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The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter


12-29-1985

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Recommended Citation

Urbanas, Alban, "On 'Essentially' (hoper) in Aristotle" (1985). *The Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*. 140.
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The American Philological Association
Washington, D.C.
December 1985

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On 'Essentially' ('ὅτι') in Aristotle

In this paper I shall examine the notion of ταυτόν --commonly translated as 'same' or 'identical'--and its relevance to so-called essential predications, as effected through the use of 'ὅτι' in Aristotle. It will be shown that propositions of the type 'A is ὅτι B' involve an essential predication where either a genus is affirmed of a species, or a species of an individual. The possibility of such predications will be founded upon the doctrine of the categories and the ontological distinction between essence and accident. Besides predications involving generic or specific identity, others effected through propositions of the type 'A is ὅτι B' will be seen to be employed by Aristotle. These latter predications will be stricto sensu neither essential nor accidental, yet will involve a necessary connection between subject and predicate. I shall then examine why Aristotle believes there to be a necessary application of predicate to subject in these cases, as well as why certain problems of identity and synonymy follow therefrom.

Let us begin then by observing the various senses that Aristotle ascribes to 'ταυτόν'. In Topics I7 he asserts:

First of all we must distinguish the various meanings of 'the same'. In general, 'sameness' would seem to fall into three divisions; for we usually speak of numerical, specific and generic sameness. There is numerical sameness when there is more than one name for the same thing, e.g. 'mantle' and 'cloak'. There is specific sameness when there are several things but they do not differ in species, e.g. one man and another man, one horse and another horse; for such things as fall under the same species are said to be specifically the same. Similarly things are generically the same when they fall under the same genus, e.g. horse and man (1).

1/ Top. 103a6-14 (trans. by Forster).

Further on he adds:

The term 'the same' seems to be applied with the most general acceptance of everyone to that which is numerically one. But even this is usually employed in several senses. Its principal and primary sense occurs when sameness is applied to a name or a definition, e.g. when a 'cloak' is said to be the same as a 'mantle', or, when 'a biped pedestrian animal' is said to be the same as a 'man'. A second sense occurs when sameness is applied to a property, e.g. when 'capable of receiving knowledge' is said to be the same as 'man', and 'that which is naturally carried upwards' is said to be the same as 'fire'. A third sense occurs when the sameness is based on an accident, e.g., when 'that which is seated' or 'that which is musical' is said to be the same as 'Socrates'. All these uses aim at indicating numerical oneness (2).

I do not intend here to comment upon each of the possible ways in which 'ταυτόν' is said here to have meaning. For the moment, I should like only to draw attention to the first type of numerical sameness, viz. that which is said to exist between 'mantle' and 'cloak'. Both are said to possess numerical sameness in spite of their difference as individual terms, for they share the same definition. As we shall see later on, this second type of numerical sameness presupposes a certain form of synonymy the importance of which must be recognized when analyzing the necessary but non-essential predications of the form 'A is ὅπερ B'.

To gain a clearer idea as to how 'ὅπερ' may be employed in statements affirming sameness or identity, let us consider the senses that Liddell, Scott and Jones (hereafter referred to as LSJ) ascribe to this term from the standpoint of Aristototele's logic:

In the logic of Aristotle, ὅπερ ἐστί, or ὅπερ alone, has two senses: a. non-technical, and unemphatic, what (a thing) is, ἐκάστη οὐσία τοῦθ' ὁ. ἐστίν, οὐ λέγεται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥτιον each substance is called what it is without the difference of more or less, Cat. 3b36; τὸ διπλάσιον τοῦθ' ὁ. ἐστίν, ἐτέρου λέγεται the double is called what it is (viz. the double) of something, i.e. is relative, ib. 6a39. b. expressing identity, οὔτε ἡ χιὼν ὁ. λευκόν snow is not what white is, i.e., is not identical with white, Top. 120b23; ὁ λευκὸς ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἐστίν ὁ. χροῖα ib. 116a27: hence, to indicate the precise or essential nature of a thing, οὐ γὰρ ἂν φαίη ὁ. κακὸν τι εἶναι τὴν ἡδονὴν he would not say that pleasure is essentially something bad, EN

2/ Top. 103 a 23-31 (trans. by Forster).

1153b6; τὰ μὲν οὐσίαν σημαίνοντα ὁ. ἐκεῖνο ἢ ὁ. ἐκεῖνό τι σημαίνει expressions which show the essence show precisely what the thing in question is or precisely of what kind it is (i.e. indicate either its species or its genus), APo. 83 a 24; ὁ. <τοῦδε> τί ἐστὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι the essence of a thing is precisely a 'this', i.e. fully specified particular, Metaph. 1030 a 3; ἡ μὲν [ἐπιστήμη] ὁ. ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶν knowledge (that man is an animal) is apprehension that 'animal' is an element in the essential nature of man, APo. 89 a 35 (3).

I should like now to examine the examples cited by LSJ in their definition of the term 'ὅπερ' in its unemphatic form (sense a.). In both examples 'ὅπερ' appears in its conventional relative pronominal form. The predicate 'not being susceptible of more or less' is affirmed of the subject 'essence', similarly, the predicate 'being said of something else' is affirmed of the subject 'double'. Each of these examples reveals that a specific subject, insofar as it is what it is, possesses a specific predicate. Further, it is safe to assume that in each of these predications the application of the predicate to the subject occurs necessarily. What must be determined, however, is whether 'οὐ λέγεται μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον' applies essentially to 'οὐσία' and whether 'ἐτέρου λέγεται' applies essentially to 'πρὸς τι' and hence to 'διπλάσιον'. Now it must be observed that essential predicates (κατηγορούμενα καθ'αυτὰ), i.e. those that are affirmed ἐν τῷ τί ἐστὶ of their subjects (4) are basically of two sorts: generic and specific (5). Further, it is according to the order of genus and species that the predicates of the category of essence as well as those of the accidental categories are classified. It is by virtue of such a classification and of the irreducible particularity of each category that one can rightly claim, e.g., that man is essentially an animal but only accidentally white. The essence-accident distinction therefore implies not only the categorial differences between substances, qualities, quantities, etc., but also the hierarchical order present in each category according to which the predicates of greater intension are subsumed under those of greater extension. In the light of these brief remarks, I think it can be easily seen that

3/ A Greek-English Lexicon, ed. H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, Oxford, 1961, p. 1262.

4/ Cf. An. post. 73 a 34-35.

5/ Cf. An. post. 92 a 6-7; Top. 101 b 18-19, 108 b 22-23, 139 a 29-31, 143 b 8-9, 153 a 18, 154 a 27; Met. 1022 a 25-29, 1029 b 13-14, 1030 a 11-13, 1037 a 29.

'not being susceptible of more or less' does not apply essentially to 'essence'. For if the contrary were true, then 'essence' would be merely a definite species of a higher genus, an extensionally greater categorical determination under which 'essence' would be subsumed. As for 'double', it is already a specification of the class of things called relatives, which Aristotle sets apart in the following manner:

We call relatives all such things as are said to be just what they are, of or than other things, or in some other way in relation to something else (6).

Now what is affirmed here of 'relative' certainly applies to 'double' essentially, insofar as 'relative' is the genus of 'double'. It does not follow from this, however, that 'being said of something else' applies to 'relative' essentially, i.e. in the same way as 'relative' applies to 'double'. For otherwise 'double' would be a species of 'relative' (which it is) and 'relative' would be a species of a higher genus (which it is not).

The problem that must now be addressed is that of the manner in which the predicates 'not being susceptible of more or less' and 'being said of something else' apply to 'essence' and 'relative' respectively, since they cannot do so essentially. The most appropriate solution to this problem would seem to be that they apply to their subjects as properties ($\tau\acute{\iota}\delta\iota\alpha$). For properties, as Aristotle states in the Topics, are not predicated essentially of their subjects, yet are co-extensive with them and belong to them always and of necessity (7). The classic example of a property as defined by Aristotle is that of man's capacity to acquire the art of reading and writing (8). This property is certainly related to man's specific difference, viz. rationality, but unlike this latter, is not partaken of by the subject -- the subject being considered here from the point of view of his specific essence --, i.e. is not a constitutive element of the definition of the subject (9). Further, Aristotle does in fact ascribe $\tau\acute{\iota}\delta\iota\alpha$ to the ultimate categorical determinations of ' $\acute{\omicron}\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\alpha$ ' and ' $\pi\acute{\omicron}\acute{\sigma}\acute{\omicron}\nu$ '. The property of any $\acute{\omicron}\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\alpha$ is that, while numerically one and the same, it is able to take on contraries (10); the property of any $\pi\acute{\omicron}\acute{\sigma}\acute{\omicron}\nu$ is that it is

6/ Cat. 6 a 36-37 (trans. by Ackrill).

7/ Cf. Top. 102 a 19-22, 129a 24-26, 131 a 27-31, 131 b 30-32.

8/ Cf. Top. 102 a 20-22.

9/ Cf. Top. 132 b 35-133 a 3.

10/ Cf. Cat. 4 a 10-11.

able to be called either equal or unequal (11). But in ascribing properties to ultimate genera of being Aristotle does not fully free himself of the implication that in some manner a superior genus and specific differences are required to delimit the meanings of these genera. For it is the case that a property can be designated as such only in contradistinction to essence, just as a species is necessarily contrasted with its genus and an accident with the substance in which it is found. But what would be the essence of the ultimate genus 'essence' against which a given attribute 'x' could be compared and set apart as a property? How could one even hope to grant linguistic expression to such an essence, assuming it could be determined, given the final form of the Aristotelean doctrine of categories? It should be observed in this connection that, according to Aristotle, it is only the essential (*καθ' αὐτά*) and permanent (*ἀεὶ*) properties that apply necessarily and at all times to their subjects (12). So a distinction not only between essence and property, but also between essential and non-essential properties is implied in the ascription of a property to a subject with which it is said to be co-extensive. Furthermore, in the first book of the Topics, when Aristotle presents his famous list of the predicables, he points out that the *ἴδιον* can be of two sorts: the first, which expresses the *τί ἦν εἶναι* of a subject, is more appropriately called the definition (*ῥος*); the second, which expresses a predicate merely co-extensive with the subject, is more rightly called a property (13). Finally, in Topics V Aristotle affirms that a property is correctly assigned to a subject only if it can be shown to apply to it naturally (*φύσει*) (14).

The point of the foregoing remarks is the following. To say that a predicate applies either essentially or as a property to an ultimate genus of being presupposes that there is an essence of that genus. But it is exactly this presupposition that cannot be made since ultimate genera of being have no essences yet, qua genera, are the fundamental bases of the specific essences of which they are affirmed. At best one might maintain that ultimate genera are their own essences, which is the equivalent of the contention that they are no essences at all, since they are not the product of the information of genera by specific differences which would give rise to their specific essential being (15). It follows then that the

11/ Cf. Cat. 6 a 26-27.

12/ Cf. Top. 129 a 17-26.

13/ Cf. Top. 101 b 19-22.

14/ Cf. Top. 134 b 5-7.

15/ Cf. Top. 143 b 8-9.

predicates 'not being susceptible of more or less' and 'being said of something else' cannot apply, properly speaking, κατ' ἴδιον or ἐν τῷ τί ἐστι to 'οὐσία' and 'πρὸς τι' respectively. Hence in the two examples of the unemphatic sense of the term 'ὅτι' cited by LSJ, this term is not employed to indicate a strict or well-defined application of a predicate to a subject according to the modes of essence or property.

I should now like to turn to sense b of 'ὅτι' which, according to LSJ, expresses identity. My purpose here will be to determine whether in this sense the term 'ὅτι' may be employed

- 1) to effect only a single form of essential predication;
- 2) to effect predictions that cannot rightly be called essential.

Concerning point 1 it is important to remember that according to Aristotle essential predications involve the application of either a generic predicate to a term representative of a species, or of a species-term to an individual subject. Further, it is of interest to notice that Aristotle does not distinguish between the functions of the copula in these two types of predication. It thus becomes possible to follow certain syllogistic forms of reasoning, as does Aristotle in the following text of the Categories:

For example, man is predicated of the individual man, and animal of man; so animal will be predicated of the individual man also--for the individual man is both a man and an animal (16).

Now it is a well-known fact that in the history of logic Peano first distinguished between the relation of an individual to its class and the inclusion of one class in another (17). This distinction is concisely illustrated by Russell:

For example, the relation of the Greek nation to the human race is different from that of Socrates to the human race, and the relation of the whole of the primes to the whole of the numbers is different from that of 2 to the whole of the numbers (18).

16/ Cat. 1 b 12-15 (trans. by Ackrill).

17/ Cf. J. Vuillemin, De la logique a la théologie: cinq études sur Aristote, Paris, 1967, p. 55.

18/ B. Russell, The Principles of Mathematics, 2nd edition, London, 1938, p. 134.

The immediate consequence of this distinction was that any syllogism of the type:

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Socrates is mortal.

was demoted to the status of a pseudo-syllogism (19). It is certain, however, that Aristotle sees no problem in maintaining a unity of meaning for the verb 'to be' in statements of the type 'Socrates is a man' and those of the type 'Men are mortal' insofar as both statements involve the application of an essential predicate to a subject. The question here is whether he employs 'ὅτι' in the sense of identity defined by LSJ, i.e., with the meaning of 'essentially', in the formulation of such statements.

Clear examples of what Peano understood by inclusion, and what is to be seen as its contrary, i.e. exclusion, are found in the two texts of the Topics cited by LSJ. Snow is not essentially white, i.e. is not a species of the genus 'white'; white man is not essentially color, i.e. is not a species of the genus 'color'. These two examples are by no means the only ones provided by the Topics in which 'ὅτι' is used in instances of inclusion or exclusion. On the contrary, as Brunschwig points out, Aristotle frequently employs the expression 'A is ὅτι B' in the Topics to affirm that B belongs to the essence of A and hence that it is the genus of A; Brunschwig cites seven occurrences of this expression in the Topics other than those indicated by LSJ (20). As regards the relation of an individual subject to its class, one is better served with examples taken from the Posterior Analytics. In I, 22 Aristotle affirms that when the wood undergoes a change so as to become white, it is incorrect to say that the white thing (τὸ λευκόν) qua white or qua a species of white (ὅτι λευκόν τι) has become wood, for whiteness is merely an accident of wood (21). This example points out that even if the white thing belongs to a species of white, it will be wrong to say that, as such, it has become wood.

19/ Cf. J. Vuillemin, op. cit., p. 55.

20/ Cf. J. Brunschwig, Aristote: Les topiques (livres I-IV), Paris, 1967, p. 154.

21/ Cf. An. post. 83 a 4-9.

A few lines further in the same chapter Aristotle reiterates this point by affirming that when the wood receives the accidental determination of whiteness, it does so, not qua anything else, but qua wood or a species of wood (ἢ ὅπερ εὔλον ἢ εὔλον τι) (22).

It is thus clear that 'ὅπερ' in the sense of 'essentially' is used by Aristotle to effect predications from the individual standpoints of genus and species, i.e. is used to designate instances of two of the three principal types of sameness or identity indicated in the text of the Topics cited at the beginning of this paper. But it is also used to designate, if only partially, an instance of the third form of 'ταύτων', i.e. that according to number. For things may be numerically the same by virtue of definition, and definition, in expressing the essence of a thing, reveals the determination of a definite species in a particular genus (23).

I should now like to turn to my second point raised with regard to the sense of 'ὅπερ' indicating identity, i.e. the question as to whether 'ὅπερ' may be used in this sense without the meaning of 'essentially'. Let us examine in this connection the text of the Metaphysics cited by LSJ, i.e. 1030 a 3. In this text the τι ἦν εἶναι is said to be ὅπερ [τόδε] τι (24). In the light of LSJ's translation of this text, it is clear that 'thisness' or determinateness or definiteness is affirmed of the τι ἦν εἶναι. It is in relatively similar fashion that this text is rendered in Bonitz's German translation:

Denn das Sosein is ein einzelnes Etwas (25).

The same is true of Tricot's French translation.

En effet, la quiddité d'un être est son essence individuelle et déterminée (26).

22/ Cf. An. post. 83 a 12-14.

23/ Cf. An. post. 90b 30-31; Top. 130b 2-6, 139 a 29-35, 143 b 6-10, 19-22; Met. 1031 a 12.

24/ Ross, contrary to Bonitz, reads ὅπερ γὰρ τι in Met. 1030 a 3, but argues for the synonymy of τι and τόδε τι; cf Aristotle's Metaphysics, Oxford, 1924, Vol. II, p. 170.

25/ Aristoteles' Metaphysik, griech.-dt./ in der Übers. von H. Bonitz; hrsg. von H. Seidel, 2 Halbbd., Hamburg, 1980.

26/ Aristote: La métaphysique, 2 vol., trad. J. Tricot, Paris, 1970.

Ross, who reads the text somewhat differently, translates:

For the essence is precisely what something is (27).

It is interesting to note that in the cited translations of Met. 1030 a 3 'ὅπερ' is either not translated (Bonitz), translated substantively in connection with [τόδε] τι (Tricot) or translated as 'precisely'. There is hence a hesitation on the part of the translators to render 'ὅπερ' as 'essentially' - a hesitation I believe to be well justified. For how could 'τι', 'τόδε τι' or any predicate 'x' be affirmed essentially of 'essence', if there can be nothing more fundamental than essence (28)? Indeed, as I pointed out in my remarks on the unemphatic sense of 'ὅπερ', essence is not itself a determinate species of being of which attributes could be affirmed essentially. Further, it is interesting to observe that in the same chapter of Met. Z in which 1030 a 3 appears, Aristotle explicitly denies that there may be an essence of anything that cannot be determined as a species of a genus. The name (ὄνομα) of anything incapable of such a determination will at best have a formula (λόγος) indicating its meaning, but as such will have no specific definition (ὀρισμός), nor will it serve to designate anything having an essence (29). It thus follows that in accordance with the strict sense of 'essence' as regards attributions of identity, the τι ἦν εἶναι is not essentially a 'this' and that in Met. 1030 a 3 'ὅπερ' is not employed to designate an instance of generic or specific identity. Further, even if one were to retain the translations of LSJ or Ross, there would still remain the problem of determining the basis upon which essence would be precisely a 'this' or precisely what something is.

I thus should like to go beyond the definition of 'ὅπερ' (sense b) provided by LSJ and call this particular sense of 'ὅπερ' indicating non-essential identity that of 'indeterminate identity'.

27/ Aristotle: Metaphysics, Oxford trans. of W.D. Ross in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon, New York, 1941. The stress on 'is' is that of Ross. The text of Ross as revised by J. Barnes reads: "For the essence is what something is," cf. The Collected Works of Aristotle, Princeton, 1984.

28/ Cf. Met. 1029 a 13-14.

29/ Cf. Met. 1030 a 11-17.

It is in my view indeterminate since in statements such as that of Met. 1030 a 3 neither a generic nor specific identity is expressed, nor a fortiori one of definition. Nor does it seem at all possible that merely an accidental identity is implied. And as to whether 'ὅπερ' is employed in Met. 1030 a 3 to attribute a property to essence, I should draw attention here to my remarks made previously in reference to the unemphatic sense of 'ὅπερ' to urge that it cannot. It is thus apparent that when employed in this specific sense, 'ὅπερ' expresses a type of identity that is not at all attested in the passage of the Topics cited at the beginning of this paper.

It is important to recognize that Met. 1030 a 3 is not an isolated case of statements expressing indeterminate identity. There are certainly other instances of 'ὅπερ' having this sense to be found in the Aristotelean Corpus. I shall point out here only three others, each found in the Metaphysics, as well as the various translations of the passages in which they appear:

- 1). Met.
1003b32-33: ἔτι δ' ἡ ἐκάστου οὐσία ἐν ἑστίν οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ὅπερ ὄν τι.

Ross: And if, further, the substance of each thing is one in no merely accidental way, and similarly is from its very nature something that is.

Bonitz: Auch ist jedes Wesen eines, nicht bloss in akzidentellem Sinne, und ebenso ist es seiend an sich.

Tricot: De plus, la substance de chaque être est une, et cela non par accident, et de même elle est aussi, essentiellement, quelque chose qui existe.

- 2). Met. 1045a36-1045b2: ὅσα δὲ μὴ ἔχει ὕλην, μήτε νοητὴν μήτε αἰσθητὴν, εὐθὺς ὅπερ ἐν τι [εἶναι] ἑστίν ἕκαστον, ὡπερ καὶ ὅπερ ὄν τι, τὸ τόδε, τὸ ποιόν, τὸ ποσόν.

Ross: But of the things which have no matter, either intelligible or perceptible, each is by its nature essentially a kind of unity, as it is essentially a kind of being--individual substance, quality, or quantity.

Bonitz: Was aber keinen Stoff hat, weder denkbaren, noch sinnlich wahrnehmbaren, das ist unmittelbar das, was Eines ist, so wie auch das, was Seindes ist, nämlich das bestimmte Etwas, das Qualitative, das Quantitative.

Tricot: Quant aux choses qui n'ont pas de matière, soit intelligible, soit sensible, c'est immédiatement et essentiellement un être, soit substance, soit qualité, soit quantité.

- 3). Met. 1051b-30-32: ὅσα δὴ ἐστὶν ὅπερ εἶναι τι καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ, περὶ ταῦτα οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀπατηθῆναι ἀλλ' ἢ νοεῖν ἢ μὴ.

Ross: About the things, then, which are essences and actualities, it is not possible to be in error, but only to know them or not to know them.

Bonitz: Bei dem also, was ein Sein an sich und in Wirklichkeit ist, ist keine Täuschung möglich, sondern nur Denken (vernunftmässiges Erfassen) oder Nichtdenken.

Tricot: Pour tout ce qui est précisément une essence et qui existe en acte, il ne peut donc y avoir erreur; il y a seulement, ou il n'y a pas, connaissance de ces êtres.

In the first text the subject clearly is οὐσία, while that of the second is the first three ultimate genera of being, and that of the last actual essences. In the lines immediately following those of the second above-cited text of the Metaphysics Aristotle explicitly states that neither 'τὸ ὄν' nor 'τὸ ἐν' represents the genus or figures in the definition of 'τὸ τόδε', 'τὸ ποῖόν' or 'τὸ ποσόν' (30). Moreover, it is interesting to notice the variety of translation in each of the three texts. At times 'ὅπερ' is not translated at all; at other times it is translated as 'precisely', 'immediately' or even 'essentially'. This reveals, I believe, the difficulty of the reader of Aristotle to determine exactly the manner in which a subject S that, properly speaking, cannot be said to possess an essence, is x qua ὅπερ x. And if one is to urge that S is immediately or precisely x, how then is one to convincingly defend Aristotle against the charge that the immediacy or precision of x's application to S is in fact based on nothing more than fiat, convention or arbitrary judgment? Could it not be further argued,

in recollection of Kant's criticism of Aristotle, that in the case of the attribution of immediate predicates to ultimate genera of being, not only this attribution, but also the establishment of the table of the ultimate genera of being in its final form is the expression not of a system, but rather a mere rhapsody (31).

I do not wish to imply here that Aristotle does not attempt to offer any justification of the attribution of a predicate to a subject by means of 'ὅτι' in the sense of indeterminate identity. On the contrary, in defence of his claim at 1030 a 3 he affirms that the $\tau\acute{\iota} \tau\acute{\iota}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ is not a predicate which is asserted of a subject other than itself. At 1003b 32-33 οὐσία is said to be ὅτι ὄν τι in the same manner as it is one, i.e. non-accidentally. According to the assertion made at 1045 a 36-1045 b 2 ultimate genera of being are ὅτι ἐν τι and ὅτι ὄν τι since they have neither intelligible nor sensible matter. And in conformity with Aristotle's statement at 1051b 30-32, things which are ὅτι εἶναι τι καὶ ἐνέργεια are those about which one cannot be mistaken. The point that I wish to underline, however, is that Aristotle offers us no way to determine why the reasons adduced for the applications of the above-cited predicates to their respective subjects are in fact sufficient for the necessity of these applications.

There are other problems which follow from Aristotle's use of 'ὅτι' in the sense of indeterminate identity that are worthy of our attention. For example, let us consider again the text of Met. 1030 a 3. In this text it is affirmed that the $\tau\acute{\iota} \tau\acute{\iota}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ is immediately or precisely a 'this'. And here 'thisness' should be viewed not as the physical determinateness proper to a composite substance, but rather as the determinateness proper to that which is presupposed by the definition of all non-essential terms, yet does not figure in their definition as either a generic or specific element (32). In other words, the $\tau\acute{\iota} \tau\acute{\iota}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ is said to be a

30/ Cf. Met. 1045 b 2-5.

31/ Cf. I. Kant, Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, (trans. L.W. Beck), Indianapolis, 1950, p. 70.

32/ Cf. Met. 1029 b 22-1030 a 3, 1030 a 27-1030 b 6.

'this' insofar as it possesses a focal meaning upon which the meanings of the other categories are based (33). The fact that Aristotle is here referring to conceptual rather than physical thisness is illustrated by what he says in 1030 a 4-5. The white man is not ὅτι τὸδε τι. This is consonant with Aristotle's view that 'white man' is not an essence, since man is not essentially white (34). However, if Aristotle were speaking here from the perspective of the Categories, he certainly would be constrained to say that the white man is immediately a τὸδε τι, for the expression 'white man' refers to a primary substance and a primary substance by its very nature is τὸδε τι (35). Nevertheless, Aristotle's use of 'τὸδε' and 'τὸδε τι' in lines 1030 a 3-6 seems to me consistent and to indicate the meaning of conceptual and not physical determinateness (36). Hence, when in 1030 a 5-6 he affirms that τὸ τὸδε belongs only to ταῖς οὐσίαις, I read him as attributing conceptual determinateness to essences and not physical determinateness to substances. Moreover, there is no apparent reason to believe that the attribution of '[τὸδε] τι' to τί ἦν εἶναι is any more immediate or complete than that of τὸ τὸδε to ταῖς οὐσίαις. If this reading is correct, then the question of the synonymy of 'τί ἦν εἶναι' and 'οὐσία' arises. For if both are immediately a 'this' and it is only οὐσία that possess thisness, then there would seem to be a ground upon which to base the claim that 'τί ἦν εἶναι' and 'οὐσία' are indeed synonymous, even though at times translators render the former as 'quiddity' and the latter as 'essence'.

It is important to observe here that Aristotle's statements on the question of synonymy are not altogether consistent. For example, in the Categories he declares that things are synonymous when they share the same name and definition:

33/ Strictly speaking it is οὐσία which is said to have a focal meaning with respect to the other categories. Nevertheless, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι is said to belong especially to οὐσία (cf. Met. 1031 a 12-14; 1030 a 29-30). On the question of focal meaning in Aristotle's categories, cf. G.E.L. Owen, "Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle," in Aristotle and Plato in the Mid-Fourth Century, Goteborg, 1960, p. 169.

34/ Cf. Met. 1030 a 1-2.

35/ Cf. Cat. 3 b 10.

36/ On the possibility of expressing either a conceptual or physical determinateness by means of 'τὸδε τι', cf. J.A. Smith, "τὸδε τι in Aristotle," The Classical Review, 1921, p. 19.

Thus, for example, both a man and an ox are animals. Each of these is called, by a common name, an animal, and the definition of being is also the same; for if one is to give the definition of each -- what being an animal is for each of them -- one will give the same definition (37).

However, in the Rhetoric, he affirms that two different terms can be called synonymous if they share the same meaning:

Synonyms are useful to the poet, by which I mean words whose ordinary meaning is the same, e.g. προέβουα (advancing) and βασιλεύω (proceeding); these two are ordinary words and have the same meaning (38).

If we follow Aristotle's view of synonymy expressed in the Rhetoric passage, then two synonymous terms, by virtue of their identical meaning, will share the same definition and hence possess a numerical identity, as was seen to be true of 'cloak' and 'mantle' in the text of the Topics dealing with identity cited at the beginning of this paper. Further, this view of synonymy allows for the verification of such a numerical identity through the determination of the identity of the genera and specific differences employed in the definition of each term. Now we have observed that Aristotle employs the expression 'A is ὅτι B' in certain instances to indicate that B is the genus of A. So if in such an instance another term C were also ὅτι B, it would follow that A and C would possess generic identity. And if it could be shown that their specific differences were the same, then they could be said to be synonymous.

An obvious problem, however, arises when in an expression based on 'A is ὅτι B', i.e. 'τὸ ὅτι B', B is replaced by 'τόδε τι'. For insofar as 'τόδε τι' does not refer to a genus of which there could be particular species, it would be difficult to determine to what specifically it refers in a given instance, even if it must refer to that which is ὅτι τόδε τι, i.e., τί ἦν εἶναι, οὐσία or perhaps εἶδος (39). Hence with regard to a text such as that of

37 Cat. 1 a 8-12 (trans. by Ackvill).

38 Rhet. 1404b 37-1405 a 2 (trans. by Roberts). On Aristotle's inconsistencies regarding the question of synonymy, cf. J. Hintikka, "Aristotle on the Ambiguity of Ambiguity" in Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality, Oxford, 1973, p. 9.

39 Cf. Met. 1017 b 24-26.

Topics 116a 23, there is no a priori reason for asserting that 'τὸ ὅπερ τὸδε τι' refers specifically to a τί ἦν εἶναι rather than an οὐσία or an εἶδος, even if it does refer to a concept and not a thing, in this particular instance 'justice' and not the just man. And this is why translators of Aristotle read 'τὸ ὅπερ τὸδε τι' as implying alternatively the general sense, idea or definition of that which it designates (40). Similarly, in the light of Met. 1045 a 36-1045b2 it is correct to say that 'τὸ ὅπερ ἐν' and 'τὸ ὅπερ ὄν' may be used to designate any of the categories. But insofar as 'ἐν' and 'ὄν' are not generic terms predicable of species which could be distinguished on the basis of specific differences, the synonymy or equivocity of terms designated by 'τὸ ὅπερ ἐν' and 'τὸ ὅπερ ὄν' will remain indeterminable. For it to be otherwise, one would have to appeal to the notion of essential identity and thereby presuppose the notions of genus, species and definition.

It is thus my conclusion that when used in the sense of indeterminate identity in statements of the form 'A is ὅπερ B' and 'C is ὅπερ B', 'ὅπερ' is not to be translated as 'essentially' and that the question of the synonymy of A and C in such statements is to be viewed as undecidable. This of course does not mean that Aristotle never implies in his writings an identity of meaning applying to terms such as 'τί ἦν εἶναι', 'οὐσία' and 'εἶδος'. It is rather the contrary that is true. But I do find it significant that in a book of the Metaphysics such as Z where Aristotle distinguishes between τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι and τὸ εἶδος in order to better determine what οὐσία is, in the last chapter of this book he sees no obstacle to the implicit affirmation of their identity, as if this were not fundamentally problematic:

φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι ζητεῖ τὸ αἴτιον τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι (41); ὥστε τὸ αἴτιον ζητεῖται τῆς ὕλης (τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ εἶδος) ᾧ τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο δ' ἡ οὐσία (42).

40 Commenting upon the expression "ὅπερ τὸδε τι" Brunschwig affirms: "Quant à τὸδε τι, il ne désigne pas la substance concrète, comme ailleurs chez Aristote; il faut le considérer comme une sorte de variable, qui désigne cela même dont il est question dans les notions considérées, le noyau de sens qui s'exhibe en elles (J. Brunschwig, op. cit., pp 154-55)." P. Gohlke asserts: "Der Ausdruck 'ὅπερ τὸδε τι' stammt aus Aristoteles' akademischer Zeit und bedeutet eigentlich die Idee eines Gegenstandes (P. Gohlke, Aristoteles: Topik, Paderborn, 1952, pp. 332-33)." As for C. Arpe, he argues: "Die Formel ὅπερ τὸδε τι ist mehrdeutig; durch sie wird entweder definitoriale Identifikation ausgedrückt, oder aber Identifikation mit einem Ding, streng im Sinne der ersten Kategorie...Also an sich, ist die Formel ὅπερ τὸδε τι indifferent gegen Kategoriale Unterscheidungen; sie bezeichnet die definitoriale Identifikation, und ob es sich bei der Definition um ein Ding handelt oder nicht, spielte ursprünglich jedenfalls keine Rolle (Das τί ἦν εἶναι bei Aristoteles, Hamburg, 1938, pp. 34-35)."

41 Met. 1041 a 27-28.

42 Met. 1041 b 7-9.