

The Aim and the Argument of Aristotle's Metaphysics
 IIγ: Metaphysics Z4-9: the essence

Metaphysics Z4-9 is Aristotle's sustained investigation of the claim of the essence of a manifest thing X to be an οὐσία existing prior to X, and thus to be either strictly an ἀρχή, or at least a stage on the path from the manifest things to the ἀρχαί. Aristotle's conclusion is, of course, negative. As he puts it in his summary of these chapters in Λ3, "movers are causes as pre-existing [ὡς προγεγεννημένα ὄντα], but causes as the λόγος are simultaneous: for when the man is healthy, then health exists, and the shape of the bronze sphere exists simultaneously with the bronze sphere" (1070a21-24). Or, to state Aristotle's conclusion more carefully: Z4-9 conclude that none of the arguments they examine give good reason to posit that the essence of X exists prior to X, and that it cannot be true in all cases that the essence of X exists prior to X; it might still be true in some cases that the essence of X exists prior to X, but further and more narrowly focussed arguments would have to be given to establish this.

The arguments that the essence of X is an οὐσία existing prior to X are Platonist arguments, arguments for Platonic forms as ἀρχαί and causes of sensible things. Aristotle had already sketched some of these Platonist arguments in Metaphysics B#8, "whether there is anything παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα": these arguments argue that generation presupposes, prior to the generated thing, not only an eternal matter but also an eternal essence of the generated thing. Here in Z4-9 Aristotle spells out these arguments in detail, and argues that they do not work. As he states his conclusion in Z8, "it is manifest that the cause [which consists] of the forms, as some are accustomed to speak of forms, if they are things παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα, is of no use at least [as a cause of] comings-to-be and existings [πρός γε τὰς γενέσεις καὶ τὰς οὐσίας]: so that [Platonic forms] would not, at least for these reasons, be οὐσίαι καθ' αὐτάς" (1033b26-9).¹

While Z4-9 are a coherent unit, supplying the investigation of essence called for in the first sentence of Z3, this investigation has a complicated internal structure. It can be difficult to keep the overall argument of these chapters in view, and it is easy to go wrong in interpreting particular parts of the argument if we lose sight of their function in the whole. So I will try to give here first a quick outline of the stages of Aristotle's argument and how they contribute to his conclusion that (as far as the Platonist arguments can show) the essence of X is not something prior to X; then I will go back to give a detailed examination of each individual stage in the argument.

The main division within these chapters is between Z4-6 on the one hand and Z7-9 on the other. These two units have complementary roles in arguing that forms παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα are "of no use as a cause of comings-to-be and existings": Z4-6 examine and resolve arguments that the ideas are necessary as causes of being to the manifest things, and Z7-9 examine and resolve arguments that the ideas are necessary as causes of becoming to the manifest things. Z7-9 thus have the special task of examining the arguments from B#8 that the fact of generation presupposes an ungenerated essence of the generated thing. To put the difference in another way: Z7-9 deal with those arguments that the essence of X exists prior to this manifest X that turn on the fact that this manifest X has come-to-be, while Z4-6 examine more general arguments that do not take coming-to-be as a premiss. It is, on reflection, obvious that there must be something wrong with any purely general argument that the essence of X must exist prior to X, since if such

¹compare A9 on the Phaedo on forms as causes of being and becoming

arguments were sound they would also prove essences prior to the ideas and to any other ἀρχαί, and would lead to an infinite regress. Indeed, Aristotle makes this point quite emphatically in examining one particular Platonist argument in Z6. As Aristotle says there, the Platonist must admit that at least in some cases the essence of X is identical to X, and therefore is not prior to X. But of course this is not the end of the game for the Platonist: it merely shows that he must return with more narrowly focussed arguments to show that, for some particular cases of X, the essence of X exists prior to X. Such an argument must turn on some premiss about X that distinguishes these cases of X from the ideas. One such premiss might be that this manifest X has come-to-be; then if (as B#8 argues) the essence of X cannot have come-to-be, it will follow that the essence of X cannot be identical to this manifest X, but must have existed prior to this manifest X. This yields the argument examined in Z7-9. Another possible premiss would be that this manifest X is only one individual X, and that there are other X's; then if the essence of X must be common to all of these X's, and so must be a universal (i.e. something predicable of many), then it cannot be identical with this one manifest X, but exists prior to it by Plato's test. This yields an argument for the essence as a universal prior to the individuals, to be examined in Z13. But the arguments of Z4-9 do not turn on universals, and do not take as a premiss that there are other individual X's: they simply use the fact of something's being X, or of something's coming-to-be X, to argue for a prior essence of X as a cause of being or of coming-to-be.

I will give, in what follows, a detailed account of the argument of the unit Z4-6 (my IIγ1), and then of Z7-9 (my IIγ2). But these units themselves, and especially Z4-6, have complex internal structures. The following subdivision may be helpful as a rough guide:

Z4-6:

Z4α (1029b1-3, 13-22) provisional definition of "essence"

Z4β (1029b22-1030b13) argument that accidents do not (in the primary sense) have essences

Z5 another argument that accidents do not (in the primary sense) have essences, since they are "said like the snub"

Z6 evaluation of a Platonist argument that the essence of X is not the same as (this manifest) X (question introduced 1031a15-18):

Z6α (1031a18-28) Aristotle accepts the conclusion where X is an accident (but in such a case Aristotle has already shown that X does not have an essence)

Z6β (1031a28-1032a11) Aristotle argues against the conclusion where X is a substance

Z7-9:

Z7 analysis of what must preexist for generation by nature or art

Z8 evaluation of a Platonist argument that the form or essence of a generated thing X must exist prior to X:

Z8α (1033a24-b19) Aristotle accepts the conclusion that the form of X, like its matter, is not generated when X is generated

Z8β (1033b19-1034a8) Aristotle argues against the conclusion that the form of X exists as a this prior to X

Z9α (1034a9-b7) appendix on generation by chance or spontaneity

Z9β (1034b7-19) appendix on non-substantial coming-to-be

As this division of the text helps to bring out, the high points of Aristotle's argument in Z4-9 are his evaluations of the Platonist arguments in Z6 and Z8: Z4-5 and Z7 are devoted to securing

the premisses Aristotle needs for his evaluation of the Platonist arguments, and Z9 is an appendix dealing with abnormal cases of coming-to-be (that is, cases other than the cases that Aristotle takes as paradigms in the argument of Z7-8). My presentation of Aristotle's argument, in what follows, is designed to bring out the main argument of Z4-6 and then of Z7-9. Especially in Z4-6, there is a danger of getting lost: Z4-5 already contain several twists and turns of argument, and it is very difficult to understand these chapters unless we keep in mind from the beginning the goal they are meant to serve in Z6. For this reason, I will begin by giving an account of Aristotle's main argument in Z6 (with references back to Z4-5 when necessary), and only then go back to describe how the argument of Z4-5 works to establish the premisses that are needed in Z6.

Πγ1: Z4-6: Platonic forms are not needed as causes of being

Πγ1a: The main argument: Z6

Aristotle begins Z6 (and thus the main argument of Z4-6) by saying that "we must inquire whether each thing and its essence are the same or different:² for this will be of aid to the inquiry about οὐσία" (1031a15-17). And Aristotle states programmatically the conclusion he will argue for: "it seems [δοκεῖ] that each thing is not other than its own οὐσία, and the essence is said to be the οὐσία of each thing" (a17-18).³ This is against Plato, who thinks that (at least in some range of cases) the οὐσία-as-essence of each thing X is something that exists prior to X. This Platonic thesis about priority obviously entails that the essence of each X is different from this X (as B#8 puts it, that the essence exists *παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα*),⁴ and Aristotle is challenging Plato's priority thesis, and thus Plato's way to the ἀρχαί through essences, by claiming that (in the relevant cases) the essence of X is identical with X. As Aristotle rightly says, "it seems that each thing is not other than its own οὐσία", since the οὐσία of a thing is simply what the thing itself is, and not something other than the thing. However, Aristotle intends this merely as the announcement of a challenge to Plato, not as a final resolution of the issue. Plato does have arguments that it cannot be right simply to identify each thing with its essence, and Aristotle must respond to these arguments. There is one Platonist argument that Aristotle is considering in particular in Z6, and, as we will see, he thinks that this argument does make a legitimate point, although he thinks it does not establish Plato's conclusion that the essences of the manifest things are οὐσίαι distinct from, and prior to, the things themselves.

Before describing Plato's argument, and Aristotle's response to it, it may help to reflect briefly on what is at stake in saying that this X is, or is not, the same as the essence of X.⁵ It is always correct to say "the X is X," or "this X is X." But a question arises about the relation between this X thing (what "the X" or "this X" stands for in subject position) and the essence of X (what the predicate "is X" signifies, what we are predicating of this thing when we say that it is X). If the

²transposing the word-order so that the grammatical antecedent comes first. Aristotle's word-order puts a stronger emphasis on the essence, recalling the question whether the essence is something *παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα*.

³note on the difference of the two γάρ. for γάρ, besides Denniston, nice discussion in Sicking and van Ophuijsen, *Two Studies in Attic Particle Usage*. in Denniston's terms, the second γάρ is "explanatory" (Denniston pp.58-60), while the first is "confirmatory and causal" (p.58). here, as often, γάρ marks the transition from saying that we must talk about X to actually talking about it. Aristotle is not trying to justify the claim that this investigation will be useful for the study of οὐσία, but, rather, starting the investigation by giving a quick argument for one answer to the question. Frede-Patzig's explanation, II,88, is bizarre; they may just not have thought about the different possible meanings of γάρ.

⁴note *παρὰ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα* recalled from B#8 in the wording of the first sentence of Z6 and in the conclusion of Z8

⁵here I am chiefly recalling points from Iβ4

thing that is X is not the same as the essence of X, then it is some other thing of which X is predicated. In the terminology that Aristotle introduces in Posterior Analytics I,4, this is to say that X exists not καθ' αὐτό, because, being something else, it is X: as, for example, "the walking [thing], being something else, is walking [τὸ βαδίζον ἕτερόν τι ὄν βαδίζον ἐστίν]" (Posterior Analytics I,4 73b6-7). As the Posterior Analytics goes on to say, "οὐσία, and whatever signifies a this, are not, being something else, what they are [οὐχ ἕτερόν τι ὄντα ἐστὶν ὅπερ ἐστίν]" (73b7-8), and so these things exist καθ' αὐτά. So if the term "X" signifies a this, then when we say "the X is X" or "this X is X" there is no difference between the ὑποκείμενον (what "the X" or "this X" stands for in subject position) and the essence of X (what the predicate "is X" signifies). By contrast, if the term "X" signifies a such, then X exists not καθ' αὐτό, since X exists only because for some Y, "Y" signifies a this and Y exists and X is truly predicated of Y. So when we say "the X is X"--τὸ βαδίζον βαδίζον ἐστίν, "the walking [thing] is walking"--the subject term stands for Y (say, Socrates), while the predicate signifies something else, what-it-is-to-be-X, τὸ βαδίξειν, and so the thing that is X is not the same as the essence of X.

As we saw in Part I, Aristotle asserts (expecting the claim to be uncontroversial) that if X is an ἀρχή, X must exist καθ' αὐτό, since otherwise there would be something prior to X, namely the underlying nature of which X is predicated.⁶ Since everyone agrees that the ἀρχαί must exist καθ' αὐτά, much of the argument about the Platonic candidates for the ἀρχαί--τὸ ὄν, τὸ ἕν, and also τὸ ἄπειρον or some similar material principle--turns on whether these things exist καθ' αὐτά: Plato insists that they do, and Aristotle argues that they do not, and therefore cannot be ἀρχαί. As we saw, Aristotle sometimes puts the issue by asking whether these things are identical with their essences. In the dispute about being and unity, "Plato and the Pythagoreans think that being and the one are not something else [of which being or one is predicated], but that this is their nature, so that their οὐσία is just to be being or to be one [ὡς οὐσῆς τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐνὶ εἶναι καὶ ὄντι]" (Metaphysics B#11 1001a9-12);⁷ and, in the course of arguing that the infinite is not (as such) "an οὐσία and an ἀρχή", Aristotle says that "to-be-infinite and [what is] infinite are the same [τὸ γὰρ ἀπείρω εἶναι καὶ ἄπειρον τὸ αὐτό], if the infinite is an οὐσία and not [said] of a subject" (Physics III,5 204a21, a23-4). In the cases of being, unity, and infinity, the Platonists want to claim that the thing that is X is the same as the essence of X, in order to make X a plausible candidate for an ἀρχή, and Aristotle wants to contest the claim. In the context of Metaphysics Z6, however, the dispute is reversed: now X is some manifest thing, and the Platonists want to claim that the thing that is X is not the same as the essence of X, in order to be able to pursue a causal chain up from this manifest X to some prior ἀρχή. Indeed, if this manifest X is not the same as the essence of X, that seems to license two different causal paths, one from this manifest X to its material ἀρχή and one to its formal ἀρχή. Both can be

⁶If the ἀρχή of all things cannot have anything prior to it, it would be impossible for the ἀρχή, being something else, to be an ἀρχή; for instance, if someone said that white, not qua something else but qua white, is an ἀρχή, but that nonetheless it is said of some underlying thing, and, being something else, is white: for that [other underlying thing] will be prior" (Metaphysics N1 1087a31-36). note (here?) on equivalence of descriptions: X is χωριστός, exists καθ' αὐτό, is τὸδε τι, is οὐσία, is not καθ' ὑποκειμένου, is the same as the essence of X: the equivalence of all of these is guaranteed by the texts discussed in Iβ4 (though the equivalence of "not καθ' ὑποκειμένου" with the others is threatened by Z3; but this will have been dealt with in IIβ above). perhaps give fuller discussion of this equivalence, against the view of Owen and Frede (and Irwin etc.) that some of these descriptions, perhaps especially "not καθ' ὑποκειμένου" or "ultimate ὑποκείμενον" and "is identical with its essence" are prima facie incompatible and that much of the work of Z is to reconcile them

⁷note text-problem, which needs rethinking (what I have given is Bonitz' emendation, accepted by Ross and Jaeger): I am currently inclined to αὐτοῦ τό instead of αὐτοῦ τοῦ. the basic point is unlikely to be affected

illustrated from the Timaeus: the Timaeus argues that ordinary sensible fire (or air or earth or water) is not a this but a such, so that it is not something whose nature is just to be fire, but something else of which fire is predicated; if so, then we can argue from this manifest fire both to its material ἀρχή, the ultimate underlying nature of which fire is predicated (the receptacle), and to its formal ἀρχή, the essence of fire (the Form).⁸ By contrast, if Aristotle can argue that this manifest X is the same as the essence of X, he will have undercut both the Platonist argument for a prior material ἀρχή (considered in Z3) and the Platonist argument for a prior formal ἀρχή (considered here in Z6, and further in Z8). It is always prima facie plausible to say that each thing is the same as its οὐσία, but the Platonists have arguments that these manifest things cannot be the same as their essences, and Aristotle's immediate task is to respond to these arguments.

Immediately after stating the general principle that "it seems [δοκεῖ] that each thing is not other than its own οὐσία, and the essence is said to be the οὐσία of each thing" (Z6 1031a17-18), Aristotle says that "in the case of things that are said per accidens [ἐπὶ μὲν δὴ τῶν λεγομένων κατὰ συμβεβηκός], [the thing and its essence] would seem [δόξειεν ἄν] to be different, as for example [a] white man and to-be-[a]-white-man [would seem] to be different" (a19-21). This claim about things said per accidens, with a long parenthetical justification (a21-8), is a μὲν clause, picked up by the δέ at a28: the μὲν clause (a19-28) says that in the case of things said per accidens, the thing and its essence must be different, and the δέ clause (a28-31) says that in the case of things said per se, the thing and its essence must be the same.⁹ Clearly the emphasis is supposed to fall on the δέ clause: the bulk of the chapter (a31-1032a11) is devoted to arguing for the claim of the δέ clause that, if "X" is an οὐσία-term, then (this manifest) X and the essence of X are the same. This is Aristotle's controversial claim against Plato, which all of Z4-6 have been building up to, and which he needs in order to disarm Plato's strategy of arguing from the manifest οὐσία to prior non-manifest οὐσία, the Platonic forms, as their essences. The μὲν clause is concessive: "even though it would seem, in the case of things said per accidens, that X and the essence of X are different, nonetheless, in the case of things said per se, X and the essence of X must be the same." Aristotle is thus, in the μὲν clause, conceding an appearance to Plato, while arguing, in the δέ clause and what follows, that the damage is limited to the case of things said per accidens.¹⁰ I too will put the emphasis on Aristotle's argument that, if "X" is an οὐσία-term, then (this manifest) X and the essence of X are the same; but first we must see why Aristotle thinks it is necessary to concede the appearance to Plato in the case of things said per accidens. What is the ground of the appearance, the δόξειεν ἄν of a19?

The first point to note is that the argument Aristotle is considering in the μὲν clause is someone else's argument. Obviously Aristotle is not putting forward, on his own authority and as a contribution to his own positive doctrine, an argument that if X is said per accidens the essence of X is something other than X, since he has just spent two whole chapters arguing that, if X is said per accidens, X does not have an essence at all.¹¹ Rather, Aristotle is considering an

⁸also give the example from Parmenides H3: the things other than the one are each said to be one, but they are not what is signified by the predicate "one". they are composed of an underlying material nature and of what they receive from the formal principle, and allow an argument either to the essence, the one, or to the ultimate subject, the pure nature of otherness or infinity. all of this was discussed, some of it rather hurriedly, in Iβ4 above

⁹strictly: the μὲν clause says that in the first case they seem to be different, the δέ clause asks (with ἄρα) whether in the second case they are necessarily the same. more comment in the text below. still, the lesson is clear

¹⁰cp. Bonitz, cited by FP, on starting with what is said per accidens, in Δ as here

¹¹or not in the primary sense. but note that Aristotle says it doesn't matter whether you say it has an essence but not primarily, or that it doesn't have an essence at all. the thrust of the argument is clear

argument that someone has given that would lead us to think that where X is said per accidens--that is, where X is a concrete accident like ὁ λευκός or a substance-accident compound like ὁ λευκὸς ἄνθρωπος (Aristotle will later distinguish the case of an abstract accident, like τὸ λευκόν in the sense of ἡ λευκότης)--the essence of X is something other than X. Aristotle's own view is that, while this argument does indeed refute the claim that in such cases the essence of X is identical with X, it leads to no positive conclusion, since in such cases there is no essence of X. However, Aristotle's point in going through this argument here is not simply to concede that, in a case where he has already shown that X has no essence, there is a valid reductio ad absurdum of the claim that the essence of X is identical with X. The point is rather that if we look at (concrete) accidents or substance-accident compounds, and take these as our paradigm cases, then it will appear to us that things in general are not identical with their essences. Aristotle's plan is to examine an argument that arises from this case, to concede the conclusion (while rendering it harmless) in the case of things said per accidens, but to show that, once we distinguish between things said per se and things said per accidens, the argument gives no ground for thinking that the essence of X is something other than X in the important case, the case where X is said per se.

Aristotle thinks, with some justification, that Plato typically begins from concrete accidents or substance-accident compounds, taking these as paradigm cases, and then argues from these cases to conclude in general that there is an idea of X prior to the manifest X's. Plato's starting-points in the theory of ideas, and many of the examples he uses to make the theory plausible, are virtue-predicates ("pious"), other evaluative predicates that admit of degrees ("καλόν"), and relational predicates ("large[r]"); these are all accidents (Plato seems to be indifferent to whether they are expressed by concrete or abstract accidental terms), and arguments designed for these cases may be less plausible when applied to a term like "man." In the Timaeus, where Plato argues that sensible fire is not the essence of fire but receptacle participating in the essence of fire, he must assimilate the case of "fire" to the paradigm case of concrete quality-terms: Plato asserts that "fire" (said of something in the sensible world) predicates a such and not a this, and he compares it to "triangular" and other shape-terms (said of the gold), which are quality-terms. As we have seen, Aristotle rejects the gold analogy, denying that "the truest is to say that each of these is gold"--i.e., that this manifest fire or air is its matter--precisely because this would reduce the substantial change between fire and air to mere alteration, and reduce the substance-terms "fire" and "air" to mere quality-terms.¹² Aristotle thinks Plato has not given any sufficient reason for reducing what seem to be substance-terms to the rank of quality-terms, and his argument in Z6 aims to show that, if what seem to be substance-terms really are substance-terms, then the Platonic arguments from the case of accidents give no reason to think that there is an essence of fire or of horse beyond these manifest fires and horses. And even if Plato turns out to be right that fire and horse are accidents of matter, so that this manifest horse cannot be the same as the essence of horse, the argument of Z5 will show that, since accidents logically depend on their subject in the way that snub depends on nose, there is no essence of horse (except, in a derivative sense, an "essence" logically dependent on matter); so that in either way there is no Platonic form of horse.

Z6α (1031a18-28): the sophism and its solutions¹³

¹²references in GC II,1 (329a17-21), discussed in IIβ above. perhaps recall the Stoic position

¹³for the breakdown of Z6 into Z6α (and a short introduction) and Z6β, see the outline of Z4-9 in the introduction to IIγ above. added note February 2006, d revise presentation of the history of this sophism taking into account Plato

The arguments that concrete accidents and substance-accident compounds are not the same as their essences are important, not because they prove what they prove, but because they have led some philosophers to think that the manifest things in general are not the same as their essences. So the particular argument that Aristotle gives as a parenthesis in the $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ -clause (1031a20-28) deserves close examination. The fact that Aristotle gives the argument in a parenthesis, and in extremely abbreviated form, suggests that his readers were already familiar with an argument, probably with a whole family of arguments, for showing that (this manifest) X is not the same as the essence of X: Aristotle's aim is to remind them of how these arguments typically go, and to point out that they depend on X being said per accidens. The most obvious Platonist arguments that could be cited here would turn on the premiss that this X comes-to-be and passes away, or that this X is in some way also not-X, or that there are other X's besides this one; but here in Z6 Aristotle wants to avoid these extra premisses, and so he gives a very abstract and "logical" argument, one which does not seem to come from any Platonic dialogue, but which must have been circulating in the Academy.

To understand the argument, it is crucial to understand its form. It is usually described as a reductio ad absurdum, but this is not quite right: it is a sophism, and Aristotle's discussion of the argument makes sense only as part of the ancient dialecticians' discussions of sophisms and their solutions (discussed in Iβ4 above). Aristotle first states the sophism, then suggests a possible solution to it, then gives a way of modifying the original sophism that is supposed to make it immune to this solution. Aristotle did not invent this sophism himself: it was one of the large number of sophisms that were tossed back and forth among the dialecticians, receiving different solutions from different philosophers, and developing variations along the way. There is reason to think that this particular sophism had already, before Aristotle took it over, been given at least two different solutions, a Megarian solution and a Platonist solution, and so used to argue both for a Megarian thesis and for a Platonist thesis; Aristotle's own solution will be a modification of the Platonist solution, modified so as to show that the sophism can be solved without positing Platonic forms.

Aristotle presents the sophism, all within the $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ -clause 1031a19-28, as follows. For ease of reference I will break up Aristotle's text, marking the introductory thesis in the main clause 1031a19-21 as [1], and then, within the parenthesis 1031a21-28, the main sophism as [2], the proposed solution as [3], and the reformulated sophism as [4].

[1] In the case of things that are said per accidens, [the thing and its essence] would seem to be different, as for example [a] white man and to-be-[a]-white-man [would seem] to be different

([2] for if they were the same, then to-be-[a]-man and to-be-[a]-white-man would be the same: for [a] man and [a] white man are the same, as they say, so that to-be-[a]-white-man and to-be-[a]-man [would have to be the same].

[3] Or perhaps the things that are per accidens [i.e. the two essences, at least

on the easy and hard one-many problems (a Megarian sophism solved by distinguishing this white thing from the white-itself, and then the harder sophisms implying that even the F-itself is both one and many or has contrary attributes or is separated from itself etc.: so the Parmenides and esp. Philebus passages); also the Aristotle E2 point about sophisms about accidents, e.g. musical Coriscus. what I said here is basically right but can be strengthened: what we have here is, in somewhat disguised form, a sophism-history we know from elsewhere, not just e.g. from Simplicius' reference to the Megarians

one of which is said per accidens] would not have to be the same, since the extremes [i.e. the two essences] do not come-to-be the same [sc. as the common middle term] in the same way.

[4] But this much might seem to follow, that the extremes come-to-be the same per accidens, e.g. to-be-white and to-be-musical [would have to be the same per accidens]; which, it seems, they are not).¹⁴

Here Aristotle is considering an argument that uses the sophism [2] and its reformulation [4] as evidence for the thesis, [1], that where X is said per accidens, (this manifest) X is not the same as the essence of X. This argument is being put forward by a Platonist, who wants to conclude that the essence of X is an οὐσία other than, and prior to, this manifest X. The Platonist first argues that, if we deny thesis [1] and maintain that (in cases of this kind) this manifest X is the same as the essence of X, then we will be unable to solve sophism [2], and will be unable to escape from its absurd conclusion. The Platonist then considers an objection, namely that even if we deny thesis [1], we can still solve sophism [2] by arguing, [3], that the absurd conclusion of sophism [2] does not validly follow from its premisses. So if solution [3] works, the Platonist's argument for thesis [1] seems to collapse. But the Platonist replies that, even if solution [3] solves the original sophism [2], it will not solve the reformulated sophism [4]; and while the conclusion of sophism [4] is not quite as manifestly absurd as the conclusion of sophism [2], the Platonist claims that it is still untenable. So the Platonist still has an argument for thesis [1], namely that, if we deny [1], we will be unable to solve sophism [4] and will be unable to escape from its absurd conclusion.

Sophisms [2] and [4] each infer from a premiss-set of the form {"X is to-be-X," "Y is to-be-Y," "X is Y"} to an unacceptable conclusion "to-be-X is to-be-Y," where "X" and "Y" are concrete terms (at least one of them an accidental paronym or substance-accident compound) that are predicated of the same individual. The important difference between sophisms [2] and [4] is not the different choices of "X" and "Y," but that sophism [4] makes clear that its conclusion is only the weaker conclusion that to-be-X is to-be-Y at least per accidens, and not the stronger conclusion that to-be-X is to-be-Y per se. Solution [3] claims that in the argument "the essence of man is the same as this man, this man is the same as this white man, this white man is the same as the essence of white man, therefore the essence of man is the same as the essence of white man," we can grant the premisses without granting the conclusion, because some of the premisses depend on taking "same" to mean "same per accidens," while the conclusion takes "same" to mean "same per se." Perhaps the claim here is that, if X is said per accidens, then the essence of X is only per accidens the same as this X, so that to-be-a-white-

¹⁴at 1031a27 I read κατὰ συμβεβηκός (EJ, Bonitz, FP, Bostock, currently Code-Most) against τὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκός (Ab, pseudo-Alexander {implicit at 480,32-6--the evidence is a paraphrase, not as Jaeger says a citation}, Ross, Jaeger). as far as the manuscripts go, it could go either way (Ab is interpreting, with reference back to ὅσα κατὰ συμβεβηκός in a24, or EJ drop τὰ after ταῦτά). but there is just no way that anyone could have thought--as Aristotle would have to be saying on Ross' construal--that an argument which is in trouble because one premiss is true only per accidens would be improved by making both premisses true only per accidens. (Ross, lamely: "the argument is, of course, unsound; but Aristotle does not commit himself to its accuracy--he merely says δόξειεν ἂν συμβαίνειν". then why on earth would Aristotle have given the argument? and why would he not have given a better argument for a position he himself holds?). also note: Ross, and FP following him, import "man" into argument [4], on no evidence whatever, thus making it unnecessarily complicated and giving it a dubious elimination-step. also: at 1031a28 δοκεῖ δ' οὐ means "the conclusion seems to be false," not "the inference seems to be invalid" (rightly Ross, FP--this may not be controversial).

man is only per accidens the same as this white man. Alternatively, the claim may be that, even granting that to-be-a-man is per se the same as this man, and that to-be-a-white-man is per se the same as this white man, nonetheless this man is only per accidens the same as this white man, so that it does not follow that to-be-a-man and to-be-a-white-man are the same per se.¹⁵ On either construal, the effect of solution [3] is to block the conclusion that to-be-X and to-be-Y are the same per se. But, as Aristotle points out, solution [3] would not block the weaker conclusion that to-be-X and to-be-Y are the same at least per accidens; and, Aristotle urges, it is absurd to say that to-be-white and to-be-musical are the same in any sense at all.¹⁶

But if the proposed solution [3] does not really solve the sophism, what else is to be done about it? Here it is important to recognize that argument [2] (or [4]) is being put forward as a sophism, rather than as a reductio ad absurdum. A reductio ad absurdum (if successful) is a valid argument, establishing the contradictory of a particular thesis P by taking P as a premiss and inferring, from P and from other premisses which the opponent will concede to be true, to an absurd conclusion. A sophism, like a reductio ad absurdum, typically infers to an absurdity, but it need not be a valid argument and it does not have to establish the contradictory of any particular premiss of the argument: a sophism is a puzzle and a challenge, and there might be several ways to solve it, either by showing that the argument is invalid, or by denying one of the premisses, or by accepting the apparently absurd conclusion. The argument that Aristotle is considering here cannot be a reductio ad absurdum, because a successful reductio ad absurdum can have only one false premiss, namely the thesis to be refuted. But the argument "the white is the same as to-be-white, the musical is the same as to-be-musical, the white is the same as the musical, therefore to-be-white is the same as to-be-musical" could be very successful at getting someone to reject the premisses "the white is the same as to-be-white" and "the musical is the same as to-be-musical," even though the argument has these two false premisses, and not only one. So when this argument is used to get the opponent to reject these premisses (which is one possible use of the argument), it is not being used to demonstrate the contradictory of one particular premiss, but rather to reveal the untenability of a general way of thought that would lead someone to accept the premisses "the white is the same as to-be-white" and "the musical is the same as to-be-musical": the target is not so much a premiss as the axiom-scheme "the X is the same as to-be-X." And the way to reveal the untenability of an axiom-scheme, as of an inference-rule, is to construct a sophistical argument that can be solved only by rejecting the axiom-scheme or

¹⁵I think probably the latter, given Metaphysics Δ9, which does say that the man and the musical and the musical man, and again Socrates and musical Socrates, are the same per accidens (but not per se). later books of the Metaphysics, including Z, presuppose that the distinctions drawn in Δ are available, and draw on them, not always with explicit notice, at crucial points in the argument; indeed, Δ seems to be intended, not as a collection of all philosophically important distinctions in important philosophical terms, but as a collection of those distinctions that Aristotle expects to need later in the argument of the Metaphysics (though there are some--how many?--that will not be used). (it seems impossible to imagine Δ being given as lectures; perhaps something more like a class handout that people would be able to refer to in subsequent lectures? Aristotle does seem to have references to such handouts, e.g. to a table of contraries). the present passage of Z6 is the most obvious place where Δ9's distinction between sameness per se and per accidens would be needed; and so I would prefer an interpretation of [3] and [4] in the Z6 argument that shows them using, rather than disregarding, the distinctions drawn in Δ9.

¹⁶note against the claim of Frede-Patzig, II,88-9, that Aristotle himself thinks argument [4] fails: very strange quote from them. Ross also thinks Aristotle thinks argument [4] fails, but this is because of his weird construal of it. for the Frede-Patzig position, besides their commentary, see Patzig's article (which has the advantage of being in English) in the Symposium Aristotelicum volume Etudes sur la Métaphysique d'Aristote (the title of the Patzig article is ridiculously general and gives no clue what the article is about)

inference-rule.¹⁷

There is reason to think that the present sophism had a complicated history, and had been solved in at least two different ways before Aristotle, who solves it in yet a third way. We should first observe that the sophism belongs to a closely related family of sophisms, some of which are explicitly attested as Megarian; and there is good reason to think that the present sophism was originally put forward by the Megarians, and used to motivate a Megarian solution. Aristotle repeatedly refers to a family of arguments put forward by "the sophists," which all turn on some person (usually Socrates or Coriscus) and one or two accidents that can be predicated of him, at the same or different times. One argument of this type that is specifically attributed to the Megarians is given by Simplicius:

On account of ignorance about these things [chiefly the per se/per accidens distinction], the so-called Megarian philosophers, having taken [i.e. having gotten a respondent to grant] as a clear premiss that things whose λόγοι are different are themselves different, and that things that are different are separate from each other, thought they could show that each thing is separate from itself. For since there is one λόγος of musical Socrates, and another λόγος of white Socrates, Socrates would also be separate from himself. (In Physica 120,12-17)¹⁸

Here the argument would go, roughly: Socrates is the same as musical Socrates, and he is also the same as white Socrates; but musical Socrates is different and separate from white Socrates, since for-Socrates-to-be-musical is different and separate from for-Socrates-to-be-white; therefore Socrates is different and separate from himself.¹⁹ The Megarians are not making this argument because they themselves believe and wish to demonstrate that Socrates is separate from himself; they are putting the argument forward as a sophism inferring to an obviously unacceptable conclusion, and challenging the respondent to figure out what to reject. Now while the Z6 sophism (or sophisms, [2] and [4]) is not exactly the same as the Megarian argument Simplicius reports, it is a straightforward transposition of the same argumentative strategy. The Z6 sophism, like Simplicius' sophism, derives an absurdity from the assumptions that the X (e.g. musical, or musical Socrates) is the same as to-be-X, that the Y (e.g. white, or white Socrates) is the same as to-be-Y, and that the X is the same as the Y. In the Z6 sophism the absurd conclusion is that to-be-X and to-be-Y must be the same (at least per accidens), since the thing that is X is the same as the thing that is Y; whereas in Simplicius' sophism the absurd conclusion is that a single thing (the thing that is both X and Y) must be different and separate from itself, since to-be-X is different and separate from to-be-Y; this is the same argumentative strategy run

¹⁷of course formally we can turn any axiom scheme into an inference rule ("from nothing, infer any proposition of this form"), or conversely (as long as we keep modus ponens fixed) we can turn any inference rule into an axiom scheme

¹⁸= #198 Döring, printed under Stilpo {cp. Döring p.155}; I wonder if Eudemus is Simplicius' source, here as immediately above

¹⁹Aristotle must be referring to a very similar argument at Physics IV,11 219b20-21: "the sophists take [i.e. get a respondent to grant] that for-Coriscus-to-be-in-the-Lyceum and for-Coriscus-to-be-in-the-marketplace are different": Simplicius in his commentary on this passage spells out the argument as "Coriscus, being the same [person], comes-to-be at one time in the marketplace and at one time in the Lyceum; but he who comes-to-be at one time in the marketplace and at one time in the Lyceum, comes-to-be other than himself" (In Physicas 723,14-16), illegitimately inferring from difference per accidens to essential difference (ibid. 16-18), or from difference in λόγος to difference in ὑποκείμενον (ibid. 18-20)

in reverse. This suggests that the Z6 sophism should also be regarded as Megarian; at a minimum, it is someone's variation on a Megarian theme. And we can see how the Megarians would have solved both Simplicius' sophism and the Z6 sophism. The Megarians solve by denying the premiss of the form "the X is [the same as] the Y" (e.g. "the white is [the same as] the musical," "the man is [the same as] the white man" or "Socrates is [the same as] white Socrates"), and they must deny this precisely because they accept the premisses of the form "X is the same as to-be-X" (e.g. "the white is the same as to-be-white"). (Presumably the Megarians do not accept the conclusion that white Socrates is different from Socrates, but they would avoid this by denying that white Socrates exists at all, just as they deny that Socrates is white. Aristotle describes the "sophists" as asking whether Coriscus and musical Coriscus are the same or different [*Metaphysics* E2 1026b15-18, cp. Γ2 1004b1-3]; presumably their strategy is to derive contradictions from either answer, and their solution is that there is no such person as musical Coriscus--musical Coriscus is οὐτις.)²⁰

But Aristotle in Z6 is immediately responding, not to the Megarians, but to a Platonist who wants to solve the same sophism in an un-Megarian way, by denying the premisses of the form "X is the same as to-be-X," while accepting the premiss of the form "the X is [the same as] the Y." The Platonist, like Aristotle and like the vast majority of philosophers, thinks it is obviously legitimate to make statements like "Socrates is white" or "the white is [the same as] the musical," and so the Platonist is forced to answer the Megarian challenge, which he does by denying premisses like "man is the same as to-be-man" and "the white is the same as to-be-white."²¹ Since the Platonist and the Megarian solve the sophism by rejecting different premisses, they can use the sophism to support different positions. "[A] man and [a] white man are the same, as they say" (Z6 1031a22-3), where "they" are the Platonists, and indeed almost everybody except the Megarians: if this can be taken for granted, then the Platonist can use the sophism to motivate a respondent to reject claims of the form "X is the same as to-be-X," and this is how the Platonist is using it here: "[a] white man and to-be-[a]-white-man [would seem] to be different: for if they were the same, then to-be-[a]-man and to-be-[a]-white-man would be the same: for [a] man and [a] white man are the same, as they say, so that to-be-[a]-white-man and to-be-[a]-man [would have to be the same]" (1031a20-24).

But the point that Aristotle wants to make in Z6 about this Platonic solution to the sophism is that, while the Platonist has good reason to reject "X is the same as to-be-X" where X is said per accidens (like "white" or "white man"), he does not have good reason to reject "X is the same as to-be-X" where X is said per se (like "man" or "Socrates"). In an argument "the X is the same as to-be-X, the Y is the same as to-be-Y, the X is the same as the Y, therefore to-be-X is the same as to-be-Y," if the premiss "the X is the same as the Y" is safe and the conclusion "to-be-X is the same as to-be-Y" is unacceptable, then we must reject at least one of the premisses "the X is the same as to-be-X" and "the Y is the same as to-be-Y," but we are not forced to reject both of them. The Platonist would perhaps fill out the argument for rejecting both of these premisses with an οὐ μᾶλλον argument: "the X is the same as to-be-X" and "the Y is the same as to-be-Y" cannot both be true, and why should one be true rather than the other?²² But, Aristotle will reply,

²⁰see Iβ4c above

²¹note apparent references in the Platonic corpus to this sort of sophism (in the *Parmenides* and esp. *Philebus*), which Plato thinks is adequately solved by distinguishing between forms and sensibles; as opposed to other kinds of sophisms which he thinks will not be solved so easily

²²cp. Stilpo's use of an οὐ μᾶλλον argument in the (unfortunately corrupt) Diogenes Laertius passage to show that "man" signifies μηδεὶς: τί γὰρ μᾶλλον τόνδε ἢ τόνδε? (DL II,119, discussed in Iβ4c above) ... maybe say more about role of οὐ μᾶλλον arguments in sophistic

there is a relevant difference between the premisses "the man is the same as to-be-a-man" (or "Socrates is the same as to-be-Socrates"), and "the white man is the same as to-be-a-white-man" (or "the white [one] is the same as to-be-white"), since "man" or "Socrates" is said per se and "white" or "white man" is said per accidens; and so the οὐ μᾶλλον argument fails. Therefore the Platonist cannot argue that sophisms of this kind must be solved by denying all of their premisses of the form "X is the same as to-be-X," since it is also possible to solve these sophisms by Aristotle's solution, namely to deny "X is the same as to-be-X" where X is said per accidens, but to affirm it where X is said per se.²³ Aristotle's solution is historically a modification of the Platonist solution, but it is a modification which renders the sophism useless as a justification for positing a Platonic form of X--an essence of X existing prior to this manifest X--in any case where "X" is a substance-term. The Platonist's strategy has been to assimilate the case of substance-terms to the case of accident-terms, using legitimate arguments that X cannot be the same as the essence of X if X is said per accidens, and trading on these to establish Platonic forms in substance-cases as well. The possibility of Aristotle's solution to the sophism shows that this strategy does not genuinely justify positing Platonic forms of things that are said per se. And in the case where X is said per accidens, while Aristotle must concede that this manifest X is not the same as the essence of X, the concession does the Platonist no good, since it does not imply that there is an essence of X other than this manifest X, and certainly not that there is an essence of X prior to this manifest X: for, as Aristotle has argued in Z4-5, if X is an accidental paronym or substance-accident compound, then there is no essence of X, or at most an essence in a derivative sense existing parasitically on the ὑποκείμενον of X, which cannot be any kind of ἀρχή of X, and in particular cannot be a Platonic form of X. Since Aristotle has already made this argument in Z4-5, when he raises here at the beginning of Z6 the question of whether something said per accidens is the same as its essence, this is not because he thinks the question is worth pursuing for its own sake (he never mentions the issue again), but only to show that the arguments that X is not the same as the essence of X where X is said per accidens do not work when X is a substance.

The main argument of Z6β (1031a28-1032a11): the case of things said καθ' αὐτά²⁴

Aristotle does not make his own solution to the sophism explicit. Instead, he simply says that in the case of things said per accidens the thing would seem not to be the same as its essence (citing the sophism to justify this), and then turns to the case of things said per se, where he argues that the thing cannot always be other than its essence. This will show that the Platonic solution to the sophism, which denies all the premisses of the form "X is the same as to-be-X," cannot be required simply by the form of the sophism, although this solution is always correct when X is said per accidens and might still sometimes be correct (and might be justified on other grounds) in some cases where X is said per se. Aristotle himself believes that X is always the same as the essence of X if X exists καθ' αὐτό, and he says as much in Z6 (so 1031a28-9, 1031b18-20, 1032a4-6), but he never directly argues for it here (as he might, say, from general

²³anyway, Aristotle's solution is always available when at least one side of the argument involves either an accidental paronym or a substance-accident composite; what Aristotle says here is not enough to deal with the cases where one term is an individual and the other a species it falls under, or one term is a species and the other is a genus it falls under. but this is a problem that Aristotle is going to deal with later; in Z4-6 he is not considering arguments that turn in any way on universality, i.e. on the same term being predicated of many.

²⁴for the breakdown of Z6 into Z6α (and a short introduction) and Z6β, see the outline of Z4-9 in the introduction to Πγ above

considerations about what it is to exist καθ' αὐτό).²⁵ Instead, in Z6 and throughout Z, Aristotle contents himself with giving a critical commentary on other philosophers' reasons for thinking that the οὐσία of X is something existing prior to X: his aim is to show that these reasons fail, rather than to establish a positive thesis about οὐσία. In Z6, as in the Περὶ Ἰδεῶν, Aristotle follows the Megarian procedure (described in Iβ4c above) of constructing parallel arguments, arguments which have the same structure as the Platonist arguments under consideration but lead to conclusions that the Platonist cannot accept: this challenges the Platonist to explain why his own arguments should be sound and Aristotle's parallel arguments should not be. Here in Z6, in order to show the unsoundness of the Platonist argument-scheme for showing that X is not the same as the essence of X, Aristotle applies this argument-scheme to the case where X is a Platonic form, and then points out what is from the Platonic point of view the absurdity of the conclusion in this case. Aristotle thus shows that the Platonic conclusion that (this manifest) X is other than the essence of X cannot be justified simply by the sophism. Plato might still be able to justify this conclusion on other grounds, but to do so he would have to add premisses that apply only in the case where this X is a sensible object, and fail where this X is a Platonic form (one obvious premiss of this kind would be "this X came-to-be"). Aristotle will examine this kind of more specific argument in late chapters, and especially in Z7-9; his goal in Z6 is just to show that the very general kind of argument given by the sophism cannot work.

Aristotle makes the argument of Z6β unnecessarily difficult to follow, because, interspersed with the fairly compressed main argument, he gives several other extremely compressed arguments (or rather shorthands for arguments) for the same or related conclusions. Aristotle has left us Z6 in much the same state as A9: in both cases, Aristotle would in oral presentation have selected a few of the arguments and explained them at greater length. To make (what I see as) the main argument more perspicuous, I will start by giving a translation of Z6β minus (what I see as) its digressions, optional alternative arguments, and concluding reflections; I will then comment on this main argument, and then come back to address the remaining material from Z6β.

In the case of things said καθ' αὐτά, must [the thing and its essence] be the same, e.g. [οἶον] if there are some οὐσίαι which have no other οὐσίαι or natures prior to them, as some say that the ideas are? For if the good-itself and to-be-good are different, and animal[-itself] and to-[be]-animal, and to-[be]-being and being[-itself], then there will be other οὐσίαι and natures and Ideas beyond [παρά] the aforesaid ones, and these will be prior οὐσίαι,²⁶ if the essence is οὐσία. [...] So the good and to-be-good are one, and beautiful and to-be-beautiful, and [likewise for] whatever things are said not κατ' ἄλλο but καθ' αὐτά and primary: for this [sc. being καθ' αὐτό and primary] would be sufficient [for the thing to be the same as its essence] even if there are no forms, or perhaps rather, even if there are forms.²⁷ [...] So by these arguments each thing itself and its essence are one and

²⁵references back in Iβ4

²⁶with Ross and FP, I read EJ's πρότεροι οὐσίαι, not Jaeger's πρότεροι καὶ μᾶλλον οὐσίαι (Ab πρότεροι καὶ οὐσίαι), but no great issue hangs on this

²⁷note on ἦ existential/predicative and on μᾶλλον. grammatically, either the existential or the predicative reading is possible, but I have yet to see a philosophically coherent interpretation of the μᾶλλον clause if ἦ is predicative. both Ross and FP prefer predicative {I think because they want Aristotle to have been taking Platonic forms, all along, merely as an example, and now to be saying that it doesn't matter which example we take}; Barnes' revision of Ross makes it existential (as did Bonitz' translation, according to FP). note against FP's misinterpretation of what the

the same not [merely] per accidens [...] so that by ἔκθεσις too it is necessary that both should be one thing. [...] The absurdity would be manifest if someone gave a name to each of the essences: for there will be beyond [παρά] that [essence] another one, e.g. beyond the essence of horse there will be another essence of horse.²⁸ But what prevents some things even now from being straightway [identical with their] essences, if the essence is οὐσία? Indeed, not only [are the thing and its essence] one, but they also have the same λόγος, as is clear from what has been said: for one and to-be-one are not one [merely] per accidens. Again, if [the essence] is something else, they will proceed to infinity: for one thing will be the essence of one and another thing will be the one, so that the same account will hold also in the case [of the essence and its essence]. (1031a28-1032a4, leaving out an alternative argument at 1031b3-11, a digression at 1031b15-18, a parenthetical reference back to the first alternative argument at 1031b20-21, and a digression on the case of accidents at 1031b22-8, as well as concluding reflections at 1032a4-11)

Even with the digressions omitted this passage has its difficulties, but it should be clear that it is a version of the third man argument, being employed, as usual, as a parallel sophism to Platonist arguments for the forms.^{29, 30} Aristotle's claim is that if the Platonist argument from the sophism at 1031a21-28 (or any other argument of equal generality) succeeded in showing that, even when X is said καθ' αὐτό, there is an essence of X other than and prior to this manifest X--that is, if it succeeded in showing that there is a Platonic Idea of X--then it would also show that "there will be other οὐσίαι and natures and Ideas beyond [παρά] the aforesaid ones" (1031b1), and that these "will go to infinity" (1032a3), conclusions which are unacceptable to the Platonists. Rather than admit that "the good-itself and to-be-good are different, and animal[-itself] and to-[be]-animal, and to-[be]-being and being[-itself]" (1031a31-2), or that "beyond the essence of horse there will be another essence of horse" (1031b30) and so to infinity, the Platonists will say that the regress stops with the Idea Horse, which is identical with what-it-is-for-it-to-be-a-horse, so that there is no third horse beyond it.³¹ But then the Platonists must concede that their very

existential construal would imply

²⁸keeping the text of the manuscripts (with FP), against Bonitz-Ross-Jaeger, who would delete the last "of horse"

²⁹although Ross, FP, and most other literature I have checked, breathe no hint of this--presumably because they don't want Aristotle to be arguing against Platonic forms, but merely to be taking Platonic forms as an "example" in arguing for his general thesis that (if X is said καθ' αὐτό) the X is the same as the essence of X

³⁰note, however, that unlike other third man arguments we have seen, it does not turn on universals; the Platonist argument here considered that the essence of horse is other than (this manifest horse) turns not on the fact that there are also other horses, but on the fact that this horse is also white

³¹Ross says, bizarrely, "It is not obvious why Aristotle should have chosen as his illustration of the identity of a καθ' αὐτό term with its essence a class of καθ' αὐτό terms which he does not believe in, the Ideas. The reason doubtless is that the argument in a29-b11 conveys a covert criticism of the ideal theory. Plato, so Aristotle thinks, believes in a separate good which is neither a particular good thing nor 'being good' (or the essence of good). But the separation of the good itself from the essence of good leads to insuperable difficulties and is therefore condemned. Instead of Ideas we should believe simply in essences or universals." There is nothing in the least "covert" about Aristotle's criticism of the Ideas here, and it is obvious why he takes Ideas as his "examples" of things identical with their essences, namely, to argue against the Platonists that their argument for Ideas (that this X is not the same as the essence of X) commits them to an unacceptable regress. And Ross is wrong to say that Aristotle is criticizing a Platonic separation between the good-itself and the essence of good: this is not a Platonic view, but an absurdity to which Aristotle is trying to reduce the Platonic position. It is, I suppose, conceivable that a Platonist would say that

general argument-scheme (from the sophism at 1031a21-28) is unsound, since its conclusion, that X is not the same as the essence of X, is not always true. But then, as Aristotle asks, "what prevents some things even now from being straightway [identical with their] essences"? If the regress from this given X to a distinct and prior essence of X must stop eventually, then what reason is there for starting the regress in the first place--why not "straightway" identify this manifest X with the essence of X? As Aristotle puts it, the fact that X is "καθ' αὐτό and primary ... would be sufficient, even if there are no forms" (1031b13-14): that is, if X is not said καθ' αὐτό of this X, then this X cannot be the same as the essence of X, but as long as X is said καθ' αὐτό of this X, then this X can be the same as the essence of X; so we can stop the regress here, without positing Platonic forms. And, as Aristotle, adds "or perhaps rather [this would be sufficient] even if there are forms" (b15): that is, if "horse" is said καθ' αὐτό of Bucephalus, then this horse Bucephalus can be the same as the essence of horse even if there is a Platonic form of horse: even if it turns out that there is also a separate eternal horse, we will still have no reason to think that this manifest horse is other than its essence, or that the separate eternal horse is the οὐσία of the manifest one.

Ἐκθεις and the case of accidents again (1031b18-30)

One long-standing puzzle in the passage we have been discussing is what Aristotle means by saying that "by ἔκθεις too it is necessary that both should be one thing" (1031b21-2). Aristotle is clearly referring to some argument that (if X is καθ' αὐτό and primary) X and the essence of X are the same: this might be an argument that he has already given, or an argument he is about to give, or, conceivably, an argument that he is only alluding to without explicitly stating in the text. So we want to know what the argument is; and we cannot settle this without deciding what Aristotle means here by ἔκθεις.

It will help to translate this part of the text in full, including some clauses I omitted before (which I will mark here with brackets):

So by these arguments each thing itself and its essence are one and the same not [merely] per accidens [and also because to know [ἐπίστασθαι] each thing is just to know the essence],³² so that by ἔκθεις too it is necessary that both should be one thing. [As for what is said per accidens, like musical or white, since it has a double meaning it is not true to say that it and its essence are the same: for both

the Idea of horse is not identical with its essence, if its essence is some higher ἀρχή serving as a formal cause to the Ideas. But Aristotle's examples here include the one-itself, good-itself, and being-itself, which are certainly primitive ἀρχαί, and no Platonist could possibly have accepted the conclusion that these things have essences distinct from them and prior to them.

³²this bracketed phrase (1031b20-21), which I did not translate above, is a reference back to 1031b6-7, which it quotes all but verbatim; that is part of the "alternative argument" 1031b3-11, which I also did not translate above, but which I will translate and discuss below. I include 1031b20-21 in my translation this time so that the reader can consider the possibility that the clause about ἔκθεις refers back to this clause and thus to the earlier "alternative argument". I think that it does not, and that 1031b20-21 is merely parenthetical; but I don't want to give this to be inferred by stealth. see below for a detailed treatment of the "alternative argument" (that if the forms and their essences were "separated" from each other, the forms would not be knowable and the essences would not exist): I will claim that one of the ways this argument is distinguished from (what I am calling) Aristotle's main argument in Z6β is precisely that it does not involve ἔκθεις. but to see this we must first see what ἔκθεις is, as well as seeing how the argument of 1031b3-11 works

the accident and what it is an accident of are [called] white, with the result that it [sc. the white] and its essence are in one way the same, in another way not the same: for [the essence of white] is not the same as the man, i.e. as the white man,³³ but it is the same as the πάθος [i.e. whiteness].] The absurdity would be manifest if someone gave a name to each of the essences: for there will be beyond [παρά] that [essence] another one, e.g. beyond the essence of horse there will be another essence of horse. (1031b18-30)

This passage has its difficulties, but it is not as mysterious as it might look, because we are well informed about the role of ἔκθεσις in arguments. "Ἐκθεσις" or "ἐκτίθεσθαι" is a technical term in describing geometrical arguments, and seems to have been extended from mathematical to philosophical contexts. In a Euclidean proposition, the statement of the proposition (e.g. "if in a triangle two angles be equal to one another, the sides which subtend the equal angles will also be equal to one another," Elements I,6) is followed first by the ἔκθεσις ("let ABC be a triangle having the angle ABC equal to the angle ACB"), and then by the διορισμός ("I say that the side AB is also equal to the side AC"), and then by the construction, proof, and conclusion. Here the geometer's ἔκθεσις of the proposition is his "setting out" of an arbitrary individual instance, temporarily assigning names (or letters of the alphabet) to the different objects referred to in the proposition, and also (by drawing the points A, B and C and the lines connecting them) "setting them out" to the pupil's sight; the geometer will then proceed as if what he had to show were simply the διορισμός, the particular instance of the proposition applied to the case of the ἐκτεθέντα. Aristotle unmistakably uses "ἐκτίθεσθαι" in this technical geometrical sense at Prior Analytics I,41 49b33-50a4, and he also applies the geometrical term metaphorically in syllogistic, both for setting out a particular instance falling under a universal term, and for "setting out" the terms themselves with names or letters (so "τοὺς ὄρους ὀνόματι ἐκτίθεσθαι", Prior Analytics I,35 48a29).³⁴ And in the present passage from Z6 again the "setting out" of a thing and its essence either is, or would naturally be accompanied by, the assignment of names to them. For, if we (for the moment) skip over the parenthesis at 1031b22-8, Aristotle immediately says that "the absurdity [of holding that the thing is not identical to its essence] would be manifest if someone gave a name to each of the essences" (b28-9). That is to say: if, as Plato says, the essence of horse (what-it-is-for-Bucephalus-to-be-a-horse) is not identical to Bucephalus, then I can ἐκτίθεσθαι the essence of horse, giving it a proper name; since (as Plato and Aristotle agree) the essence of horse is (a) horse, I can give it a horsey name, say "Pegasus." But then I can ask again about the essence of horse (what-it-is-for-Pegasus-to-be-a-horse); and if "beyond the essence of horse there will be another essence of horse" (b30), a third horse, call it Ariel.³⁵ This conclusion is absurd enough in itself; or, if we want to make the absurdity more manifest, we can argue in the same way to a whole infinite series of horse-essences. Again, this does not actually refute the Platonist claim that what-it-is-for-Bucephalus-to-be-a-horse is something other than Bucephalus, but it shows that the argument the Platonist has given for this conclusion, since it would equally conclude that what-it-is-for-Pegasus-to-be-a-horse is something other than Pegasus, must be unsound. The assigning of names is not really needed for Aristotle's argument, but it helps, as he says, to make the absurdity

³³ τῷ, not τό, which yields nonsense

³⁴ give brief account of "proof by ἔκθεσις" of the validity of some syllogistic moods (the accounts in Lukasiewicz and Patzig are ridiculous--the correct account was given by Robin Smith in History and Philosophy of Logic vol.2)

³⁵ note on Bonitz' deletion of ἵππῳ. the argument can be made to work this way too, but I prefer the transmitted text

manifest.

However, the exercise of ἔκθεσις and name-assignment also serves another function, namely to bring out why the case of substance-terms (and also abstract accidental terms) differs from the case of concrete accidental terms. Certainly there ought to be some connection between considerations about ἔκθεσις and considerations about accidental terms, to explain why Aristotle revives the long-dismissed case of things said per accidens here at 1031b22-8, in between the announcement of an argument from ἔκθεσις and its explanation. What the connection is becomes clearer from Aristotle's discussion of sophisms of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως in On Sophistical Refutations c22. There Aristotle is speaking of sophisms that arise because a term that signifies something in one category appears by its grammatical form to belong to another category; in particular, because a term that does not signify τὸδε τι is treated as if it did signify τὸδε τι. One example is a sophism that arises from asking "about Coriscus and musical Coriscus, whether they are the same or different. [The sophism arises because] the former signifies τὸδε τι, and the latter signifies τοιόνδε, so that it is not possible to ἐκθέσθαι it" (178b39-179a3).³⁶ The sophism turns on treating "musical Coriscus" as a proper name, and thus "setting it out." To make the ἔκθεσις explicit, a new name might be assigned: "musical Coriscus is someone, let us call him Erastus; now then, are Erastus and Coriscus the same person or not?", so that contradictions can be derived either way (if Erastus and Coriscus are two different people, it is obviously absurd; if Erastus and Coriscus are the same person, this is also absurd, e.g. because Erastus came-to-be only when Coriscus came-to-be musical, not when Coriscus was born). Aristotle advises that, if we are confronted with such a sophism, we should solve it by pointing out that "musical Coriscus" signifies not τὸδε τι but τοιόνδε, and therefore that "musical Coriscus" cannot be treated as (or replaced by) a proper name: so the question whether Coriscus and musical Coriscus are the same person or different people has a false presupposition, and has no right answer. So too in the context in Z6, the point is that it is not legitimate to ἐκτίθεσθαι a concrete accidental term like "musical" (or a substance-accident composite like "musical Coriscus"). So, although various arguments turning on ἔκθεσις serve to show the absurdity of positing that X and the essence of X are two different things, we know that it also leads to absurdity, if X is a concrete accidental term or a substance-accident composite, to say that X is the same as the essence of X; the reason that the arguments from ἔκθεσις do not suffice, in this case, to show that X and the essence of X are the same, is that "X" does not signify τὸδε τι, so that it is illegitimate to "set X out" and ask whether it is the same as or different from the essence of X. On the other hand, no similar sophisms arise from "setting out" an abstract accidental term like "music" (= musicality, the ἔξις of a musical person); here ἔκθεσις is legitimate, and Aristotle is willing to say that the term signifies τὸδε τι: "[a good which is] ὅπερ τὸδε τι [is better] than one which is not in [the good as] a genus, e.g. justice [is better] than the just [man]: for the former is in the good as in a genus, and the latter is not, and the former is ὅπερ good and the latter is not; for nothing is called ὅπερ the genus which is not in the genus, e.g. the white man is not ὅπερ [a] color" (Topics III,1 116a23-7).

To return, then, to the argument of Z6, we have arguments for identifying X with the essence of X where "X" is an abstract accidental term, even though (as had been clear since the beginning of Z6) we cannot do so where "X" is a concrete accidental term or a substance-accident composite; so we need to distinguish the meanings of terms like λευκόν more carefully than we had done at the beginning of the chapter. "As for what is said per accidens, like musical

³⁶against White/Dorion, this is Aristotle's own view, and the sophism has nothing to do with the third man or with an infinite regress

or white [οἶον τὸ μουσικὸν ἢ λευκόν], since it has a double meaning it is not true to say that it and its essence are the same: for both the accident and what it is an accident of are [called] white, with the result that it [sc. the white] and its essence are in one way the same, in another way not the same: for [the essence of white] is not the same as the man, i.e. as the white man, but it is the same as the πάθος [i.e. whiteness]" (1031b22-8). This is to say that even the Platonists' best case does not really work for them. Τὸ λευκόν, in the sense of a white body, or ἡ μουσική, in the sense of a female musician, certainly cannot be the same as the essences of λευκόν and μουσική, since the λόγοι of λευκόν and μουσική (which are the verbal expressions of these essences), describing one as a certain kind of color and other other as a certain kind of art, are not truly predicated of the white body and the female musician: "of things which are in a ὑποκείμενον, in most cases neither the name nor the λόγος is predicated of the ὑποκείμενον; nothing prevents the name from being predicated of the ὑποκείμενον in some cases, but for the λόγος it is impossible: e.g. the λευκόν, which is in the body as its ὑποκείμενον, is predicated of its ὑποκείμενον (for a body [since σῶμα is neuter] is called λευκόν), but the λόγος of λευκόν [sc. "color distensive of the visual ray"] will never be predicated of the body" (*Categories* c5 2a27-34). But this does not show that the essence of τὸ λευκόν is anything other than τὸ λευκόν in a perfectly ordinary sense of the term, namely the πάθος which is present in the white body; the Platonists' argument does not establish a separate Form of the white. So if τὸ λευκόν is taken to be the πάθος, then τὸ λευκόν is the same as its essence; and if τὸ λευκόν is taken to be the homonymous white body, then Z4-5 has argued that there is no essence of τὸ λευκόν in this sense, just as there is no essence of the paronymous ὁ λευκός, since both the white (body) and the white (man) are white only per accidens, and are not ὅπερ white. So everything that has an essence is identical with its essence. Or, to put the point more strongly: everything is identical with its essence, but it does not follow that ὁ λευκός (or ὁ λευκός ἄνθρωπος) is identical with his essence, since the inference from "everything is identical with its essence" to "the white man is identical with his essence" is a fallacy of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως, which fails because it substitutes a τοιόνδε in a formula that quantifies over τάδε, like the inference from "what I saw today I saw last summer" and "I saw a white weasel today" to "I saw a white weasel last summer." On either formulation, we have no reason to posit Platonic forms.³⁷

The alternative argument about separating a Form from its essence (1031b3-11)

Aristotle's strategy has been to show that if the Platonists' argument that (this manifest) X is not the essence of X were sound, they would also show that even the Form X is not identical with the essence of X (i.e., with what it is for the Form X to be X). Rather than leave this as a self-sufficient reductio ad absurdum, Aristotle gives explicit arguments that the separation of the Form from its essence would be absurd. One such argument is, as we have seen, that if the Form X is not the essence of X, "then there will be other οὐσίαι and natures and Ideas beyond [παρά] the aforesaid ones, and these will be prior οὐσίαι, if the essence is οὐσία" (1031b1-3); and this can be extended to an infinite regress to make the absurdity more manifest. But Aristotle also

³⁷loose ends in this subsection: d rethink what is covered by "the argument from ἔκθεσις" here; also note that the name-assignment isn't necessary for ἔκθεσις, but completes the ἔκθεσις (name-assignment presupposes treating the term as signifying τόδε τι, since to signify in the way that a proper name signifies is just to signify τόδε τι). also discuss Ross' note to A9 992b10, on ἔκθεσις (esp. at A9 992b10, M9 1086b9-10, N3 1090a17); some of these passages (for Ross only the M passage) are taken to imply a special sense of ἔκθεσις = χωρισμός τῶν εἰδῶν, but in fact all can be handled under the SE c22 sense; so can B6 1003a10, where Jaeger's <δεῖ> ἐκθέσθαι seems preferable to Ross' emendation ἐν θέσθαι. also refer to White in Phronesis for 1971, and Dorion on the SE passage

gives an alternative argument, also designed to show that the separation of the Form from its essence is absurd:

If they [the Ideas and their essences] are disjoined [ἀπολελυμένοι] from each other, then there will not be knowledge of the former, and the latter will not be existent [ὄντα] (by "disjoined" I mean if being-good does not belong to the good-itself, and it does not belong to being-good to be good): for there is knowledge of each thing when we know its essence [= what-it-is-for-that-thing-to-be]; and the case of the good and all the other cases will be analogous, so that if being-good is not good, then being-existent is not existent and being-one is not one; but either all the essences are existent or none are, so that if even being-existent is not existent, none of the others are either. Also, that to which being-good does not belong is not good. (1031b3-11)

This alternative argument depends on the maxim that, if two things are distinct, it is at least in principle possible for them to be disjoined, and it proceeds by collecting the absurdities that would result from disjoining the Form from the essence.³⁸ This argument, unlike the main third-horse argument, does not turn on an infinite regress; it also does not depend on treating the essence of X as a further instance of X, or indeed as a further nameable individual of any kind; indeed, the thought-experiment starts by denying self-predication ("it does not belong to being-good to be good") and concludes that the essences are not beings at all. And this is presumably the reason why Aristotle gives the alternative argument: the main regress argument concluded that there are further οὐσίαι beyond the Ideas "if, that is, the essence is οὐσία", where the assumption that an essence is an οὐσία is justified by the Platonist opponent's practice of arguing that the Ideas are οὐσίαι because they are the essences of the manifest οὐσίαι. But in case the opponent disputes the assumption (most plausibly, he distinguishes the verb-phrase "to-be-X" from the noun-phrase "X-itself," and says that the Form X is not what-it-is-to-be-X but is rather the cause, to the many X's, of their-being-X),³⁹ Aristotle gives an alternative argument that does not depend on the assumption that the essence is an οὐσία (and by concluding that essences are not ὄντα, it surely also concludes that they are not οὐσίαι). While Aristotle presumably takes the series "to-be-X is not X, to-be-existent is not existent, to-be-X is not existent" as a reductio ad absurdum, it is striking that the Stoics simply accept each step of it; if some Academics of Aristotle's day, under similar pressures of argument, had anticipated the Stoics in this paradoxical position, then Aristotle is happy to leave them there. Aristotle adds that if the Form and the essence are disjoined, then the Form of X will not be knowable (i.e. it cannot be known to be an X), and indeed it will not be an X at all, since being-an-X will not belong to it. Presumably the reason why Aristotle takes this to be absurd depends on the special role that the Form of X is supposed to play. Socrates is white and is known to be white, but there is nothing absurd in concluding that, in the hypothetical situation in which Socrates is disjoined from being-white, he would not be white and could not be known to be white; he would, nonetheless, still

³⁸a paradigm for this sort of thought-experiment would be the separation of the others from participating in the One in the third hypothesis of the Parmenides; also the separation of the One from participation in existence in the fifth hypothesis

³⁹cp. discussions elsewhere, and esp. the formula of EE I,8 for the good-itself; perhaps also compare Metaphysics A7 988b3-4, saying that for the Platonists the Forms "provide" the essence to each of the other things (rather than that they are the essence of each of the other things--Aristotle actually suggests, 988a34ff, that there is some uncertainty about whether the Forms are essences of things or are causes to them in some other way)

have a nature of his own and could still be known as having that nature. By contrast, the Form of X (insofar as the theory describes it at all) is exhausted by its being X; if it were disjoined from being-X, then it would have no remaining nature and would not be knowable either by intellect or by sensation. An opponent who wanted to distinguish the Form of X from its being-X might conceivably accept this conclusion, and say that the Form of X, logically prior to its being X, is a piece of intelligible matter, where we do not know the nature of this matter and would not know its existence if it were not informed; again, Aristotle assumes that this is an unattractive paradox.

The digression on Forms, οὐσία as essence, and οὐσία as ὑποκείμενον (1031b15-18)

From these two different kinds of argument, the Platonist is supposed to conclude that the Form X is simply identical with its being-X; but then, Aristotle says, what argument does the Platonist have against making this manifest X "straightway" identical with its being-X, and eliminating Forms altogether? But, while he is at it, Aristotle adds a curious aside:

At the same time it is clear that, if there are Ideas such as some people speak of, the ὑποκείμενον will not be οὐσία: for these must be οὐσίαι, but not καθ' ὑποκειμένου; for [if they are καθ' ὑποκειμένου] they will be by participation. (1031b15-18)

This is apparently supposed to be a corollary of the argument that Aristotle has been developing, but it is not immediately obvious either how it relates to the broader argument or how the particular argument of 1031b15-18 is supposed to work. There is something odd about the μέν/δέ antithesis "these must be οὐσίαι, but not καθ' ὑποκειμένου", since it is a mark of οὐσία that it is not καθ' ὑποκειμένου; and how would it follow, because the Form of X is an οὐσία and is not καθ' ὑποκειμένου, that the material substratum is not also an οὐσία? Ross suggests that the argument is a reductio ad absurdum: "If the Ideas are separate entities, it will not be substratum that is substance; for they are substances which involve no substratum, since if they were predicable of a substratum they would exist merely by being participated in by the substratum' ... thus [since it would follow that it is not substratum that is substance] the belief in Ideas conflicts with a well-founded view about the nature of substance [namely the view from the first sentence of Z3, that the ὑποκείμενον, as well as the essence etc., is οὐσία]" (AM II, 178). But if the conclusion is simply that no ὑποκείμενον of the Ideas (distinct from the Ideas themselves) is οὐσία (because they have no ὑποκείμενον), then Aristotle cannot regard this conclusion as absurd, since the same conclusion will hold, for the same reasons, of Aristotle's own separate immaterial substances; and if the conclusion is that no ὑποκείμενα are οὐσίαι, then it is a pure non sequitur.⁴⁰ But the solution is (i) that Aristotle is indeed concluding only that no ὑποκείμενον of the Ideas (distinct from the Ideas themselves) is οὐσία, and (ii) that Aristotle does not regard this conclusion as absurd. Aristotle has just forced the Platonists to admit that, in the case where X is an Idea, there is no distinction between the thing that is X and the essence of X. The Platonists do, of course, draw such a distinction in the case of an ordinary sensible X, and they use this distinction to search for οὐσίαι beyond the manifest ones in two different directions: searching for the essence of X, distinct from this manifest X, leads us to the Idea of X, and searching for the ὑποκείμενον of X (i.e. to what the thing that is X is in itself, temporally

⁴⁰FP are apparently trying to construct an argument for this conclusion, but what they give does not even remotely resemble an argument

or logically prior to its being X) leads us to the receptacle. But, as Aristotle has pointed out, if it is always legitimate to distinguish the essence of X from X itself, an infinite regress will result, and if it is not always legitimate, then why should we not identify this manifest X with the essence of X? Aristotle is now, parenthetically, making a similar point about the ὑποκείμενον: the believers in Ideas cannot always distinguish a ὑποκείμενον of X (having its own nature, temporally or logically prior to its being X) from the X which is predicated of it, since if there was such a ὑποκειμένη φύσις of the Idea X, then "it will be by participation": that is, the Idea X will not be (as we have argued) identical with the essence of X, but will only be an X-by-participation, something other than the essence of X and participating in that essence, just as (according to the Platonists) the sensible X's are.⁴¹ The Platonists might still be right that in the case of a sensible οὐσία X, there is a distinct non-manifest ὑποκείμενον which is the οὐσία of the manifest οὐσία X, just as they might be right that there is a distinct non-manifest essence which is the οὐσία of the manifest οὐσία X; but since neither conclusion can hold for every οὐσία, this undermines the Platonists' reasons for thinking that they hold even for the manifest οὐσίαι, and Aristotle's own view is that both conclusions are false even for the manifest οὐσίαι, and that neither the pursuit of essences nor the pursuit of ὑποκείμενα genuinely leads to further οὐσίαι παρὰ τὰς ὁμολογουμένας οὐσίας. Aristotle emphasizes the point about essences, and makes the point about ὑποκείμενα only in a parenthesis, because he has already dealt with the claim of the ὑποκείμενον in Z3, and is now trying to deal systematically with the claim of the essence.

Concluding reflections and the sophism about Socrates (1032a4-11)

After the arguments we have considered, Aristotle adds a conclusion to Z6:

So it is clear that among things that are primary and said καθ' αὐτά, each thing and its essence [τὸ ἐκάστῳ εἶναι καὶ ἕκαστον] are one and the same; and it is clear that the sophistical refutations against this thesis are solved by the same solution as [the sophistical refutations against the thesis that] Socrates and his essence [Σωκράτης καὶ Σωκράτει εἶναι] are the same; for there is no difference either in the things out-of-which one would ask it [i.e. the questions which a questioner would use as premisses for the sophistical refutation] or in the things out-of-which one would succeed in solving it. So we have said how the essence is the same as each thing, and how it is not the same. (1032a4-11)⁴²

This passage has caused some alarm among the commentators, who have taken Aristotle to be referring to some further problem about Socrates, analogous to but different from, and presumptively more difficult than, the problems discussed in Z6; Aristotle would then be reassuring us that the Socrates problem too can be solved by similar techniques. Ross suggests that the Socrates problem is a problem about whether X and the essence of X are the same if X is an individual, and so he says that Z6 must have been discussing the case where X is a universal;

⁴¹note on various construals that have been tried for "they will be by participation"

⁴²think whether what I say below is affected by Δ9 1017b33-1018a4, the Socrates example. {note that in 1018a3, it's likely to be τὸ γὰρ, rather than as Jaeger τὸ δὲ}. my first guess is that the δοκεῖ at 1018a2 is non-veridical: Socrates and Socrates' being musical are not in fact the same, but that's not so easy to discern as that man and man's being musical aren't the same, because some men aren't musical and since Socrates is in fact musical we can't give such a counter-instance in his case

Frede and Patzig suggest that the Socrates problem turns on whether Socrates is a form or a form-matter composite, and they say that Z6 has been affirming that X is the same as its essence only in the case where X is "a primary οὐσία, and thus a substantial form." But all this is chasing in the wrong direction. Z6 has been talking about things that are primary and said καθ' αὐτό, but it shows no interest at all in giving conditions that something must satisfy in order to be primary and καθ' αὐτό (e.g. must it be a universal? a form?), and it has certainly not occurred to Aristotle that Socrates might be a difficult case, a being to whom the conclusions of the chapter might not apply because he might fail to be primary and καθ' αὐτό (because he is an individual, or because he might be a form-matter composite rather than a form). On the contrary, Aristotle is taking the Socrates problem to be an easier problem:⁴³ there is some familiar sophism against the thesis that Socrates and to-be-Socrates are the same, and Aristotle's audience already know how to solve this sophism, and Aristotle is saying that the same well-known solution that defuses this sophism also defuses the sophism against Aristotle's thesis that everything primary and said καθ' αὐτό is identical with its essence. The sophism against Aristotle's thesis is the sophism from the beginning of Z6 (1031a19-28); the Platonists in Aristotle's audience think that this can be solved only by denying that (this) X is the same as the essence of X, even where X is something said καθ' αὐτό like "man." However, these same Platonists are rightly unimpressed by the sophism about Socrates, and Aristotle is pointing out that, just as we can solve the Socrates sophism without denying that Socrates and to-be-Socrates are the same, so too we can solve the sophism of 1031a19-28 without denying that man and to-be-man are the same, although we must indeed deny that the white (man) and to-be-white are the same. So what was the Socrates sophism? Well, Aristotle tells us, by telling us that it was formally parallel to the sophism against his own thesis. So it went "Socrates is the same as to-be-Socrates; but Socrates is the same as white Socrates; but white Socrates is the same as to-be-white-Socrates; therefore, absurdly, to-be-Socrates is the same as to-be-white-Socrates"⁴⁴ (the step "white Socrates is the same as to-be-white-Socrates" might be supported by saying "white Socrates is someone, call him Coriscus; so, just as Socrates is the same as to-be-Socrates, Coriscus is the same as to-be-Coriscus"). This is a familiar Megarian type of sophism; and while the Megarians might have called it a refutation of the thesis that Socrates is the same as white Socrates, the same argument could also be considered (by someone who takes it for granted that Socrates is the same as white Socrates) as a sophisticated refutation of the thesis that Socrates is the same as to-be-Socrates. Any well-trained Platonist will reply that the case of Socrates and the case of white Socrates are not parallel, that we can admit that the person Socrates is the same as his essence without admitting this for the pseudo-person white-Socrates. Aristotle agrees, and points out that, just as we can solve this sophism by distinguishing the logical type of "Socrates" from the logical type of "white Socrates," so we can solve the sophism of 1031a19-28 by distinguishing the logical type of "man" from the logical type of "white man" or of "white" (taken for what has the πάθος rather than for the πάθος); and so we can maintain the thesis that whatever is primary and said καθ' αὐτό is the same as its essence.

Note once more that Aristotle has given no arguments about whether man, or Socrates, are in fact primary and said καθ' αὐτό. As far as we can tell from Z6, it might perfectly well turn out that (this) man is not the same as the essence of man, because he is individual and the essence of

⁴³so, rightly, Bostock, though he then goes off the rails

⁴⁴this is basically what pseudo-Alexander ad locum says the argument was, although he leaves out the step "white Socrates is the same as to-be-white-Socrates" and jumps to the conclusion. but pseudo-Alexander seems to go wrong on what Aristotle's solution is

man is universal; or that Socrates is not the essence of Socrates because he is a soul-body composite and it is merely his soul. That is not what Z6 is about. There has actually been a debate in the scholarly literature about whether the last lines of Z6 are saying that Socrates is identical with his essence or that Socrates is not identical with his essence.⁴⁵ But they are not saying either of these things; they are just saying that we know how to solve the sophisticated refutations against the thesis that Socrates is identical with his essence. If Socrates turns out not to be identical with his essence (and not to be primary and said καθ' αὐτό), then this will have to be for some much more specific reason, and not because of the kind of general logical considerations that are embodied in Megarian-style sophisms. And if the essence of man is a Form distinct from this man who has it, that too will have to be for some more specific reason, say because the essence is universal and this man is individual, or because the essence is eternal and this man is corruptible, not because of the kind of general logical considerations that we have examined in Z6.

⁴⁵Bostock gives the lineup