

CHAPTER 6

This chapter is a further attack on the problem of the unity of a definition. As I read it, it brings to bear on that problem the new conception of a definition, developed in *H2* and in *H3*, and it claims that with this understanding the old problem disappears.

47^a7–8

The question of the unity of a definition was linked with the question of the unity of a number at *H3*, 44^a2–9, but numbers are not mentioned again in the present chapter.

45^a8–20

Aristotle opens his discussion with the general principle that whenever a thing has parts, but is not to be identified with the sum of those parts, then there is always a cause of its unity. (As at *Z16*, 40^b9, and at *Z17*, 41^b12, a heap is given as an instance of something that *is* just the sum of its parts.) Then he briefly illustrates how this principle applies to bodies, before stating the main problem at ^a12 ff. (For the suggestion at ^a13 that the *Iliad* is a unity by being bound together, see *Z4*, 30^b9–10 n.)

As before, Aristotle states his problem in this way: a definition is a unity because what it is a definition *of* is a unity, but the problem is to explain how the thing defined *could* be a unity. As I said at *Z12*, 37^b8–14 n., the source of the problem seems to be that the definition has parts, and so it must appear that the thing defined has corresponding parts. If this is admitted, then to conform to the general principle with which we began, we must either say that the thing defined is simply the sum of those parts, or we must supply an appropriate cause of unity for it. But in the light of *H3*, 43^b10–14, the second alternative now appears to be impossible. For if there is a cause of unity, then it is the substance of the thing defined, and so should certainly have been included in the definition. Yet, if it had been, then the words which specify it would simply have formed another part of the definition, and so by hypothesis would correspond to another *part* of the thing defined. We should then still be at a loss for the cause of the unity of all those parts. The moral is that *if* the parts of the definition do each correspond to parts of the thing defined, then the thing defined can only be the sum of those parts, as it were the 'mere heap' of them.

It seems to be just this consequence that Aristotle proceeds to elaborate. Suppose, for example, that man is defined as a two-footed animal. What is defined is of course the universal 'man', not this or that particular man, so the suggestion is that this universal be construed simply as a 'heap' of two others. Now one can see why, from his own philosophical

perspective, Aristotle should find this suggestion intolerable. But why does he think that the Platonist too would be bound to reject it? I think it is because he is pressing very hard on the idea that absolutely *no* ‘cause of unity’ is supplied by the suggested definition. Consequently, what is defined is not *any* kind of unity, which means that it is not ‘one thing’ at all. But that is simply a way of saying that it does not exist. So on this proposal there is actually no such thing as being a man; there are *only* the different universals in terms of which man is defined. Aristotle is confident that even a Platonist could not accept this.

Is this inference fair? Well, if we continue to think in terms of his own metaphor, it seems not to be. After all, heaps do exist, and a heap is one thing (one heap) even if there is not much to hold it together. In fact heaps do have a ‘cause of unity’ in Aristotle’s sense, namely the arrangement of the items that they are heaps of. So let us drop the metaphor. Then we may say that even when one property is explicitly defined as the conjunction of two others, still it is *one* property that is defined, and not two. This again is because the definition does after all specify a suitable ‘cause of unity’, i.e. a way in which the two ‘constituent’ properties must be ‘arranged’ in order to form the property defined, namely that they must be ‘arranged’ *by conjunction*. (Clearly the *disjunction* of those same constituents would define quite a different property.) A definition which really did not supply *any* ‘cause of unity’ would simply be a list, and a phrase such as ‘a two-footed animal’ is not a list. But Aristotle’s argument, I think, overlooks this point.

45^a20–33

A more literal rendering of the first sentence of this paragraph is: ‘So it is clear that, for those who proceed in this way, as they are accustomed to define and to say (*legein*), it is not possible to . . . solve the problem.’ The Greek word ‘*legein*’ has a wide range of meanings, and it is not clear what kind of ‘saying’ is in question here. I have adopted the translation ‘to explain’ because that suits equally well the two interpretations of this sentence that seem worth pursuing. On the one interpretation, the point is that definitions are themselves explanations, so ‘to define and explain’ just means ‘to define’. Aristotle is saying, then, that the problem cannot be resolved if we retain the traditional way of defining man, e.g. as a two-footed animal. On the other interpretation, the Platonist is taken to be adopting a certain explanation *of definitions*, so ‘to define and to explain’ is short for ‘to define and to explain that definition’. On this account Aristotle is not objecting to the definition itself, but is saying that the Platonists have misunderstood it. In particular, they think that the two parts of the definition correspond to two parts of the universal defined, but that is a mistake. This second interpretation seems to me an unnatural way of taking the Greek, yet it seems to the vast majority of commentators to be what the argument requires at this point. So it can

fairly be called the orthodox interpretation. (Among its adherents are Ross; Balme [1962]; Grene [1974]; Rorty [1974]; Lloyd [1981], 32–6; Burnyeat *et al.* [1984]; Scaltsas [1985]; Furth [1988], 246; Irwin [1988], 568; Gill [1989], 139–44.) Let us pursue this suggestion first.

On this account the problem is to show how the universal ‘man’, still defined as ‘two-footed animal’, can be a unity. It is perfectly clear from what follows that Aristotle is claiming that his notions of matter and form provide the solution. There then seems to be only one possible explanation of how they could do so: the phrase ‘two-footed animal’ does not mention two co-ordinate parts of the universal defined, for one word gives its matter and the other its form. Taking a hint from Z12, 38^a6–8, it will be the genus ‘animal’ that gives the matter of ‘man’, and the differentia ‘two-footed’ that gives its form. So the universal ‘man’ is a compound of a sort, but not one whose ‘cause of unity’ is still to seek. For Aristotle goes on to argue in the rest of this paragraph, and again in the final paragraph (from 45^b10), that it is ridiculous to ask for any further explanation of how matter and form can together make a unity.

There are three objections to this line of interpretation. One I have already mentioned, namely that it requires us to understand the opening sentence at ^a20–2 in an unnatural way. The second is its reliance on the thesis that the genus is matter. Since this thesis is by no means a standing feature of Aristotle’s thought (cf. Z12, 38^a5–9 n.), one would certainly expect him to *state* the thesis somewhere in his discussion if he is in fact relying on it. But he never does. The interpretation must, then, depend upon the point that one of the very few occurrences of this thesis is in Z12, where again the topic is the unity of a definition. Perhaps the suggestion comes readily to Aristotle’s mind when he is thinking of this problem, though very seldom in other contexts? But this raises the question of the relation between Z12 and H6. If H6 was written first, it is then puzzling (on this interpretation) that in Z12 Aristotle puts no great weight on the idea that the genus is matter, but casually disjoins that suggestion with another (i.e. that the genus does not exist apart from the species), as if it makes little difference which we say. But anyway it is much more probable that Z12 was written first, for I have argued in my epilogue to that chapter that it was a relatively early attempt, whereas H6 evidently presupposes the doctrine that form is actuality, as introduced in H2. (The doctrine was anticipated at Z13, 38^b6; it is also prominent in book II of the *De Anima*.) On this hypothesis, however, it is puzzling that H6 makes not the slightest mention of the question that occupied much of Z12: how does a series of several different differentiae form a unity? It would appear that H6 no longer regards this as a relevant problem, though one cannot see why, if it is still retaining the traditional style of definition discussed in Z12.

Finally, one must ask how Aristotle supposes that his problem will disappear if the genus is dubbed ‘matter’. It is no doubt fair to say that if the two parts of the definition may be distinguished as matter and form, then this *could* help to prevent us from supposing that each corresponds

to an independent part of the item defined. But Aristotle's own illustration signally fails to bring home this point. He introduces the definition 'a round [piece of] bronze' as one that clearly combines matter and form, and says that it is obvious that this defines a unity. But on the contrary, in the terms in which this problem is usually seen, it is obvious that it does *not* define a unity. Being round is one property, being bronze is another, quite independent property, and the conjunction of the two is an entirely accidental compound, with no more unity than the property of being a pale man. Z12 said (at 37^b14–18) that 'pale' and 'man' will form a unity when the one belongs to the other, i.e. when some particular man is pale, but it went on to argue that that model will *not* explain the required unity of the universal 'two-footed animal'. On the present interpretation, H6 appears to say exactly the opposite. At any rate, it must be particular round pieces of bronze that Aristotle is thinking of when he says that there is no cause, other than the efficient cause, of what is potential being actual (^a31, repeated ^b21–2). For efficient causes apply only to particulars. So his thought appears to be: (i) a particular round piece of bronze is a unity; therefore (ii) the universal 'round bronze' is a unity; and so by analogy (iii) the universal 'two-footed animal' is a unity. But on this interpretation the step from (i) to (ii) is wholly illegitimate, and we may add that the step from (ii) to (iii), founded only on an unpersuasive analogy, is anyway left entirely to our imagination. Our text simply does not assert (iii).

These are serious problems for the orthodox interpretation of H6. So I now turn to a different interpretation, which begins from the different reading of ^a20–2. On this reading, Aristotle's opening remark is that we cannot solve the problem if we still retain the traditional style of definition, such as 'man is a two-footed animal'. But what does he think is wrong with such a definition? Well, he says that it does not show how what is defined is a unity, and so far we have supposed that what is defined is the universal 'man'. But we can also say that the definition defines *a man*, and we can certainly take ^a14–15 as asking 'What is it, then, that makes *a man* a unity rather than a plurality?' When the question is taken in this way, Aristotle's answer to it is obvious: what makes a man a unity is his form, or in other words his soul. Accordingly, a definition of man should take the form 'such-and-such a formula in such-and-such a matter taken as universal' (Z10, 35^b27–30), for 'it is clear that the soul is the primary substance, that the body is matter, and that man or animal is the compound of the two taken universally' (Z11, 37^a5–7). What is wrong with the traditional kind of definition is that it simply ignores the soul, yet it is the soul that *is* the desired cause of unity.

We may generalize this interpretation. In Z17 (esp. from 41^b11) Aristotle argued that the cause of unity of each thing is always its form. In H2 he argued that *all* proper definitions will predicate form of matter (43^a5–7), and the examples show that 'matter' is there meant in its ordinary sense. There is no particular reason to suppose that this doctrine

of *H2* was influenced by the discussion of form in *Z17*, but the doctrine is repeated in *H3*, at 43^b30–2, in a context which very clearly does depend both on *Z17* and on *H2*. Aristotle views this as a new conception of definition, for when he is thinking of a definition as combining genus and differentiae, he says that the differentia is *not* predicated of the genus (*Z4*, 30^a10–14; *Z12*, 37^b18–21; and see *Z12*, epilogue); but when he is thinking of a definition as combining matter and form, he says that the form *is* predicated of the matter. What he is proposing here in *H6* is that the traditional style of definition be abandoned, and the new style adopted in its place. Then, he thinks, the problem he has stated will disappear, for the new style of definition always does specify the cause of unity, since it specifies the form, and the form is the cause of unity.

Of the three objections that I raised to the orthodox interpretation, the first is straightforwardly met by this revised interpretation, and the second does not arise. As for the relationship between *Z12* and *H6*, we may suppose that *H6* was written long after *Z12*, and that it ignores the problem of many differentiae because the new conception of definition has rendered it irrelevant. In any case, on this revised interpretation there is really nothing in common between the problem tackled in *Z12* and the problem resolved in *H6*. This defence, of course, does admit that a revised form of the third objection may fairly be raised. We could put it by saying that, on the present interpretation, *H6* is guilty of *ignoratio elenchi*: it professes to be answering the problem of 'the unity of a definition', but is actually doing no such thing, for the 'real' unity problem concerns the unity of the universal 'man', not the unity of *a man*. It seems best to admit this charge, but to add that it applies not only to *H6* but also to *H3*, 44^a2–9. There too Aristotle claims that a definition is a unity, and that the Platonists cannot explain this, whereas he can (45–6). But when he comes to state his explanation it is that 'substances are one in this way . . . because each is an actuality and a certain nature' (47–9). This again seems to provide the answer to the wrong question, i.e. to the question 'What makes *a man* a unity?'

I conclude that although there are objections to this revised interpretation, they are much less serious than the objections to the orthodox interpretation. It ought, therefore, to be accepted. (See further 45^b7–23 n.).

In *Z12* Aristotle had taken it to be obvious that a particular pale man may be counted as one thing (37^b14–18). Here too he takes it to be obvious that a particular lump of matter, say bronze, and a form such as circularity, may together constitute one thing. But he also offers to *explain* this unity by relying on his assimilation of matter to potentiality and of form to actuality. This explanation is entirely bogus.

There is no genuine connection between form and actuality, and it only causes confusion to speak as though matter and potentiality were the same (cf. *Z16*, 40^b5–16 n.). Thus Aristotle says here that matter and form should be distinguished, 'and the one is potentially while the other is actually' (24), as if that explained the distinction between them. As

we learn from 45^b17–19, what he means is that ‘the one is potentially *what* the other is actually’, but this is nonsense. It implies that when we have a round piece of bronze, then the matter, i.e. the bronze, is *potentially* round, whereas the form, i.e. the shape, is *actually* round. But (a) when the bronze is round, then of course it is actually round, and not just potentially round, whereas (b) it is the bronze which is round, and the shape itself is not round at all. (This is a category-mistake on a par with Plato’s mistake of supposing that the form of largeness is a large thing.) Or again, consider his statement at ^a30–2 that when what is potentially a sphere is actually a sphere, ‘this is precisely what being is for each of them’. If this means that it is the essence, both of the potential sphere and of the actual sphere, to be a sphere, then apparently it is false. For the phrase ‘the potential sphere’ presumably refers to the bronze, and it is *not* part of the essence of the bronze that it should be a sphere. If, on the other hand, it means that it is the essence of the potential sphere to be potentially a sphere, while it is the essence of the actual sphere to be actually a sphere, then in a sense it can be accepted. But if we do accept it, then of course we must say that the potential sphere (i.e. the bronze) and the actual sphere (i.e. the sphere) are different things, since they have different essences (and hence different life-histories). This hardly supports the claim that a round piece of bronze is *one* thing.

Evidently Aristotle should not have attempted this explanation of how, when we have some matter in a certain form, we have one thing. For, even if we discount the awkward remarks I have just noted, potentiality anyway explains nothing. (If one is puzzled over how *x* could be *F*, one is not helped by the assurance that *x* has the potentiality of being *F*.) He should simply have said that it is obvious that a round piece of bronze can be regarded as one thing, and left it at that.

45^a33–^b7

^a33–5: *Intelligible matter*. Aristotle has just been talking of defining a circular (or spherical) piece of bronze. This reminds him that one can also define a circle (or a sphere), and at first glance such a definition does not mention any kind of matter. But he wishes to maintain that it does, since ‘there is intelligible matter as well as perceptible matter’. In *Z*₁₀ ‘intelligible matter’ was evidently the matter of such geometrical entities as circles and spheres (see 35^b31–36^a12 n.), so the simplest hypothesis is that the same explanation applies here too. The example ‘a circle is a plane figure’ is intended to indicate that the (‘intelligible’) plane is the *matter* of which an (‘intelligible’) circle is made. Different circles differ from one another by being ‘made of’ different parts of the plane.

In this example what one might naturally regard as the *genus* of a circle, namely ‘plane figure’, is construed as mentioning the matter of the

circle. This might be thought to be a point in favour of the orthodox interpretation of H6, according to which 'man is a two-footed animal' is still permitted as a proper definition, but the genus 'animal' is construed as mentioning matter. If so, then to preserve the analogy with an 'intelligible' circle, the genus 'animal' should be construed as mentioning the *perceptible* matter of which an ordinary perceptible animal is made, i.e. flesh and bones in the case of a man, but something rather different in the case of an oyster. (This view is adopted by Rorty [1974], 76.) But while I agree that Aristotle thinks that a definition should mention such perceptible matter, it is odd to suppose that he thought that the word 'animal' already did this. Accordingly, the usual version of the orthodox interpretation (following Ross) supposes that the genus 'animal' is itself an example of 'intelligible matter', i.e. the matter of which the ('intelligible') species 'man' is made. This implies that the phrase 'intelligible matter' does not mean the same here in H6 as it meant in Z10, which is a further count against this interpretation.

^a36–^b7: If a definition must always mention matter, then evidently what has no matter cannot be defined. Aristotle appears to infer that what has no matter must be simple, and for that reason must automatically be a unity. On Ross's account, what Aristotle is thinking of as simple are the *summa genera* that are the titles of the categories, i.e. substance, quality, quantity, and the rest. So the words 'a this, a quality, a quantity' at ^b1–2 should be understood as 'being a this, being a quality, being a quantity'; they introduce three examples of things which have no matter. On the orthodox account, these 'have no matter' because they have no genus; they are themselves ultimate genera and hence 'ultimate matters'. While this is a possible view, it is nevertheless odd. One would more naturally expect what has no matter to be itself pure form rather than pure matter. In that case one might prefer to take the parenthetical words 'a this, a quality, a quantity' simply as a list of headings; they suggest merely that there will be simple and indefinable items *in* each of the various categories. But, as at H3, 43^b28–32, we are left to speculate upon what Aristotle may have been thinking of as examples.

At ^b3–4 Aristotle adds that an essence is also something that is 'at once' both a unity and a being. If he is retaining the view of Z4–6, which equates essence and definition, the explanation of this claim is that a definition defines a unity because it predicates form of matter, as the previous paragraph has explained. If he is retaining the view of Z7–10, which equates essence and form, then we could say (in conformity with Ross's account) that at ^b1–2 Aristotle observes that what is (from a logical point of view) 'pure matter' itself has no matter, and here at ^b3–4 he makes the corresponding point about 'pure form'. Alternatively, if we suppose that Aristotle has been thinking of forms throughout, then we may say that he adds a separate mention of essences because it is not at all clear that all essences do fall under one or other of the traditional categories. One could offer yet further speculations.

The remaining claims made in this paragraph are (i) that being and unity do not occur in definitions (^b2-3); (ii) that being and unity are not genera (^b6); and (iii) that they do not exist separately from particulars (^b7). It appears that (ii) is the reason for (i); at any rate, that is the way that Aristotle usually connects these two claims (e.g. *An. Post* II, 92^b13-14). It also appears that Aristotle has some motive for introducing (ii), namely to guard against a possible misunderstanding. For he has said of things without matter that each is 'just what is some unity' and 'just what is some being', and this is a form of words that might be taken to mean that each has unity and being as its genus. (The phrase '*estin hoper X*' is often used in this way in the Logical Works. See Barnes [1975], 168.) So it is natural for him to add an explicit disclaimer. For both of these reasons, one is strongly tempted to rearrange our text, so that ^b2-3 comes after ^b6. Certainly the text as we have it, with its several repetitions, runs very awkwardly.

Finally, it should be observed that Aristotle is surely exaggerating when he claims that *everything* without matter is a unity. For suppose that *X* and *Y* are each things without matter. Then it would appear that what is indicated by such phrases as '*X* and *Y*' and '*X* or *Y*' is equally without matter, but that hardly seems a good ground for saying that what is indicated must 'at once' be a unity.

45^b7-23

At 46, 987^b7-14 Aristotle tells us that Plato was led to talk of participation (where the Pythagoreans had talked of imitation) in an attempt to say how particulars were related to the forms after which they were called. But he could not explain what this participation was. So one might naturally suppose that when Lycophron talked of communion, and others of composition or of tying together, it was this relation of predication that they too were trying to describe. On the other hand, some evidently attempted to use the notion of participation to describe the relation between genus and differentia, as Aristotle shows us when he twice argues that this will not do (*Z*12, 37^b18-24; *Z*14, 39^b2-6). He also adds, on the second occasion, that one might try saying that genus and differentia 'are placed together and in contact, or intermixed', but comments that 'all this is absurd'. Perhaps, then, it was for this purpose that Lycophron talked of communion, and others invented other expressions. But 'the tying together of soul with body', though it may be meant as a definition of life, is surely not a definition through genus and differentia. Moreover, it would seem somewhat circular to propose 'the communion of knowing and the soul' as any kind of definition of knowledge. In fact, as Aristotle proceeds to elaborate his point further with examples such as 'the bronze being a triangle', it becomes clear that it is just ordinary predication that he is talking of. (Lycophron's concern with the 'is' of predication is also mentioned at *Phys* I, 2, 185^b27-8.)

The point, then, appears just to be this: people have invented all kinds of expressions for describing predication, but have not been able to explain that vocabulary in any useful way.

I postpone to the epilogue a speculation on why Aristotle might have thought that his own terminology of matter and form, potentiality and actuality, was superior. What needs to be considered here is why he should suppose that these remarks on predication are at all relevant to his topic in this chapter, the problem of the unity of a definition. The answer can only be that he is presuming that the unity of the proposition 'the bronze is round' carries with it the unity of the item referred to by 'the round bronze', and that this in turn carries with it the unity of the proposed definition 'a round bronze' (offered, we imagine, as the definition of some single word such as 'cloak'). The phrase 'a round bronze' is regarded as itself a phrase in which a form (signified by 'round') is predicated of matter (signified by 'bronze'). So we may generalize and say that any definition which predicates form of matter in this way will define a unity. On the orthodox interpretation of this chapter, *all* definitions may be so regarded, including the definition of a man as 'a wingless two-footed animal'. On the interpretation that I prefer, only some proposed definitions will qualify. In particular, the traditional definition of a man should be rejected, and replaced by something along the lines of 'such-and-such a body living such-and-such a kind of life'. But in either case the solution accepted here is just the same solution as was rejected at Z12, 37^b14–24. We must suppose that in the gap between these two treatments Aristotle has come to a radically different view of what the problem itself is supposed to be.

Final Epilogue: Unity and Definition

In Z4–11 there is little stress on the notion of unity. In fact unity is mentioned only once (at Z4, 30^b7–13), and the more prominent idea is that a substance, or form, ought to be something 'primary', which is twice explained as meaning non-compound (Z4, 30^a10–11; Z11, 37^b3–4). If we may discount Z12, unity does not begin to play an important role until Z16, 40^b5–16, where it is argued that many of the things commonly held to be substances do not merit that title, since they are not sufficiently 'unified'. Indeed, if we put this passage together with some others (notably Z17, 41^b28–31), it appears that Aristotle will accept only living plants and animals as proper examples of perceptible substances, and the main factor that is influencing him seems to be their well-developed 'unity'. In particular he is impressed by the fact that the activities of the parts can only be understood as contributions to the activity, i.e. life, of the whole. So it is not surprising that when Z17 introduces a new line of thought by considering substance as a 'cause' (i.e. explanation), it should describe the required cause not only as a 'cause of being' (41^a32, ^b28) but also as a 'cause of unity' (^b11–12). In each case it is the form, i.e.

soul, that merits this description, and this is a thought that is carried further in book *H*.

The thought is combined with another new development, which we first find in *H2*, namely a revised view of the nature of definitions. During much of *Z7-10* Aristotle had claimed that only form can be defined. In *Z11* this doctrine is certainly modified, as he admits that *some* things have to be defined as compounds of form in matter, i.e. as 'one thing in another, or certain things in a certain state' (36^b23-4). But in the general context of *Z7-11* it is natural to look upon such definitions as second-rate; what they define is a compound and not a pure form, and accordingly what they define should not be counted as a substance (*Z10*, 35^b27-31). But in *H2* it is asserted that *every* definition defines such a compound, since *every* definition should combine both form and matter. The same claim recurs at *H3*, 43^b30-2, and I have argued that it is also required at *H6*, 45^a20-9, if we are to make sense of that passage. So on this view, if we are concerned with a pure form, something simple and not composite (*H3*, 43^b28-30), something which itself has no matter (*H6*, 45^a36-^b1), then we must say that it has no definition at all. (Presumably it may still be known, but in another way, and not via a definition. Cf. *Z17*, 41^b9-11). This is a very notable volte-face, and I can see no satisfying explanation of it. No doubt Aristotle was wrong in the first place both when he supposed that all forms can be defined and when he supposed that only forms can be defined. But he seems to be equally wrong in his second view that definition applies, not to forms themselves, but only to compounds of form in matter. So the change of view is not clearly an improvement, but it certainly is a change.

On the new view of definition it is not the whole of a definition that counts as a 'cause of being', but only the part which is form. This Aristotle somewhat oddly calls the 'differentia' (42^b32-3, 43^a2-4) as if any differences in the specified matter are of no significance (cf. 43^a12-14n.). In *H2* he does not seem to be thinking of this cause as specially a cause of unity. At any rate, unity is not explicitly mentioned, and while several of the differentiae that he lists do indicate how a thing 'holds together', still many do not. But in *H3*, we find both the emphasis on unity from *Z17* (43^b10-13) and the new view of definition from *H2* (43^b30-2). This leads Aristotle to think once more of the problem that he used to call 'the unity of a definition', which he therefore brings in at *H3*, 44^a2-9, and which occupies him throughout *H6*. But though he now professes to have a solution to it, that is only because of his changed perception of what the problem is. For he now thinks that it is adequately answered so long as the definition says why the objects falling under it are unities, and that is exactly what the new style of definition does. For it says how the matter of the object is arranged, organized, and structured by the form.

In the course of further elaborating this reply, Aristotle's perception of the problem seems to change yet again, as he comes to see the unity of matter and form as somehow providing a solution to the much wider

problem of the unity of predication. At any rate, he criticizes the attempts of others to explain this *latter* unity at 45^b7-16, and he goes on to claim that we have only to see things in terms of matter and form, potentiality and actuality, and that problem too will disappear. If this suggestion is to apply to more than a very restricted range of predications, we must here understand 'matter' and 'form' in their wider sense (cf. Z3, prologue). So 'the bronze is round' is a satisfactory predication, and 'the round bronze' designates a single item, because bronze is related to roundness as matter to form. And similarly too, 'the man is pale' is a satisfactory predication, and 'the pale man' designates a single item, because again the man is related to pallor as matter to form. In the first of these cases one could plausibly say that it is the form, i.e. the shape, that ensures that the bronze in question does constitute one thing, say a coin. But in the second case the analogous claim would be absurd, for the man does not in any way owe his unity to his pale colour. Thus, when 'matter' and 'form' are understood in their wider sense, we can no longer suppose that it is form in particular that is the 'cause' of the unity. The significant point can only be that the two terms are *related* to one another as matter to form. But how is that supposed to help us understand how a 'unity' can result from them?

Aristotle himself seems to have thought that the equation between form and actuality, and between matter and potentiality, would continue to hold even when 'form' and 'matter' are understood in their wider sense, and would continue to remove any puzzle. But this suggestion is of no value, and I pursue it no further. There is, however, a different feature of the matter/form relationship which may have something to offer. Let us begin with a reflection upon the kind of view that Aristotle is rejecting. The terminology of 'communion', 'composition', and 'tying together' goes wrong because it suggests a symmetrical relationship; it treats the two entities in question as equal partners. This point applies with less force to 'participation' (and to 'imitation'), but one may still object that these idioms suggest a relationship between two entities which exist independently of one another. But Aristotle would say that the relation between matter and form is not like this. Though he does indeed speak of a compound of the two, still the 'ingredients' of this compound are not on an equal footing. It is definitely a mistake to suppose that the form (the 'arrangement') is as much an *element* of the compound as is the matter of which it is the form (the stuff 'arranged'). On the contrary, the two are quite different types of thing, and neither can exist without the other. The form, that is, exists only as the 'arrangement' of some matter, and equally matter exists only in some 'arrangement' or other. Moreover, this point, which was developed in Z17 and H3 with substantial form in mind, will also generalize perfectly nicely to all those other cases where Aristotle is ready to see an underlying thing which can be called 'matter', and a property which it acquires or loses which can be called 'form'. For the basic thought is simply this. Subject and predicate 'fit together' without the need of anything further to effect

the combination, just because they are entities of different types. By contrast, two entities of the same type can be put together to make one only by adding some extra thing to link the one to the other.