affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question indicates is

> ...that what you are dealing with is not in this case a non-Being. It is a Being. You can inquire into its nature. The partial, i.e., quasi-generic, knowledge of the 'what-it-is' given in the answer to the first question suffices to show that you are dealing with a Being of some kind, and are able to proceed to a specific knowledge of its nature.[16]

If read in this way the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions, rather than meaning 'if S is' (where 'is' carries the force of 'exists') and 'what is (the definition of) S', really mean 'Is it a Being?' and 'What is this Being?' The affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question establishes the thing as a Being, a thing about which we can undertake further inquiry. The answer to the τί ἔστι question gives us the definition of the Being, it tells us exactly what this Being is. 'Being' is here being used in its non-generic sense, the sense in which everything which is, regardless of category, is a Being. Presumably then, the

---

[15] Ibid., p. 291.

[16] Ibid., p. 291.

differentiation of the ὅτι and διότι questions from the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι questions will be on the basis of asking about the non-generic Being of something allegedly from one of the accidental categories as opposed to asking about the non-generic Being of what is a purported οὐσία.

That this is Owens' meaning is made clear by his discussion of Posterior Analytics II.vii $92^{b}10$-14. According to Owens, this passage reads:

> The question 'what is a man' and the fact that a man is, are not the same. Then too we say that it is necessary to show by demonstration <u>that</u> everything is, unless it be Entity; and 'to be' is not the Entity of anything, since Being is not a genus.[17]

As Owens reads the passage, Aristotle first is contrasting the nine accidental categories with the category of οὐσία (Owens: 'Entity'), the former being demonstrated of the latter. Though the ten categories are the highest genera, they are in some sense subordinate to Being, Being being something under which the ten categories are grouped in a way other than as genus to species. Since Being is not a genus but is in some sense above the categorical distinctions, it cannot be grouped under one particular genus - the category of οὐσία.

> It is one question to ask 'Is this a Being or not?' ...It is another question to inquire '<u>What</u> is this Being?'... The generic knowledge of the category was

---

[17] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 292. Owens' reading is a bit awkward. The first sentence 'The question...the same' really is not part of the present argument but the last sentence of the previous argument. All that Owens is concerned with is the remainder of the quotation.

> sufficient for the first question. The exact location within the category is required for the second.[18]

Though Owens' reading has the major advantage of avoiding the problems to which the existence/essence reading of the εἰ ἔστι/τί ἔστι questions leads, it still suffers from serious defects of its own. Owens both reads the participle ὄν in an overly ontological way and fails to realize that as a result of reading ὄν as 'Being', the negative answer to the εἰ ἔστι becomes self-contradictory and the affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι becomes tautological. This latter point is a fatal philosophical objection to Owens' proposal.

According to Owens, the εἰ ἔστι question merely asks 'Is it a Being?' Presumably an affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question would then be 'It is a Being'. But what if we have a negative answer? Presumably the appropriate response would be 'It is not a Being'. So much seems obvious - until we try to understand what the sentence 'It is not a Being' indicates. On the one hand we seem to be speaking about some thing - otherwise how can we understand the word 'it'? However, on the other hand, we are denying of this thing that we are speaking about that it is a thing.

To read one of Aristotle's examples in Owens' way, suppose we were to ask 'Is a centaur a Being?' The only answer seems to be 'No, centaurs are not Beings'. But what then is the subject of the second sentence? A non-Being? If so, then what are we talking about? It seems that even in order to make sense out of the sentence 'Centaurs

---

[18] Ibid., p. 293.

are not Beings' we are already committed to the claims that centaurs are Beings.

Furthermore it is not merely the negative answer to the question 'It is a Being?' which troubles us. Even the affirmative answer 'It is a Being' creates difficulties. Since, in Owens' terms, in order for the sentence 'It is a Being' to make sense, 'it' must denote a Being, in effect the sentence 'It is a Being' is nothing more than the tautology 'Some particular Being is a Being' - and to tell me that a thing is a thing is hardly informative. Hence Owens' rendering forces our answers to the εἰ ἔστι question to be either in some sense self-contradictory ('Some Being is not a Being') or in some sense mere tautologies ('Some Being is a Being').

To put the issue in contemporary terms, Owens' reading of the εἰ ἔστι question as 'Is it a Being?' fails to fully face the way in which the εἰ ἔστι question is related to the problem of reference. If we give an affirmative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question, then we are really saying nothing more than that the thing to which we are referring is some thing and if we give the negative answer we run afoul of the old difficulties about referring to what does not exist. In short, reading the εἰ ἔστι question in the manner that Owens suggests seems to have only gotten Aristotle into a different problem. Whereas the existence/essence reading of the εἰ ἔστι/τί ἔστι questions conflicts with Aristotle's metaphysics, Owens' 'Is it a Being?'/'What is this Being'? reading is philosophically untenable.

The root cause of Owens' difficulties is that though he has

realized that the εἰ ἔστι question must in some sense concern Being, he has failed to recognize that in the context of Posterior Analytics II Being cannot be read in the ontological manner that characterizes his interpretation but instead must be understood linguistically. In other words, rather than understanding Aristotle's remarks about Being in terms of how we speak about or "is" things, Owens has interpreted these comments as being about the things being spoken about or "is-ed." But the moment that 'Being' is read in this way, it becomes impossible to give an intelligible negative or a significant affirmative answer to the question 'Is it a Being?'

In the next section I hope to show how, by construing Being in a linguistic rather than an ontological manner, we can offer a more reasonable version of Owens' proposal than the one which Owens himself has advanced.

IV

Perhaps the best place to begin reinterpreting Owens' reading of the εἰ ἔστι question is by trying to understand how we can preserve Owens' insight that the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions are not contrasted in the manner of the existence/essence distinction and at the same time avoid Owens' difficulties with the notion of reference. The proposal I wish to make stems directly from our previous consideration of Aristotle's discussion of those sentences which are capable of being asserted and my suggestion in Section III that what led Owens' proposal into difficulties was Owens' understanding Being in an ontological rather than a linguistic manner.

In order to motivate my proposal, let me amplify on this second point. If we understand Being in the manner of Owens, that it is some thing like an aspect or a quality which every thing which is has, then when we attempt to decide whether something (e.g., X) is or is not we will be seeking whether X does or does not possess this thing, i.e., whether X is or is not a Being. But the whole point of denying that τὸ ὄν is a genus is that there is no thing which every thing has in common - that there is no aspect or quality which makes a thing a thing.

But then how is Aristotle's discussion of τὸ ὄν to be construed if not as being about some thing which all things are? The solution seems to be in remembering that the Greek word ὄν, which Owens translates as 'Being', is really the neuter nominative singular participle of the Greek verb εἶναι ('to be'). By rendering ὄν as 'Being' Owens turns a verbal participle into a noun. This in turn suggests that

when we use the word 'Being' we are speaking about some thing. But though ὄν might carry this nominative or "thing" sense, it also carries a verbal sense stemming from its being a participle. By rendering ὄν as 'Being' we lose this predicative function and hence we lose the suggestion that in speaking about ὄν, what we are speaking about in some sense concerns how we predicate of things - of how we "is" things - rather than merely about the things we are predicating of. On reading ὄν as 'Being', we suggest that we are talking about the thing being predicated of separately from our talking about our predicating of it; on reading ὄν participially (as, if I may coin a word, "is-ing") we suggest that we are talking about the thing being predicated of in terms of our predicating of it. Hence, it I am correct, to assert that something is ὄν should not be understood (as Owens would) as the assertion that something is a Being, but rather should be taken to mean something is predicated of or, in my jargon, that something is "is-ed."

Now let us return to the εἰ ἔστι question and try to become clear about what question is being asked. As already noted, Owens' interpretation 'Is it a Being'? is unacceptable because of the difficulties which we encounter in construing the reference of 'it' without making the answers to the question either tautological or self-contradictory. The lesson to be learned from the failure of Owens' analysis is that if we are to make the answers to the εἰ ἔστι question significant the subject of the question must not be understood as already necessarily being what the question seeks to learn about the subject of the question seeks to learn about the subject of the question. Any interpretation (such as Owens') which fails to meet this condition will obviously

result in the answers to the εἰ ἔστι question being either tautological (since the subject already necessarily is this sort of item) or self-contradictory (since the subject already necessarily is not this sort of item).

If we are to adequately understand the εἰ ἔστι question, the interpretive principle which I have just noted forces us to recognize that the subject of the question - what the question is about - cannot be a thing. No matter how we proceed, construal of the subject of the εἰ ἔστι question, the 'it', as a thing will result in an interpretation in which the εἰ ἔστι question will lack significance. Since obviously Aristotle intends the εἰ ἔστι question to be significant, clearly we should construe the subject of the question, the 'it', not as a thing but a word. On this reading, the question does not concern centaurs but 'centaur', not gods but 'god'. In fact, as I have already shown, the εἰ ἔστι question could not possibly concern centaurs and gods simply because there are no centaurs and gods.[19] Thus the εἰ ἔστι question will concern (at least primarily) words and not (at least primarily) the things to which the words allegedly refer. Failure to recognize this point by interpreting the εἰ ἔστι question in terms of the things to which we are allegedly referring results in the already noted difficulties concerning reference.

When the recognition that the εἰ ἔστι question concerns words is combined with my proposal concerning the meaning of ὄν - viz. that

---

[19]Regarding this point, cf. above p. 42-43.

ὄν be understood in terms of predicating of things rather than in terms of the things themselves - a different way of understanding the εἰ ἔστι question emerges. Because of the way Aristotle understands predication - i.e., as a relation between two things, not between words - only things (not words) can be predicated of things. However, words can be used to predicate things of things - words can be used to assert or deny that one thing belongs to another thing - and this clearly suggests another reading of the εἰ ἔστι question in which it is understood as a query as to whether some given word can be used to show that some thing is predicated of or, in my jargon, to show that some thing is "is-ed." Put differently, what I am proposing is that the question be understood as asking 'Is the word "..." usable to predicate?' or 'Does the word "..." make an "is-ing"?'

Of course someone might respond to this proposal by saying 'But then aren't you making the εἰ ἔστι question just as trivial as Owens did, since every word can be used to make a predication?' However, this objection completely overlooks what Aristotle means by predication. As already pointed out in Chapter One, Section I, for Aristotle predication is primarily to be understood as a relation of two things to one another and not to be understood in terms of the linguistic vehicle used to assert this relationship. Since not all words successfully denote, not all words can be used to make predications. Therefore, rather than the reading of the εἰ ἔστι question as 'Is the word "..." usable to predicate?' being trivial, it becomes the question whose answers will determine the subject matter of scientific inquiry.

Three pieces of evidence favor my interpretation of the εἰ ἔστι

question as 'Is the word "..." usable to predicate?' First it gives a clear sense to the εἰ ἔστι question without encountering any of the problems which led to the rejection of both the common interpretation (i.e., 'If S exists') and Owens' interpretation. Second it is clearly consistent with the texts concerning predication which I discussed in Chapter One. Third it allows us to understand several other points in Posterior Analytics II in a rather uncomplicated way. To this third point, let me now briefly turn.

The analysis of the εἰ ἔστι question which I have offered fits perfectly with the analysis of the τί ἐστι. For Aristotle, when we ask what is a man or what is a triangle, we are not asking for a definition of the words 'man' or 'triangle' but the definitory formula of man and triangle, of what something has to be in order to be a man or a triangle. In other words, the answer to the τί ἔστι question is not a mere verbal definition but rather an expression of what it is to be a certain sort of thing.

In his discussion of the εἰ ἔστι and τί ἔστι questions in Posterior Analytics II.ii Aristotle wrote that the εἰ ἔστι merely asks whether a substance has a middle term while the answer to the τί ἔστι question is the actual supplying of that middle term. But how can we only know that there is a middle term - or, what this really means, how can we know that the purported substance has a definition - without knowing what this middle term - or definition - is?

Rather than being forced into Owens' rather tenuous distinction between generic or quasi-generic knowledge and specific knowledge, the

proposal that I am making yields a quite simple explanation. In telling us that a certain word can be used to make a literal predication, what the εἰ ἔστι question tells us is that there is some thing in the world which this word denotes. The τί ἔστι question then goes on to ask what this thing is. Note - not what the word means but what the thing which the word denotes is. A negative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question forecloses further inquiry because asserting that a certain word cannot be used to make a literal predication shows that there is no thing in the world which this word denotes. The reason we do not ask the τί ἔστι question if there is a negative answer to the εἰ ἔστι question is simply that we cannot go on to ask what the thing is if there is no thing in the world which this word denotes.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter I would just like to emphasize one point, namely that by reading the εἰ ἔστι question in the manner that I have suggested - viz. as a query about whether a word can be used to make a literal predication - Aristotle's discussion of the εἰ ἔστι question in Posterior Analytics II can be reconciled perfectly to the theory of existential assertion which I discussed in Chapter One.

Chapter Four

'Being' in the Dictionary: An Analysis of Metaphysics V.vii

In this chapter I will offer a translation of and commentary on Metaphysics V.vii $1017^{a}7-^{b}9$, the "dictionary" discussion of τὸ ὄν ('being'). In my analysis I will argue that rather than being a treatment of some entity called 'being' or a discussion of existence or some general way of treating all predicates, Aristotle's intent is to understand the role played by the Greek verb εἶναι ('to be') and its various cognates. In the course of his discussion Aristotle offers four semantic rules governing the use of the verb. Due to the length of this chapter, let me briefly summarize my results before proceeding to my detailed analysis.

In Section I, I discuss two initial problems which any analysis of Metaphysics V.vii must face. The first concerns the subject matter of the chapter. I argue that whereas several commentators have understood the notion of τὸ ὄν elsewhere as either the notion of Being or as an omnium gatherum way of talking about everything that exists, in Metaphysics V.vii Aristotle's discussion concerns the various uses of the verb 'to be' and its cognates. The second difficulty concerns how the structure of Metaphysics V.vii should be understood.

In Section II, I show that in $1017^{a}8-22$ by τὸ ὄν κατὰ συμβεβηκός

Aristotle means the use of the verb εἶναι and its cognates to indicate that which is accidental. That Aristotle intends τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to cover sentences of the form 'X is Y' where Y is an accident of X is shown both by his examples, his discussion, and by the semantic rule which he provides in lines ^{a}12-13: 'X is Y' can be used to mean that Y is an accident of X.

In Section III, I analyze Aristotle's 1017^{a}22-27 discussion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό and show that what Aristotle means by this expression are all essential predications which are made by means of the verb εἶναι or any of its cognates. Since essential predications generate a hierarchy extending from each of the ten categories down to the infima species, Aristotle's scheme generates something similar to the tree of Porphyry. Hence Aristotle's semantic rule: X is καθ'αὑτό to Y if the predication follows figures of predication (i.e., the categories).

Section IV consists of an analysis of 1017^{a}27-30. These lines have repeatedly been the Achilles heel of interpretations of 1017^{a}8-27. Aristotle notes that a sentence which consists of a subject and an active verb has the same meaning as a sentence consisting of a subject, a form of the verb 'to be', and the present participle of the original verb. The difficulty raised by these lines is simply that Aristotle's three examples more readily appear to be examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός than examples of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

Numerous attempts have been to resolve this incongruity - all of which are united on seeing 1017^{a}27-30 as an attempt to explain only the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. The proposal I wish to advance rejects

this assumption and analyzes lines $^{a}27$-30 as examples of how all predications, whether they be according to what is accidental or according to what is essential, can be transformed into κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθαυτό uses of 'to be' and its cognates. In other words, I argue that the three examples in $^{a}27$-30 are examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός but that Aristotle intends these examples to show how similar transformations can be made to yield instances of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό as well.

Section V is an analysis of Aristotle's claims in $1017^{a}31$-35 that the verb 'to be' can be used to indicate the true and the false. As I pointed out earlier, this use is quite similar to the English locution where we say that something is true or false by saying 'It is' or 'It is not'. That Aristotle includes such a sense of τὸ ὄν in Metaphysics V.vii clearly supports my reading of this chapter in terms of an analysis of the uses of the verb 'to be'. Alternative readings are forced to understand lines $^{a}31$-35 in terms of 'being as true' and 'being as false' - something which is most obscure.

The concluding part of this chapter, Section VI, treats $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$, Aristotle's discussion of the use of the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is potential and that which is actual. This fourth sense has exact parallels in English - we often use present indicative sentences to indicate that which is not now actual but is merely potential, e.g., the farmer pointing to his just-sown fields and saying 'This is corn' and 'That is wheat'. Other commentators who have read these remarks in terms of 'actual being' and 'potential being' have simply missed Aristotle's point - namely a straightforward simple comment about linguistic usage.

In the appendix to this chapter, I discuss Aristotle's distinction between καθ'αὐτό ('essential') and κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('accidental') in order to determine in which sense we are to understand Aristotle's contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('accidental being') and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὐτό ('essential being'). After examining three texts, Posterior Analytics I.iv (where Aristotle discusses the senses of καθ' αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν relevant to ἐπιστήμη ('science')), Metaphysics V.xviii (the "dictionary" discussion of καθ'αὐτό), and Metaphysics V.xxx (the "dictionary" discussion of κατὰ συμβεβηκός), I conclude that the most adequate way in which to understand the κατὰ συμβεβηκός/καθ'αὐτό distinction in Metaphysics V.vii is where these two terms have the senses appropriate to ἐπιστήμη.

One final note before beginning my analysis. In the commentary I am about to offer I will confine my remarks almost exclusively to Metaphysics V.vii. This is not because this chapter is Aristotle's sole discussion of the various meanings of τὸ ὄν. However, this chapter of the "dictionary" is the most important discussion of τὸ ὄν and the other texts follow the lines laid down in Metaphysics V.vii. For this reason, in the analysis which follows, I will merely note these other parallel discussions, allowing the reader to verify personally the adequacy of my reading of Metaphysics V.vii.

I

There are two initial problems which any analysis of Metaphysics V.vii must answer. The first concerns what Aristotle takes himself to be discussing in this chapter; the second concerns the structure of the chapter itself.

With regard to the former question, we can only adequately answer it by looking beyond the first sentence in which Aristotle tells us that τὸ ὄν ('being') is said according to what is accidental and according to what is essential. Since in certain other texts, various commentators have argued that the term refers either to the notion of Being or to that which is, several writers have tried to understand the subject matter of Metaphysics V.vii in the same way. Thus Joseph Owens understands the four senses of τὸ ὄν as '...four general ways in which Being is expressed...' and Emerson Buchanan reads the second sense of as not meaning '...the verb "to be," or "being," in its various meanings, but the beings which are expressed by predicative phrases...'[1]

What I wish to argue in my analysis of Metaphysics V.vii is that Aristotle's discussion is not about Being and that it is not about some sort of extralinguistic entity denoted by predicative phrases in general and the verb 'to be' in particular. I will propose reading Metaphysics V.vii as Aristotle's analysis of the various ways in which the word

---

[1]Owens, The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics, p. 307 and Emerson Buchanan, Aristotle's Theory of Being (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 13. Owens makes his comment concerning the passage in Metaphysics VI.ii 1026^{a}33 ff where Aristotle offers the same fourfold classification of τὸ ὄν as in Metaphysics V.vii.

'being' and all of the other forms of the verb 'to be' can be meaningfully used.

I will demonstrate this in two ways. The first is quicker - simply examining the way in which Aristotle designates his subject, a strong prima facie case can be made for the position that Aristotle's concern is with the words 'to be', 'is', 'being', etc. and not what they allegedly "get at" in the world.

In modern written English we can indicate the difference between using a word and mentioning a word by means of semantic quotes. However, the ancient Greeks lacked this device. The only way in which a writer could indicate that he was talking about a word rather than using a word was by placing the neuter definite acticle τό in front of the word. Though this is Aristotle's only way of indicating what we would indicate in modern English by means of semantic quotes, the neuter definite article τό has many other grammatical functions. Hence we must be wary in reading a use of τό as indicating a mentioning of a word rather than in some other way.

Let us now examine the use of the neuter definite article τό in Metaphysics V.vii. After drawing the initial dichotomy in terms of τὸ ὄν Aristotle immediately proceeds to offer us in $^{a}8$-$^{a}12$ examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in terms of εἶναι ('to be'). These are followed by a semantic rule for this first sense of τὸ ὄν - a rule presented in terms of εἶναι. In the case of the second sense of τὸ ὄν in $^{a}22$-27 (or $^{a}22$-30 as some commentators would argue. For the difference, see Section IV.), Aristotle never even uses the expression τὸ ὄν ('being').

Rather Aristotle either uses the infinitive εἶναι ('to be') or, what is even more significant, puts his point in terms of τὸ εἶναι (literally: 'the to be'). The third sense of τὸ ὄν is presented in terms of τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ἔστιν (literally: 'the is'). The most interesting example Aristotle offers us is the way in which he introduces the fourth sense of τὸ ὄν - namely 'Furthermore τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ὄν mean...'. The way in which Aristotle here puts τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ὄν on a par and the way in which he puts τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ἔστιν on a par in the previous case shows that the three expressions - τὸ ὄν , τὸ εἶναι , and τὸ ἔστιν - all designate the same thing.

What I now wish to argue is that in Metaphysics V.vii the various uses of the neuter definite article must be understood as indicating semantic quotation. Especially in the third sense, it is difficult to see how else the phrase τὸ ἔστιν (literally: 'the is') can be understood save as meaning 'is'. Since τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ὄν are all taken to designate the same thing, it follows that τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ὄν also indicate the mentioning rather than the using of various forms of the verb 'to be' - e.g., 'to be' and 'being'.

A conclusion of fundamental importance follows from these considerations. Since it is clear that in several cases we must regard Aristotle as discussing, not using, various forms of the verb 'to be', it is also clear that in the context of the discussion in Metaphysics V.vii he wishes to treat the expression τὸ ὄν in the same way. In other words, just as Aristotle is talking about 'is' and 'to be', not is or to be, so he is speaking of 'being' not being - it is the word that is his concern, not its alleged reference.

However, an even more significant point arises. Certainly no one would argue that 'to be' or 'is' refers to something in the world called to be or is. Whereas 'blue' or 'wood' clearly designate things in the world, namely blue things or wooden things, 'to be' or 'is' do not serve such a function. Rather they are purely grammatical devices which are dispensable - unlike 'blue' or 'wood', 'to be' or 'is' does not refer to anything. But if Aristotle wishes to assimilate the expression τὸ ὄν to the expressions τὸ εἶναι and τὸ ἔστιν, how can we avoid the conclusion that 'being' also does not really denote anything but is rather a dispensable grammatical device? As will be seen, at least in Metaphysics V.vii Aristotle so regards it. And this is the second way in which I will demonstrate that Metaphysics V.vii is a discussion of the verb 'to be' and its cognates - by carefully analyzing the entire chapter. I will show how such an interpretation fits Aristotle's Greek, is philosophically interesting, and - perhaps most significantly - is perfectly commonsensical.

The issue of the structure of V.vii concerns how the third and fourth senses of τὸ ὄν fit into the chapter. Aristotle begins the chapter with what appears to be an exhaustive dichotomy - τὸ ὄν is said either κατὰ συμβεβηκός or καθ' αὑτό. Hence every use of τὸ ὄν which is not κατὰ συμβεβηκός is καθ' αὑτό and vice versa. This would imply that the third and the fourth senses of τὸ ὄν in ^{a}31-35 and ^{a}35-^{b}9 respectively are to be assimilated to the second sense of τὸ ὄν given in ^{a}22-27. On this reading the second, third, and fourth senses of τὸ ὄν are all to be treated as being varieties of τὸ ὄν καθ' αὑτό.

In the face of this conclusion, one finds the unanimous opposition of all the recent commentators. Ross, Kirwan, De Rijk, etc. all regard the sense of τὸ ὄν given in ^{a}22-27 as the meaning of τὸ ὄν καθ'αὑτό while the remaining two senses are merely additional ways in which τὸ ὄν can be said.[2] Though this interpretation is standard, it is by no means obvious how it can be defended against the argument I have just offered.

Furthermore the comparison of V.vii with what is in many ways its companion, only appears to aggravate the difficulties which the standard interpretation faces. Examination of V.vi reveals that it does not follow the structure which Ross, Kirwan, De Rijk, et al propose for V.vii but rather the unorthodox analysis which I have suggested. Thus in V.vi, after an initial discussion concerning the saying of ἓν κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('accidentally one'), Aristotle does not proceed to treat the several nonaccidental ways of saying ἓν ('one') as neither κατὰ συμβεβηκός nor καθ'αὑτό ways of saying ἓν but rather as all being varieties of one meaning, the καθ'αὑτό sense, of ἓν .

However, despite initial appearances the analogy of V.vi to V.vii on this point of structure is really only superficial and contrary to first impression, the structure of V.vi not only does not support the unorthodox structure which I suggest but in fact lends support to the standard structural analysis. The reason for this is that though it is true that in V.vi Aristotle does assimilate all uses of ἓν to either

---

[2]Cf. W.D. Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1970) Vol. I p. 305-308; Christopher Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics Books Γ, Δ, and Ε (Oxford, 1970), p. 143-146; and L.M.De Rijk, The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy (Assen, 1952).

κατὰ συμβεβηκός or καθ'αὑτό uses, when he treats the nonaccidental uses of ἕν from the very beginning of his treatment of the saying of ἓν καθ' αὐτό he is quite explicit in his assimilating all nonaccidental uses of ἕν to the καθ'αὑτό use of ἕν. Thus, for example, when he begins his discussion of ἓν καθ'αὑτό after having discussed the meaning of ἓν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, Aristotle writes 'But of those things which are said to be in themselves [or alternatively: 'essentially'] one, on the one hand some are said to be ⟨one⟩ by continuity...'[3] thereby making it quite clear from the outset that the sense he is discussing is by no means the only way in which one can say that something is one καθ'αὑτό. In contrast, in V.vii no such indication is provided. Thus, should we accept the parallelism of V.vi and V.vii, it is the traditional structure which finds confirmation.

Let us therefore reconsider what initially led us to question the analysis of V.vii into four distinct senses of τὸ ὄν. The reason was that the distinction in $^{a}7$-8 between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό appears to be dichotomous - either τὸ ὄν is said accidentally or τὸ ὄν is said essentially. Hence where can the two senses of τὸ ὄν given in $^{a}31$-35 and $^{a}35$-$^{b}9$ be fit into the scheme? The only way out is to acknowledge that the distinction between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό does <u>not</u> exhaust all of the possibilities. But if we read τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό as τὸ ὄν being used accidentally and τὸ ὄν being used essentially there does not seem to be any remaining alternative.

---

[3] <u>Metaphysics</u> V.vi $1015^{b}36$-$1017^{a}1$.

Thus if we accept the traditional interpretation of the structure of V.vii we must find a reading of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό other than the one which I have just mentioned. In order to see what this other reading is we need only recall (1) the conclusion which I have already drawn with respect to the actual subject of V.vii - namely the verb 'to be' and its various cognates - and (2) the actual Greek which was rendered into English as 'accidentally' and 'essentially' could carry a somewhat different sense. Since the Greek κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ'αὑτό could be rendered 'according to accident' and 'according to essence' or 'according to what is accidental' and 'according to what is essential' or more literally, 'according to what is happening' and 'according to itself', the impression that Aristotle's concern is with the accidental and essential uses of τὸ ὂν is to be seen as the culprit. Instead of the initial dichotomy being between the accidental and essential uses of τὸ ὂν , Aristotle's point is that the verb 'to be', the participle 'being', etc. can be used to indicate that which is essential. In other words, the error which the advocate of the unorthodox structure makes is to treat the issue as being the accidental and essential uses of τὸ ὂν whereas in fact the initial point is that τὸ ὂν can be used to designate that which is accidental and that which is essential. Hence the third and fourth uses in $^{a}31$-$^{b}9$ can be readily accommodated without any further difficulty.

II

τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός

Immediately after drawing his distinction between the saying of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό Aristotle embarks upon a discussion of the former. This analysis proceeds in three stages. First, in ^{a}8-13, Aristotle offers us three examples of the use of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. These examples he explains, in the process giving us a semantic rule which describes this use of εἶναι. Next, in ^{a}13-19, Aristotle clarifies his point, using a different verb, συμβεβηκέναι ('to be accidental' or 'to be happening'). Finally he uses a third verb, ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to' or 'to hold good of'), to further clarify the issue.

In this section, the first part of my analysis of ^{a}8-22 will be in terms of these three groupings. In the second portion of this section I turn to the most recent major discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, that of Christopher Kirwan, and after a thorough analysis show why it is untenable. Finally, before closing this section, I discuss the thorny problem of the meaning of συμβεβηκός in ^{a}7-22.

i) On the one hand according to what is happening [or less literally: 'according to what is accidental' or 'accidentally'], for example, we say the just ⟨person⟩ is cultured and the man is cultured and the cultured ⟨person⟩ is a man, which is almost like saying the cultured ⟨person⟩ builds since it is happening to the builder to be cultured or ⟨it is happening⟩ to the cultured ⟨person⟩ to be building. For [the] 'This is this' means this to be happening to this.[4]

---

[4] Metaphysics V.vii 1017^{a}8-13.

Aristotle here gives us three sentences which he explicitly says are examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. They are:

(1) The just ⟨person⟩ is cultured

(2) The man is cultured

(3) The cultured ⟨person⟩ is a man

These three examples Aristotle states are <u>almost</u> (<u>but not quite</u>) like saying

(4) The cultured ⟨person⟩ builds

Wherein lies the difference?

The obvious and correct explanation is that whereas in (1), (2), and (3) the verb 'to be' is used as a copula to unite the subject with the predicate, in the case of (4) no such additional word is involved. In (4) we merely have a verb predicated of a noun - in (1), (2), and (3) we had an adjective being united to a noun by means of a form of the verb 'to be'. But all four sentences have something in common and this is why Aristotle offers them to us - namely that in each the predication is only of what is accidental, not of what is essential. Aristotle's explication makes this clear - (4) is similar to (1), (2), and (3) because in (4) either it just happens to the builder that he is cultured or vice versa, it just happens to the cultured person that he is a builder. There is nothing in being a builder or in being cultured which implies the other. Hence, if a man should be both cultured and a builder it would be accidental - it would just happen.

Returning to the three examples Aristotle offered, it is clear

that these three examples were not chosen in a merely arbitrary way. Rather they illustrate three ways in which accidental predication can occur. In order to see this we need only realize that in the translations of these sentences I have supplied the word 'person' even though it does not explicitly occur in the Greek. In ancient Greek, adjectives may be turned into nouns by the simple prefixing of the definite article. Hence an ancient Greek would readily use a phrase which would be literally rendered into English as 'the blue' or 'the round'. Thus (1) and (3) might be more literally (thought perhaps less intelligibly) be rendered as:

(1a) The just is cultured

(3a) The cultured is a man

Aristotle's point is the following: imagine an οὐσία such as a man and one of its accidents, its being cultured. Since being a man does not involve being cultured, if we meet a man who is cultured his being cultured "just happens." The assertion of this accident of the οὐσία can take place in two ways - either the accident is said of the οὐσία or vice versa, the οὐσία is said of its accident. These two cases correspond to examples (2) and (3a) respectively. In each instance 'is' is used to assert the accident of the οὐσία.

Example (1a) is somewhat more complex. Imagine two accidents of an οὐσία, e.g., just and cultured. These two accidents can be predicated of each other. In this case the predication is true in virtue of each accident belonging to the same οὐσία, though neither the subject

nor the predicate of the sentence is an οὐσία - denoting term. (Save for its not being phrased in terms of the copula 'to be' Aristotle's fourth sentence is of this type - two accidents of a third thing are being predicated of one another. Aristotle's explanation of (4) confirms the point I am making in connection with (1).)

These three modes of forming a sentence which involves the predication of what is accidental provides the framework within which Aristotle presents his discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Throughout his treatment of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός Aristotle patterns his points after the way in which these three sentences assert that which is accidental.

Aristotle concludes his analysis by offering us a semantic rule explaining the signification involved in this use of the verb 'to be'. That he clearly intends this is shown by the word γάρ ('for') with which he introduces this sentence, γάρ being the standard Aristotelian way of indicating that a reason or an explanation is being offered. Aristotle's rule for the κατὰ συμβεβηκός use of τὸ ὄν is:

'This is this' means this is accidental to this.

From the context (^{a}12-13 being meant as an explanation for ^{a}8-12) the demonstratives are revealed as being merely ways of designating anything - either an οὐσία or some item in one of the other categories - so long as the two items are accidental to one another. Aristotle intends this rule only to apply to predications of the sort that he has been discussing, viz. accidental predications. His point is that

whenever we have a predication which is of an accident and this predication is made by means of one of the forms of the copulative verb 'to be' we have a use of the verb 'to be' according to what is accidental.

> And so also as regards what we said previously. For whenever we should say the man is cultured and the cultured ⟨person⟩ is a man, or the white ⟨person⟩ is cultured, or this is white, ⟨we should say⟩ on the one hand that both to-the-same are happening and on the other hand, that to-the-"being" it is happening. And the cultured ⟨person⟩ is a man, that to this the cultured is happening. And thus is said even the not-white to be, that ⟨there is⟩ that to which it is happening, that is.[5]

Having stated the semantic rule which governs this use of the verb 'to be' Aristotle now proceeds to show how it applies to the examples he had previously given. Thus he offers us four more sentences which correspond to examples (1), (2), and (3). They are:

(5) The man is cultured

(6) The cultured ⟨person⟩ is a man

(7) The white ⟨person⟩ is cultured

(8) This is white

Referring back to the initial examples, (5) is the same as (2) while (6) is identical with (3). (7) does not exactly correspond to (1) since one of the accidents given in (7) has been changed from being just to being white. However, Aristotle is clearly using (7) to illustrate the same situation as (1), namely where one of two accidents

---

[5] Metaphysics V.vii $1017^{a}13$-19.

of a third thing is said of the other.

However, (8) does not obviously correspond to any of the previous examples - all that it consists of is a demonstrative and the adjective 'white'. However, by what I have rendered as (8) Aristotle most likely intends the reverse of (7), viz.

(8a) The cultured ⟨person⟩ is white

In order to defend this, let me merely note first that in the case of none of the other examples does Aristotle use a demonstrative and second since the demonstrative must have a reference, the most obvious and, from a grammatical viewpoint, correct reference is that which has immediately preceded it, i.e., the cultured. Hence my reading (8) as (8a).

Aristotle then offers his explanation of these four examples showing how they fit into the semantic rule which he gave in $^{a}12$-13.

(9) that both the subject and the predicate are happening to the same "being"

(10) that the predicate is happening to the subject

(11) that to the predicate, the subject is happening

(9) is meant to cover cases (1), (7), and (8). It is the situation where two accidents of a third thing are being said of one another. (10) covers sentences (2) and (5) - it is the case where the term denoting the οὐσία is the subject and the term denoting the accident is the predicate. (11) clearly is meant to cover sentences (3) and

(6) - it is the case where the οὐσία - denoting term is the predicate in the sentence while the term denoting the accident is the subject. Thus (9), (10), and (11) illustrate the same constructions which we have in the preceding lines. The only difference is that (9), (10), and (11) explicate these preceding examples in terms of συμβέβηκε ('is happening'), thereby making it explicit that it is the case that the predications are of what is accidental.

In [a]18-19 Aristotle simply notes that the same point which he has just made in (11) can be extended to cover those cases where the predicate is not something "positive" like white but something "negative" like not-white. Since the subject of the sentence 'This man is not-white' is, i.e., he is something, we can predicate of him "negative" predicates such as not-white and thereby use the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is accidental even where the accident is something "negative." Why? Since being not-white is an accident of a man, i.e., it "just happens" to be the case that a man is not-white, using the verb 'to be' to predicate 'not-white' of 'man' is to use τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

> Now the sayings to be according to what is happening thus are said either because to the same "being" belong both or since to a "being" that belongs or since the same thing is to which it belongs, of which the same is predicated.[6]

---

[6]Metaphysics V.vii 1017[a]19-22.

Aristotle here repeats the classification of the various ways of saying 'to be' according to what is accidental, this time presenting his point in terms of a third verb, ὑπάρχειν.

(12) both the subject and the predicate belong to the same "being"

(13) that the predicate belongs to the "being" which is the subject

(14) that the subject already presupposes that which is predicated of it

Aristotle's classification corresponds exactly to the alternatives given in both $^{a}8$-13 and $^{a}13$-19. In the first case, (12) (which corresponds to (1), (7), (8), and (9)), we have the case where both the subject and the predicate of the sentence denote what are accidents of a third thing - an οὐσία. In virtue of their both belonging to this third thing we can truly predicate one of the other. However, since they are merely accidental to one another, the predication will be according to what is accidental, not according to what is essential. In the second case (13), we are considering the analogue of (2), (5), and (10). The term denoting the οὐσία stands as the subject of the sentence and that which is its accident is denoted by the predicate. The last case (14) is the same as (3), (6), and (11). Aristotle puts his point somewhat elliptically but it is clear that the case he is considering is a sentence such as the ones considered earlier in (3), (6), and (11), viz. a sentence in which the subject (e.g., 'the cultured') presupposes some οὐσία (e.g., 'man') to which it belongs.

Aristotle is simply pointing out that whenever we predicate of such a subject the οὐσία to which it really belongs, we are really predicating it of itself.

ii) In his treatment of $1017^{a}7$-22, Kirwan poses two main questions: (A) is the κατὰ συμβεβηκός use of the verb 'to be' an existential or a copulative use? and (B) in what sense is the use of the verb 'to be' κατὰ συμβεβηκός?[7]

With regard to the first question, Kirwan offers three possible answers - that Aristotle's subject is either (1) coincidental copulative being, (2) all copulative uses of the verb 'to be', or (3) coincidental senses of the existential 'be'. As we shall see, Kirwan argues by elimination for the third proposal.

Two reasons in favor of the first alternative are offered - (a) that Aristotle's examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός are examples of coincidental being and (b) that the semantic rule in $^{a}12$-13 explains the copulative uses of 'to be' in terms of the relation of coincidence. Against this, Kirwan offers two objects - (i) that Aristotle's discussion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό '...does not seem to restrict itself to <u>necessary</u> copulative being' and (ii) that such an interpretation fails to provide any way of classifying false predications.[8]

Neither of these objections is successful. The first presupposes the correctness of Kirwan's analysis of $1017^{a}22$ ff (or at least the

---

[7]Kirwan, <u>Aristotle's Metaphysics</u>, p. 143-146.

[8]<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 143.

rejection of the view which I will defend below in Section III). Since, as I will later argue, τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό really signifies the use of the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is essential, the interpretation of 1017^{a}22-27 whose rejection is presupposed by this objection is really correct. Hence Kirwan's first criticism fails.

The second objection, that interpreting τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as coincidental copulative being fails to '...provide any way of classifying false predication' is inadequate simply because such predications are simply irrelevant to Aristotle's discussion. In 1017^{a}7-30 Aristotle is concerned with τὸ ὂν not τὸ μὴ ὂν ; with what <u>is</u>, not with what <u>is not</u>. False predications do not find a place in the discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό simply because what is false <u>is not</u> and 1017^{a}7-30 concerns what <u>is</u>.

Thus it is clear that Kirwan has not provided any adequate basis for rejecting the interpretation of 1017^{a}7-22 which I have defended. It may nevertheless be the case that either the second or third proposed explanations of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός is better than the interpretation which I have adopted. Hence let us continue by examining these remaining alternatives.

Kirwan's second proposal was that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός designates all copulative uses of the verb 'to be'. Superficially this seems to nicely distinguish τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό since the latter term could then be understood as designating the sense of 'to be' where it means 'to exist'. In support of this interpretation Kirwan cites 1017^{a}20-22 in which Aristotle's

> ...analysis of the coincidental things-that-are revealed by assertions such as [(a) 'someone just is artistic', (b) 'a man is artistic', and (c) 'someone artistic is a man'] includes a reference in each case to some other thing-that-is: the latter would be an existent thing e.g., a man, whose existence accounted for the non-existential being of e.g., the man's being artistic (cf. also De Interpretatione 11. 21[a]25-28).[9]

In his analysis, Kirwan argues that this view is inadequate since in a parallel passage in Metaphysics VI.ii Aristotle speaks of all four senses of τὸ ὄν as being ἁπλῶς λεγόμενον. Since this phrase is '... normally used to pick out the existential "be"...',[10] we have the clear implication that not only τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό but τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as well must be existential senses of 'to be'. Should we allow this objection, then it is clear that the distinction between τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό and τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός must be drawn between different existential senses of 'to be', not between existential and nonexistential uses of 'to be'. This leads directly to Kirwan's claim that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός designates coincidental senses of the existential 'be'.

However, Kirwan's basis for rejecting the second proposal (i.e., copulative vs. existential uses of 'to be') is somewhat questionable since it depends upon reading the phrase τὸ ἁπλῶς λεγόμενον in Metaphysics VI.ii 1026[a]33 as a reference to the existential uses of 'to be'. Since this reading is unnecessary and probably incorrect, Kirwan's

---

[9] Ibid., p. 144.

[10] Ibid., p. 144.

grounds for rejecting this second proposal are unsatisfactory.[11]

A more obvious thought admittedly inconclusive ground for rejecting the identification of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός with all copulative uses of 'to be' is that all of the examples Aristotle gives in ^{a}8-22 are nonessential predications. Should we expect τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to cover sentences like 'Man is rational' and 'A triangle is three-sided' in addition to 'The man is white' or 'The builder is cultured', it is curious that Aristotle fails to offer us the appropriate examples. The obvious conclusion is that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός does not cover essential predications - though admittedly this argument is merely suggestive, not definitive.

Since Kirwan has rejected both the first and second interpretations of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, he feels that he has established that 1017^{a}7-22 concerns coincidental existential uses of the verb 'to be'. However, this is hardly the case, since in addition to Kirwan's use of the questionable interpretation of Metaphysics VI.ii there are at least two further difficulties with his position. One is that any plausibility which either the second or the third interpretations of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός have stems from the assumption that τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό denotes nothing but the existential use of 'to be', whereas in fact τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό refers to essential copulative uses of 'to be'. Since

---

[11] The phrase τὸ ἁπλῶς λεγόμενον probably means nothing more than 'the unqualified saying' or 'the simple saying'. Kirwan's reference to De Interpretatione xi 21^{a}25-28 does not support his reading of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. See my discussion of the latter lines in Chapter Two, Section III.

τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό does not mean what it must mean for either the copulative vs. existential or the coincidental existential vs. non-coincidental existential reading to be correct, both of these interpretations can be rejected. However since there is the danger of circularity if I rest my rejection of Kirwan's reading of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός on my rejection of his reading of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό, let us concentrate on my second ground for rejecting the identification of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός with the coincidental existential uses of 'to be'.

This second objection, one which is specifically directed against the reading adopted by Kirwan (namely that the dichotomy in $^{a}7$-30 is between coincidental and non-coincidental existential uses of 'to be') is that in order to accept this interpretation we are unable to assign any appropriate sense to the word συμβεβηκός. As we shall shortly see, each reading Kirwan proposes faces serious difficulties.

Kirwan states that there are three possible meanings for the word συμβεβηκός: (1) 'unusual', (2) 'nonessential', and (3) 'derivative'. By 'unusual' Kirwan means something similar to the way in which Aristotle defines συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics VI.ii $1026^{b}31$-32 ('what is neither always nor for the most part;). This would make a συμβεβηκός that which is uncommon. The second sense, 'nonessential', denotes that which is not in its own right. Since we are told that '...a thing is nonessentially F only when its existence...does not imply its - the same thing's - being F', we can infer that the second suggestion covers everything which is neither explicitly nor implicitly a part of the

essence of the thing.[12]

However, how Kirwan proposes to read συμβεβηκός as 'derivative' is somewhat obscure. Whether or not the texts Kirwan cites support such a reading is questionable. Kirwan writes that derivative uses of 'to be' are those uses of 'to be' which are

> ...to be explained by reference to the way in which something else 'is': specifically that the being (existence)of the complex item designated 'the just artistic' has to be explained by reference to the being (existence) of the man in whom the elements of that complex severally coincide...[13]

Let us examine the texts Kirwan cites in order to see whether they will bear such a reading.

One alleged occurrence is Posterior Analytics I.iv $73^{b}4$-5. However, how this passage exhibits the appropriate use of συμβεβηκός is unclear. Since in my discussion of the meaning of the phrase καθ' αὑτό I will treat this passage in full, let me here merely note that Posterior Analytics $73^{b}4$-5 clearly refers to everything which belongs to a thing so long as it does not belong in either of the ways relevant to scientific knowledge.[14] Hence in $73^{b}4$-5 the word συμβεβηκός seems to simply mean 'nonessential'.

The remaining texts cited by Kirwan - Categories vi $5^{a}38$-$^{b}4$ and Metaphysics V.xiii $1020^{a}26$-32 - more clearly involves uses of the

---

[12]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 145.

[13]Ibid., p. 145.

[14]See p. 230-242 of the appendix.

word συμβεβηκός which might be rendered as 'derivative' or 'secondary'. Both passages concern the way in which items which would normally be said to be quantities are quantities κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('in a secondary or derivative sense' or, as it would normally be rendered, 'accidentally' or 'according to accident'). The first text is from the Categories discussion of the category of quantity. After describing the way in which we speak of numbers and geometrical figures as quantities, Aristotle remarks

> But strictly speaking, these sayings alone are said to be quantities, and all the others are said to be quantities κατὰ συμβεβηκός ['in a secondary or derivative sense' or 'according to accident'], for it is to these that we look when we say that the others are quantities. For example, the white is said to be large because the white belongs to a large surface and the action is large and the movement is long because they take up much time. For each of these is not said to be a quantity καθ' αὑτό.[15]

Kirwan's other text is from the "dictionary" discussion of quantity. It makes the same point as the Categories vi passage. Aristotle distinguishes between those things which are said to be quantities καθ' αὑτά and those things which are said to be quantities κατὰ συμβεβηκός. After discussing the former group, Aristotle turns to the latter.

> But of those things which are said to be quantities κατὰ συμβεβηκός, some are said just as it was stated that the cultured is a quantity and the white ⟨is a quantity⟩ since to what they belong is a certain quantity. But others are said just as movement and

---

[15] Categories vi $5^{a}38$-$b4$.

> action, for these also are called quantities of a certain sort and continuous since the things of which these are affections are divisibles. But I mean not the thing moving but that through which it was moved. Since that is a quantity, the change is a quantity and because of this, the time is a quantity.[16]

Though there are difficulties connected with the interpretation of both of these texts,[17] Kirwan's reading seems to be that by calling something a quantity κατὰ συμβεβηκός, Aristotle is indicating that it is not essentially a quantity but rather that we call it a quantity in virtue of its belonging to something which is essentially a quantity. Thus 'The white thing is large' shows that we can speak of that which is white as being large in virtue of whiteness belonging to something else, i.e., a surface, which in turn is large.

However, in each of these texts, it would appear that the word συμβεβηκός might just as well be rendered as either 'unusual' or 'non-essential'. Thus it is only unusual for that which is white to be large. Similarly an action or a motion can be described as large but not because that is what an action or a motion is (i.e., not essentially). Hence in each case what is large will only unusually or non-essentially be a quantity. In short, neither Categories $5^{a}38$-$^{b}4$ nor Metaphysics $1020^{a}26$-34 seem to demand reading the word συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'derivative' or 'secondary'.

---

[16]Metaphysics V.xiii $1020^{a}26$-32.

[17]On this point, cf. Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics Vol. I, p. 324-325.

To sum up - it does not seem to be necessary to interpret any of the passages cited by Kirwan as demanding the reading of the word συμβεβηκός as 'in a derivative or secondary sense'. At most these passages would seem to justify reading X is a συμβεβηκός of Y in this sense if (1) X belongs to Y or Y belongs to X and (2) even though X is not a Y, it is said to be a Y. However, since the Categories vi and Metaphysics V.xiii passages might be read in the manner Kirwan advocates, let us for the sake of the argument concede to Kirwan that such a sense does exist in other passages and hence also might be found in $1017^{a}7$-22. Having clarified Kirwan's three senses of συμβεβηκός, let us now return to his discussion of their applicability to $1017^{a}7$-22.

Kirwan rejects the identification of συμβεβηκός with 'unusual' on two grounds. The first is that the contrast between things-that-are usually and things-that-are unusually (i.e., the common vs. the uncommon) does not seem to fit the contrast between τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό and τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. The second objection presupposes his account of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό as non-coindicental existential senses of 'to be'. Kirwan states that

> If, as argued above [in his discussion of ἓν καθ' αὑτό] things-that-are in their own right include such items as Callias and pallor, it is hard to see how these could be said to exist unusually. 'An artistic man is unusual' denies that two components usually go together; 'Callias is unusual' cannot be taken in the same sense - nor therefore 'Callias is usual'.[18]

---

[18]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 144.

In other words, reading συμβεβηκός as 'unusual' seems to create problems when we speak of single terms. Whereas to talk of two terms as not usually occurring together does not in any way reflect upon how common or uncommon each is, single terms can only be said to be common or uncommon in the latter manner - and since this is the case, what sense can we give to the assertion that this particular (e.g. Callias) is καθ' αὑτό? After all, particular individuals are neither common nor uncommon, they simply are.

Kirwan is more sympathetic to reading συμβεβηκός in the second sense, i.e., 'nonessential'. In his eyes, such a reading would have at least two advantages. First, it would allow us to read κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ' αὑτό in the same sense in Metaphysics V.vii as in V.vi and V.ix. Second, such an interpretation of συμβεβηκός provides

> ...a good contrast with 'in its own right': for such items as Callias and pallor are essentially things-that-are, which means to say - trivially - that their being things-that-are is a condition of their existence.[19]

Against this reading, Kirwan raises an objection which should have led him to abandon this approach to 1017^{a}7-22. Kirwan notes that

> ...it seems by the same token contradictory to assert of anything that it is non-essentially a thing-that-is. We can indeed say that a man is non-essentially artistic, for his existence does not depend on his artistry; but we cannot say that an artistic man is non-essentially.

---

[19] Ibid., p. 144.

existent.[20]

In order for us to accept the second reading of συμβεβηκός we must allow that Aristotle confused the sentence 'A man is nonessentially artistic' with another sentence, one which Kirwan admits cannot even be given an intelligible sense, viz. 'An artistic man nonessentially is (exists)'. Though Kirwan attempts to show how Aristotle might plausibly make such an error, the point remains that this interpretation forces us to swallow a rather unpalatable consequence. As already noted in Chapter One, though even great philosophers make errors it is bad interpretation to read anyone in this way unless there is no other alternative. Since there is another interpretation which lacks this defect, it should be preferred to this one.

Three grounds are offered in explanation of Aristotle's error. The first is that since the problem does not arise when συμβεβηκός has the sense of 'unusual' and '...nowhere does Aristotle clearly reveal that he saw the difference between these two senses of [συμβεβηκός]',[21] it would be quite easy for him to slip from what was true of συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'unusual' to what was false of συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'nonessential'. Unfortunately, this explanation depends on Aristotle's confusing the second sense of συμβεβηκός with a first sense which Kirwan has just shown to be inapplicable to 1017^{a}7-22. Thus Aristotle would be confusing a use of συμβεβηκός ('nonessential') which involves

---

[20] Ibid., p. 144.

[21] Ibid., p. 144.

a logical error with a use of συμβεβηκός ('unusual') which Kirwan has already rejected.

The second is that since word-order in Greek is variable Aristotle could write 'is' at the beginning or end of a sentence. Kirwan writes that

> Idiomatic Greek would indeed still distinguish 'a man artistic is' as copulative from 'an artistic man is' as non-copulative, but if the significance of that idiom escaped Aristotle he had no other way of distinguishing 'a man is non-essentially artistic' from 'an artistic man non-essentially is i.e. exists'.[22]

However, Aristotle was more sensitive than any of his predecessors to the nuances of the Greek language, so Kirwan's argument rests on a rather large if.

The third explanation which Kirwan offers for Aristotle's alleged confusion between 'a man is nonessentially artistic' and 'an artistic man is (exists) nonessentially' is the weakest - Kirwan himself declares that it foists upon Aristotle a set of beliefs which is 'incoherent'.[23] Kirwan begins with a point he had already argued for in connection with Metaphysics V.vi $1015^{b}16$, namely that Aristotle believed that 'certain complex referring expressions such as "an artistic man" refer to complex non-linguistic entities'.[24] Granting this, Kirwan states that Aristotle

---

[22] Ibid., p. 145. The emphasis is mine.

[23] Ibid., p. 145.

[24] Ibid., p. 145.

> ...may thus have been tempted to argue that the existence of a man who is artistic does not depend on that of the complex state of affairs designated 'artistic man': hence that the artistic man is a non-essential existent.. But whatever we think of coincidental unities, this account of coincidental existents must be incoherent.[25]

Kirwan's two points quite suffice to show the inadequacy of coincidental existents in which the existence of an artistic man is severed from the existence of the corresponding complex state of affairs. First it is wrong to regard the complex state of affairs designated by 'artistic man' as being made up of two distinct things - the artistic and the man. Only the man can be regarded as a distinct existent since for Aristotle being artistic must be understood in terms of a man who is artistic (revealing the dependence of being artistic on that which is artistic). To reject this we must accept abstract universals (e.g., artistry), something which Aristotle would never allow.

The second difficulty Kirwan notes is simply that one cannot sever the tie between the existence of the artistic man and the existence of the complex state of affairs designated by 'the artistic man'. To put it in contemporary terms which Kirwan does not - anyone wishing to assert a fact ontology must assert a necessary link between the existence/nonexistence of things like an artistic man and the existence/nonexistence of the corresponding fact. To maintain anything else is to deny that '...a thing is non-essentially F only when its existence... does not imply its - the same thing's - being F' - which would be

---

[25] Ibid., p. 145. The emphasis is mine.

absurd.[26]

To sum up - Kirwan believes he has shown how συμβεβηκός might mean 'nonessential' in the contrast between coincidental and non-coincidental existential uses of 'to be' even though this interpretation commits Aristotle to the intolerable confusion between the two sentences 'A man is nonessentially artistic' and 'An artistic man is (exists) nonessentially'. On the other hand I have shown that any reading which foists such an error upon Aristotle is unacceptable.

However, Kirwan does not accept the identification of συμβεβηκός with 'nonessential'. Whereas such a reading has the advantage of interpreting συμβεβηκός in the same way in Metaphysics V.vi, V.vii, and V.ix, Kirwan observes that there is a feature of Aristotle's treatment of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός- namely the references in ^{a}19-22 to some other thing-that-is - which is not found in V.vi and V.ix. This reference to some other thing leads Kirwan to adopt his third proposed sense of συμβεβηκός, viz. 'derivative'. First he argues that the example in 1017^{a}19-22 uses

> ...'is' in a derivative sense, which has to be explained by reference to the way in which something else 'is': specifically that the being (existence) of the complex item designated by reference to the being (existence) of the man in whom the elements of that complex severally coincide.[27]

(Though the example in 1017^{a}19-22 does not really demand treatment in

---

[26] Ibid., p. 145.

[27] Ibid., p. 145.

any way other than 'nonessential', let us for the moment concede to Kirwan that it does.)

Kirwan next attempts to show the relevance of this third sense of συμβεβηκός to the second. He notes that reading συμβεβηκός as 'non-essential' '...asserted that existence of the simple item designated by "the artistic man" does not depend on the existence of the complex state of affairs designated by the same expression'.[28] On the other hand, the third reading holds that the existence of the complex state of affairs depends on and has to be explained by reference to the simple item designated by 'the artistic man'.

However, Kirwan claims that these two positions

> '...are not antagonistic but complementary. Indeed it may well have been Aristotle's view that the existence of B is derivative from that of A only if A can continue to exist when B does not. If so, [the third reading] implies the substance of [the second reading] while also giving a better explanation of the meaning of 'coincidental'.[29]

Kirwan's claim that the second and third interpretations can be seen as complementary amounts to the assertion that whereas the simple item the man who happens to be artistic does not depend upon the complex state of affairs designated by 'the artistic man', the latter does depend on the former and in fact must be explained by reference to it.

---

[28] Ibid., p. 145. Note how Kirwan here commits the interpretation of συμβεβηκός as 'nonessential' to this position whereas in the previous paragraph he wrote that Aristotle merely might have adopted this view.

[29] Ibid., p. 145-146.

In other words, Kirwan's point is that the dependence only goes one way - the dependence of the state of affairs on the thing - and not the other way around - of the thing on the state of affairs.

Kirwan further claims that should Aristotle accept the principle that the existence of B is derivative from that of A only if A can continue to exist when B does not, then the third reading substantially implies the second. This can be explained by considering two examples of what Kirwan considers to be τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός- 'An artistic man is (exists) derivatively' and 'The just artistic is (exists) derivatively'. In the first, the existence of 'an artistic man' is derivative from 'man' since the latter may exist without the former but not vice versa. Similarly in the second example 'the just artistic (man)' being derivative for its existence upon 'man'. In this way the various examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός may be absorbed into the interpretation of συμβεβηκός as 'in a derivative or secondary sense'. Though Kirwan himself does not formulate such a schema, should we read τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the manner he proposes, viz. derivative existential uses of 'to be', we are committed to the following rule:

'The XY is (exists) derivatively' means 'Y can exist even when the XY does not exist'

Unfortunately Kirwan has overlooked the fact that treating τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as the derivative existential use of 'to be' has a fatal defect - it makes the definition of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός so unacceptably broad as to permit self-contradiction. For example, consider the sentence 'The rational animal is (exists) derivatively'.

This clearly satisfies the definition of derivative existential usage of 'to be' since that which is an animal can exist even when there are no rational animals. But Kirwan has already indicated that 'The man is (exists)' is an example of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Since being a man is by definition the same as being a rational animal, Kirwan is unable to distinguish between τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό and τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. In fact, the only cases where two terms X and Y will not satisfy the above definition of 'The XY is (exists) derivatively' is when X is the genus of the species Y. In short, Kirwan has found a usage of συμβεβηκός, viz. 'derivative', which is so broad as to exclude hardly anything. For this reason τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός cannot be read as the derivative existential use of 'to be'.

To conclude my analysis of Kirwan's commentary on $1017^{a}7$-22 - should we allow Kirwan that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός denotes coincidental existential uses of 'to be' we find that no sense adequate to his interpretation can be assigned to the word συμβεβηκός. Each of the three interpretations offered by Kirwan has been shown to have unacceptable consequences. If this is so, then my second objection to reading τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as the coincidental existential use of 'to be' has been vindicated. This in turn allows me to affirm what I previously indicated - that since τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός means neither all copulative uses of the verb 'to be' nor the coincidental senses of the existential 'be', τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός indicates the coincidental copulative uses of 'to be'.

iii) One problem remains before closing this discussion of the meaning of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in $1017^{a}7$-22 - namely in what sense of the word συμβεβηκός are we saying that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός is the use of the copula 'to be' in predications made according to accident? Though in different contexts the word συμβεβηκός has a wide variety of meanings, in the present case only two appear to be relevant, viz. συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'unusual' and συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'nonessential'.[30] The purpose of the present discussion is to decide which sense is to decide which sense is intended by Aristotle in $1017^{a}7$-22.

The difference between reading συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'unusual' and reading συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'nonessential' in the discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός determines how broadly we shall construe the use of the copula 'to be' in predications made according to that which is a συμβεβηκός. If we read συμβεβηκός in the narrow sense of 'unusual' then only those things which are accidental in the narrow sense, namely what belongs neither always nor for the most part, will be covered by τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Opposed to this reading is the broader sense of συμβεβηκός which means 'nonessential'. If read in this way, then every predicate which belongs to a subject but is not essential (in the sense of inhering in the definition of the subject) will be covered by τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Thus, whereas the first sense of συμβεβηκός only covers accidents in the most narrow sense of what only happens

---

[30]As I already noted, Kirwan offered a third sense, 'derivative'. However, as I have shown above (p. 136-139), there is insufficient evidence for the claim that συμβεβηκός can carry this purported meaning.

unusually, the second sense of συμβεβηκός will cover not only these predicates but also predicates which always belong to a subject but are not essential to it.

This distinction between a narrow and a broad sense of συμβεβηκός perhaps can be understood more readily by comparison with the discussion of the predicables in Topics I. There Aristotle draws two pairs of distinctions - between those subjects and predicates which are convertible and those which are not and between those predicates which are essential to their subjects and those which are not. This leads to a fourfold classification: definitions (which are both essential and convertible), genera and differentiae (which are essential but not convertible), properties (which are convertible but are not essential), and accidents (which are neither convertible nor essential). If, in the discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, we read συμβεβηκός as meaning 'nonessential', then every predicate which is either a property or an accident of its subject will (if the predication is made by means of the verb 'to be' or one of its cognates) be an instance of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. On the other hand, if we should read συμβεβηκός in the narrow sense of 'unusual', then we must reject predications of properties as examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός since, though such predicates are nonessential, they are convertible and hence will always be true of their subjects. On the narrow reading of συμβεβηκός as 'unusual' we are forced to confine τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός solely to nonconvertible, nonessential predications - i.e., what Topics I labels accidents. In short, the difference between the two readings of συμβεβηκός is the

difference between reading τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as covering accidents (in the sense of Topics I) or both accidents (in the sense of Topics I) and properties.[31]

---

[31]Before proceeding, perhaps it should be noted that Ross understands the place of property predications quite differently from the way I am proposing. Whereas I see the issue as the determination of whether Aristotle includes predicating a property of its subject by means of the verb 'to be' in his discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, Ross discusses predications of properties under his analysis of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. For Ross, the problem with predications of properties is whether the necessary connection of a property to its subject makes it an example of 'to be' used according to what is essential. Ross writes that τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό means

> ...the being which is necessary connexion. This sense of being...will be capable of being illustrated by propositions. Four kinds of proposition exhibit such a connexion - those in which there is predicated of a subject its definition, its genus, its differentia, or its property.
> (Ross Metaphysics Vol. I, p. 306; My own emphasis)

Ross then proceeds to show that only predications of the genus are suitable examples of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. For an analysis of Ross' views on this point, cf. below p. 171ff.

Why Ross understands predicating a property of its subject as a necessary connection and hence as a possible instance of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is most unclear. Contra Ross, a property does not belong in a necessary way to its subject. For Aristotle, the very definition of what is a property makes this clear - properties are those predicates which, though convertible with their subjects, are not essential to their subjects.

> And a property [ἴδιον] is what does not reveal the essence [τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι] of the thing but belongs to it alone and it predicated convertibly of the thing.
> (Topics I.v 102^{a}18-19)

Since properties do not belong καθ'αὑτό to their subjects, they cannot possibly be examples of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Hence it is difficult to explain Ross' even considering whether such predications might be instances of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. If propositions which involve asserting a property of a subject by means of the verb 'to be' are to find a place in Metaphysics V.vii it must be under τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

When we attempt to decide whether it is the narrow sense of συμβεβηκός (i.e., 'unusual') which only covers accidents or it is the broad sense of συμβεβηκός (i.e., 'nonessential') which covers both accidents and properties that is appropriate to 1017^{a}7-22, we find that there is a conflict in the textual evidence. Two considerations favor the restriction of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to those predications which a are accidental in the narrow sense. The first is internal to the text of Metaphysics V.vii - namely that all of the examples of συμβεβηκός given in 1017^{a}8-22 are examples of predicates which are neither convertible nor essential to their subjects; they are all instances of what is unusual and not of what is either always or for the most part. Put another way, Aristotle does not give us any examples of property predications as instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός

The second reason favoring the narrow interpretation of συμβεβηκός is external to the text of Metaphysics V.vii and depends upon the rather strong analogy to Aristotle's discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the "dictionary" to his discussion of the same term in Metaphysics VI.ii-iii. In this latter passage Aristotle offers the same fourfold division of the meaning of as we are given in Metaphysics V.vii:

> But since the unqualified saying of 'being' is said in many ways, of which one was according to what is happening [κατὰ συμβεβηκός; less literally: 'according to accident' or 'accidental']; an other was the as true (and 'not-being' as the false); and besides

> these the figures of predication (for example, what quality, quantity, where, when, and if something else it means in this same manner); and furthermore besides all these the by potentiality and by actuality.[32]

At this point Aristotle offers what apparently is a discussion of the meaning of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός:

> Indeed since 'being' is said in many ways, one must first speak about what is according to what is happening [κατὰ συμβεβηκός]...[33]

After several examples (all of which are accidents in the narrow sense), Aristotle defines συμβεβηκός in terms of what is unusual:

> Now, since there are among the things which are some are in the same way always and of necessity... and some are not of necessity nor always, but for the most part, this is the principle and this is the reason for the being of what is happening [συμβεβηκός]. For what should be neither always nor for the most part, we say happens [συμβεβηκός; less literally: 'accidental'].[34]

Hence in a parallel discussion of $1017^{a}7$-22 Aristotle identifies the sense of συμβεβηκός in which 'to be' is said according to what is accidental as the narrow sense, viz. 'unusual'.[35]

Of these two considerations favoring reading συμβεβηκός in 1017^{a}

---

[32] Metaphysics VI.ii $1026^{a}33$-$^{b}2$.

[33] Metaphysics VI.ii $1026^{b}2$-3.

[34] Metaphysics VI.ii $1026^{b}27$-31.

[35] In two other parallel discussions (Metaphysics IX.x $1051^{a}34$-$^{b}2$ and Metaphysics XIV.ii $1089^{a}26$-28) to Metaphysics V.vii Aristotle does not even mention τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

7-22 in the sense of 'unusual', the second is far more significant than the first. The fact that Aristotle does not give examples of property predications is at best suggestive of his restricting the meaning of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to accidents. Even though such a consideration provides evidence for the narrow reading, the argument from silence can never be very strong.[36] If we have evidence in favor of reading συμβεβηκός in the broader sense of 'nonessential' we could easily explain these examples away as simply being a limited and somewhat incomplete selection. Hence without the further support of the second reason, no one would think that we have a strong basis for restricting the meaning of συμβεβηκός to the narrow sense of 'unusual'. However, the second consideration, viz. that in the parallel discussion to Metaphysics V.vii in Metaphysics VI.ii-iii Aristotle defines συμβεβηκός in the narrow sense, very strongly indicates that we should read συμβεβηκός in the narrow sense in 1017^{a}7-22.

However, there is a major objection to reading συμβεβηκός in 1017^{a}7-22 in the narrow sense of 'unusual', one which strongly favors reading the term in the broader sense of 'nonessential'. This point stems directly from the opposition of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. As is clear from the μὲν ...δὲ...construction with which Aristotle begins Metaphysics V.vii, the contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is intended to be exhaustive. Since (as I show in the next section) the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is the use of

---

[36]In fact, in a passage I cite below (cf. p. 236-237) in which συμβεβηκός must be given the sense of 'nonessential', Aristotle offers us two examples of what are in the narrow sense accidents. This text is especially noteworthy since the two examples - 'cultured' belonging to 'animal' and 'white' belonging to 'animal' - are almost the same as the examples in 1017^{a}8-22.

the verb 'to be' to predicate the definition, a genus, or a differentia of a subject, a problem emerges if we restrict the meaning of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to the use of the verb 'to be' in those predications which are accidents - where shall we place those sentences in which the predicate is a property of the subject? Since a property does not belong καθ'αὑτό to its subject, a sentence like 'Man is capable of receiving knowledge' ('being capable of receiving knowledge' being a property of 'man') is not an example of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Further, since a property is always true of its subject (even though it is not καθ'αὑτό to it), 'man is capable of receiving knowledge' cannot be an example of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός if συμβεβηκός carries the meaning of what is true 'neither always nor for the most part'. In short, if we read συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'unusual' we lose the opposition of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό - the distinction will not be exhaustive since no place has been provided for the use of 'to be' to predicate a property of its subject.

The failure of the narrow interpretation of συμβεβηκός as 'unusual' to provide a place for property predications in the contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is the main motivation behind the broad interpretation of συμβεβηκός as 'nonessential'. On this alternative reading the defect is remedied. Whereas narrowly restricting τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to the use of the verb 'to be' in predicating what are (in the narrow sense) accidents fails to preserve the initial dichotomy, the broader reading of συμβεβηκός as 'nonessential' allows τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to cover every predication made by means of the

verb 'to be' which is not an essential predicate. Thus on the second reading, not merely accidents (in the narrow sense) but properties as well (since they also are not καθ' αὑτό) will be instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. On this reading the dichotomy between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό is preserved simply because τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός is being understood in a sense ('according to what is non-essential') which makes it the exact complement of καθ' αὑτό ('according to what is essential').

The fact that reading συμβεβηκός in the broad sense of 'nonessential' provides such a fine contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό is very strong evidence in its favor. In effect it would enable us to understand Metaphysics V.vii quite unproblematically. However, there are three other pieces of evidence favoring this second reading.

The first is that one of the very texts which support my reading of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό as the verb 'to be' used to make predications in which the predicate inheres in the definition of the subject can also be used to support reading τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as the verb 'to be' used to make predication in which the predicate does not inhere in the definition of the subject. As Kirwan notes, the verb ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to' or 'to hold good of') is in some ways the counterpart of the verb εἶναι .[37] As I point out in the appendix, in the very place where Aristotle offers the two senses (really, as I show at the end of

---

[37]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 141.

Section I of the appendix, they reduce to a single sense) of καθ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to essentially') which are relevant to the discussion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό, he then remarks that whatever does not belong in the appropriate way is a συμβεβηκός.

> And likewise as regards other cases, I say such things ⟨belong⟩ to one another according to essences [καθ'αὑτά]. But as many as belong in neither way are accidents [συμβεβηκότα]. For example, the cultured or white ⟨belonging⟩ to an animal.[38]

In this passage in which καθ'αὑτό is being used in the same sense as in Metaphysics V.vii 1017[a]22-27, συμβεβηκός is being used in such a way that it must be read as covering everything which does not belong essentially. Hence συμβεβηκός must here be read as 'nonessential'.[39]

The second is that in De Interpretatione xi 21[a]26-28, where Aristotle mentions the same two senses of the verb 'to be' as in Metaphysics V.vii 1017[a]7-30, he uses κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'according to what is not essential'. As I have already shown,[40] the contrast in De Interpretatione xi 21[a]26-28 between κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς τὸ ἔστιν and καθ'αὑτὸ τὸ ἔστιν is the contrast between using the verb 'to be' to predicate of a subject something which does not inhere in its essence and using the verb 'to be' to predicate of a subject something which

---

[38]Posterior Analytics I.iv 73[b]3-5.

[39]In fact in many places in Posterior Analytics συμβεβηκός must take the sense of 'nonessential'.

[40]Cf. Chapter Two Section III esp. p. 76 ff.

does inhere in its essence. Thus, in this parallel discussion of Metaphysics V.vii, the expression κατὰ συμβεβηκός does not have the narrow meaning of 'according to what is accidental'(in the sense of 'unusual') but rather 'according to what is accidental'(in the sense of 'nonessential').

The third piece of additional evidence is something which was pointed out by Kirwan - namely that reading κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'according to what is nonessential' allows us to understand the contrast between κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ'αὑτό in the same way in Metaphysics V.vi (the "dictionary" discussion of 'one'), Metaphysics V.vii (the "dictionary" discussion of 'being'), and Metaphysics V.ix (the "dictionary" discussion of 'same'). In each of these chapters καθ'αὑτό signifies what inheres in the definition and, since in the first and the third κατὰ συμβεβηκός is simply the complement of καθ'αὑτό, it is only natural to read κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the same way in Metaphysics V.vii - viz. 'nonessential', meaning what does not inhere in the definition.[41]

Thus there seems to be good evidence in favor of reading συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics V.vii in the broad sense of 'nonessential'. Not only does it have the tremendous advantage of resting firmly on evidence internal to Metaphysics V.vii, but it also has important support from several parallel passages in which Aristotle uses συμβεβηκός in the

---

[41]With regard to this point cf. above, p. 139-144 and Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 144-145. As I show on p. 136-139 Kirwan is simply mistaken in claiming that 1017^{a}19-22 provide any grounds for reading συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'derivative'.

sense of 'nonessential'. Furthermore - and probably most importantly - reading τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as the use of the verb 'to be' in nonessential predications produces a consistent, unproblematic interpretation of Metaphysics V.vii itself. These telling advantages seem to decide the issue firmly in favor of reading συμβεβηκός as 'nonessential' rather than as 'unusual'.

However, nothing has been done to defuse the main argument in favor of reading συμβεβηκός in 1017^{a}7-22 as 'unusual' - viz. that in the parallel discussion in Metaphysics VI.ii-iii Aristotle defines συμβεβηκός as what happens neither always nor for the most part. Since there clearly is a strong parallel between the two texts, the advocates of the narrow reading of συμβεβηκός definitely here have a very significant point.

But let us note two things: First, that the just-stated argument depends not upon the text of Metaphysics V.vii itself but rather upon the purported conflict of this text with another one. Hence if there is any conflict it is not between parts of Metaphysics V.vii but rather between Metaphysics V.vii and another passage. Second, even reading Metaphysics V.vii in such a manner as to be consistent with Metaphysics VI.ii-iii would throw Metaphysics V.vii into conflict with several other texts. Hence it does not seem possible to interpret Metaphysics V.vii in such a way as to render it consistent with all the relevant texts. Thus, even though the conflict between Metaphysics V.vii and Metaphysics VI.ii-iii cannot be completely resolved, it seems far preferable to interpret Metaphysics V.vii in such a manner that our

explanation of this text itself is adequate and consistent with several other texts than to interpret Metaphysics V.vii in such a manner that our explanation of this text itself is both inadequate and inconsistent with several other texts. Hence I think that even though reading συμβεβηκός as 'nonessential' does not resolve every difficulty, it is a better than the one we obtain if we understand συμβεβηκός as 'unusual'.

Though I am tempted to explain the difficulties posed by Metaphysics VI.ii-iii as a result of Aristotle's sliding from συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'nonessential' to συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'unusual', for present purposes these points need not be settled.[42] As I just pointed out, no matter how we understand these several texts there does not appear to be any way in which they can all be reconciled. The proposal I am advocating simply seems to be both the best supported and the most economical solution.

In summary - though I am forced to acknowledge that there still remains a conflict between my interpretation of συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics V.vii as 'nonessential' and Metaphysics VI.ii-iii, since there does not seem to be any way in which all the relevant texts can be reconciled and since this reading yields a totally unproblematic interpretation of Metaphysics V.vii itself, I think that it is to be preferred over the alternative proposal.[43]

---

[42] In support of this we can always fall back on the point made by Kirwan that Aristotle is not wholly clear in distinguishing these two senses of the term συμβεβηκός (cf. above. p. 141-142).

[43] I might add that if the conflict between my reading of συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics V.vii and my reading of συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics VI.ii-iii is the only difficulty of my interpretation of Metaphysics V.vii (and I think it is), then my interpretation of Metaphysics V.vii should still be accepted simply because every rival interpretation faces much more serious difficulties.

III

Having discussed the way in which the verb 'to be' can be used to indicate that which is accidental, Aristotle proceeds to analyze how the same word can be used to indicate that which is essential. Aristotle writes

> And on the other hand, to be is said according to themselves [καθ' αὑτά ; less literally: 'according to essences' or 'according to what are essentials'] in as many ways as mean the figures of predication. For in as many ways as it is said, in so many ways [the] 'to be' means. Now since of the predicates some mean the what-is, others quality, others quantity, others relation, others activity or passivity, others where, others when, for to each of these [the] 'to be' means the same.[44]

---

[44] In his recent article 'The Present Progressive Periphrasis and the Metaphysics of Aristotle' (Phronesis Vol. XVIII No. 1, 1973; discussed below in Section IV, p. 194-207) R. Allan Cobb offers a translation which is somewhat different than the one I offer here. Cobb understands 1017[a]22-30 as being about being, not as being about the verb 'to be' and its various cognates. Commenting on Ross' translation (which understands the subject matter of 1017[a]22-30 in the same way as I do), Cobb says that Ross' introduction of semantic quotes '...is highly interpretive in a way not directly supported by the text' (p. 85).

However, this criticism is quite dubious. Twice in [a]22-27 Aristotle uses the only device he has to indicate that he is mentioning the verb, not using it, viz. placing the neuter definite article τό before a word. Though I readily grant that the presence of the neuter definite article τό does not guarantee that what follows is being mentioned rather than being used, it must be remembered that in the context of Metaphysics V.vii this same grammatical device is used to indicate that the other three senses of τὸ ὄν concern the verb 'to be' and not being. Thus, merely in order to preserve the unity of the subject matter of the chapter - namely 'being' rather than 'being' and being - we must prefer the translation which I offer above. For a further discussion of this point, see Section I of this chapter, p. 116-119.

Among commentators there has been considerable disagreement concerning what τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό means. The brevity with which Aristotle describes this use of 'to be', in particular his failure to illustrate it by means of even a single example, has only aggravated the grounds for disagreement.[45] In what follows I will discuss the proposals of L.A. Kosman, Christopher Kirwan, W.D. Ross, and L.M. De Rijk concerning these lines.[46] Having noted the various defects of these proposals, I will then present a modified version of Ross' analysis which I will defend as the correct interpretation of 1017^{a}22-27.

In his 1968 article 'Predicating the Good' L.A. Kosman offered an analysis of Aristotle's discussion of the καθ'αὑτό use of τὸ ὂν in 1017^{a}22-27.[47] As I will show, Professor Kosman's proposal fails because he has not appreciated the distinction which Aristotle draws between saying τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and saying τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

Kosman understood Aristotle's remarks that εἶναι is said καθ'αὑτό in as many ways as there are categories to refer to the predication of terms from the different categories of an οὐσία term. Hence Kosman wrote that

> When I say that Socrates is a man, this is to predicate of him a certain kind or sense of being, being what he is. When I say that he is cultured, this is to predicate of him another kind or sense of being, being a certain quality, and similarly, when I say

---

[45]As I will argue below in Section IV, the examples in ^{a}27-30 are not examples of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό but examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

[46]Still another interpretation, that of R. Allan Cobb, will be treated in Section IV.

[47]Phronesis, Vol. XIII.

> that he is five feet tall, or in the Lyceum, or has his shoes off, etc.[48]

Then Kosman argues that the lines directly following $1017^{a}22$-27 confirm his analysis. Thus when Aristotle argues that it makes no difference whether we say 'A man is walking' or 'A man walks', Kosman reads this simply as an amplification of the previous remark.

> What this shows is that it is possible in Greek or in English to predicate being without explicitly using the verb "εἶναι" or "to be." Thus to say "Socrates is a man" is to predicate being in the category of τί ἐστι, to say "Socrates is cultured" is to predicate being in the category of ποιόν, and to say "Socrates walks" is equally to predicate being (in the category of ποιεῖν) even though no explicit use is made of the verb "to be."[49]

Hence in order to illustrate Aristotle's remarks on the καθ' αὑτό use of εἶναι, Kosman offers us five different examples involving the use of the verb 'to be' - (1) 'Socrates is a man', (2) 'He [i.e., Socrates] is cultured', (3) 'He [i.e., Socrates] is five feet tall', (4) '⟨Socrates⟩ is in the Lyceum', and (5) 'Socrates is barefoot' (a rephrasing of (6)) - and two which '...predicate being...even though no explicit use is made of the verb "to be"'[50] - (6) '[Socrates] has his shoes off' and (7) 'Socrates walks'.

As will soon become evident, rather than being a list of seven

---

[48] Ibid., p. 173.

[49] Ibid., p. 173-174.

[50] Ibid., p. 174.

examples of the use of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό, only the first illustrates this use of the verb 'to be'. Contra Kosman, the next four examples - (2) through (5) - have nothing whatever to do with the use of τὸ ὄν discussed in ^{a}22-27 and the final two sentences - (6) and (7) are not illustrations of any of the four senses of τὸ ὄν discussed in Metaphysics V.vii.

In order to show the inadequacy of such a reading, it is only necessary to pinpoint its fundamental failure - namely that this analysis provides no adequate way in which to distinguish τὸ ὂν καθαὑτό from τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. The obviousness of this point can be seen by merely noting that Kosman's second example of what is supposed to be the use of τὸ ὂν καθαὑτό is virtually the same sentence which Aristotle used twice in ^{a}8-22 to illustrate τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. If we allow Kosman's reading, then many κατὰ συμβεβηκός uses of τὸ ὄν because καθαὑτό uses of τὸ ὄν.

Granting that there are difficulties in deciding the exact manner in which Aristotle draws the distinction between the κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθαὑτό senses of τὸ ὄν , nevertheless the μέν...δέ...construction with which Aristotle opens Metaphysics V.vii makes it perfectly clear that Aristotle wishes to draw an exclusive distinction - and this is the very point which Kosman's treatment precludes.

Christopher Kirwan's analysis of Metaphysics V.viii, the most recent major discussion of these lines in English, is particularly significant because (1) he criticizes an interpretation of 1017^{a}22-27 which is quite similar to the one which I wish to defend and (2) he

understands lines ^{a}22-27 to be a discussion of the various senses of 'exist' - the very term around which my entire dissertation turns. In what follows I will argue (i) that there are serious difficulties with Kirwan's reading of 1017^{a}22-30, (ii) that his grounds for rejecting the genus/species hierarchy interpretation of Ross are inadequate, and (iii) that Kirwan overlooks certain passages which lend support to this rival interpretation of τὸ ὂν ὡς ὄν.[51]

Kirwan's translation of Aristotle's remarks is quite close to my own:

> All things which signify the figures of predication are said to be in their own right; for 'to be' signifies in the same number of ways as they are said. Since, therefore, among things predicated some signify what a thing is, some a qualification, some a quantity, some a relative, some doing or being affected, some where, some when, 'to be' signifies the same thing as each of these. For there is no difference between 'a man is one that keeps-healthy' and 'a man keeps-healthy' or between 'a man is one that walks, or cuts' and 'a man walks,or cuts', and equally in the other cases.[52]

Kirwan distinguishes two basic approaches which one can take to these lines - namely we can conceive of Aristotle's discussion as either (a) a classification of the various ways of understanding the propositional form 'x is F' or (b) as a discussion of the different senses of the word 'exist'. These two approaches result in three possible analyses of 1017^{a}22-27:

---

[51]Kirwan's interpretation of 1017^{a}22-30 is found in Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 140-143.

[52]Ibid., p. 40.

(1) 'something is pale (has pallor)' signifies 'something is is qualified in a certain way'

(2) 'the pale (pallor) exists' signifies 'the pale qualifies something'

(3) 'The pale (pallor) is a color' signifies 'The pale is a certain qualification'

The first and third analyses see $^{a}22$-27 as a treatment of propositions of the form 'X is F' while the second sees the issue as being the different meanings of 'exist'.

Next Kirwan considers which of the three analyses is correct. On the first proposal, Aristotle's remarks in $^{a}22$-27 simply point out that every predicate has a place in one of the eight (or, as in Categories iv and Topics I.ix, ten) categories. Though he does not identify this interpretation it is almost identical with the one advocated by Professor Kosman. Concerning this analysis, Kirwan notes that there are two grounds in favor of such a reading. First, Aristotle's remark in $^{a}27$-30 that sentences employing verbs other than the verb 'to be' can be rephrased so as to involve the latter verb, e.g., 'Socrates walks' can easily be rendered as 'Socrates is walking' and similarly for other sentences. Second, Prior Analytics I.xxxvii suggests that there are category distinctions in the use of εἶναι by asserting that there are such distinctions in the use of ὑπάρχειν. Since the two verbs have the same force, what holds for one should hold for the other.

---

[52] Ibid., p. 40.

Against such a proposal Kirwan quite correctly points out that if we regard the use of 'is' in the sentence 'Coriscus is pale' as a καθ' αὑτό use of 'is' since 'Coriscus is pale' implies that 'Coriscus is qualified in a certain way', how are we to differentiate the καθ' αὑτό use of 'to be' in 1017^{a}22-27 from the κατὰ συμβεβηκός use of 'to be' discussed in 1017^{a}8-22? In short, to interpret the καθ' αὑτό use of 'to be' along the lines advanced in the first analysis prevents us from being able to draw any distinction between the καθ' αὑτό and κατὰ συμβεβηκός uses of 'to be'.

On the second analysis, Aristotle's discussion concerns different senses of the word 'exists'. On this view, the discussion really points out that the items in the different categories all exist in different ways. Hence saying that the pale exists is to say that the pale qualifies something - i.e., this is how pallor exists, as a qualification. Or again, to say that walking exists is to say that walking is an action of something - i.e., that this is how walking exists, as an action. Kirwan adopts this reading of ^{a}22-27 on two grounds. The first is simply by elimination - he shows the falsity of (1) and (3) thereby showing that (2) must be correct. However, as I will show in due course, since his grounds for rejecting Ross' interpretation are inadequate, if Kirwan is to find support for his adoption of (2) it must be by means of his second argument, namely that unlike Ross' analysis, interpretation (2) offers a ready explanation of Aristotle's claim that εἶναι has a different meaning in each of the categories. On this analysis, since each category will relate in a

different way to the category of οὐσία, the difference between something in the category of quality existing and something in the category of activity existing will be quite manifest. The introduction of the doctrine of the categories then serves merely to point out that all the items in a given category relate to οὐσία in the same manner and that all of the items of other categories relate to οὐσία in a different manners.

It is undoubtedly correct to say that some doctrine similar to this is present in Aristotle. Thus the claim in Metaphysics IV.ii that all the things which are either are themselves substances or are affections of substances or are processes towards substances, etc. Similarly Aristotle's constant remarks that to be φ is to be so-and-so in such-and-such a way.

However, the crucial issue which we must consider at this point is not whether Kirwan has correctly stated an Aristotelian doctrine but rather whether Kirwan has correctly stated the point which Aristotle is making in this passage - and with respect to this issue I think that the answer is clearly no.[53] This rejection of Kirwan's account is based on several grounds. The first is simply that though Aristotle does say in 1017^{a}23-24 that the verb 'to be' has as many senses as there are categories, i.e., that in each category 'to be' means something different, this does not, contra Kirwan, imply that what is meant

---

[53]In his fine paper 'Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology' in Bambrough ed. New Essays on Plato and Aristotle, Professor G.E.L. Owen indicates that he at least partially supports an interpretation of τὸ ὂν πολλαχῶς similar to Kirwan's. Owen writes

by the καθ' αὑτό saying of εἶναι are these differing senses.

In his defense of reading (2), Kirwan has urged against the Ross interpretation that it offered '...no reason for treating [the use of 'to be' in the different categories] as explicating different senses of the copulative "be"'.[54] However this point is only telling if we

---

> ...the expression which Aristotle uses in Metaphysics Δ7 to identify the general role of the verb "to be" in which it carries different senses in the different categories. We took this role to be the (or an) existential use of the verb. Aristotle calls it τὸ καθ' αὑτὸ ὄν (1017ᵃ7-8, 22-3), a phrase which can certainly be applied to existential statements (e.g., at De Interpretatione 21ᵃ28), but which he often uses elsewhere to mark an other functions of the verb "to be", namely its use in definitions or in statements immediately derived from definitions. (p. 82)

Aside from erring in claiming that τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό refers to the existential use of 'to be' in De Interpretatione 21ᵃ28 (cf. Chapter Two, Section III), in so far as Owen allows τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό to refer to existential uses of 'to be' it faces the same difficulties which I will adduce against Kirwan's analysis.

[54]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 141.

In his book, Kirwan also offers two other objections to the Ross reading. The first, Ross' failure to

> ...explain why, when Aristotle divides by categories the 'necessary' senses of the copulative 'be', he should omit to do the same for the 'coincidental' senses. (p. 141)

reveals Kirwan's failure to understand Ross' proposal. The reason why Aristotle mentions the doctrine of the categories in 1017ᵃ27-30 is that only those uses of the copulative 'to be' which follow the schema of the categories will be καθ' αὑτό predications. Other predications will not be made according to the categories and hence will involve κατὰ συμβεβηκός uses of 'to be'. In short, the doctrine of the categories is not mentioned in connection with τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός simply because it is irrelevant to 'to be' used according to what is accidental. The second objection offered by Kirwan, concerning the difficulty which 1017ᵃ27-30 pose for Ross' reading of 1017ᵃ22-27, is discussed below in Section IV (p. 191-193).

interpret the καθ'αὑτό sense of 'to be' as an explanation of why 'to be' means different things in different categories. Kirwan read the clause ὁσαχῶς γὰρ λέγεται, τοσαυταχῶς τὸ εἶναι σημαίνει as an explanation of what is the καθ'αὑτό saying of εἶναι in the figures of predication. In other words, he takes the phrase ὁσαχῶς ...σημαίνει to be giving the meaning of the καθ'αὑτό sense of εἶναι.

However, this reading is quite unnecessary since another equally plausible interpretation is available - namely taking the clause in ^{a}23-24 to be an additional comment explicating merely why there are many figures of predication. On this reading, we can regard ^{a}23-24 <u>not</u> as an explication of the καθ'αὑτό saying of εἶναι in the categories such that the καθ'αὑτό saying of εἶναι will be different in each. Hence we can even adopt Kirwan's explanation <u>in toto</u> but nevertheless still reject his claim that this is the meaning of the καθ'αὑτό use of εἶναι. Certainly saying that something is pale or that something is colored is to say that something is qualified in a certain way. However the καθ'αὑτό use of εἶναι would be involved only if we should relate these qualifications-of-something generically, e.g., anything which is white is something which is colored. In this manner Kirwan's explanation of the way in which 'to be' has a different meaning in each category can even be directly incorporated into either Ross' interpretation or my own interpretation of these lines. However, rather than the verb 'to be' having a different meaning in each category depending upon the καθ'αὑτό use of εἶναι, the reason why the καθ'αὑτό saying of εἶναι means in as many ways as there are categories is that 'to be' has a different

meaning in each category.

A second serious objection to Kirwan, one which I have already discussed in Section II, is the difficulty which his interpretation of the καθ' αὑτό sense of εἶναι caused when he attempted to interpret the κατὰ συμβεβηκός sense of εἶναι. Whatever interpretive problems lurk in 1017^{a}22-30, Aristotle's discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός appeared to be a quite straightforward treatment of the verb 'to be' used to make accidental predications. Unfortunately this simplicity is lost if we read ^{a}22-27 in Kirwan's manner. Since Kirwan's reading of 1017^{a}7-22 had no independent support save his reading of ^{a}22-30, the difficulty in understanding ^{a}7-22 to which Kirwan's interpretation of ^{a}22-30 leads, is in itself sufficient reason to suspect the adequacy of reading the καθ' αὑτό sense of 'to be' in the manner Kirwan suggests.

However, the most serious problem which Kirwan's proposal faces is certain passages in which Aristotle discusses the meanings of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν ('to hold good of essentially' or 'to belong to essentially'). Despite his own mention of the fact that for Aristotle the use of the verb ὑπάρχειν is parallel to the use of the εἶναι, in this discussion of Metaphysics V.vii Kirwan makes no mention of Posterior Analytics I.iv or of Metaphysics V.xviii - two passages in which the main difficulties to understanding ^{a}22-30, namely brevity and the lack of examples, are remedied. As I show in the appendix, these passages completely differ from Kirwan's proposed analysis.

Before closing my discussion of Kirwan and turning to the Ross analysis, we must consider whether Kirwan has even adequately stated

his opponent's position. Whereas Ross wishes to assert that 'to be' is said καθ' αὑτό whenever we predicate of a species its genus, Kirwan's rendering of this as

> (3) 'The pale (pallor) is a color' signifies 'The pale is a certain qualification'

contains a quite erroneous implication. Despite Ross' clear denial that predicating a definiens of its definiendum involves the use of 'to be' καθ' αὑτό, (3) quite clearly suggests this unfortunate consequence. Owing to this suggestion that the καθ' αὑτό sense of 'is' is the 'is' of definition, (3) is an inadequate statement of Ross' position. Since he in no way wishes to so restrict τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό, the Ross interpretation must be rendered differently.

Ross' interpretation of $^{a}22$-30 quite properly begins by contrasting these lines to those which immediately precede them.[55] Since $^{a}7$-22 concern τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός

> ...the being which is nothing but an accidental and, it may be, merely temporary connexion between subject and attribute...if the opposition is to be a proper one, [τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό must] mean the being which is a necessary connexion.[56]

Ross continues by noting that four sorts of propositions will exhibit this type of connection - those where the predicate is either the

---

[55]For Ross' interpretation, cf. Ross Metaphysics, Vol. I, p. 306-308.

[56]Ibid., p. 306.

definition (ὁρισμός), the genus (γένος), the differentia (διαφορά), or the property (ἴδιον) of the subject.

However, Ross argues that only one of these four sorts of predication illustrates τὸ ὄν καθ'αὑτό. The reason for this arises from the fact that

> ..."essential being" is said to fall into kinds which are either identical with or correspond to the categories. But propositions of which the subject belongs to one category, the predicate to another, will not readily lend themselves to a classification answering to the categories; nor will the connexion of subject and predicate be in such a case of the most direct, essential kind.[57]

In other words, Ross, seeing the issue as deciding exactly what sorts of predication will be according to the figures of predication, concludes that only certain predications, viz. those in which both the predicate and the subject belong to the same category, will be amenable to the classification based on the doctrine of categories. Furthermore the only propositions which assert "essential being" in the most direct and essential way will be those propositions whose subject and predicate belong to the same category.

Then Ross proceeds to examine each of the four sorts of propositions which exhibit necessary connections in order to see whether or not they meet the requirement that both subject and predicate be of the same category. First he considers the predication of a property.

---

[57] Ibid., p. 306.

Since whenever the predicate is a property of the subject the subject and the predicate may belong to different categories, Ross asserts that this type of predication is not the kind of proposition which Aristotle has in mind. Nor will predicating a differentia of the subject be a proposition asserting τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό - after all, in many cases the differentiae of a category are items belonging to a different category. Ross points to the way in which qualities are the differentiae of the category of οὐσία. But if a proposition whose predicate is a differentia of its subject does not assert τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό, neither can a proposition whose predicate is the definition of the subject. Since the definition of a subject consists of both the genus of the subject and the differentia of the genus, Ross argues that in so far as we deal with the differentia which is included in the definition, the same problem will arise in the case of predications of definition as arose in the case of predications of differentia - namely that since the differentia may belong to a different category from the subject, it will not be the case that the subject and the predicate unambiguously belong to the same category.

Therefore, by process of elimination, we are left with those propositions in which the predicate is the genus of the subject. It is only in this case that the subject and predicate must belong to the same category. Hence these are the only propositions which Aristotle has in mind when he discusses the assertion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Ross' conclusion is that

> Being per se is asserted in as many different ways as there are categories (11.22-24): I.e., if we examine propositions in which the B which A is said to be is the genus of A, we shall find that the being which is implied has different meanings according to the category to which subject and predicate belong.[58]

On Ross' reading, Aristotle is here conceiving of the categories in terms of generic containment relations where the various genera, the species, and finally the individual man all belong καθ' αὑτό to the items standing above it in the hierarchy. Since these generic entailments can be exhibited in each category, the verb 'to be' can be used in each category to indicate that which is essential. Thus in the case of the category of οὐσία, the genus ἔμψυχη σῶμα, its successive subgenera (e.g., animal, mammal, primate, etc.), the species man, and finally the individual man can all be arranged hierarchially beginning with the summum genus οὐσία, proceeding downward through the genera living being and animal, then on to the species and finally the individual member of the species. Since, when we say 'A particular man is a man' or 'Man is an animal' we are using a form of the verb 'to be' to predicate of an item in the category of οὐσία that which belongs to the item καθ' αὑτό, we are asserting τὸ εἶναι καθ' αὑτό.

The exact same point may be made with respect to the use of 'is' in any of the other categories. Consider the category of ποιόν ('quality'). The genus color belongs καθ' αὑτό to the category of quality, the colors red, white, and blue belong καθ' αὑτό to the genus color, the

---

[58] Ibid., p. 307.

shades crimson, scarlet, and blood-red belong κατὰ τινός to red, etc. Since these successive genera all exhibit κατὰ τινός relationships, when I assert 'Blood-red is red' or 'Scarlet is a color' I am using 'is' to indicate that which is κατὰ τινός. The same comment can be made with respect to every category - in each case I can exhibit the same type of relationship that is involved in the cases of οὐσία and ποιόν.[59]

In this conception of the categories, they form the ten summa genera over which there is no higher genus. Thus the categories become

---

[59]In passing I might note that I do not wish to here embroil myself in the controversy which rages concerning the status of the lowest level items in the accidental categories. Most scholars read Categories in such a way that just as in the category of οὐσία there is a lowest level "universal," the species, and the individual instances of that species, so in the non-οὐσία categories there are lowest level "universals" and the instances of these "universals." Thus, one individual man has in himself a particular instance of a shade which another man, even though he be of the exact same shade of color, nevertheless has in himself a different particular instance of that shade. Supporters of this view include Ackrill, Categories and De Interpretatione, p. 74-76, G.E.M. Anscombe, Three Philosophers (Oxford, 1963), p. 7-10, James Duerlinger 'Predication and Inherence in Aristotle's Categories' Phronesis, 1970, and (in a certain sense) Barrington Jones 'Individuals in Aristotle's Categories' Phronesis, 1972.

Opposed to this position is G.E.L. Owen's argument that the lowest level items in the non-οὐσία categories are particular bottom-level universals, not instances of these universals. In other words, unlike the category of οὐσία in the accidental categories the lowest level items are not instances of kinds, but the individual kinds themselves. For Owen's views, cf. 'Inherence' Phronesis, 1965.

Fortunately, for present purposes, resolution of this dispute is unnecessary. On both sides there will be the same genus/species hierarchy, the only difference being what are the lowest level items in the non-οὐσία categorical hierarchies. Whereas Owen would insist that these bottom level items are kinds, his opponents would argue that they are instances of kinds. But in either case the tree of Porphyry scheme which I have advanced stands.

the ten ultimate kinds of things that there are. This is of course part of Aristotle's repeated claim that τὸ ὄν does not form a genus since if it did the categories would obviously have to be its species.

Despite its attractiveness, I believe that Ross' approach is ultimately inadequate. Though his analysis has the great merit of seeing the manner in which the discussion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό in ^{a}22-27 must be opposed to the treatment of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in ^{a}8-22, his analysis fails for the very reason that it does not preserve this opposition. Curiously, the full force of this criticism has been overlooked by almost every previous commentator.[60]

It will be recalled that Ross began his discussion of Aristotle's treatment of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό by observing that four sorts of propositions could be used to assert necessary connections between the subject and the predicate. Those were when the predication was according to either (1) a property, (2) a differentia, (3) the genus, or (4) the definition. After some further analysis Ross concluded that the only sort of predication which asserts "essential being" is one in which the predicate is the genus of the subject.

But at this point a hitherto unnoticed problem emerges. If we are to assign the assertion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό solely to propositions in which the predicate is the genus of the subject, what sort of "being"

---

[60]In fact, the only previous commentator to even mention the problem I am about to raise is De Rijk and he merely glosses over the criticism in a single sentence, thereby leaving it uncertain whether he sees the full force of the difficulty. For De Rijk's views, cf. below, p. 178-179.

do propositions predicating a property, a differentia, or the definition assert? Surely sentences such as 'Man is capable of being cultured' or 'Man is rational' assert some sort of "being" - yet it is by no means clear that in his scheme Ross has allowed them any place. After all, the argument by which Ross establishes the Aristotle intends predications of genus to be the only sentences which assert τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό precludes predications of property, differentia, and definition from asserting "essential being." Similarly, as Ross himself point out, since these three kinds of predication assert a necessary connection between the subject and the predicate of a sentence, they cannot be assertions of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός since that is the sort of "being" '...which is nothing but an accidental and, it may be temporary connexion between subject and attribute.'[61]

Hence the following dilemma - Ross is forced by his analysis to say either (1) that when we predicate a property, a differentia, or the definition of a subject, we do not assert any sort of "being" or (2) that Aristotle has simply ignored the sort of "being" which these sorts of assertions involve. Since both alternatives are unacceptable, the following conclusion seems to be inescapable - that because Ross' analysis forces us to say that predications of definition, property, and differentia assert neither τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός nor τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό , his interpretation of ^{a}22-27 is mistaken. But note - this

---

[61] Ibid., p. 306.

criticism, as fatal as it is to the interpretation actually advanced by Ross, does not refute his basic insight that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός concerns the copula 'to be' used in certain sorts of predications. As I shall argue, merely modifying Ross' account to avoid the objection I have just raised makes his theory an adequate explanation of 1017^{a}22-27.[62]

However, before making this modification, let us discuss one more rival proposal - that of L.M. De Rijk. De Rijk is well aware of the plausibility of the Ross interpretation:

> If...Aristotle means by 'accidental being' the being which is a merely temporary connexion between S and P, it seems very obvious to suppose that 'essential being' is thought by him to be the being which is an essential and necessary connexion between S and P.[63]

However, De Rijk argues that when one adopts this 'very obvious' interpretation of '...ascribing...to essential being a merely propositional (i.e., logical) character, one meets with insoluble difficulties.'[64]

Three such difficulties are noted. The first seems to be the same objection that I have already raised against Ross, viz. that Ross has neglected the other three sorts of propositions which he alleges also assert necessary connections. As I noted above, Ross by restricting τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός to propositions whose predicate is the genus of the subject thereby ignored propositions whose predicate is either the

---

[62]Cf. below, p. 182 ff.

[63]The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy p. 36.

[64]Ibid., p. 36.

definition or the differentia or a property of the subject. Apparently in the same vein, De Rijk objects that

> It seems to be rather strange that only one kind of proposition (viz. those in which P is the genus of S) is intended here by Aristotle.[65]

Though I am in complete agreement with De Rijk that this objection is quite telling against Ross' reading, it does not show that the interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό in a propositional manner is inadequate. Rather, all that it shows is that Ross' understanding of this propositional character fails.

The second difficulty raised by De Rijk rests on a misinterpretation of Ross. De Rijk objects that the theory of categories can only be applied to terms, not propositions. Hence, since Ross' reading involves arranging propositions under the categories, it simply misunderstands the doctrine of the categories of being. De Rijk writes:

> ...it is unusual and even impossible to range propositions under the categories. Only predicates (or subjects) can be ranged in the table of the categories (in other words, not S-P but only S or P).[66]

However, Ross does not say that propositions are to be grouped according to the categories, but rather that predications which are made according to the categories (i.e., according to the hierarchical arrangement of terms from the widest down to the narrowest) are predi-

---

[65] Ibid., p. 36.

[66] Ibid., p. 36-37.

cations which assert τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Of course the theory of the categories applies to terms, not propositions. But this does not prevent our speaking of propositions which follow the categories. Since De Rijk's third objection concerns 1017[a]27-30 I will treat it in the next section when I specifically analyze these lines.[67]

Based on these considerations De Rijk concludes that reading τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό in terms of the relation of the predicate of a proposition to the subject oa a proposition is unacceptable. Though such a propositional interpretation should be assigned to τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός, it simply will not do for τὸ ὂν καθαὑτό. De Rijk's solution is to see the contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό as the opposition of the accidental unity of the subject and the predicate in a proposition such as 'A man is recovering' with the essential unity exhibited by the predicate and the copula. On such a reading "essential being" has nothing to do with the relation of the predicate to the subject but rather concerns the fact that

> ...the copula by itself is meaningless and it takes its meaning only by its connexion with the predicate ... The copula cannot exist apart from a predicate, no more than matter can apart from form...[68]

Though I am in complete agreement with De Rijk's claim that by itself the copula 'to be' has no meaning and that it takes its color from its relation to another term, this is quite different from saying

---

[67]See below in Section IV, p. 191-193.

[68]De Rijk, The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy, p. 38-39.

that this is what Aristotle means by τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. In order to show that what Aristotle means by "essential being" is the relationship of the copula and the predicate, De Rijk offers an interesting though deficient interpretation of 1017^{a}27-30, one which I will discuss in the next section. However, even without considering lines ^{a}27-30, we can show the inadequacy of De Rijk's reading.

What I believe is the basic failure with De Rijk's reading is its inability to account for propositions in which the unity of the subject and the predicate is not accidental. Whereas Ross explains such propositions by saying that they are instances of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό, De Rijk's interpretation precludes such a move. Similarly, we can hardly say that there is only an accidental unity of the subject and the predicate in propositions such as 'A man is an animal', 'A man is rational', or 'A man is a rational animal'. Of course we might say that a proposition whose predicate is either the genus or the differentia or the definition of the subject asserts no sort of being at all. However, that appears to be a rather desperate proposal for which there is no justification at all. Hence how does De Rijk understand such propositions? On this point he is mute and therefore I think that we should reject his interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Furthermore, since De Rijk himself acknowledges that Ross' propositional interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is 'very obvious' (save for the three 'insoluble difficulties' which I have rendered innocuous), I see no reason for looking for unobvious analyses.[69]

---

[69]In Aristotle's Theory of Being, p. 12-13, Emerson Buchanan offers an interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό which is virtually identical to De Rijk's. Needless-to-say, it also suffers from the same defect as De Rijk's.

Hence let us return to the Ross proposal and see how it can be modified so as (1) to preserve its great advantage, viz. its providing a good contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός as 'to be' used to make accidental predications and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό as 'to be' used to make essential predications and (2) avoid the difficulty which I have raised against the Ross' reading, viz. the failure to account for predications of differentia and genus. The obvious solution is simply to read τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό as covering all three sorts of καθ'αὑτό predications - i.e., 'to be' used to predicate the genus of the subject, 'to be' used to predicate a differentia of a subject, or 'to be' used to predicate a definition of a subject.[70]

The only reason why Ross does not accept this solution is that

> ...'essential being' is said to fall into kinds which are either identical with or correspond to the categories. But propositions of which the subject belongs to one category, the predicate to another, will not readily lend themselves to a classification answering to the categories; nor will the connexion of subject and predicate be in such a case of the most direct, essential kind. Now... where the predicate is a differentia of the subject, they may be in different categories - the differentia of a substance, for example, is a quality (1020^a33); so that such propositions are not intended here. And where the predicate is the definition of the subject, the same difficulty arises, so far as the differentia included in the definition is concerned.[71]

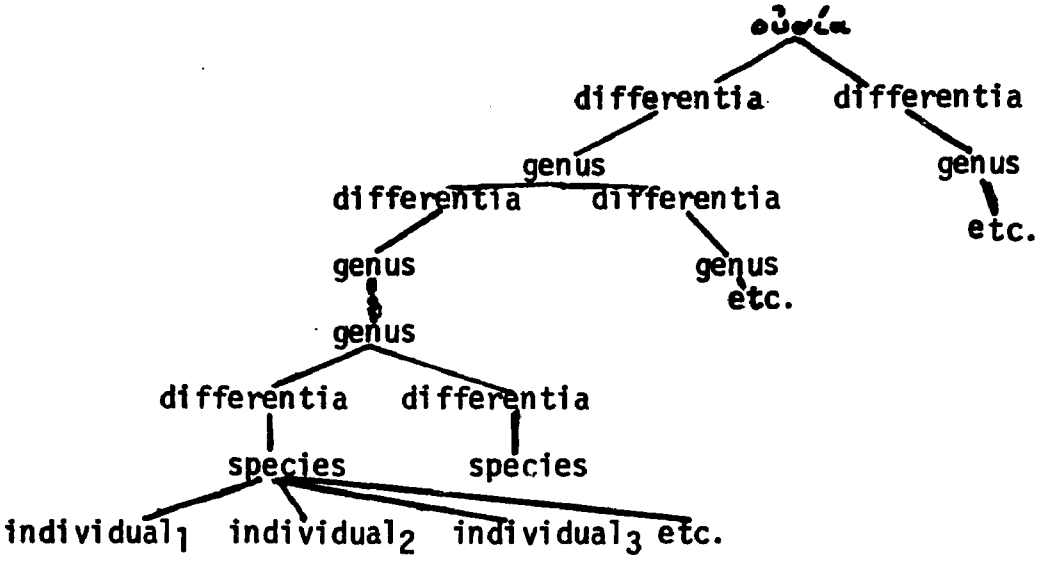
---

[70]As I already noted, since Ross' claim that predicating a property of a subject involves a necessary connection between the subject and the predicate seems to be mistaken, such predications are not examples of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό (cf. above, p. 150).

[71]Ross, Metaphysics Vol. I, p. 306-307.

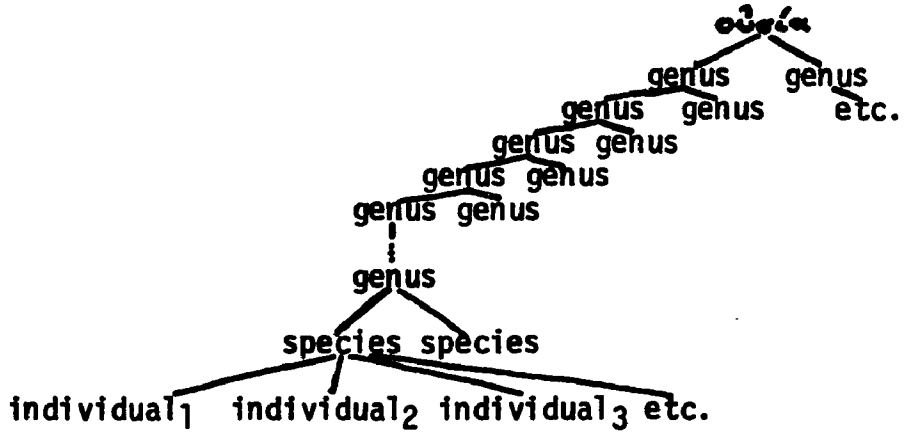
Ross concludes that since the only proposition in which both the subject and the predicate will belong to the same category are propositions in which the predicate is the genus of the subject, these are the only sort of propositions which Aristotle has in view.

Though I thoroughly grant Ross that Aristotle at least intends such propositions, why does Ross so restrict his understanding of the phrase 'the figures of predication' so as to exclude the differentia and the definition? No such restriction is necessary. Of course the differentia of the category of οὐσία are items from non-οὐσία categories. But why understand the phrase 'the figures of predication' in such a narrow way so that it only covers the category to which a term actually belongs? Why not read the phrase in such a way so that it refers to the whole categorical structure - i.e., both the successive genera and their successive differentiae? On such a proposal we would have the following model for the category of οὐσία:



instead of Ross' model which only contains the successive genera and

the species of an individual:



Basically similar models can be constructed for the other categories.

In addition to the way in which such a reading of τὸ ἓν κατ'αὐτό would fit Aristotle's text and resolve or avoid all of the various difficulties I have already noted in connection with 1017^{a}22-27, one major piece of evidence favors my proposed reading of τὸ ἓν κατ'αὐτό as the verb 'to be' or its cognates used to predicate a genus, a differentia, or the definition of a subject. Curiously this evidence, strongly suggested by Aristotle's own remarks on the substitutability of ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to' or 'to hold good of') and εἶναι, seems to have gone unappreciated by previous commentators. As I have already hinted in my discussion of Kirwan's interpretation of τὸ ἓν κατ'αὐτό, the information of which I am speaking is Aristotle's discussions of the meaning of κατ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν in Posterior Analytics I.iv and Metaphysics V.xviii.

Though I offer my full analysis of these two texts in Sections I and II of the appendix, briefly the conclusion of the analysis I there present is that the only sense of κατ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν which would provide

a good contrast between τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is the sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν on which Aristotle's science ultimately depends - namely 'X belongs καθ'αὑτό to Y' = $_{df.}$ 'X inheres in the τί ἐστι of Y'. Since we know ὑπάρχειν covers both that which is predicable and that which is a constituent, if we narrow καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν to predicables, we will be designating the same things as τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό (save for the use of the verb ὑπάρχειν instead of the verb εἶναι).

As I show in the appendix, what the narrow sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν designates is the belonging to a subject of the subject's genus, differentia, and definition. In turn these are the very things which we would expect were my analysis of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό correct. The fact that Aristotle uses καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν in this very way is strong evidence in favor of my interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. In short - merely consulting these parallel discussions of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν confirms my reading of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

In summary - τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό means the use of the verb 'to be' and its cognates as the copula in asserting that which is essential. The essential predications will follow the categorical hierarchy. The three sorts of essential predication will be predicating the genus of a subject, the differentia of a subject, and the definition of a subject. In one respect all uses of 'to be' which are instances of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό will be the same since they will all be predications of that which is essential. In another respect these uses of 'to be' will differ according to the category according to which the predication is being made. As I noted, this will be due to the verb 'to be'

meaning different things because items in different categories relate to items in the category of ಅಂಬಲಿ in different ways. Thus Ross' reading was on the right track though it needed a significant modification.[72]

---

[72]For other discussions of this sense of ಕಡೆ ಹೊ cf. the passages mentioned in part iii of Section II of this chapter.

IV

In this section I will analyze 1017[a]27-30 in which Aristotle offers several examples to elucidate his previous discussion. These lines have been the bane of previous interpreters of Metaphysics V.vii. Since the examples in [a]27-30 come at the end of Aristotle's discussion of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό in [a]22-27, commentators have quite naturally been led to conclude that [a]27-30 are meant to illustrate this sense of τὸ ὄν. Unfortunately for this facile interpretation, it has been extremely difficult to show how these examples are instances of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό since prima facie they are cases of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Faced with this dilemma, various proposals have been advanced. I will review and criticize these previous solutions before presenting my own analysis.

By itself Aristotle's comment appears to be rather straightforward. Read quite literally, Aristotle says:

> For [the] '⟨The⟩ man is recovering' is not different from [the] '⟨The⟩ man recovers', nor does [the] '⟨The⟩ man walks or cuts'. And likewise as regards the others.[73]

The bracketed occurrences of 'the' translate (in a perhaps overly literal way) four occurrences of the Greek neuter definite article τό. Since the noun which these occurrences precede, ἄνθρωπος, normally takes the masculine definite article, the only explanation for these anomalies must be the point I noted earlier, namely the use of the

---

[73] Metaphysics V.vii, 1017[a]27-30.

neuter definite article to mark a semantic quotation.[74] Hence Aristotle's discussion does not concern a man who is recovering or a man who is walking but the sentences '⟨The⟩ man is recovering' and '⟨The⟩ man is walking'.

Aristotle's four examples are:

(1) '⟨The⟩ man is recovering'

(2) '⟨The⟩ man recovers'

(3) '⟨The⟩ man is walking or cutting'

(4) '⟨The⟩ man walks or cuts'

Save for my perhaps over-literal rendering of (3) and (4), they might be translated as four sentences instead of two, viz.

(3a) '⟨The⟩ man is walking'

(3b) '⟨The⟩ man is cutting'

(4a) '⟨The⟩ man walks'

(4b) '⟨The⟩ man cuts'

For the purposes of the ensuing analysis, it does not matter whether we use (3) and (4) or (3a), (3b), (4a), and (4b) as our reading. What does matter is understanding why Aristotle says that there is some important sense in which (1) and (3) (or (3a) and (3b)) do not differ from (2) and (4) (or (4a) and (4b)) respectively.

In passing let me note that in this instance rendering the Greek

---

[74]Cf. above, p. 118.

verb ὑγιαίνειν as 'to recover' is much to be preferred over the more normal translation 'to be healthy'. As will be seen, Aristotle's point turns on the equivalence of the active verb and an auxiliary verb plus the present participle of the original verb. 'To recover' is a verb and it has a present participle 'recovering'. Since 'to be healthy' consists of an auxiliary verb and an adverb, such a translation would obscure Aristotle's point.

As in so many other cases of Aristotelian exegesis, the best place to begin is with Ross' comments. This is especially true in this instance, since most of the succeeding discussions of this passage have focused on Ross' proposal. Ross fully recognized the difficulty posed by these lines. Whereas from the context we would expect Aristotle to give us examples of 'to be' used according to what is essential, in fact we are given what appear to be examples of 'to be' used according to what is accidental. Ross' "resolution" of the difficulty is simply to admit that Aristotle's illustrations are somewhat inappropriate but nonetheless still insist that his previous analysis of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is correct.

Ross writes that

> Aristotle makes his meaning unnecessarily obscure by citing (1017^{a}27-30) propositions which do not assert essential being at all. 'The man is healthy', 'the man is walking', 'the man is cutting' are purely accidental propositions just like 'the man is musical'. But these propositions serve as well as essential propositions would to illustrate the point he is at the moment making - that 'is' takes its colour from the terms it connects. 'The man is walking' means

nothing more or less than 'the man walks'...[75]

Lest it be thought that lines ^{a}27-30 point towards some interpretation of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν κατ' ἀλήθειαν other than the one he has advanced, Ross adds that

> It is much more in Aristotle's manner to use an example which while illustrating his immediate point obscures his main meaning.[76]

The major overriding difficulty with this interpretation is simply the rather unpalatable result which it forces us to accept - namely Aristotle's having unnecessarily put his point in an obscure and confused way. Why, we are tempted to ask, if these examples are indeed meant to explain τὸ ὂν κατ' ἀλήθειαν are they examples of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός? Though we may ultimately be forced to adopt such an explanation, surely we should prefer any alternative interpretation which does not foist such an unclarity on Aristotle. In any case, this in fact has proven to be the motivation of Ross' critics - i.e., to find an interpretation of ^{a}27-30 which shows how these examples do fit the immediate context. This in turn has led to the rejection of

---

[75]Ross, Metaphysics Vol. I, p. 307.
Why Ross here renders τὸ ἄνθρωπος ὑγιαίνων ἐστίν as '"The man is healthy"' instead of '"The man is recovering"' is most unclear. In his Oxford translation Ross himself adopted the latter translation - the one for which I have just argued (cf. above p. 188). As I said before, in this context rendering ὑγιαίνειν as 'to be healthy' obscures Aristotle's point. Since elsewhere Ross himself seems aware of this point, the translation offered in this quote is likely due to carelessness.

[76]Ibid., p. 308.

one of Ross' assumptions, viz. that the illustrations in $^{a}27$-30 are instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. The general trend among later commentators has been to understand Aristotle's examples as cases of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό and hence to interpret the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό in terms of the examples given in $^{a}27$-30. Should the examples given in $1017^{a}27$-30 prove to be instances of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό then the difficulty posed by these lines will have been resolved (or, perhaps it would be better to say, dissolved).

The first such interpretation which we should consider is that of L.M. De Rijk. In cirticizing Ross' interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό De Rijk noted the difficulty which Ross has with $1017^{a}27$-30:

> Even if only the propositions named by Prof. Ross ...are intended by Aristotle, how is it to be explained, then, that he ($1017^{a}27$-30) gives another kind of proposition as instance...?... For, on the one hand, Prof. Ross says (Metaph., I 307, ll. 13-14) that the copula takes its colour from the category to which the terms it connects belong, and (ibid., ll. 36 ff.) he interprets in this way the examples of accidental being, from which it might be concluded that accidental being, too, has the same relation to the categories. We can formulate this objection otherwise: Should not Prof. Ross be consistent in supposing the those 'accidental propositions' are instances of the categories ποιόν [quality] and ποιεῖν [activity]?[77]

Of course this merely reststes the problem which we have been discussing.

Confronted with this problem (and the two objections which I

---

[77]De Rijk, The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy, p. 37.

noted in the previous section [78]), De Rijk tries to reinterpret the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό so that the examples in ^{a}27-30 are instances of "essential being". As I have already noted,[79] the solution which De Rijk adopts is to reject reading τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό in terms of propositions and instead read it as the essential unity of the copula 'to be' and the rest of the predicate. In contrast to Ross' proposal, De Rijk writes that

> ...not the entity S-P is the point in question, but only the being of P, inclusive of the copula absorbed by P. These two together (ἐστι + P) indicate a certain form of being.... In other words: though propositions are given as instances, it could have sufficed for Aristotle to mention only predicate + copula.[80]

Though in fact Aristotle uses propositions as examples, De Rijk claims that τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό only concerns the predicates of these propositions. Hence De Rijk says that

> For the sake of clarity...we might write: (ἄνθρωπος) ὑγιαίνει = (man) is recovering, for the subject is here beside the question.[81]

However, before we accept this reading, let us ask whether it really is an improvement over Ross' explanation. Aside from the overall problem with De Rijk's interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό that I

---

[78]Cf. above, p. 178-180.

[79]Cf. above, p. 180.

[80]De Rijk, The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy, p. 41. The emphasis is mine.

[81]Ibid., p. 41.

noted in the last section,[82] there is the much more specific problem - is De Rijk's analysis of 1017^{a}27-30 any better than Ross'? Not only do I think that the answer is no, but I think that the reason why it is no is simply because De Rijk's reading suffers from the very same defect as Ross' - namely the examples of 1017^{a}27-30 are not what we would expect.

On De Rijk's interpretation, essential being is the sort of unity that we encounter in the relationship of the copula 'to be' and the present participle. If this were all that Aristotle intended, he could have given as his examples the verbs alone. Yet as De Rijk himself notes, Aristotle offers us propositions, not mere verbs. Saying that the subject should be overlooked is to disregard the evidence - the point is Aristotle does give examples with subjects when he could easily have given us examples without subjects had he meant what De Rijk claims. Thus, it would appear that De Rijk is trying to fit the examples to his interpretation even if the price must be the distortion of the evidence.

As mentioned earlier, one of Kirwan's three objects to Ross' interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is Ross' difficulty with 1017^{a}27-30.

> ...Ross is forced to explain the intrusion of non-necessary examples in ^{a}27-30...as due to Aristotle's wish to illustrate, by the readiest means at hand, the general point that '"is" takes its colour from the terms it connects'.... But Ross would have to admit that on his interpretation ^{a}27-30 would fit better in the previous paragraph [i.e., the discussion of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός].[83]

---

[82]Cf. above, p. 181.

[83]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 141.

However, even with his reinterpretation of τὸ ὂν ὡς ἀληθές in terms of existence '[a]27-30 remain puzzling' but might be explained as an attempt

> ...to meet the objection that we do not commonly say such things as 'walking exists'. According to Aristotle 'walking exists' is implied by 'Coriscus walks'...and this implication might be thought to be made more obvious to a Greek by the consideration that 'Coriscus walks' already contains a hidden 'is', albeit a copulative and not existential 'is'.[84]

Such an interpretation clearly depends upon the acceptance of Kirwan's reading of 1017[a]22-27 in terms ofnon-coincidental senses of the existential 'be' - a reading which I have already provided sufficient grounds for rejecting.[85] But more specifically, if Kirwan's analysis of 1017[a]27-30 is correct, why did Aristotle put his point in such an opaque way? Of course Aristotle might be trying to justify the inference from 'X walks' to 'Walking exists' by showing that all predicates can be paraphrased into predicates containing the copula. However, where is there any evidence that Aristotle is trying to forestall the objection that 'we do not commonly say such things as "walking exists"'? Since Kirwan's explanation rests on nothing more than a pure conjecture, I think that it can be dismissed.

The final interpretation which I will examine is one that has recently been advanced by R. Allan Cobb.[86] Claiming that the examples

---

[84]Ibid., p. 142.

[85]Cf. above, p. 167-171.

[86]Cobb, 'The Present Progressive Periphrasis and the Metaphysics of Aristotle'. As part of his article Cobb makes certain claims about the history of Greek syntax and its role in Aristotle's metaphysical theory. However, I will not here examine these remarks since they are not really germane to our present inquiry.

in ^{a}27-30 are instances of the present progressive periphrasis, Cobb asserts that Aristotle's point is the '...identification of the present inflected form of the verb (e.g., "...walks") and the present periphrastic form of the verb (e.g., "...is walking").'[87] According to Cobb, Aristotle is using these examples in order to show how certain crucial cases, namely those involving '...the continuous action of an agent going on at the time of the assertion',[88] can be accommodated to

> The theory...that what a thing is, or more accurately what a thing is in itself, is determined by members of all ten categories, but only in a primary way in relation to the category of substance (οὐσία) and in secondary ways in relation to the other categories.[89]

Using the present active indicative as his example, Cobb makes two important grammatical points. The first is that in modern English the present inflected form of the verb and the present periphrastic form of the verb differ in meaning. Whereas

> ...the former generally expresses, when it occurs as an element of statements, a dispositional or recurrent state of affairs, though the action involved, if any, is not implied to be taking place at the time of the assertion...the latter generally expresses a continuous action taking place at the time of the assertion.[90]

Thus, to use one of Cobb's examples, 'John drinks' indicates nothing about what John is doing at the moment while 'John is drinking' tells us that he is now consuming some sort of liquid. Unlike classical

---

[87] Ibid., p. 81.
[88] Ibid., p. 80.
[89] Ibid., p. 80.
[90] Ibid., p. 81.

Greek, where 'John walks' and 'John is walking' are both perfectly intelligible sentences, in modern English there is an additional difference between the two verb forms - namely that while in most cases a subject and a present inflected verb do not form a complete sentence but demands some qualification (e.g., 'every day' in 'John walks every day'), a subject, an auxiliary verb, and a participle do form a complete sentence (e.g., 'John is running').

The second grammatical point concerns the role which the auxiliary verb 'to be' plays in periphrastic constructions - namely that '...the present progressive periphrasis cannot be analyzed as an adjective or predicate plus copula'.[91] Whereas, verb participles can be used adjectivally, they are not so used in the present progressive periphrasis. Instead of the verb 'to be' merely serving the role of the logical copula, in the present progressive periphrasis the verb 'to be' helps to indicate an action which has been going on since some time prior to the moment of assertion. Thus, in a standard subject-predicate sentence of the form 'S is P', the 'is' tells us nothing about S prior to the moment of assertion. However, because of the logical character of the progressive sense, in 'John is drinking' 'is' describes an activity which was begun in the past and is being continued into the present.

In order to justify his claim that Aristotle's examples in 1017^{a} 27-30 all exhibit a progressive sense, Cobb notes that in Metaphysics

---

[91] Ibid., p. 82.

IX.vi Aristotle argues that a present inflected verb like '...walks' has an exclusively progressive sense. Since the point of $^{a}27$-30 is to show the equivalence of 'The man walks' and 'The man is walking', this shows that '...is walking' also has a progressive sense.

Turning to Metaphysics V.vii Cobb offers an interpretation of τὸ ἐν καθ'αὑτό under which there is a sense in which every true predication is καθ'αὑτό to its subject. On his reading 1017^{a}22-30 shows

> ...that all the categoricals can be said to be in themselves in the sense that, as the examples of recovering, walking, and cutting show, when they are predicated of a subject they signify what the subject is in itself.[92]

Obviously such an interpretation radically differs from the standard understanding of Aristotle whereby every item from a non-οὐσία category is merely accidental to a thing from the category of οὐσία. Fully aware of this, Cobb tries to reinterpret the notion of what a thing is in itself in such a manner that even items from the accidental categories can be said to be part of the τί ἐστι of a substance.

In order to do this, Cobb cites Metaphysics VII.iv 1030^{a}17 ff where Aristotle points out that though the primary answer to the τί ἐστι - the 'what is it'? - question, is an item from the first category, the category of substance, he also allows secondary answers to this question to be items from any one of the other categories.

---

[92] Ibid., p. 86.

> Thus if someone asks "What is that?" referring to Socrates, the primary and most informative answer would be "a man", but in addition, one might also say, in a secondary but nevertheless appropriate sense of what Socrates is, that he is someone who is pale or standing in the market place or walking to the gymnasium.[93]

According to Cobb, all of these are possible answers to the request for the τί ἐστι of Socrates since each specifies some aspect of Socrates. Cobb provides more evidence for his proposal in De Anima I.i, where he alleges Aristotle indicates that accidental characteristics enable us to know a thing's τί ἐστι.

If Cobb is correct, then it is clear why accidental predications like 'The man is recovering' are also instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός - simply because one of the aspects of the man is the fact that he is recovering, we can say what the man is by saying that he is recovering. Of course such an answer would only secondarily tell us what the man is. However, unlike Ross' reading, it would show why the examples of 1017^{a}27-30 are illustrations of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.

Why then does Aristotle show that the present inflected and present progressive forms of the verb express the same thing? Because when one expresses the fact that the subject is engaged in a continuous activity by means of a sentence like 'Socrates walks', it is not clear that we are in any way indicating what Socrates is. However, since 'Socrates is walking' contains a form of the verb 'to be', it clearly tells us what Socrates is - albeit in a secondary sense. The present

---

[93] Ibid., p. 89.

progressive periphrasis merely makes it obvious why not only being a man and being rational tell us what Socrates is, but the state of affairs gotten at by 'Socrates walks' can also be used to answer the τί ἐστι question.

Though I readily grant that Cobb's interpretation of $1017^{a}22$-30 is quite novel, I think that it is so untenable that its adoption renders the entire distinction between accidental and essential predications unintelligible. According to Cobb, the reason why an item in one of the non-οὐσία categories can be said to be καθ'αὑτό to some thing in the category of οὐσία arises from (1) the definition of X's being καθ'αὑτό to Y - viz. X's inhering in the τί ἐστι of Y - and (2) the fact that the technical term τί ἐστι is said in many ways. On Cobb's reading there is a sense in which everything which a substance is is καθ'αὑτό to that substance because everything which a substance is either can answer the 'what is it?' question in its primary sense or can answer the 'what is it?' question in one of its secondary senses.

Consider Socrates. On Cobb's view Socrates has one primary τί ἐστι - being a man - and many secondary τί ἐστι's - weighing 150 pounds, being in the market place, walking, etc. Since all of these various things are true of Socrates, they all tell us what Socrates himself is. The difference between the first answer and all the other answers is that the first designates Socrates in a more primary and complete way than any of the other answers do. But since all the answers are true of Socrates, they are all καθ'αὑτό to Socrates. Or so Cobb would lead us to believe.

However, though Cobb is surely correct in saying that there is a sense in which whenever X is true of Y, Y itself is X, this is not what Aristotle means by X's being καθ'αὑτό to Y. Of course whenever Socrates himself is in the market place, is walking, or is of a certain weight all these things are true of Socrates. But none of them is true of Socrates in the way which would make it καθ'αὑτό to Socrates.

As shown in the appendix, for Aristotle X's being καθ'αὑτό Y tells us much more than that there is some temporary or contingent connection between X and Y. If X is καθ'αὑτό Y then there is a logically necessary connection between the two such that should X cease to be Y, X ceases to be. Thus 'Socrates is a man' asserts a connection between being a man and being Socrates because Socrates could not cease to be a man without Socrates' ceasing to be. The same sort of necessary connections exist in all the categories - e.g., should this particular instance of pale lemon yellow cease tc be an instance of color, then it ceases to be an instances of pale lemon yellow.

Opposed to such καθ'αὑτό connections are κατὰ συμβεβηκός connections - connections which are temporary or contingent. Since these connections may or may not hold, a thing continues to be whether or not it enters into or ceases to enter into such a connection. If X is κατὰ συμβεβηκός Y, then there is merely a logically contingent tie between X and Y so that should X cease to be Y, X does not cease to be. Sentences like 'Socrates is in the market place', 'Socrates is walking', or 'This particular instance of yellow is a cat' all assert

such links. Socrates' leaving the agora does not mean that Socrates has ceased existing; my pickling the cat in formaldehyde means the cat has ceased to be but the particular instance of yellow still exists.

By reading τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό in such a way that everything which is true of a subject is καθ'αὑτό to that subject, Cobb has barred our making the distinction I have just drawn. If everything which is true of Socrates is καθ'αὑτό Socrates, then nothing which is true of Socrates will merely be κατὰ συμβεβηκός to Socrates. Socrates himself is not whatever happens at the moment to be true of Socrates. Socrates himself is what Socrates is - i.e., a rational animal - and cannot cease to be.

Cobb believes that his theory is supported by the fact that the technical term τί ἐστι is said in many ways. But how does the rather innocuous claim that this term is said in many ways provide a basis for Cobb's view that everything which is true of a thing is in the τί ἐστι of that thing? The very point of the claim that the τί ἐστι question is said in many ways in the different categories is to show that certain sorts of answers to the τί ἐστι question are inadequate - namely those in which we say what a thing in one category is by means of something from a different category. Saying that the 'What is it?' question is said in many ways shows why telling me that Socrates is in the market place does answer the question 'What is Socrates?' but not in the sense where I have been given what Socrates primarily is. Saying that the 'What is it?' question is said in many ways shows why telling me that this particular instance of yellow is a cat does answer the question 'What is the particular instance of yellow?' but not in

the sense in which 'This particular instance of yellow is a color' does. However, saying that the ' hat is it?' question is said in many ways does not show that accidental attributes determine a thing's what is - it merely warns us that someone (such as Cobb) might be deceived by the variety of answers which we can give to the questions 'What is Socrates?' or 'What is yellow?' into thinking that all these answers really tell us what Socrates is or what yellow is. Aristotle's response would be his standard 'Well, in a sense they do and in a sense they do not. Whenever you answer the "What is X?" question by means of something accidental, you do not answer the "What is X?" question in the way you do when you give something which is essential.'

The one passage which Cobb cites in order to justify his claim that accidents help determine a thing's essence is De Anima I.i 402^{b} 21-25.[94] According to Cobb, this passage reads:

> But contrariwise, the accidental characteristic also contribute a great deal to knowing the what-it-is; for whenever we can give an account of the apparent accidental characteristics, either all or most of them, then we can also speak best concerning substance.

However, Cobb's translation of the word συμβεβηκός by 'accidental characteristic' is rather questionable. Aristotle is not using the term συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'accident' but rather the sense of 'nondefinitory essential attribute' - the same sense discussed in Section III of the appendix. Whereas the accidents of a thing tell us

---

[94] Ibid., p. 89.

nothing about the essence of the thing, the nondefinitory essential attributes clearly would aid in our discovering the thing's essence. In fact, the full passage even contains the same example as the text discussed in Section III of the appendix - namely the sum of the interior angles of a triangle.

As I read De Anima I.i 402^{b}16-25, Aristotle is saying

> And not only is it useful for the study of the causes [αἰτίας] of the nondefinitory essential attributes [τῶν συμβεβηκότων τὰς οὐσίας] to know the τί ἐστι [the 'what-is'; here restricted to only the definitory attributes] (just as in mathematics ⟨it is useful⟩ to grasp what is the straight and curved or what is a line and a plane for knowing the equality of ⟨the interior angles⟩ of a triangle to so many right ⟨angles⟩) but also conversely, knowledge of the τί ἐστι in a large part follows from ⟨knowing⟩ the nondefinitory essential attributes [τὰ συμβεβηκότα]. For when we are able to give an account conformable to experience concerning all or most of the nondefinitory essential attributes [περὶ τῶν συμβεβηκότων], then we will be able to best speak concerning the essence [περὶ τῆς οὐσίας].

Understood in my way, this passage merely points out the relationship of the nondefinitory essential attributes to the definitory essential attributes. Understood in Cobb's way, this passage tells us that it is useful to study something which cannot even be known, namely the relation of a thing to its accidents.[95] Hence I think that we can safely conclude that Cobb has misinterpreted the one text that he cites in support of his claims concerning the relationship of a thing's accidents to the thing's essence.

---

[95]Concerning Aristotle's claim that accidents cannot be scientifically known, cf. Metaphysics VI.ii 1027^{a}19-21.

Having shown the unacceptability of Cobb's interpretation of 1017[a]22-30, let us not concentrate on his remarks about the grammar of the examples in [a]27-30. It will be recalled that the crucial premise of Cobb's analysis is the claim that the sentences '⟨The⟩ man is recovering', '⟨The⟩ man is walking', and '⟨The⟩ man is cutting' are all examples of the present progressive periphrasis. But what is the actual evidence produced for this claim? Simply that the explicit Greek of these three sentences consists of (1) a subject, (2) the third person singular present indicative of the verb 'to be', and (3) a participle. Granted Aristotle is asserting the equivalence of a sentence with this structure and a sentence whose structure consists of (1) a subject and (2) a present inflected verb - but does Aristotle really intend the former sentences to be present periphrases? Of course Cobb is correct in insisting that a present progressive periphrasis can not be analyzed into a copula and a participle - but is the Greek sentence τὸ ἄνθρωπος βαδίζων ἐστίν('" The man is walking"') intended by Aristotle to be a present progressive periphrasis?

Whereas in English the affirmative answer seems to be so obvious that it seems rather otiose even to raise my question, the case is quite different in ancient Greek. In modern English grammar isolated adjectives (such as 'blue') must be explicitly supplied with some noun (such as 'thing') before we obtain an expression which can suitably be the subject of a sentence (e.g., 'the blue thing'); in ancient Greek the noun 'thing' need not be explicitly supplied but would be understood by the speaker. Hence, whereas a speaker of modern English would

regard the sentence 'The just is cultured' as gibberish, Aristotle regards its literal Greek equivalent as grammatical since he understands this sentence as 'The just person is cultured'. The same point applies for verb participles which are used adjectively. Thus the sentence ὁ βαδίζων ἐστὶ ἄνθρωπος ('The walking is a man') is correct Greek; it would be taken by a native speaker to mean the same thing as the English 'The walking thing is a man'.

It goes without saying that in ancient Greek the same locution - saying 'the blue' when one means 'the blue thing' - also applies to predicate expressions. Thus ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ λευκὸς can mean either 'The man is white' or 'The man is a white thing'. Similarly for verb participles - to say that Socrates is the thing that is walking we need not say 'Socrates is the thing that is walking' or 'Socrates is a walking thing'. Instead the speaker of Greek could merely say 'Socrates is walking' and thereby be understood by his fellow speakers as predicating being a walking thing of Socrates.

To some extent, this way of understanding a sentence like 'Socrates is walking' as an adjectival periphrasis where 'is' is treated as a copula and 'walking' serves as an adjective can be duplicated in English. Though generally in English 'Socrates is walking' must be a present progressive periphrasis, even in English it occasionally can be an adjectival periphrasis. Thus consider the following case - on a dark night two men see a third walking through a field Who is it? Finally one says (with the appropriate emphasis) 'Socrates <u>is</u> walking'. Such a case would be understood as attributing to Socrates the property of being the man walking through the field - and as I have argued, this

usage is much easier in ancient Greek than in modern English.

If what I have just said concerning Greek usage is correct, then there would be no bar to our understanding the examples in $^{a}27$-30 as instances of a subject being joined to a predicate by means of the copula 'to be'. If this is true, Aristotle's point would simply be that a sentence such as 'The man walks' can be transformed into a sentence like 'The man is walking', where the latter sentence is not read as a present progressive periphrasis but rather as 'The man is a walking thing'. Aristotle would be showing how a sentence consisting of a subject and an indicative verb asserts the same thing as a sentence consisting of a subject term, a form of the copula 'to be', and a predicate term. Aristotle is showing how a predication not involving a copulative use of the verb 'to be' is equivalent to a predication which does involve a copulative use of the verb 'to be'.

Two pieces of evidence favor my reading of ἄνθρωπος βαδίζων ἐστιν as two terms, 'man' and 'walking thing', linked by means of the copula 'to be' over Cobb's present progressive periphrasis interpretation. The first is that τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός concerns accidental predications involving a form of the copula 'to be'. This determines the subject matter of the whole of $1017^{a}7$-30 as being about sentences of the form: subject term-copula-predicate term. The second is simply the way in which Aristotle understands sentence form. As I noted in Chapter One Aristotle believes that the subject term-copula-predicate term form is the form of all propositions. Thus were $^{a}27$-30 read as making the point that every sentence - even ones like 'The man walks'

which do not involve any use of the copula 'to be' - can be transformed into a sentence which does use the copulative 'to be', it would be asserting one of Aristotle's standard views. On the other hand, read in Cobb's way, lines ^{a}27-30 conflict with some of Aristotle's firmest positions.

If my comments have been correct, then the grammatical structure of the examples in ^{a}27-30 and even the point which Aristotle is trying to make should be clear. However, the initial difficulty, viz. what these examples of accidental predications are doing at the end of a discussion of essential predications, remains unsolved. It will be recalled that the difficulty arose from the conflict of (1) the examples in ^{a}27-30 are meant to be examples of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό and (2) the examples in ^{a}27-30 seem to be instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Furthermore it will be recalled that the standard way in which Ross' critics have tried to resolve this difficulty has been by denying (2) - by so interpreting the notion of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό so that the examples in ^{a}27-30 will be instances of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό. My purpose in reviewing the proposals of De Rijk, Kirwan, and Cobb has been to show the failure of these analyses which have denied (2).

But lest we despair and fall back on Ross' own solution (in effect, 'Aristotle goofed'), let us remember that we have another option - namely deny (1) thereby rejecting the claim that the examples in 1017^{a}27-30 are meant to be instances of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό. Instead of thinking that Aristotle's examples are meant to be examples of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό, what I wish to propose is that not only are the examples in ^{a}27-30 in fact instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός but they are not

meant to be anything else. Hence the troublesome dilemma has been resolved by taking the bull by the first horn.

In order to make this suggestion plausible, let us remember the general context in which lines ^{a}27-30 occur. Aristotle begins Metaphysics V.vii with a μὲν...δὲ...construction. After discussing τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in ^{a}8-22, then he turns to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. After finishing with this sense of τὸ ὄν we are then offered two other senses of 'to be'. The first two senses of 'to be' deal with its use as the logical copula, the remaining two in other roles. In between the first two senses and the remaining senses come the three examples in ^{a}27-30. Thus ^{a}27-30 forms the end of Aristotle's discussion of 'to be' as the copula.

The proposal which I wish to make is that Aristotle is not using the examples in ^{a}27-30 to illustrate τὸ ὂν καθαὑτό but rather merely close off his discussion of the copulative uses of 'to be'. Aristotle is merely trying to show us how every sentence can be transformed into a sentence of the subject term-copula-predicate term structure. The fact that his examples are instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός in part stems from the lack of similar troublesome sentences asserting τὸ ὂν καθαὑτό. But since the only purpose of the examples in ^{a}27-30 is to demarcate the instances of the copulative 'to be' from the other senses of 'to be', it does not matter whether he uses an instance of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός or an instance of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. Both would serve the same purpose - to show how every sentence can be transformed into a sentence containing the copula 'to be'. Since the extent of the μὲν...δὲ...construction ends at ^{a}30, my reading is that Aristotle is

emphasizing the difference between $^{a}8$-27 and $^{a}31$-$^{b}9$ by means of a concluding comment - lines $^{a}27$-30.[96]

The advantages of the reading I have proposed are obvious. It allows us to read τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός and τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό in the straightforward unproblematic ways for which I have already argued. It explains why examples of accidental predications occur after a discussion of essential predication. It gives a point to Aristotle's comments, one which does not conflict with Aristotle's other views and which is none other than the basis of Aristotle's whole logic, viz. that the logical structure of every sentence is a subject term linked to a predicate term by means of a form of the copula 'to be'.

In conclusion - the examples in $^{a}27$-30 are Aristotle's closing comments on 'to be' considered as the copula. They serve to show how every predication can be transformed into a sentence involving the copula 'to be'. That the examples are instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός does not in any way detract from my reading since, once we have recognized that $^{a}27$-30 are not meant to illustrate τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό but rather are meant to illustrate the copulative use of 'to be', there is no reason for us to expect an instance of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός any more than we should expect an instance of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό.

---

[96]Lest it be objected that there could be no sentences making essential predications which do not involve 'to be', remember Physics I.iii $185^{b}28$-29 where Aristotle discusses certain philosophers who, trying to banish the verb 'to be' from such sentences 'X is white' formed the artificial verb λελευκῆνται ('to-have-been-whitened'). The sentence τοῦδε λευκοῦ λελευκῆνται ('This white has-been-whitened') asserts a καθ' αὑτό connection and yet does not involve the copula 'to be'.

V

'Being' as True and 'Not-Being' as False

Having completed his discussion of the verb 'to be' and its cognates used as logical copulas in accidental and essential predications, in $1017^{a}31$-35 Aristotle now turns to a third sense of εἶναι - namely the use of the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is true and that which is false. As I noted in the opening of this chapter, it is this and the next sense of τὸ ὄν which most clearly show that the subject matter of Metaphysics V.vii concerns linguistic usage, viz. what the verb 'to be' and its cognates means, rather than concerning some thing known as Being.

The major difficulty which we face in trying to explicate this third sense of the verb εἶναι is in understanding in what way this sense differs from the previous two senses of τὸ ὄν. This difficulty is the result of the third sense of the verb εἶναι depending upon a peculiarity of Greek grammar which is difficult to represent in English. In order to appreciate how the first two senses of εἶναι are to be distinguished from this third sense, I will first discuss the grammatical peculiarity that is in question. Second I will discuss Ross' interpretation of these lines and show that though Ross' understanding is probably correct, his translation and commentary are somewhat misleading. Third I will offer a different translation of $1017^{a}31$-35 which in certain respects expresses Aristotle's intentions better than the one offered by Ross.

As I have just noted, the sense of 'to be' as <u>true</u> and 'not to be' as <u>false</u> depends upon a point of Greek grammar which is difficult to represent in modern English. Unlike modern English where the copula 'to be' must always be placed between the subject term and the predicate term (e.g., 'A man is an animal'), in ancient Greek word order was more flexible in that the copula could also be placed at the beginning or the end of a sentence. Thus in ancient Greek not only could the copula be placed between the subject term and the predicate term (e.g., ἄνθρωπος ἐστι ζῷον) but it also could either precede the subject term (e.g., ἐστι ἄνθρωπος ζῷον) or follow the predicate term (e.g., ἄνθρωπος ζῷον ἐστι).

The sense of 'to be' with which Aristotle is dealing in $1017^{a}31$-35 depends upon the difference between the meaning which the verb εἶναι has in sentences with the second order (literally: 'Is (a) man (an) animal') and the meaning which εἶναι has in sentences of either the first order (literally: '(A) man is (an) animal') or the third order (literally: '(A) man (an) animal is'). Whereas in sentences of the first or third arrangement the verb εἶναι merely has the sense of the copula, in sentences with the second order the verb has the additional sense that what follows is being asserted to be true. This sense of the verb 'to be', known to classicists as the emphatic sense of the verb εἶναι, is difficult to express in English since English word order is not variable. Thus the problem which commentators on $1017^{a}31$-35 have faced is simply how to express in English a sense of the verb εἶναι for which English lacks a perfect parallel.

In order to appreciate this difficulty, let us turn to Ross as an example. Ross renders $1017^{a}31$-35 as:

> Again, 'being' and 'is' mean that a statement is true, 'not being' that it is not true but false - and this alike in the case of affirmation and of negation; e.g. 'Socrates is musical' means that this is true, or 'Socrates is not-pale' means that this is true; but 'the diagonal of the square is not commensurate with the side' means that it is false to say it is.[96]

On this translation Aristotle's two examples of 'being' as true and one example of 'not being' as false are:

(1) 'Socrates is musical'

(2) 'Socrates is not-musical'

(3) 'The diagonal of the square is not commensurate with side'

The three examples which Aristotle offers in $^{a}33$-35 do not illustrate all the cases that the third sense of 'to be' generates. Since we have two distinctions (viz. (1) that the verb 'to be' can be used to mean that which is true and 'not to be' can be used to mean that which is false and (2) that an assertion can be of either an affirmation (e.g., 'A is B') or a denial (e.g., 'A is not B')) a complete listing would demand four cases. However, Aristotle only illustrates (1) saying that an affirmation is true, (2) saying that a denial is true, and (3) saying that an affirmation is false; he neglects the remaining case (4) saying that a denial is false. Having already rendered Aristotle's three examples in terms of an emphatic use of the English 'is' (e.g., 'Socrates is musical', etc.), Ross himself offers 'The square on the diagonal is not not-commensurate with the square on the side' as an example of the unillustrated fourth case.

---

[96]McKeon, The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 761.

Because Ross renders the three examples as having the grammatical form subject term-copula-predicate term he is forced to understand these three examples solely in terms of stress being placed on the copula. He reaches this conclusion by first correctly pointing out that Aristotle wishes to distinguish this third sense of 'to be' from the first two senses of 'to be' and then realizing that the three examples given in the Greek text appear to be instances of 'to be' used as the grammatical copula. In order to show how the three examples are not merely instances of 'to be' used as the grammatical copula, Ross concludes that in the examples 'is' must be stressed and that it is this stress which is the asserting of the statement. Ross writes

> The cases in which being means truth and not-being falsity are distinguished both from the accidental and from the essential sense of being. Evidently then an ordinary sentence of the type 'A is B' can hardly be used to illustrate this third sense, since it must be an instance of either the essential or the accidental sense. What we want is a proposition in which the truth or the falsity of another proposition is stated, and such propositions we find in those of the form 'A <u>is</u> B', 'A <u>is not</u> B', where the ordinary proposition 'A is B' is pronounced true or false.[97]

Thus Ross is urging us to understand the third sense of 'to be' in terms of an alleged distinction between the proposition 'A is B' and the proposition 'A <u>is</u> B'. Somehow Ross wishes us to distinguish between utterances of the sentence 'A is B' on the basis of the way in which 'is' is stressed - when the copula is unstressed we are not using

---

[97]Ross, <u>Metaphysics</u> Vol. I, p. 308.

the verb 'to be' to assert that which is true while when the copula is stressed we are using the verb 'to be' to assert that which is true. Ceteris paribus the same point applies for 'is not' used to assert that which is false.

Though I think it is clear that Ross correctly recognized that in 1017^{a}31-35 Aristotle wishes to demarcate the emphatic from the nonemphatic use of εἶναι, Ross errs in trying to represent the distinction in the same way in English simply because in English the stress which we place upon the copula does not affect the meaning of the proposition. Whereas in ancient Greek the different word order provides a clear basis for distinguishing the third sense of εἶναι from the first two senses, there is no comparable difference in English. One need not have Quinean worries about the identity conditions of propositions in order to suspect that the distinction which Ross is trying to draw is illusory. Just because a sentence is uttered with 'is' stressed, are we really making a statement (or uttering a proposition) different from the one we would make (or utter) if we did not emphasize 'is'? On Ross' analysis the answer must be affirmative - and yet there is no intuitive reason for such a distinction. When, under the proper circumstances, I utter the sentence 'A is B', it does not make any difference whether I whisper 'A is B' or I shout out 'A is B'. In either case the sense is the same, viz. my asserting that A is B. Of course Ross is correct in saying that the third sense of 'to be' must be a sense of 'to be' whereby we can say that propositions like 'A is B' and 'A is not B' are true or false. However, contra Ross, merely emphasizing 'is' simply does not make the proposition 'A is B' differ-

ent from the proposition 'A is B'. Hence my belief that Ross' analysis suggests a misinterpretation of Aristotle's intentions.

In order to see how we can better convey into English what Aristotle means by the use of 'to be' as indicating what is true and 'not to be' as indicating what is false, let us consider the following two examples, both of which provide in modern English some approximation to Aristotle's Greek usage.

Example I: Two sports fans are debating whether or not the Yankees did or did not win. Suppose there is something important at stake, so as the discussion proceeds the decibel level rises.

A: 'The Yankees won.'

B: 'No, that is false.'

A: 'No, that is true.'

B: 'It is not true!'

A: 'It is true!'

B: 'It is not!!'

A: 'It is!!!'

Example II: At a trial a lawyer is examining a witness. Without any emphasis or shouting, the lawyer simply asks the witness several straightforward questions and the witness responds.

C: 'Is it not true that you own the building in question?'

D: 'It is'.

C: 'And is it true that you were in the building on the day in question?'

D: 'It is not'.

I think that it is situations similar to these which Aristotle has in mind - namely a fact-asserting sense of 'to be' where we use 'is' to indicate that something is or is not the case. Normally in English we do not use 'It is' or 'It is not' in this way but we must add some other word or phrase in order to assert or deny the occurrence of a certain state of affairs. Hence we have such expressions as 'It is the case that', 'It is not the case that', 'It is true that', 'It is a fact that', etc. However, even in English, there are certain situations in which 'is' can be shorn of these additions and we obtain naked occurrences as in the examples above.

However, rendering the Greek third person singular indicative of the verb ἐστι (to be') into English by the strictly literal translation 'It is' results in gibberish. Hence, in order to clearly indicate Aristotle's intended meaning and avoid the difficulty of Ross' proposal, I have supplied the words 'the case that' in the following translation of $1017^{a}31-35$:

> Again [the] 'to be' and [the] 'is' mean that ⟨something is⟩ true, and [the] 'not to be' ⟨means⟩ that ⟨something is⟩ not true but false in a similar way as regards affirmation and denial. For example, that it is ⟨the case that⟩ Socrates ⟨is⟩ cultured, that this is true, or that it is ⟨the case that⟩ Socrates ⟨is⟩ not-white, that ⟨this is⟩ true; and that it is not ⟨the case that⟩ the diameter ⟨is⟩ commensurate, that ⟨this is⟩ false.

If read in the way that I am proposing, then there is no difficulty in seeing the way in which this third sense of 'to be' is to be distinguished from the uses of 'to be' as the logical copula. Whereas

the first two sense of 'to be' linked a subject term with a predicate term, this third sense of 'to be' applies to a whole proposition and it indicates of this whole proposition whether or not the proposition is true.

On my proposal, Aristotle's fourfold distinction would be:

(1) 'To be' used to indicate that an affirmation is true, e.g., 'It is ⟨the case that⟩ Socrates ⟨is⟩ cultured'.

(2) 'To be' used to indicate that a denial is true, e.g., 'It is ⟨the case that⟩ Socrates ⟨is⟩ not-white'.

(3) 'Not to be' used to indicate that an affirmation is false, e.g., 'It is not ⟨the case that⟩ the diameter ⟨is⟩ commensurate'.

(4) 'Not to be' used to indicate that a denial is false, (Following Ross' example) 'It is not the case that the diameter is not incommensurate'.

The semantic rule for this sense of 'to be' is provided in the first sentence of $^{a}31$-35, viz.

'To be' means that something is true

'Not to be' means that something is false.

In summary - Aristotle's third use of the verb 'to be' and its cognates is the use of 'to be' and 'not to be' where these mean asserting that a proposition is true and asserting that a proposition is false. Though in general, English usage requires qualification by means of such words as 'true', 'false', 'the case that', or 'the fact that', in ancient Greek such qualifications were not explicitly needed. However, as I have pointed out, even in modern English there are

situations in which 'to be' and 'not to be' carry a sense which is somewhat similar to the one which Aristotle is discussing in these lines.[98]

---

[98]For further discussions of this sense of the verb 'to be' cf. Metaphysics VI.iv and IX.x.

VI

'Being' as Potential and as Actual

In this section I will discuss the fourth sense of the verb 'to be' which Aristotle mentions in Metaphysics V.vii - namely the use of 'to be' and its cognates to indicate both what is actual and what is potential. Numerous commentators have analyzed these remarks in terms of actual being and potential being.[99] As I shall show, treating $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$ as a discussion of how we 'is' both what is now the case and what potentially is the case leads to a much more commonsensical interpretation of these lines - an interpretation which is perfectly conformable to the actual details of both Greek and English linguistic usage. In fact, I hope that the very simplicity of my interpretation of these lines will be sufficient evidence to convince anyone who still remains sceptical concerning the main exegetical point which I have been seeking to establish in this chapter - that Metaphysics V.vii is not an exercise in extralinguistic ontology or a discussion of existence or an analysis of predicates in general, but rather an attempt to understand the role played by the Greek verb εἶναι ('to be') and its various cognates.

In $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$ Aristotle writes:

> Again [the] 'to be' and [the] 'being' mean on the one hand the stated as potential and on the other hand the ⟨stated⟩ as actual of the previous ⟨modes of⟩ say-

---

[99] E.g., Owens, The Doctrine of Being, p. 307.

> ing. For both the seeing spoken as potential and the ⟨seeing spoken⟩ as actual we say to be seeing. And in the same way, both the being able to use knowledge and the using ⟨we say⟩ to know; and both that to which already belongs rest and the being able to rest ⟨we say to be⟩ resting. And likewise also as regards substances. For we say Hermes to be in the stone, and the half of the line ⟨to be in the whole⟩, and grain ⟨to be in the⟩ not yet ripe. And when it is possible and when not, elsewhere one must define.

The crucial phrase in this passage is 'of the previous modes of saying'. This phrase refers back to the three other ways of using the verb 'to be'. Whereas the first, second, and third senses of 'to be' are independent, the fourth sense of 'to be' is simply two ways in which the other three senses can be said. In other words, Aristotle does not consider this fourth sense coordinate with the other three but rather simply our ability to use the other three senses of 'to be' not merely according to what is actual but also according to what is potential. If my analysis of the first three senses of 'to be' is correct, what Aristotle is asserting is that we can use the verb 'to be' or its cognates in the three schemata (1) 'A is (accidentally) B', (2) 'A is (essentially) B', and (3) 'It is the case that A is B', not only when sentences of these forms are actually true but also when they are potentially true.

In order to show that this is the correct reading let us simply run through Aristotle's examples and show how they will fit my interpretation. Aristotle's first case concerns sight - the way in which we can use the verb 'to be' and its cognates to indicate both that which potentially sees and that which actually sees. Suppose we were classifying things which possessed sight and things which did not and we came

to consider a new born puppy or kitten which has not yet opened its eyes. We could quite straightforwardly say 'The puppy is sighted' even though it does not now in fact see. Why? Because it potentially sees, i.e., it is the sort of thing which is capable of seeing. On the other hand when we speak of mature dogs as sighted (e.g., 'This dog is sighted'), we use the verb 'to be' to indicate that which is in fact actual.

In the same way, a person who knows something (e.g., geometry) only possesses this knowledge in the fullest sense when they are actually using this knowledge (e.g., at those times when they are solving geometry problems). But clearly at all times we can say of such a person 'He is knowledgeable of geometry' because the person is able to use that knowledge to solve geometry problems. Hence again we can use the verb 'to be' of that which is not yet actual.

Similarly, we can use the verb 'to be' to speak of some thing which is not now resting as resting because that thing is potentially resting. Thus I can say of my automobile 'This is a resting object' even when my car is in fact in motion. Why? Because potentially it could be brought to rest. Contrast this to a discussion of electrons (or, for Aristotle, the heavenly spheres) which are constantly in motion and cannot be brought to rest. Hence you can not truly say 'This electron (or heavenly sphere) is at rest'.

Turning from attributes of substances to substances themselves, suppose we were walking with a sculptor through his studio which was filled with unworked blocks of marble. The person points first to one block, saying 'This is the Hermes' and then to another block, declaring

'This is the Aphrodite'. What does he mean by these assertions? Surely the various chunks of marble are not at this moment the works he is envisioning. Yet they are potentially these statues - the sculptor intends to make this piece into a statue of Hermes and that piece into a statue of Aphrodite. Hence these blocks of marble are not now statues of Hermes and Aphrodite, but potentially they are.

Aristotle's next example - that half a line is potentially contained in the whole line - is somewhat unfortunate since, for Aristotle, geometrical objects such as lines are not substances. Whether we explain the example in terms of the fact that even though geometrical objects are not substances they in some ways grammatically function like substances or we follow Ross and say 'The example is a concession to Pythagorean and Platonic views',[100] the intent of the illustration is clear - namely the way in which a line segment is potentially in a line. Aristotle's concern is that a geometer can speak of parts of lines which have not yet been demarcated because they potentially can be demarcated (e.g., 'This half of the line is twice as long as that line').

Aristotle's final example - 'The grain ⟨to be in the⟩ not yet ripe' - refers to a case such as the following: Suppose you were walking with a farmer through his newly sown fields. Even though his seeds have not yet even sprouted, he says 'This field is filled with corn' and 'That field is filled with lettuce'. At this time these just-planted fields are not corn or lettuce since to be corn is to be a certain

---

[100]Ross, Metaphysics Vol. I, p. 309.

sort of a plant, so many feet high, with ears, etc. and to be lettuce is to be a certain sort of green, leafy vegetable, etc. and this farmer's fields simply do not now contain such plants. However, potentially this field contains corn and that one contains lettuce and hence we can use the verb 'to be' and its cognates to indicate what is not now actual but is instead merely potential. Thus, everyone would understand such sentences as being about what is not now but hopefully will be in the future.

Not merely does the simplicity of my interpretation and the ease with which it fits the text of $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$ strongly favor reading the fourth sense of τὸ ὄν in the manner that I suggest but two features of the Greek text also support my reading. The first is the occurrence of the adjective ῥητόν ('stated' or 'spoken') in $^{b}1$ and its adverb ῥητῶς in $^{b}3$.[101] These terms indicate that rather than being concerned about actual and potential being, where 'being' is understood either as some sort of thing or as a way of designating everything that exists, Aristotle's emphasis is linguistic and on what we say. The second is Aristotle's final sentence where he points put that he has not yet said when something is possible and when it is not and that he will do this elsewhere (namely in Metaphysics IX.i-ix). But if we read 'being' as a general way of talking about everything which is, we will be unable to distinguish a discussion of τὸ ὂν ἐντελεχείᾳ and τὸ ὂν δυνάμει from a discussion of actuality and potentiality neat. Since it is clear

---

[101] Reading with mss. EJΠ against Ross' adoption of the reading of A^{b}, Alexander, and Asclepius.

that in $^{a}35$-$^{b}8$ he has been talking about actuality and potentiality, the obvious move is to argue that Aristotle has not been concerned with actuality and potentiality per se but rather the actuality and potentiality of something. My reading clearly fits this requirement.

In his discussion of $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$ De Rijk attacks the interpretation of the fourth sense of the verb 'to be' as the use of the other three senses of 'to be' according to what is actual and according to what is potential. He does this for two reasons. First, he claims that the distinction would be inapplicable to the third sense of 'to be', viz. 'to be' as true and 'not to be' as false. Second, he alleges that Metaphysics IX.x, where Aristotle offers the same three senses of τὸ ὄν as the second, third, and fourth senses of Metaphysics V.vii, confirms his suspicions. According to De Rijk, rather than describing the use of 'to be' according to what is actual and according to what is potential in terms of 'to be' used according to what is accidental, 'to be' used according to what is essential, and 'to be' as true (as Metaphysics V.vii seems to do), Metaphysics IX.x seems to describe the use of 'to be' according to what is actual and according to what is potential solely in terms of the use of 'to be' according to what is essential. As De Rijk puts his case:

> Prof. Ross (Metaph. I 309) suggests that this sense of being (viz. actual and potential being) covers the others, but I think he is mistaken. In the first place it seems to be impossible that this sense of being could be applicable to the distinction 'being as truth' and 'non-being as false' qua talis. Moreover the parallel passage Θ10, 1051 a 34-b 2 puts it beyond all question that the word τούτων (b1) only refers to the categories, for in that passage the distinction 'being as truth' and 'not-being as false' is only mentioned

afterwards.[102]

De Rijk then quotes Ross' own translation of $1051^{a}34\text{-}^{b}2$:

> The terms 'being' and 'non-being' are employed firstly with reference to the categories, and second with reference to the potency or actuality of these or their non-potency or non-actuality, and thirdly in the sense of true and false...

Concerning the inapplicability of applying the use of 'to be' according to what is actual and according to what is potential to the sense of 'to be' as true and 'not to be' as false, De Rijk is simply mistaken. Reading the third sense of 'to be' in the way in which I did in the last section, we clearly can use that sense of 'to be' not only of what is actually true now but also of what is potentially true. Ceteris paribus the same point applies for the use of 'not to be' as false.

In order to show this, let us simply modify Example I of the last section. Instead of arguing about whether the Yankees did win, let the present topic of dispute be whether the Yankees will win.

A: 'The Yankees will win.'

B: 'The Yankees will not win.'

A: 'It is true that the Yankees will win.'

B: 'It is not true that the Yankees will win.'

A: 'It is true!'

---

[102]De Rijk, The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy, p. 54.

B: 'It is not true!'

A: 'It is!!'

B: 'It is not!!!'

What is being affirmed by A and denied by B is something which has not yet occurred. It is only potentially the case that the Yankees will win or that they will lose. And yet clearly both A and B are using the same sense of 'to be' as we discussed in the previous section, only this time the verb 'to be' is being used to indicate the truth or falsity of that which is potential whereas in our earlier use of this example it was being used to indicate the truth or falsity of that which is actual.[103]

De Rijk's second objection also fails. It would appear that in Metaphysics IX.x the reason why the use of 'to be' as true follows rather than precedes the use of 'to be' according to what is potential and according to what is actual can probably be explained simply on stylistic grounds. Metaphysics IX.x is a discussion of 'to be' as true and 'not to be' as false. Aristotle has altered the order of presentation from the one he used in Metaphysics V.vii in order to facilitate moving from the enumeration of the senses of τὸ ὄν to the main subject matter of Metaphysics IX.x - the change of order does not itself indicate that τὸ ὂν δυνάμει and τὸ ὂν ἐντελεχείᾳ mean something other than what I have already indicated. Furthermore the plural genitive demonstrative τούτων ('of these') need not have the reference De Rijk

---

[103]By the appropriate simple modifications, the second example of the previous section could also be used to illustrate the use of 'to be' as potentially true.

alleges. A more literal translation than Ross' would be:

> But since 'being' and 'not-being' are said on the one hand according to the figures of predication, and again according to the potentiality and actuality of these [τούτων] or the contraries, and again as true or false...

De Rijk reads τούτων as referring to 'the figures of predication' and hence only to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό. However, it can just as well be taken as referring back to τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν ('being' and 'not-being') in which case this passage could yield the same sense as I read in $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$. Hence neither of De Rijk's points provides any grounds for rejecting my interpretation of $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$.

The semantic rule for this fourth sense of τὸ ὄν was provided in the opening sentence of this section, in $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}2$:

> 'To be' means ⟨what is⟩ stated as potential ⟨according to⟩ the previous ⟨modes of⟩ saying 'to be'
>
> 'To be' means ⟨what is⟩ stated as actual ⟨according to⟩ the previous ⟨modes of⟩ saying 'to be'

In conclusion - in this section I have argued that the fourth sense of the verb 'to be' which Aristotle presents in Metaphysics V.vii is not so much a separate sense of the verb 'to be' as it is the saying of the other three senses both according to what is actually the case and according to what is potentially the case. As I have shown, in modern English we in fact use the verb 'to be' and its cognates in a manner perfectly comparable to the sense Aristotle discusses in $1017^{a}35$-$^{b}9$.

APPENDIX

On the Meaning of κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ' αὑτό

In this appendix I will examine three passages - Posterior Analytics I.iv, Metaphysics V.xviii, and Metaphysics V.xxx - in which Aristotle discusses the meaning of the terms κατὰ συμβεβηκός ('accidentally' or 'according to accident' or more literally: 'according to what is happening') and καθ'αὑτό ('essentially' or 'according to essence' or more literally: 'according to itself'), and more particularly, the meaning of κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to accidentally') and καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν ('to belong to essentially'). Though in no way do I consider this appendix a comprehensive treatment of these distinctions, it will provide some illumination of my interpretation of the κατὰ συμβεβηκός/καθ'αὑτό distinction of Metaphysics V.vii. Whereas I believe that the three passages I am about to discuss are in fact representative of Aristotle's views, to defend this position would demand a much more extensive discussion. However, even should these passages not be typical of Aristotle's use of the terms κατὰ συμβεβηκός and καθ'αὑτό, it is still the case that since each passage figured prominently in my analysis of Metaphysics V.vii, I clearly owe the reader some account of these three texts.

As should be obvious from Chapter Four, considerable light can be shed on the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό by an examination of the meaning of either the technical term καθ'αὑτό alone or the expression καθ'αὑτὸ

ὑπάρχειν. Unfortunately the importance of this inquiry to the study of Metaphysics V.vii has generally been overlooked. The three major texts with which I will deal are: (1) Posterior Analytics I.iv (in which Aristotle discusses the various meanings of the term καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν), (2) Metaphysics V.xviii (the "dictionary" discussion of καθ' αὑτό), and (3) Metaphysics V.xxx (the "dictionary" discussion of κατὰ συμβεβηκός).

I

One of the most extensive discussions of the meaning of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν occurs in Posterior Analytics I.iv. As I have already noted in Chapter Four, since for Aristotle the use of the verb ὑπάρχειν ('to hold good of' or 'to belong to') parallels the use of the verb εἶναι ('to be'), understanding the meaning of the phrase καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν will clarify the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό. In this chapter Aristotle attempts to clarify the meanings of several terms which are crucial in his account of ἐπιστήμη ('scientific knowledge'). In particular, he attempts to define what we mean by these terms: (1) κατὰ παντός ('according to all'), (2) καθ' αὑτό ('according to essence'), and (3) καθόλου ('universal' of literally, 'according to the whole').

Concerning the first term - κατὰ παντός - Aristotle tells us in 73^a28-34 that by this we mean what is always predicated of all individuals of a certain sort. Thus if x_1 and x_2 are both individuals of a given kind, should F be said of x_1 and not of x_2 or should F be said of x_1 at some time t_1 but not at some other time t_2, F will not be said according to all x's. Aristotle defends his definition of κατὰ παντός by noting that when we seek to show that a predication is not κατὰ παντός we do so by attempting to find either a single individual to which the predicate does not apply or a single time at which the predicate does not apply.

Given this definition of κατὰ παντός it is clear that Aristotle wishes all universal affirmative propositions to be propositions which are κατὰ παντός. Thus it is irrelevant whether or not the proposition involves predicating a property, a genus, a differentia, or the defini-

tion of the subject - what is important is that the predicate applies to all instances of the subject. To be specific, propositions such as 'All human beings are animals', 'All human beings are rational', and 'All human beings are capable of becoming cultured' are κατὰ παντός even though in the first two cases the predicates belong καθ'αὑτό (in the sense Aristotle describes in 73^{a}34-37), while in the remaining case the predicates do not.

In 73^{a}34-^{b}24 Aristotle analyzes the meaning of the term καθ'αὑτό. His treatment distinguishes four different senses of this term, of which only the first two prove to be relevant to his account of ἐπιστήμη. It is these first two senses of καθαὑτό, senses which Aristotle explicates in terms of certain things belonging to certain other things, that make this discussion relevant to the interpretation of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

Aristotle's first sense of καθ'αὑτό is the sense in which the essential parts of a thing belong to that thing, namely by being parts of the definition of that thing. In 73^{a}34-37 he writes

> By 'according to essences' ⟨I mean⟩ as many as belong in the what-is [τί ἐστι ; less literally: 'essence']. For example, a line to a triangle and a point to a line. For the essence [οὐσία] of these is ⟨composed⟩ out of these, and it inheres in the formula which states the what-is [τί ἐστι].

In order to understand Aristotle's point we should focus on his definition of this first sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν before considering his two examples. Aristotle's point is that if some thing inheres in the formula of the essence, that thing belongs καθ'αὑτό. Now since

Aristotelian definitions consist of the proximate genus and the differentia, this seems to imply that by inhering in the defining formula Aristotle means either the genus or the differentia. Such a reading would involve identifying belonging κατὰ παντός with being predicated κατὰ παντός.

Unfortunately, as Aristotle's two examples show, no such identification is adequate. Thus Aristotle's two examples show, no such identification is adequate. Thus Aristotle writes that the reason why a line belongs κατὰ παντός to a triangle and a point belongs κατὰ παντός to a line is that the defining formulae of 'triangle' and 'line' contain the terms 'line' and 'point'. Thus, if the definition of 'triangle' were 'a plane figure bounded by three straight lines', line would belong to triangle in virtue of 'line' being a part of the defining formula of 'triangle'. What refutes the facile identification in the previous paragraph of belonging κατὰ παντός with κατὰ παντός predication is that the predications 'A triangle is a line' and 'A line is a point' are false. 'Line' and 'point' cannot be truly predicated of 'triangle' and 'line' respectively. Rather they are components or constituents.

However, no major difficulties with this passage need emerge so long as we bear in mind the fact that the distinguishing feature of belonging κατὰ παντός was not X being truly predicated of Y but rather X inhering in the definition of Y. Thus certain components of the definition of Y will belong κατὰ παντός to Y even though they are not truly predicable of Y. Hence nothing prevents us, in fact the definition of κατὰ παντὸς ὑπάρχειν obviously allows us, to say that the genus and the differentia both belong κατὰ παντός to the subject since both the genus and

the differentia inhere in the definition. One can even say that the combination of both the genus and the differentia belongs καθ' αὑτό to the subject since there is the clear, though admittedly curious, sense in which the definition inheres in itself.

However, the relationship of the genus, the differentia, and the definition to the subject is different from the relationship of other components in the definition to the subject. Whereas other components in the definition of the subject are not truly predicable of the subject, the definition, the genus, and the differentia are truly predicable of the subject.

To illustrate, if we allow 'a plane figure bounded by three straight lines' to be the definition of 'triangle', we can then say line, plane, and figure all belong καθ' αὑτό to a triangle. However, 'plane figure' is the genus of 'triangle' and 'being bounded by three straight lines' is one of the differentia of that genus. Thus, even though we cannot truly say 'A triangle is a line', we can go on and say 'A triangle <u>is</u> a plane figure' or 'A triangle <u>is</u> a plane figure bounded by three straight lines' because a triangle <u>is</u> its genus, its differentia, and its definition but <u>is</u> not a line. Thus these sorts of predications will form a subclass of these things which belong καθ' αὑτό.

The second sense of καθ' αὑτό which Aristotle lists is that whereby we say that X belongs καθ' αὑτό to Y in virtue of Y's being included in the definition of X. In $73^{a}37$-$^{b}3$ Aristotle writes

> And to those of the things belonging to these, where these inhere in the formula making evident the what-is [τί ἐστι]. For example, the straight and the curved belongs to line, and the odd and even, the prime and

> compound, and square and oblong to number. And to each of these, on the one hand line and on the other hand number, inheres in the formula which states the what-is [τί ἐστι].

In this second sense of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν, Aristotle is not focusing on something which inheres in the definition belonging to the thing being defined, but rather the fact that the thing being defined has inhering in its definition that to which it belongs. In virtue of this curious relationship it becomes impossible for that which is being defined to belong to anything else.

Consider Aristotle's examples. The reason why being straight and being curved belong καθ' αὑτό to line is not that the definition of 'line' includes the term 'straight' or the term 'curved' but rather that when we define being straight we must make reference to lines by saying that it is an attribute belonging to lines of a certain sort, namely those which are the shortest line between 'curved' belonging to 'line'. For the attributes of numbers, we can draw the same conclusion as made in the case of lines - the definitions of 'odd' and 'even', 'prime' and 'compound' (i.e., not prime but the product of two other numbers neither of which is the number one), and 'square' and 'oblong' (i.e., being the product of some integer multiplied by itself and being the product of some integer multiplied by a different integer) all contain the term 'number'.

Though the examples which Aristotle offers for the second use of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν are all pairs, this sense of the term applies equally well to groups of three - to use Ross' example, equilateral, isoceles, and scalene belonging to triangle - or of some larger number. The only

thing which is important is that what belongs contains in its definition that to which it belongs.[1]

It is by no means coincidental that attributes which belong καθ' αὑτό in this second sense occur in pairs (or triads or ...). In fact, later in this same chapter Aristotle shows why they occur in this way. At the close of his discussion of the meaning of καθ' αὑτὰ ὑπάρχειν at 73^{b}19-22 Aristotle points out that it is a consequence of the way in which attributes of the sort being discussed relate to the genus of the subject. After describing straight and curved as opposites belonging to lines and odd and even as opposites belonging to numbers, he writes

> For the contrary is either a privation or a contradictory in the same genus. For example, the non-odd in number is even since it follows. Thus if it is necessary to either affirm or deny, it is also necessary for the essentials to belong.

It is in virtue of the fact that these attributes belong to the genus of the subject that there must be either a privation of the attribute or a contrary of the attribute in the same genus. Should it be the case that the attribute will be coextensive with the genus, then the attribute will readily belong to the subject in virtue of the genus.

There is an important consequence of this explanation of the second sense of καθ' αὑτὰ ὑπάρχειν - namely that anything which belongs essentially to some other thing in this second sense is predicable of that

---

[1]Ross, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics, p. 519.

to which it belongs. In other words, should X belong καθ' αὑτό to Y in this second sense, Y does not merely inhere in the definition of X but we can also say, using the 'is' of predication, that 'That which is X is Y' or, more simply, that 'The Y is X'. The reason for this stems from the fact that every member of the genus must possess one of the pair (or triad or...) of opposites in virtue of its being a member of the genus. In other words, being a member of the genus X (say line) implies being either Y or Z (say straight or curved). Since the genus is predicable of the individual and since such opposites belong to the individual in virtue of their belonging to the genus, such opposites will also be predicable of the individual.

Aristotle makes it clear in several places that these first two senses of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν-the sense in which the parts of the definition of a thing belongs to that thing and the sense in which a thing cannot be defined without referring to what it belongs - to be the only significant ones for his account of ἐπιστήμη. In fact, nowhere else in Posterior Analytics does Aristotle even mention the third and fourth senses of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν, all later references being to the first and second meanings. Two passages which indicate the significance of the two already discussed meanings of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν occur in the immediate context of Posterior Analytics I.iv.

The first such passage is a short summary occurring after the presentation of the second meaning of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν. That Aristotle offers such a summary before even mentioning the remaining two senses indicates the importance he attaches to the ones he has already discussed. In $73^{b}3$-5 Aristotle writes

> And likewise as regards other cases, I say such things ⟨belong⟩ to one another according to essences [κατ' οὐσία]. But as many as belong in neither way are accidents [συμβεβηκότα]. For example, the cultured or white ⟨belonging⟩ to an animal.

That this whole remark concerns both the first and second senses of κατὰ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν follows from his speaking in $^{b}4$ of 'in neither way'. In passing it pays to note that this passage is Aristotle's first mention of συμβεβηκότα. According to $^{b}4$-5, if X does not belong to Y in either of the two senses already discussed, X is an accident of Y. Thus 'cultured' and 'white' are συμβεβηκότα of animal.

The second indication of the importance attached to the first two senses of κατὰ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν is more clear. Occurring after the treatment of the remaining uses, Aristotle adds

> Therefore statements concerning unqualified objects of scientific knowledge are according to essences when the things being predicated inhere ⟨in their subject's definition⟩ or it is through these [i.e., the subjects] that the things being predicated inhere. For it is not possible not to belong either unqualifiedly or as opposites.[2]

The first manner in which such scientific statements can be made to corresponds to the first sense of κατὰ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν while the alternative way corresponds to the second meaning of κατὰ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν.

Returning to the remaining senses of κατὰ αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν, it is clear that since only the first two senses are important in ἐπιστήμη that Aristotle lists a third sense which concerns the manner in which items

---

[2] Posterior Analytics I.iv $73^{b}16$-19.

in the nine non-οὐσία categories depend upon items in the category of οὐσία and a fourth sense which concerns the relation of two events solely for the sake of completeness.

With regard to the third sense of καθ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν, in 73^b5-10 Aristotle writes

> Again what is not said of a subject [καθ'ὑποκειμένου] other than itself. For the walking being something different from what is walking and the white ⟨being something different from what is⟩ white. But οὐσία and as many as indicate an individual [τόδε τι] are not something else but are just what they are. Indeed, I say those which are not of a subject [μὴ καθ'ὑποκειμένου] are according to themselves [καθαύτά] while those which are of a subject are accidents [συμβεβηκότα].

In order to see the difference between this third sense and its predecessors it is only necessary to point out that whereas the first two meanings concerned the relationships between two terms, one belonging in a certain way to the other, the present passage deals with isolated terms. Aristotle's point is that whenever we take an item, say F, in one of the non-οὐσία categories we must say that that which is F is different from F - that being F can only be true of something which is an οὐσία. However, should we take an item from the category of οὐσία, say G, we can say that that which is G is G. Thus there is a clear sense in which οὐσία terms are said according to themselves while non-οὐσία terms just happen to another. This distinction, that between the category of οὐσία and the accidental categories, is really a different way of putting the same point that in Metaphysics IV.ii becomes the assertion that all statements of τὸ ὄν are said πρὸς οὐσίαν.

Aristotle's description of the remaining sense of καθ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν

is

> And again another manner is, on the one hand, what belongs to each thing through itself is essential, while on the other hand ⟨what does not belong to each thing⟩ through itself is accidental. For example, if while walking it lightened, it is accidental since it is not through walking that it lightened but we say this happened. But if through itself, then it is essential. For example if an animal while being slaughtered died and as a result of the slaughtering, that is through its being slaughtered. But through its being slaughtered it did not just happen to die. (73^b10-16)

Aristotle's concern is over connections between two events. For certain events we say that one occurred through the other while for other events we say that one simply happened after the other. Aristotle's distinction is that between one event being the result of the other event and its simply being a coincidence that the two events occur together. When we have a proper connection between two events we can say that the one belongs καθ' αὑτό to the other while in those cases where there is no such link we say that it was merely a coincidence that the second event followed the first.

At this point, before examining the other texts, perhaps it is appropriate to ask what light Aristotle's discussion of the meaning of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν and κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχειν has shed on the meaning of τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό and τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός . It almost goes without saying that the third and fourth senses of καθ' αὑτό and their corresponding senses of κατὰ συμβεβηκός are irrelevant to Metaphysics V.vii 1017^a 7-30. Not only does the fact that 73^b5-10 concerns single isolated terms and 73^b10-16 concerns events mitigate against their being related

to a discussion of the relation between two terms, but there is the even more telling objection that it is impossible to reconcile these two senses of καθ'αὐτὸ ὑπάρχειν to what Aristotle says concerning τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

It will be recalled that I have already pointed out that Aristotle says in 1017^{a}23-24 that τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό can be said in as many ways as there are categories. But the third sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν can only be truly said of terms from the category of οὐσία and that all non-οὐσία category terms are in this sense accidental. In the case of the fourth sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν it is not even clear how this usage which concerns relations between events is to be related to the categories. Hence let us consider the relation of the first two senses of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

Again, it will be recalled that part of what initially led to the present inquiry was the claim that εἶναι and ὑπάρχειν have the same force, or, as Kirwan puts it, that ὑπάρχειν is the 'technical counterpart' of εἶναι.[3] In order to display the relevance of the discussion of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν to τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό we must realize that εἶναι and ὑπάρχειν do not have the same force in all contexts and that whereas all copulative use of 'to be' can be expressed in terms of the verb 'to belong' there are certain uses of 'to belong' which are inappropriately expressed in terms of the copula 'to be'. More particularly, ὑπάρχειν can express not only the belonging of a predicate to its subject but also the belonging of a constituent to a

---

[3]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 141.

whole. However, as we have already noted, the meaning of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός is restricted to 'to be' when used in propositions. Hence these wider uses of ὑπάρχειν where it expresses being a constituent of rather than being predicated of are irrelevant to our understanding Metaphysics V.vii. But as regards the remaining narrower use of ὑπάρχειν where it expresses being predicated of, where in other words it truly is the technical counterpart of εἶναι, we will have an elucidating parallel. To put this whole paragraph succintly, not all uses of ὑπάρχειν will be relevant to understand τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό but only those where X belonging to Y can be expressed as X is predicated of Y.

Now in the discussion of the first sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν it has already been pointed out that by defining this sense as merely being that which inheres in the definition of the thing Aristotle has covered both the predicates and the constituents of a thing. If we recognize that the constituents are irrelevant to the discussion of εἶναι we are left to conclude that those things which Aristotle says belong καθ'αὑτό are also those things which are said to be καθ'αὑτό - and this implies that τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό is the predication of those things which inhere in the definition not merely as constituents of the definition but rather as predicable constituents of the definition. Since these predicable constituents of the definition were the genus, the differentia, and the definition of the subject, we can say that whenever a statement's predicate is the genus, the differentia, or the definition of the statement's subject, that statement is the assertion of τὸ ὂν καθ'αὑτό.

In the case of the second sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν it has already been noted that what Aristotle is here envisioning must involve one

thing being predicated of another. Not unlike the first sense, in this second one of the pair (or triad or...) of opposites will have its appropriate genus predicated of it, i.e., if we say that X (e.g., being a line) belongs to Y (e.g., being straight) that is equivalent to saying 'The straight ⟨thing⟩ is a line'. Such a sentence is curious in that one of the opposites belonging to individuals of a genus is being predicated of the genus. It is a reverse of the normal order of predication since the real logical subject of the sentence, 'line', is here being treated as the predicate. However, this implies that the sentence 'The straight ⟨thing⟩ is a line' is really equivalent to the sentence 'The straight line is a line' - a sentence in which the predicate belongs καθ'αὑτό to the subject in the first sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν. Thus there is a curious way in which instances of this second type of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν can be reduced to instances of the first type of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν .

To sum up - after examining the various senses of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν discussed in Posterior Analytics I.iv there is some suggestion that the κατὰ συμβεβηκός /καθ'αὑτό distinction in Metaphysics V.vii should be understood as the distinction between the predicate's not inhering in the subject and the predicate's inhering in the subject.

II

Let us now turn to Aristotle's discussion of the meaning of καθ'αὑτό in Metaphysics V.xviii. Not only will the treatment of these remarks complement Aristotle's analysis of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν in Posterior Analytics I.iv but it also will provide the foundation for the interpretation of Metaphysics V.xxx in Section III.

Metaphysics V.xviii consists of an analysis of various meanings of the two terms καθ' ὅ ('that in virtue of which' or 'that by which') and καθ'αὑτό. After offering several senses of καθ' ὅ, Aristotle proceeds to give five different ways in which the term καθ'αὑτό can be used. The first sense of καθ'αὑτό, given 1022[a]25-27, is a definitional sense by which we say that the definition of a thing is καθ'αὑτό to that thing.

> For one [thing which is] καθ'αὑτό is the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι [the essence, or more literally: 'the what it was to be'] of each. For example, Callias is καθ'αὑτό Callias, i.e., the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of Callias.

In this sense of καθ'αὑτό the only thing which is καθ'αὑτό to anything else is the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι. Via this meaning, 'being a rational animal' would be καθ'αὑτό to 'man' since the former states the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of the latter. However, since only the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is καθ'αὑτό in this sense, neither the parts of the definition - i.e., the genus and the differentia - nor what logically follows from either the definition or its parts will in this usage belong καθ'αὑτό. Hence in this sense of καθ'αὑτό, statements such as 'Man is rational', 'Man is an animal', and 'Man possesses tactile sense organs' (possessing tactile

sense organs being, for Aristotle, a necessary consequent of being an animal) will not be καθ' αὑτό. Only the assertion of the definition, that is, the statement of the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι , will in this sense of καθ' αὑτό constitute a καθ' αὑτό assertion.[4]

The second sense of καθ' αὑτό which Aristotle offers is similar to the first sense of καθ' αὑτό in Posterior Analytics I.iv. In this latter passage, Aristotle defined X's belonging to Y as X's belonging in the what-is, the τί ἐστι , of Y. As I have already shown, such a definition implied that not only did this definition cover καθ' αὑτό predicates but καθ' αὑτό constituents as well. In particular, it will be recalled that the examples given by Aristotle were nonpredicable constituents, e.g., 'line' to 'triangle' and 'point' to 'line'. In Metaphysics V.xviii Aristotle offers us the same definition as in Posterior Analytics 73^{a}34-37. However in the Metaphysics, Aristotle's example is a predicate.

In 1022^{a}27-29 Aristotle writes

> And one [meaning of καθ' αὑτό is] as many as belong in the what-is. For example, Callias is an animal καθ' αὑτό since 'animal' inheres in the formula; for Callias is a certain animal.

---

[4]Any impression to the contrary notwithstanding, the phrase τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καλλίᾳ does not commit Aristotle to the doctrine of individual forms. As I understand the phrase, the "what it was to be" of Callias is τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ἀνθρώπῳ ['what it was to be a man']. In other words, Callias' essence is the essence of a man. The consequence of this is of course that all men possess the same essence, viz. the essence of man. However, since being a man is not to be some general character but rather to be a certain sort of individual, we can preserve both Aristotle's claim that all men possess the same essence and his claim that all men are numerically distinct. However, a full explanation of how the theory of individual forms misunderstands Aristotle's account of substantial form demands separate treatment.

In his commentary Ross remarks that the difference between the examples given in Posterior Analytics I.iv and the example offered in Metaphysics V.xviii shows that in the former passage what is '...in question are not the genus and differentiae but the simpler entities involved in a complex entity (e.g., line in triangle)' while in the latter text the elements of the essence are its genus and its differentia.[5]

However, the evidence for this claim is inadequate. Just as in the case of An. Post. 73[a]34-37, the examples of nonpredicable καθ'αὑτό constituents did not show that all that Aristotle intended by the first sense of καθ'αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν were nonpredicable καθ'αὑτό constituents, so the fact that in Metaphysics 1022[a]27-29 Aristotle's example is a predicable καθ'αὑτό constituent does not show that he does not also intend to cover nonpredicable καθ'αὑτό constituents. In both passages, the definitions are the same and therefore in the absence of contrary evidence (the fact of Aristotle's choosing an example of a certain sort being perfectly compatible with my reading), we are forced to conclude that in both places Aristotle intends the same thing, i.e., both predicable and nonpredicable constituents.

In passing, Kirwan's remark that these two senses of καθ'αὑτό 'parallel Posterior Analytics I.iv 73[b]5-10' is completely mistaken.[6] As I have already shown, Posterior Analytics 73[b]5-10 concerns the way in which items in the nine non-οὐσία categories can be said to be

---

[5]Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics, Vol. I, p. 334.

[6]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 168.

accidental to items in the category of οὐσία. Nothing like that is at issue in 1022^{a}24-29. The first sense of καθ' αὑτό in Metaphysics V.xviii is completely contained within the second sense - and this second sense of καθ' αὑτό is identical with the sense given in Posterior Analytics I.iv 73^{a}34-37.

The third sense of καθ' αὑτό is similar to the second sense of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν given in Posterior Analytics I.iv. However, the manner in which Aristotle puts his point in these two places differs significantly. Whereas the Posterior Analytics passage was restricted to those predicates which necessarily belonged to a certain subject, in virtue of the subject's inhering in the definition of the predicate, the present passage is expressed in terms of primary recipients.

In 1022^{a}29-32 Aristotle writes

> And furthermore [something is καθ' αὑτό] if it or a certain one of its parts is the primary recipient. For example, a surface is καθ' ἑαυτήν [in virtue of itself] white and the man is καθ' αὑτό alive, since the soul, which is the primary recipient of life, is a certain part of a man.

This sense of καθ' αὑτό is the sense in which X belongs to Y when Y is the primary recipient of X. Now if it were the case that one thing could have two or more primary recipients, then the sense of καθ' αὑτό given in 1022^{a}29-32 would in fact be much broader than the sense of καθ' αὑτό given in 73^{a}37-^{b}3. In such a case, there would be a many-one rather than a one-one correlation between that which belongs and that to which it primarily belongs.

However, Aristotle explicitly believes that for any X there is one

and only one Y to which it primarily belongs. In Physics VII.iv 248^{b} 21-249^{a}3 in the course of a discussion on the commensurability of motion, Aristotle declares that

> Can it be that the incommensurability of two things in respect of any attribute is due to a difference in that which is primarily capable of carrying the attribute? Thus horse and dog are so commensurable that we may say which is whiter, since that which primarily contains the whiteness is the same in both, viz. the surface: and similarly they are commensurable in respect to size. But water and speech are not commensurable in respect of clearness, since that which primarily contains the attribute is different in the two cases. It would seem, however, that we must reject this solution, since clearly we could thus make all equivocal attributes univocal and say merely that which contains each of them is different in different cases: thus 'equality', 'sweetness', and 'whiteness' will severally always be the same, though that which contains them is different in different cases. Moreover, it is not any casual thing that is capable of carrying any attribute: each single attribute can be carried primarily only by one single thing.[7]

In other words, the only way in which a term can have two or more prinary recipients is if the term is used ὁμωνύμως. Should a term be used συνωνύμως, then in its applications the term will always have a single primary recipient. Thus when a term belongs καθ' αὑτό to its primary recipient or to something which has as one of its parts the primary recipient, it will be the same as saying that the term cannot be defined without making reference to its primary recipient. The primary recipient will play this role because it will be the subject of which this term is primarily said.

---

[7]Translated by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye in McKeon, The Basic Works of Aristotle, p. 350.

Thus consider Aristotle's own example of the third sense of καθ' αὑτό. 'White' is καθ' αὑτό to 'surface' because surface is the primary recipient of white. When expressed in terms of An. Post. $73^{a}37-^{b}3$ this would be the assertion that we cannot define 'white' without making reference to that to which it belongs, namely 'surface'. Another way of putting this point is that whenever we say 'The white...', the space will always be filled either by the word 'surface' or by something of which surface is a part.

'Living' is καθ' αὑτό to 'man' because man contains as one of his parts, namely the soul, that which is the primary recipient of life. Though something cannot be a man if it is not alive, the definition of 'man' is not 'to be alive'. Rather the definition of a man refers to a man's genus, animal. This in turn must be defined by reference to the higher genus ensouled body in whose definition 'soul' actually inheres. For Aristotle, as for the Greeks in general, to have a soul was to be alive (and vice versa). The very term used to denote a living thing, namely ἔμψυχον σῶμα, literally means 'ensouled body'. Thus, to be alive primarily belongs to the soul, and it is only in virtue of soul being a part of a man that to be alive is, in the third sense of καθ' αὑτό, καθ' αὑτό to man.

The fourth sense of καθ' αὑτό is rather trivial and is meant to cover answers to self-explanatory questions. Aristotle points out that whenever we speak of the αἴτια of a thing, the καθ' αὑτὸ αἴτιον is the thing itself. Thus all of the parts of the τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι of X can be described as αἴτια of X, but X is καθ' αὑτό the αἴτιον of X. In $1022^{a}32-35$ Aristotle writes

> Furthermore [something is καθ' αὑτό] of which there is not another αἴτιον [cause or reason]. For while man has many αἴτια such as being an animal and being two-footed, nevertheless the man is καθ' αὑτό a man.

Questions of the form 'Why is X a Y?' will generally receive answers relating X to Y by means of some middle term Z, where X, Y, and Z are all different terms. However, should X and Y be the same, we can hardly say anything more than 'But X is a Y because that is what X's are, namely Y's'. In such a case the explanation reveals that X's are Y's in virtue of themselves.

In his commentary Kirwan claims that this sense of καθ' αὑτό 'reappears in Posterior Analytics I.iv $73^{b}10$-16.'[8] However, in this assertion, he again completely errs. The fourth sense of καθ' αὑτό in Posterior Analytics I.iv concerned the relation of two events, something not even mentioned in Metaphysics V.xviii.

The final sense of καθ' αὑτό given in the dictionary has been the source of some difficulty. Not only is the remark terse, but the received text is corrupt. Given these problems Ross offered 'without much conviction' the following reading:

> 'Further, those attributes are per se to a subject which belong to it alone, and in so far as they belong to it merely by virtue of itself considered apart by itself', i.e., by virtue of its specific character, not of its generic character nor of any concomitant associated with it. The reference then is to attributes commensurate with a subject, those which are καθόλου in the strict sense defined in

---

[8]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 168.

An. Post. $73^{b}25\text{-}74^{a}3$.[9]

On this interpretation, Aristotle's final sense of καθ' αὑτό is one where X belongs καθ' αὑτό to Y means (1) X's belong only to Y's and (2) X belongs to Y in virtue of itself, not in virtue of something else. Kirwan succintly renders this as 'an F is in its own right what holds good of Fs alone, and of all Fs'.[10]

Though I believe these definitions to be correct interpretations of $1022^{a}35\text{-}36$, both Kirwan and Ross have overlooked the fact that this sense of καθ' αὑτό is the same as 'καθόλου in the strict sense defined in An. Post. $73^{b}25\text{-}75^{a}3$'.[11] It will be recalled that in this latter passage Aristotle says that X is καθόλου to Y means that (1) X is said of all Y, (2) is καθ' αὑτό (in one of the two senses of καθ' αὑτό given in $73^{a}34\text{-}^{b}3$ (the second and third senses of Metaphysics V.xviii)), and (3) X is ᾗ αὑτό to Y. Thus, in the sense given in An. Post. $73^{b}25\text{-}74^{a}3$, X can be καθόλου to Y only if X is καθ' αὑτό to Y in either of the two relevant senses. However, in the text of Metaphysics V.xviii, there is no such restriction upon the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό. To be specific, whereas both Ross and Kirwan in their definitions of the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό would interpret $1022^{a}35\text{-}36$ to simply designate convertible predicates regardless of whether or not they are, in the significant ways essential, in relating this text to $73^{b}25\text{-}74^{a}3$ both commentators restrict the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό to essential convertible predicates.

---

[9]Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics, Vol. I, p. 335.

[10]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 170.

[11]Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics, Vol. I, p. 335.

To illustrate, the way in which both Ross and Kirwan explicitly read the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό they would allow both 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' and 'being capable of learning grammar' to be καθ' αὑτό to 'triangle' and 'man' respectively, since the respective predicates are true of all and only these subjects. However, there is a crucial difference between these two examples. Whereas both 'All triangles have interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' and 'All men are capable of learning grammar' are convertible, the first is an essential predication while the second is not as essential predication - and since the second is not an essential predication the predicate is not said καθ' αὑτό of the subject in the first two senses of Posterior Analytics I.iv. To sum up, Ross and Kirwan would on the one hand allow both essential and nonessential convertible predications to be καθ' αὑτό in the fifth sense, while on the other hand they would restrict $1022^{a}35$-36 to only essential convertible predications.

The solution to this difficulty is clear - since there is no justification in the text of $1022^{a}35$-36 for restricting the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό to essential (in the relevant senses of καθ' αὑτό) predications, we can accept both of the definitions which Ross and Kirwan give. However, when each relates the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό to Posterior Analytics $73^{b}25$-$74^{a}3$ they err since that would involve a restriction which lacks textual justification. In fin, the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό is the sense where X is true of all Y's and only Y's.

Having disentangled the five senses of καθ' αὑτό which Aristotle discusses in Metaphysics V.xviii, let me briefly indicate their rele-

vance to the analysis of Metaphysics V.vii. The first sense of καθ' αὑτό, the definitional sense, is clearly too narrow. It would force us to say that the only predications asserting τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό would be definitions. This in turn would make τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός so broad as to cover not merely predicates which are accidents in the most narrow sense, but predicates which are the genus, the differentia, and the property as well. Yet both the examples of 1017^a8-22 and the semantic rule of 1017^a12-13 preclude such a reading.

The third sense of καθ' αὑτό which concerns the belonging of an attribute to its primary recipient reduces to the second sense, inherence in the definition, in the manner I indicated in Section I. The fourth sense, concerning αἰτία ('causes' or 'reasons'), simply has nothing to do with Metaphysics V.vii. The fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό which concerns those predicates which are convertible with their subjects is both too narrow and too broad. It is too narrow since it forces us to say that predications involving the genus and the differentia are instances of τὸ ὂν κατὰ συμβεβηκός. Yet this conflicts with the semantic rule of 1017^a12-13 and seems at variance with the examples of 1017^a8-22. It is too broad since it is difficult to see how the semantic rule for τὸ ὂν καθ' αὑτό, viz. 'in as many ways as mean the figures of predications', can be applied to predications of properties.

Hence, by elimination, the only sense of καθ' αὑτό discussed in Metaphysics V.xviii which seems appropriate to Metaphysics V.vii is the second sense, viz. inherence in the definition.

III

In Metaphysics V.xxx Aristotle distinguishes two senses of the term συμβεβηκός. The first sense is rather unproblematic - it is simply Aristotle's narrow sense of the term συμβεβηκός, viz. something is a συμβεβηκός of something else whenever the former is true of the latter but neither out of necessity nor for the most part. The second sense has been the source of much misinterpretation which I hope to resolve. In particular, what I will try to show is that the only way in which V.xxx $1025^{a}30$-34 can be read so as not to contradict a large number of other passages is, contra Christopher Kirwan, to read it as a discussion of συμβεβηκός in the sense of 'nondefinitory essential attribute' or 'any nondefinitory thing which is predicable of something else essentially'. However, before defending this position, let me first present Kirwan's interpretation and show why it is inadequate.

In his recent translation, Kirwan rendered $1025^{a}30$-34 as:

> Things are called coincidental in other ways also, as for instance whatever holds good of each thing in its own right without being in its substance, as for instance possessing two right angles does of a triangle. These admit of being invariable, but the former [i.e., accidents in the first sense] do not. The matter is discussed elsewhere.[12]

Quite correctly Kirwan begins his explanation by attempting to understand the example. Thus he asks

> In what sense does the possession of two right angles (i.e. of angles having that sum) hold good

---

[12]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 65.

of a triangle "in its own right"?[13]

In order to answer this question, Kirwan turns to Aristotle's discussion of the meanings of καθ' αὑτό in Metaphysics V.xviii.

Kirwan argues that of the five senses of καθ' αὑτό given in V.xviii, the fourth and especially the fifth senses are appropriate. Reading the phrase μὴ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὄντα as 'without being in its substance' (where this is understood as denoting everything which inheres in the defining formula), Kirwan rules out the first and second senses of Metaphysics V.xviii. Kirwan rejects the third sense of καθ' αὑτό (Meta. $1022^{a}29$-32) on the grounds that $1025^{a}30$-34 would then be rendered in such a way so that it would '...not always demand a new sense of "coincidence"', i.e., it is only an accident (in the first sense of συμβεβηκός given in Metaphysics V.xxx) that this surface is white, but it is essential (in the sense of Meta. $1022^{a}29$-32 and An. Post. $73^{a}37$-$^{b}3$) that this white thing be either a surface itself or contain a surface as a part.[14]

Kirwan continues

> The fourth ($1022^{a}32$, 'self evidently') fits well, since what is self-explanatory cannot be coincidental in Aristotle's first sense of 'coincidental' and would have to be accommodated under a new sense. And the fifth ($1022^{a}35$, see note [the remark quoted below]), if indeed it can be extracted from the corrupt text of Δ18, is tailor-made for Aristotle's example here.[15]

---

[13] Ibid., p. 182.

[14] Ibid., p. 182.

[15] Ibid., p. 182.

However, despite Kirwan's claim, neither of these senses of καθόλου will fit 1025^{a}31. With regard to the fourth, it is rather obvious that even though he asserts the contrary, Kirwan must reject this sense of καθόλου since the fourth sense was the way in which we say that the αὐτόν of a man is being a man - and no matter how we read ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ (definitely on Kirwan's reading) it seems that we must say that being a man is ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ of a man. Concerning the fifth sense, the shakiness of Kirwan's identification is evident. The text of 1022^{a}35-36 is both corrupt and obscure. In his own commentary on the passage, Kirwan admitted that his interpretation was questionable. Referring to 1022^{a}35-36, Kirwan wrote

> The text and punctuation of this final sentence are altogether dubious. The translation adopted follows Ross' reading, though without any strong conviction that it can bear the meaning that he gives it, viz. 'an F is in its own right what holds good of Fs alone, and of all Fs'.[16]

Assuming that this is the sense which καθόλου has in Meta. V.xxx we would then be led to conclude that the sense of συμβεβηκός which Aristotle is offering us in 1025^{a}30-34 is equivalent to 'nonessential', where 'nonessential' would cover every predicate which belongs to a thing without being in the essense of that thing. Thus the second sense of συμβεβηκός covers not only those predicates which are nonessential but always true of their subjects, i.e., properties, but also those predicates which are accidental in the narrower sense given

---

[16] Ibid., p. 170.

in the first paragraph of V.xxx. However, this interpretation is a bit awkward, since as Kirwan himself notes, Aristotle does not clearly indicate how broad this second sense of συμβεβηκός is. To sum up - Kirwan sees Aristotle as indicating a sense of συμβεβηκός which at least covers those predications which are either not essential or accidental in the narrow sense of 1025^{a}14-30.[17]

In order to see why the fifth sense of καθ' αὑτό will not fit 1025^{a} 31, we must analyze the relation of being a triangle to having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles. Whereas Kirwan makes this example fit his interpretation of the definition of 1025^{a}31-32, let us adopt the superior approach of trying to understand the definition by means of the example. As I will show, it is clear that Aristotle considers the relationship of these two things to be καθ' αὑτό in the senses relevant to an analysis of ἐπιστήμη. However, if Kirwan reads the phrase in 1025^{a}31 in the same way as he does in 1022^{a}35-36, i.e., 'an F is in its own right what holds good of Fs alone, and of all

---

[17]In his The Philosophy of Aristotle, D.J.Allan writes that

> ...Aristotle sometimes describes those permanent features which do not form part of the essence, as inseparable accidents (καθ' αὑτὸ συμβεβηκότα). These are much the same as what he elsewhere terms 'properties', ἴδια. In this sense, it is an accident of the triangle that its angles are together equal to two right angles. (p. 114)

In other words, Allan would read this second sense of συμβεβηκός as being narrower than the broad 'every nonessential predicate'. Instead he restricts this sense of συμβεβηκός to only those nonessential predicates which belong to the thing καθ' αὑτό. As will be evident, several of the same points which I raise against Kirwan apply to Allan as well.

Fs', and he then reads the phrase μὴ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὄντα 'without being in its substance' (where this means inherence in the essence), we are left to conclude that 1025^{a}30-34 implied that it is only a property of a triangle, not part of the essence of a triangle, that its angles be equal to two right angles. And what is more serious, since Aristotle's example is one which is subject to scientific demonstration, Kirwan is implying that we can have scientific demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) and scientific knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of that which is not essential!!! Hence my view - the errors which Kirwan's interpretation commits border on the egregious.

Let me now cite several texts in which Aristotle discusses the relationship of 'having angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' to 'triangle'. The first is from Posterior Analytics I.iv, the very place in which Aristotle defines three of the key terms used in his account of ἐπιστήμη. After already elucidating κατὰ παντός and καθ'αὑτό and having stated that the only sense of καθ'αὑτό with which science is concerned are (1) where X belongs to Y because X inheres in the definition of Y and (2) where X belongs to Y because Y inheres in the definition of X, Aristotle proceeds to explain what he means by καθόλου ('universal', or more literally: 'according to the whole'), using as his example the very case which is at issue.

In 73^{b}26-32 Aristotle writes

> And by καθόλου ['universal' or 'according to the whole'] I mean what should belong κατὰ παντός and καθ'αὑτό and ᾗ αὐτό [qua itself]. Therefore it is evident that as many as are καθ'αὑτό, belong to their subjects out of necessity. But καθ'αὑτό and ᾗ αὐτό are the same, for example...to the triangle qua triangle belongs two

> right angles since the triangle καθ' αὑτό [has interior angles whose sum] is equal to two right angles.

Aristotle then explains that 'having angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' belongs primarily to 'triangle' and not either the wider term 'figure' (since there are figures whose interior angles have a sum greater than 180°) or the narrower term 'isoceles triangle' (since the interior angles of an isoceles triangle are equal to two right angles qua the isoceles triangle being a type of triangle).

The significance of this passage is clear. In order for Kirwan to be correct in his interpretation of 1025[a]30-34, he must show (1) that having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles is not καθ' αὑτό to triangle but rather κατὰ συμβεβηκός and (2) that Aristotle believes that there is ἀνάδεξις of what is nonessential and eternal. The passage I have just cited shows the falsity of (1). That Kirwan's defense of (1) is mistaken is evident from the fact that the way in which having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles belongs to a triangle is throughout the rest of the corpus Aristotle's standard example of a καθ' αὑτό attribute - i.e., something which belongs to something else in one of the two senses given above.

Further examination of Aristotle's use of this example even reveals at least one way in which Aristotle believes that full "unpacking" of the terms which occur in the defining formula of 'triangle' will reveal that 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' is contained therein. Thus, in Metaphysics IX.ix 1051[a] 24-25 Aristotle asks

> Through what does [having interior angles whose sum is equal to] two right angles belong to triangle? Because the angles about a single point are equal to two right angles.

Since line is καθ' αὑτό to triangle and point is καθ' αὑτό to line in the first sense of καθ' αὑτό and a certain attribute belongs to a point, it will belong καθ' αὑτό in the first sense of καθ' αὑτὸ ὑπάρχειν to a triangle.

In Physics II.ix Aristotle offers a similar explanation - since the constituents of a triangle are straight lines, the triangle will have interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles.

> For since the straight [line] is this, necessarily the triangle ['s interior angles are] equal to two right angles...[B]ut if this is not [i.e., if the sum of the interior angles of a triangle are not equal to two right angles], neither is the straight [line this].... For the ἀρχαί [will not be true], if [the sum of the interior angles of] the triangle are not [equal to] two right angles.[18]

Again, if having an interior angle sum of 180° is due to the nature of a straight line and 'straight line' inheres in the defining formula of 'triangle', it is clear that the relationship between being a triangle and having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles is καθ' αὑτό in the first sense and since the latter belongs qua triangle, i.e., primarily, there will be strict scientific demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) in the most rigorous sense of this relationship.

Kirwan is simply wrong in saying that 'triangle' and 'having

---

[18] 200a16-30.

interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' are only related nonessentially - Aristotle explicitly and repeatedly implies that the relationship is καθ' αὑτό and ἐξ ἀνάγκης. Contra Kirwan, having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles is not something nonessential and yet nevertheless demonstrable. In fact, Aristotle would probably find the very notion of some mathematical statement always being true and yet not being necessary unintelligible.

Furthermore the implication of Kirwan's position that Aristotle believes that there is demonstration of what is nonessential to a subject contradicts Aristotle's repeated assertion that scientific demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) is concerned with those things which belong καθ' αὑτό in one of the two senses given in An. Post. I.iv $73^{a}34$-$^{b}5$. Consider An. Post. I.vi $74^{a}5$-12:

> Now if demonstrative science proceeds from necessary principles (for what is known, cannot be otherwise), and those which belong to their subjects καθ' αὑτό [essentially] are necessary (for on the one hand they belong in the what-is [τί ἐστι], and on the other hand those being predicated belong in the what-is [τί ἐστι] of these, of which one of the opposites necessarily belong, it is evident that the demonstrative syllogism would be out of such things. For everything either belongs thus or [belongs] κατὰ συμβεβηκός [accidentally], but the accidents are not necessary.

This passage makes it clear that Aristotle does not envision scientific demonstration for nonessential predicates. It clearly reveals that those predicates which are not καθ' αὑτό are not necessary and hence do not demonstrably belong to their subjects.

---

[19] Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 182.

In passing let me note that two more of Kirwan's claims must be rejected. First, his assertion that in his passage συμβεβηκός means 'derivative' is mistaken.[19] The fact that in this passage Aristotle repeats the exact same senses of κατὰ συμβεβηκός as he did in Posterior Analytics I.iv shows that he means by κατὰ συμβεβηκός the same thing here as he does in the earlier passage. Since, in the passage I have just quoted, Aristotle says that συμβεβηκότα are not necessary, we can infer that there is no ἐπιστήμη of them and hence that Aristotle does not intend συμβεβηκός to mean (as Kirwan asserts) 'derivative'.

Second, as inadequate as Kirwan's interpretation of $1025^{a}30$-34 is, even if we grant him the claim that the sense of καθ' αὑτό in $1025^{a}31$ is the same as those of either $1022^{a}32$-35 or $1022^{a}35$-36, it would appear to be the case that he has still incorrectly understood $1025^{a}30$-34 - for just after arguing that καθ' αὑτό in $1025^{a}31$ means either the fourth or fifth sense of Metaphysics V.xviii he states

> In any case the new sense of 'coincidental' which the example demands is 'non-essential'. Although this new sense applies, as Aristotle's example shows, in some cases where the first sense does not, it also applies in every case where the first does.[20]

Since the first sense of συμβεβηκός in Metaphysics V.xxx denotes what belongs to something but neither from necessity nor for the most part, whatever it also may cover, this sense at least denotes those things

---

[19]Kirwan, Aristotle's Metaphysics, p. 182.

[20]Ibid., p. 182.

which belong to something else only occasionally (e.g., a man's being white or being six feet tall). But the definition of the second sense of συμβεβηκός said (however, we might interpret the phrase ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ) that those things which belong to something else in this second way belong καθ' αὑτό, a term which Kirwan understood as most likely meaning what belongs to all and only things of a certain sort. How Kirwan can therefore subsum all συμβεβηκότα (sense one) under συμβεβηκότα (sense two) is beyond me - the very definitions of the two senses clearly show this to be impossible.

To sum up - not only does Kirwan's interpretation of the meaning of καθ' αὑτό in $1025^{a}31$ fail, but it appears to be the case that even should we grant him his incorrect explanation, his proposed reading of $1025^{a}30$-34 contradicts his interpretation of $1025^{a}14$-30. Having shown that Aristotle considers the relationship between 'triangle' and 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' to be καθ' αὑτό in the senses relevant to scientific knowledge and that Aristotle does not believe that there can be ἐπιστήμη of what is not essential in these two ways, let me return to Metaphysics V.xxx and suggest what I believe must be the correct reading.

Kirwan's error, namely reading the sense of συμβεβηκός given in $1025^{a}30$-34 as some sort of accident, can be revealed by the following translation:

> But συμβεβηκός is also said in another way, i.e., as many things as belong to each καθ' αὑτό while not being in the οὐσία. For example, to the triangle, to have [interior angles whose sum is equal to] two right angles. And it is possible for these things to be eternal, while none of the others [are eternal].

But an explanation of this is elsewhere.

In order to understand what the term συμβεβηκός here means, we must understand what sense of the word οὐσία Aristotle intends and, as I already noted in the discussion of Kirwan's analysis, to do this we must correctly interpret the example. Hence, to pose Kirwan's question again, in what sense is having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles a συμβεβηκός of triangle?

Kirwan answered that there was only a nonessential tie between the two. However, as I have already shown, this will not do since there are too many passages in which the linkage is described as καθ' αὑτό. What led my predecessor into his error was the definition's saying that what was a συμβεβηκός in this sense belonged to each καθ' αὑτό while <u>not being in the</u> οὐσία. Since he interprets the word οὐσία to here mean the essence of the thing, he in effect reduces the definition to a virtual contradiction because in this context to belong καθ' αὑτό would normally be taken to mean 'in virtue of its essence'.

However, what my analysis of Aristotle's example shows is that even though 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' does not explicitly appear in the definition of 'triangle', nevertheless it belongs καθ' αὑτό to a triangle <u>in the senses which are relevant to</u> ἐπιστήμη. In short, 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' (1) does not <u>explicitly</u> inhere in the definition of 'triangle' but (2) it is καθ' αὑτό to triangle in both of the first two senses given in <u>Posterior Analytics</u> I.vi.

In what way can we reconcile these seemingly conflicting point?

The key is provided by the interpretation of the phrase ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ. Kirwan simply assumed that this covered everything which inheres in the definition and everything in whose definition it inheres. However, as our examination of the example in $1025^{a}32$ clearly shows, this can not be what Aristotle intends for these are the very senses in which 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' belongs to 'triangle'. Therefore, the phrase ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ must have a narrower meaning.

The obvious candidate for such a narrower meaning for ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, a restriction on those senses of καθ' αὑτό in which 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' is καθ' αὑτό belongs to 'triangle', would be 'in the definition' where this is understood as meaning what is not implicitly but only explicitly in the definition. As already noted, the relationship of the former to the latter is (1) not explicitly definitory (i.e., 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' is neither the proximate genus nor the differentia of 'triangle') but (2) καθ' αὑτό. Therefore, reading ὅσα ὑπάρχει ἑνάστῳ καθ' αὑτὸ μὴ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὄντα as 'as many as belong to each καθ' αὑτό (in senses one and two of Posterior Analytics I.iv (or, what is the same, senses two and three of Metaphysics V.xviii)) while not being in the definition (where this is understood as being only what is explicitly in the definition)' provides an interpretation which conforms exactly to the examples.[21]

---

[21] It is possible that the reading which I have proposed is the same as that adopted by Ross. In his commentary on this passage, he writes that Aristotle

Confirmation of the view which I have presented can be found in other passages in which Aristotle speaks of καθ'αὑτὰ συμβεβηκότα. The most striking is De Partibus Animalum I.iii 643[a]27-31 where, in the course of discussing the Platonic method of division, Aristotle argues that the method of division errs since definition ought to distinguish those things which are in the essence (ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ) from those things which are καθ'αὑτά though not in the essence. Aristotle writes

> Furthermore it is necessary to divide those which are ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ [in the essence] and not those which are συμβεβηκότα καθ'αὑτά [nondefinitory essential attributes]. For example, if someone might divide the [geometrical plane] figures [it would be wrong to divide them so] that some have [interior] angles equal to two right angles and others have [interior angles equal to] more [than two right angles]. For it is a particular συμβεβηκός [nondefinitory essential attribute] of the triangle that it has [interior] angles equal to two right angles.

From the fact that this remark occurs within the context of a discussion of definition, it is clear that the initial distinction between τοῖς ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ('those which are in the essence') and μὴ τοῖς συμβεβηκόσι καθ'αὑτά (as I would render the phrase, 'those which are nondefinitory essential attributes') must be related to the issue

---

> ...elsewhere (B.9995[b]20,25, An. Post. 75[b]1, 83[b]19) calls the καθ'αὑτὰ συμβεβηκός that which, since it is not included in the definition of the subject, is a συμβεβηκός but which yet flows from the nature of the subject, - in other words, the property. (p. 349)

Save for Ross' use of the word 'property', a word normally reserved for translating the term ἴδιον, meaning a convertible nonessential predicate, it would be clear that this remark denotes the same thing as my discussion.

of definition. If we render these phrases in the same way that I have proposed interpreting them in Metaphysics V.xxx, then Aristotle is simply noting that whenever we define anything it is necessary for us to distinguish between those terms which actually appear in the definition of the thing, i.e., ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ, from those which are derivative from these, i.e., καθ' αὐτὰ συμβεβηκότα.

Such an interpretation would clearly fit Aristotle's explanation of definition. With reference to this particular passage of De Partibus Animalum, Aristotle would first be pointing out that we must draw the distinction between definitory attributes and nondefinitory essential attributes and then be noting its significance with reference to the method of division. Aristotle's argument attempts to show that it is wrong to divide things on the basis of simply any differentia and that the only adequate differentia is in the essence of the thing. Hence in defining 'triangle', even though 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' would divide the genus 'geometrical plane figure' into triangles and all other polygons, 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' is not the differentia of the genus. Aristotle's final comment indicates why - namely that the proposed differentia is only a καθ' αὐτὸ συμβεβηκός of a triangle, it is not ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ . Were 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' truly the differentia of the genus 'geometrical plane figure' the reverse would be true. But this fails to show that 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' either does not necessarily or nonessentially belong to 'triangle' - it only shows that it is nondefinitory of 'triangle'.

Other passages can be cited which also support my reading.[22]

Before closing this section, one very important implication of my discussion must be noted. Since the two senses of συμβεβηκός mentioned in Metaphysics V.xxx are (1) that which is neither always nor for the most part and (2) that which is a nondefinitory essential attribute, nowhere in this chapter does Aristotle discuss those senses of κατὰ συμβεβηκός which would complement any of the five senses of καθ'αὑτό discussed in Metaphysics V.xviii. In particular, Aristotle does not offer us the sense of κατὰ συμβεβηκός which would complement the sense of καθ'αὑτό which is fundamental to Aristotelian science - viz. X is κατὰ συμβεβηκός to Y means X does not inhere in the definition of Y.

---

[22]Other striking passages are Physics II.ii 193^{b}26-30 where Aristotle contrasts the τί ἐστι of the sun and the moon with the καθ' αὑτὰ συμβεβηκότα of these, Posterior Analytics II.iii 90^{b}7 ff where Aristotle specifically says that 'having interior angles whose sum is equal to two right angles' is not the ὅρισμός of a triangle even though it is an apodeictic conclusion, and the passages cited by Ross (cf. note 21), all of which (1) support my reading and (2) are quite confusing if we read in either Kirwan's or Allan's way.

Selected Bibliography

Ackrill, John Categories and De Interpretatione (Oxford, 1963)

Allan, D.J. The Philosophy of Aristotle (Oxford, 1970)

Anscombe, G.E.M. and Geach, P.T. Three Philosophers (Oxford, 1961)

Aristotle Categoriae et Liber de Interpretatione ed. by L. Minio-Paluello (Oxford, 1949)

_____, Categories edited and translated by H.P. Cooke (Cambridge, Mass., 1967)

_____, Categories translated by E.M. Edghill in McKeon, Richard ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941)

_____, Metaphysics translated by W.D. Ross in McKeon, Richard ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941)

_____, On Interpretation edited and translated by H.P. Cooke (Cambridge, Mass., 1967)

_____, On Interpretation translated by E.M. Edghill in McKeon, Richard ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941)

_____, Parts of Animals translated by A.L. Peck (Cambridge, Mass., 1968)

_____, Physics translated by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye in McKeon, Richard ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941)

_____, Posterior Analytics translated by G.R.G. Mure in McKeon, Richard ed. The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941)

_____, Posterior Analytics edited and translated by Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, Mass., 1966)

_____, Topics et Sophistici Elenchi ed. by W.D. Ross (Oxford, 1958)

Babin, Eugene The Theory of Opposition in Aristotle (Notre Dame, Ind. 1940)

Buchanan, Emerson Aristotle's Theory of Being (Cambridge, Mass., 1962)

Cobb, R. Allen 'The Present Progressive Periphrasis and the Metaphysics of Aristotle' Phronesis Vol. XVIII (1973) p. 80-90

Copi, Irving Introduction to Logic (New York, 1972)

Cornford, F.M. Plato's Theory of Knowledge (London, 1935)

De Rijk, L.M. The Place of the Categories of Being in Aristotle's Philosophy (Assen, 1952)

Duerlinger, James 'Predication and Inherence in Aristotle's Categories' Phronesis Vol. XV (1970) p. 179-203

Eustratius In Analytica Posteriora ed. by M. Hayduck in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca (Berlin, 1907) Vol. 21

Hintikka, Jaakko 'Aristotle and the Ambiguity of Ambiguity' Inquiry Vol. II (1959) p. 137-151

Jones, Barrington 'Individuals in Aristotle's Categories' Phronesis Vol. XVII (1972) p. 107-123

Kirwan, Christopher Aristotle's Metaphysics Books Γ, Δ, and Ε (Oxford, 1970)

Kneale, W. and M. The Development of Logic (New York, 1972)

Kosman, L.A. 'Predicating the Good' Phronesis Vol. XIII (1968) p. 171-174

Owen, G.E.L. 'Aristotle on the Snares of Ontology' in Bambrough, Renford ed. New Essays on Plato and Aristotle (London, 1965) p. 69-95

_____, 'Inherence' Phronesis Vol. X (1965) p. 97-105

Owens, Joseph The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics (Toronto, 1963)

Philoponus In Analytica Posteriora ed. by M. Wallies in Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca (Berlin, 1909) Vol. 13

Ross, W.D. Aristotle (London, 1923)

_____, Aristotle's De Anima (Oxford, 1961)

_____, Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1970)

_____, Aristotle's Physics (Oxford, 1966)

_____, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics (Oxford, 1965)

Russell, Bertrand Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy (London, 1919)

Strawson, P.F. Introduction to Logical Theory (London, Methuen and Co., Ltd., University Paperbacks, 1963)

Themistius Paraphrase of Posterior Analytics ed. by M. Wallies in Commentaria in Aristotelem Gracea (Berlin, 1900) Vol. 5

Thompson, Manley 'On Aristotle's Square of Opposition' in Moravcsik, J.M.E. ed. Aristotle (Garden City, N.Y., 1967) p. 51-72

White, Nicholas 'Origins of Aristotle's Essentialism' Review of Metaphysics Vol. XXVI (1973) p. 57-85