METAPHYSICS Z, 1, 1028a20–30

dio καὶ ἀπορηθεὶέν (ἂν)1) τις πότερον τὸ βαθιζεὶν καὶ τὸ ὑμαίνειν καὶ τὸ καθήσθαι ἐκαστὸν αὐτῶν ὡς σημαινεί2), ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἄτομον τῶν τουτούτων ὁδὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐστὶν οὕτε καθ’ αὐτὸ περικός οὕτε χωρίζεσθαι δυνατὸν τῆς ὀσύλας, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον, εἰτέρη, τὸ βαθιζεὶν τῶν ὄντων καὶ τὸ καθημένου καὶ τὸ ὑμαίνειν. ταύτα δὲ μᾶλλον φαίνεται ὑντα, διότι ἐστὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον αὐτοῖς ὥρμομένον (τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶν ἡ ὀσύλα καὶ τὸ καθ’ ἐκαστὸν), ὅπερ ἐμφαίνεται ἐν τῇ κατηγορίᾳ τῇ τοιαύτῃ τὸ ἀγάθον γὰρ ἢ τὸ καθήμενον οὐχ ἄνευ τούτου λέγεται. δήλον οὖν ὅτι διὰ ταύτην κάθειν ἐκαστὸν ἐστὶν.

The above aporia follows an argument in the first ten lines of the chapter which establishes the ontological priority of substance over the other categorical beings. Substance, introduced as a τί ἐστι καὶ τόδε τι (1028a 11–12), is viewed in the dual role of essential predicate and of essentially qualified subject3). As essential predicate, substance responds to the privileged question 'what-is' (1028a 14–18). Constituted by its essence, substance is

1) I accept Jaeger’s emendation. The alternative readings καὶ ἀπορηθεὶέν τις (ἈβοΤ) and καὶ ἀπορηθεὶέν τις (Ε].) are both suspect. The expression ἀπορηθεὶέν ὡς τις, with the insertion sometimes of an aspirated (ἢ) or γάρ between ἀπορηθεὶέν and ὡς, is a commonplace in Aristotle. See, for instance, Cat. 10b31; De Int. 22b29; Phys. 210a25; Meteor. 339b3, 342a3, 388a43; De G.C. 317b20; De An. 410b10, 411b14, 423a21; Metaph. 1002b12. The expression διο καὶ ἀπορηθεὶέν ὡς τις appears in Meteor. 361a25.

2) Ab’s reading ὡς σημαινεί, accepted by Ross (see note in his Commentary), is more likely than the reading ὡς ἡ μὴ ὡς (E]. Al. Ase.). The aporia has to do with whatever is signified by the infinitives βαθιζεὶν, etc. The article τῷ in τὸ βαθιζεὶν suggests an item taken in a linguistic mode. One should not look, however, in Aristotle for a sharp distinction between word and thing. Things behave linguistically, and Aristotle freely passes from the linguistic to the ontological realm, and vice versa. See D.W. Hamlyn, “Aristotle on Predication”, Phronesis, vol. 6, no. 2, 1961, especially pp. 110–113.

3) These two perspectives are not incompatible with each other because there is an identity between the thing and its essence; cf. Metaph. Z, 6, 1031a17–18: ἐκαστὸν τε γὰρ οἷς ἄλλο δοκεῖ εἶλαι τῆς ἔκαστον ὀσύλας, καὶ τὸ τί ἢν εἶλαι λέγεται εἶλαι ἡ ἐκαστὸν ὀσύλα. I have discussed elsewhere the distinction and relationship between reistic and archiological (formal) senses of substance. See my article “Two Conceptions of Substance in Aristotle”, New Scholasticism, vol. 47 (1973), no. 1.
the ontological foundation and subject of the other categorial beings which function as its various attributes (1028a 18–20).

In the ensuing aporia, the question is raised regarding the ontological status of the denotata of infinitives such as ἐξαντλεῖν and καθῆσθαι. As I see it, the aporia arises because of the form of the infinitive which, per se, while designating an activity or state, does not refer to a subject or bearer of the activity or state. At the same time, what is designated by the infinitive is such that it cannot have an independent nature or be separable from substance. Chung-Hwan Chen has perceptive remarks about the nature of ἐξαντλεῖν, etc., but seems to miss the point of the aporia with respect to terms such as ἐξαντλεῖν, etc. He obviously takes them to be verbs prior to being used in definite propositions. He writes: “Aristotle asks whether what is expressed by a verb is existent. He answers that, for example, to walk, to be healthy or to sit only vaguely implies a substance which performs the action, but walking, sitting, etc. are judged to be more real because there is something definite underlying them (i.e. an individual substance) which is implied in the very designation “walking”. The expression “walking” cannot be used without such an implication”.

I do not think that this really explains the contrast between ἐξαντλεῖν and καθῆσθαι. Aristotle’s point is that unlike τὸ ἐξαντλεῖν, τὸ καθῆσθαι and τὸ ὑγιαίνειν, the corresponding infinitives do not have, in their linguistic form, a reference to an underlying substance, not even an implicit one. The infinitive, per se, does not imply a subject at all. The aporia in question arises if we understand the infinitives to stand, not for the predicative use of verbs, but for activities (processes) and states as such. Asclepius, in his commentary on the passage, characteristically renders the aporia as follows: διὸ καὶ ἄξιον ἀπορῆσαι περὶ τῆς ὑγείας αὐτῆς καὶ τῆς ἐξαντλεώς καὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν τῶν τοιούτων, πότερον οὖν τα

4) Jaeger’s excising of πεφυκός (1.23) is not justified. Presumably, he was suspicious of the construction ἐστὶ ... καθ’ αὐτὸ πεφυκός. Perhaps for this reason he refers in the apparatus to Bonitz’ Index for the combination of πεφυκός with the infinitive. We find, however, elsewhere in Aristotle a construction with πεφυκός (1.23) similar to that at 1028a23. Cf. De P. A. 664a13: ὡς ὑγιείς ἀνευρὼν ἀρα ἐκεῖνον πεφυκός ἐστὶ τοῖς ἐξομιλίαν ἀνευρὼν τῶν ἑτέρων. Ibid. 665b34–35: μέσον γὰρ τὸ τῆς καθήσεως ἐστὶ σῶμα τυχόμενον καὶ κολλοῦν πεφυκός ... For the combination of φύσις with καθ’ αὐτὸ, see Index Aristotleus 838b45–47.


6) Ibid., p. 211.
We may note, however, that while the word βάδως suggests an object of some sort\(^7\), the word βαδίζειν is ontologically neutral. The temptation of hypostatization is stronger in the case of the substantive than in the case of the infinitive. The source of the aporia is the dilemma between, on the one hand, hypostatizing processes and states, and, on the other hand, denying altogether their existence\(^9\). The ontology of βαδίζον, καθήμενον and ύμαινον, however, is not as problematic because their form of assertion (καθημοσία) is revelatory of subject that supports them into existence. The meaning of the word εἴτεο among line 24 is dependent on the interpretation to be given to βαδίζον, etc. I take it that βαδίζον functions here as a predicate, not as a subject. It stands for the attribute that accompanies the predicative ‘is’ when the verb βαδίζει is analyzed into its equivalent components\(^10\). Thus I believe Ross to be wrong when he explains τὸ βαδίζον as “a substance (though referred to only as the possessor of an activity)”\(^11\). His translation of 11.24–25 reads: “but rather, if anything, it is that which walks or sits or is healthy that is an existent thing?”. Contrary to Ross’s assumption, εἴτεο does not express a certainty about the reality of τὸ βαδίζον, τὸ καθήμενον and τὸ ύμαινον but hints at a conceivable doubt about their reality, since they are not subjects, things in themselves, though in comparison with βαδίζειν, etc. they appear to be more real because of the built-in reference to a subject in their linguistic form. 1028a 24–25 might be translated as follows: “but rather, if at all, it is walking and sitting and healthy that are beings”. εἴτεο indicates the entertainment of the possibility of a total reduction

\(^7\) In Metaphysicorum Z 1, 376, 34–36.

\(^8\) This is because of its substantive form. Cf. the apparent signification of a τὸ ὁτε by secondary substances in the Categories, due to their σχήμα τῆς προσημοσίας: εἰι δὲ τῶν δευτέρων οὐσίων φαίνεται μὲν ὁμοίως τῷ σχήματι τῆς προσημοσίας τὸ ὁτε τι σημαίνειν, ὅταν εἴη τὸν ἀνθρώπον ἡ ζωήν, ὅδ’ ἐπὶ ἄλλητε γε, ἄλλα μᾶλλον πολὺ τι σημαίνει... (Cat. 4113–16).


of all being to substance as the sole ontological category. This is not a position that Aristotle actually takes. Nevertheless he comes close to it when he ascribes to substance at 1028a 31 the exclusive title of ὁ ἀρχόντος\(^{12}\).}

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