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and Plato's *Theaetetus*: The Case of  
the Snub Nose

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# School Examples and Curricular Entanglements in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, other *Pragmateiai*, and Plato's *Theaetetus*: The Case of the Snub Nose

Gyburg Uhlmann

## 1 Introduction: Snub nose, and what?

Aristotle starts the argumentation in Z 5 of his *Metaphysics* with an example:<sup>1</sup> the example of the snub nose. It is meant to further elaborate considerations in Z 4 about the possibility to explore definitions of composites from another perspective. Aristotle makes very clear that composite does not simply equal composite, for there are several ways in which something can be said to be composed out of a plurality. What is at stake in these approaches and trial runs is the conceptual unity of something that is said to be a being and therefore has to be – in some way – self-for-itself, i.e. self-subsistent.<sup>2</sup>

That is the case for the substances (*ousiai*), for the very reason that they exist independently from other things – and Aristotle asks what the constitutive reason for this self-sufficiency is ontologically – but is it also the case for objects that are not only one thing but include two or more properties? This first approach needs further distinctions, since there are many ontologically different cases of plural entities, and it is Aristotle's concern in these questions and answers to bring light into the darkness of this plurality.

Our example<sup>3</sup> is used to grasp the necessity of distinguishing between primary and secondary definables and definitions and to reconcile them with each

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<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Carolyn Kelly for correcting linguistic weaknesses of an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Z 1, 1028a13-15; 1028a25-27; 1028a29-33; 1028b2-7.

<sup>3</sup>D.M. Balme, *The Snub*, *Ancient Philosophy* 4 (1984) 1-8; Phil Corkum, *Critical Notice of Michail Peramatzis, Priority in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 2011, 2013, in: *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 43 (1): 136-156; Michail Peramatzis, *Matter in Scientific Definitions in Aristotle*, in *Oxford Handbooks Online*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013-4; id., *Priority in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011; id., *Essence and Per Se Predication in Aristotle's Metaphysics Z.4*, in: *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 39, 2010, 121-182; Michael Frede and Günther Patzig (Frede, Michael / Patzig, Günther. *Aristoteles 'Metaphysik Z'*. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar (in 2 volumes), München, C.H.Beck, 1988 (=Frede/Patzig);

other and explore their limits by looking for a clear distinction and a link between different cases of ontological plurality.

Aristotle uses this example in the different contexts of several treatises and disciplines to explain and analyze particular questions: twice in the *Physics*<sup>4</sup>, in Z 5, Z 10, Z 11 of the *Metaphysics*, in E 1 of the *Metaphysics*, in *De anima* III (429b10-14), once in the *Rhetoric* in a political context,<sup>5</sup> once in the *Politics*<sup>6</sup>, and in the *Sophistici Elenchi* (13, 173b1-16; 31, 181b35-182a6). Therefore, it is necessary to understand what the status of this example is.

In this paper I will present the different contextualizations and functions of the example and argue that it is part of Aristotle's tool box in his school practices, for which it is characteristic that there is no such thing as a regular or standard use of examples but that it is in and by their particular context that the examples obtain their functions and shapes. The transfer from one context to another presupposes – *mutatis mutandis* – a certain knowledge and acquaintance with the usability and functions of the examples in other contexts, and works with this presupposed knowledge.

However, i.e. despite the fact of specifically applied and transferred use, it is crucial to understand that these dynamic practices in which the audiences are actively involved are constitutive for the way Aristotle teaches and does philosophy. Therefore, the snub nose and other examples must be called school examples because of (and not in spite of) their dynamic character. We must therefore include in our analyses institutional contexts, and audiences and readers in regard to their reciprocal activities and responses.

Myles Burnyeat considers the snub nose as a paradigm for “form in matter definitions” especially in the *Physics*. This assumption leads him to the conclusion that its application in Z 5 happens “without overt reference to its role as paradigm for form in matter definitions in the *Physics*”.<sup>7</sup> As we will see, there is sufficient reason to doubt a hierarchical relation between standard use and its deviations, and to contend the flexibility of school examples in the primary sense of the term. Therefore, I argue that there is a connection between its use in Z 5 and its use in E 1 or the *Physics* and other *pragmateiai*<sup>8</sup> in the sense of a dynamic

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Myles Burnyeat, *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*, Pittsburgh: Mathesis Publications, 2001; Michael Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance: The Categories and Metaphysics Zeta*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000; Mary Louise Gill. *Aristotle on Substance: The Paradox of Unity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, 36 (on abstraction theory); Kyle Fraser, *Aristotle on the Separation of Species-Form*, in: *Animus* 4 1999 (online journal: [www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/1999vol4/fraser4.htm](http://www.swgc.mun.ca/animus/1999vol4/fraser4.htm)).

<sup>4</sup>Ph. II, 2, 194a1-11; Ph. II 2, 194a12-26.

<sup>5</sup>Rh. 1360a23-37.

<sup>6</sup>Pol. 1309b21-33

<sup>7</sup>Myles Burnyeat, *A Map to Metaphysics Z*, 26; cf. also Michail Peramatzis, *Matter in Scientific Definitions*, 39.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Michail Peramatzis, *Logical Level*, 28.

transfer in which the philosophical practices change and are modified by and in their particular contexts.<sup>9</sup>

In our case the dynamics of the snub nose do not end at the boundaries of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* or at the walls of the Lykeion that marked the frontier of the discussion space. For at least motivically, it leads back to the Platonic Academy. Plato describes the snub nose as a characteristic property of Socrates, and the similarity between Socrates and the young Theaitetus finds one of its first and foremost (outer) reasons in Theaitetus being snub nosed. It is here, where Plato reflects on the snub nose and uses it as a case to explain something, that is epistemically crucial. This assumption is supported by the fact that the character Theaitetus is one of the very important nodes, as it were, in the *Corpus Platonicum* which is entangled to a very high degree with several other central passages and argumentations, including the *Meno*, the *Charmides*, the *Sophistes*, the *Republic* etc.<sup>10</sup> Theaitetus even becomes an example already in the Platonic Corpus, namely in the *Sophistes*, and functions in his relationship to Socrates as paradigmatic object of Socrates' maieutic method.

But, what happens when Aristotle pursues the core and potential of these Platonic practices on other terms? In this paper I explore multiple forms of reference to Plato and thereby extend the concept of intertextuality beyond instances of quotation and directly intended report or reference by also including oral practices and the dynamic interaction between oral lectures and written treatises. There is not only the verbal quotation of a passage and the explicit naming of a certain dialogue or dialogue passage, but also the re-writing of a motive, the re-functionalizing of a metaphor, the re-shaping of an image, the re-use and transfer of an example into another context, and the dynamics between the oral and written usage of the example.

These new extended concepts of reference will contribute to broadening our understanding of Aristotle's communicative practices towards and with Plato and the Platonic Academy and also of the genesis and dynamics of Aristotelian treatises and the intratextual interactions inside the Corpus. The entanglements between the different instances of the examples inside the *Corpus Aristotelicum* and the communication with Platonic texts and teaching institutions via these ex-

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<sup>9</sup>Frank A. Lewis, A Nose by Any Other Name: Sameness, Substitution, and Essence in Metaphysics Z 5, in: Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy 28, 2005, 161-91 underlines the connection between the snub nose in Z 5 and the Sophistici Elenchi.

<sup>10</sup>For the sources cf. Debra Nails, The People of Plato, Indianapolis 2002, 275; Thomas Alexander Szlezák: Das Bild des Dialektikers in Platons späten Dialogen, Berlin 2004, 103-109; Jill Gordon: Plato's Erotic World, Cambridge 2012, 125-130, Anne Balansard: Enquête sur la doxographie platonicienne dans la première partie du Théétète, Sankt Augustin 2012, 32-38; Eugenio Benitez, Livia Guimaraes: Philosophy as Performed in Plato's Theaitetus, in: The Review of Metaphysics 47, 1993/1994, 297-328.

amples hint at a scholarly use of Platonic references or to phrase it differently: they hint at knowledge arranged and applied in the context of school institutional practices which is constitutive for Aristotle's philosophical communication.

We will thus gain insights into whether or how there was a school tradition that crosses the boundaries of the distinct school institutions of the Academy and the Lykeion and possible audiences and readerships of the particular texts. Such a tradition of scholarly practices involves many protagonists and networks, and arranges and rearranges or contextualizes and re-contextualizes knowledge. That means: I will discuss school examples as scholarly practices that contribute to a dynamic ordering and re-ordering of material which is better referred to as contextualizing and re-contextualizing because of the active and creative input that is involved in this process.<sup>11</sup>

## 2 The Snub Nose as School Practice

In the case of the snub nose – which will be used as a paradigm – there are two main circles of example practices which intersect with each other: one which is connected with the distinction between the horizons and specific tasks of *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, while the other refers to elenctic strategies against sophistic argumentational fraud. However, inside these circles, each context requires different arguments and shapes of the example, and each context produces and involves intersecting aspects and arguments across the two circles.

Because of its explicitness and elaborateness the instance of the snub-nose-example in *Metaphysics Z 5*<sup>12</sup> can function as a starting point for our project:

If someone denies that a *logos* which is built out of an addition can be a definition, it is a problem to be resolved, of which of the not simple but compound things there will be a definition. For it is necessary to explain them out of an addition. E.g. there is nose and concavity, and snubness, which is said out of the two in the form of the 'this in that', and neither concavity nor snubness are accidentally affections of the nose, but by itself (*kath'auten*). Nor is 'white' attached to 'Kallias', or to 'man' (because Kallias, who happens to be a man, is white), but as 'male' attaches to 'animal' and 'equal' to 'quantity' and as all *per se attributes* attach to their subjects.

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<sup>11</sup>By using the terms 'new contextualization' or 're-contextualization' and 'transfer' I refer to the terminological instruments which have been developed in the Collaborative Research Center "Episteme in motion" (CRC 980) at the Freie Universität Berlin. The CRC 980 has supported this paper by a financial aid for proof reading.

<sup>12</sup>Frank A. Lewis (2005). A Nose by Any Other Name: Sameness, Substitution, and Essence in *Metaphysics Z 5*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 28, 161-91.

Such attributes are those in which either the *logos* or the name to which this affection attaches inhere, and which cannot be explained without, e.g. ‘white’ can be explained without ‘man’, but not ‘female’ without ‘animal’. Therefore, there is either no what-it-is-to-be (i.e. the substantial being, *ti ên einai*) and definition of any of these things, or if there is, it is in another sense, as we have said. There is just another problem about them. For if ‘snub nose’ is the same as ‘concave nose’, ‘snub’ and ‘concave’ would be the same. But if not (because it is impossible to predicate ‘snub’ without the subject of which it is an affection for itself (*kath’auto*), for it is ‘concavity in a nose’), either one cannot say ‘snub nose’ or there is no other way than to say the same twice: ‘nose nose concave’ (for ‘snub nose’ will be ‘concave nose nose’). Therefore, it is absurd <to assume> that these things have an essential form (*ti ên einai*); but if not, there will be an infinite regress: for, in ‘snub nose nose’ another thing will be involved. Therefore, there is only a definition of the substance (*ousia*). (Metaph. Z 5, 1030b14-1031a2)<sup>13</sup>

In dealing with the snub nose case Aristotle pursues an argumentational complex which he presented and started in the preceding chapter Z 4.<sup>14</sup> This chapter was concerned with the question whether there is a way in which objects can be defined that are not like the first substances self-contained and independently existing but in some way connected and mixed with something else. In Z 4 Aristotle has led multiple approaches and objections to an answer which neither denies nor affirms the possibility of definitions of non-substances. Instead he presented a solution as acceptable that allows for a secondary sense of definables. In some way it seems plausible to give a formula (*logos*), an account on things that are compounds, which can substitute a definition in the first sense or at least come near such a function.

<sup>13</sup> Ἔχει δ’ ἀπορίαν, ἐάν τις μὴ φῆ ὁρισμὸν εἶναι τὸν ἐκ προσθέσεως λόγον, τίνος ἔσται ὁρισμὸς τῶν οὐχ ἀπλῶν ἀλλὰ συνδεδυασμένων ἐκ προσθέσεως γὰρ ἀνάγκη δηλοῦν. λέγω δὲ οἷον ἔστι ῥίς καὶ κοιλότης, καὶ σιμότης τὸ ἐκ τῶν δυοῖν λεγόμενον τῷ τόδε ἐν τῷδε, καὶ οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός γε οὔθ’ ἡ κοιλότης οὔθ’ ἡ σιμότης πάθος τῆς ῥίνος, ἀλλὰ καθ’ αὐτήν οὐδ’ ὡς τὸ λευκὸν Καλλία, ἢ ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι Καλλίας λευκὸς ᾧ συμβέβηκεν ἀνθρώπου εἶναι, ἀλλ’ ὡς τὸ ἄρρεν τῷ ζῶντι καὶ τὸ ἴσον τῷ ποσῷ καὶ πάντα ὅσα λέγεται καθ’ αὐτὰ ὑπάρχειν. ταῦτα δ’ ἔστιν ἐν ὅσοις ὑπάρχει ἡ ὁ λόγος ἢ τοῦνομα οὐ ἔστι τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, καὶ μὴ ἐνδέχεται δηλωῶσαι χωρὶς, ὥσπερ τὸ λευκὸν ἄνευ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐνδέχεται ἀλλ’ οὐ τὸ θῆλυ ἄνευ τοῦ ζῶντος ὥστε τούτων τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ ὁρισμὸς ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδενὸς ἢ, εἰ ἔστιν, ἄλλως, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν. ἔστι δὲ ἀπορία καὶ ἕτερα περὶ αὐτῶν. εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔστι σιμὴ ῥίς καὶ κοιλὴ ῥίς, τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσται τὸ σιμὸν καὶ τὸ κοῖλον εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὸ ἀδύνατον εἶναι εἰπεῖν τὸ σιμὸν ἄνευ τοῦ πράγματος οὐ ἔστι πάθος καθ’ αὐτό (ἔστι γὰρ τὸ σιμὸν κοιλότης ἐν ῥίνι), τὸ ῥίνα σιμὴν εἰπεῖν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ δις τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσται εἰρημένον, ῥίς ῥίς κοιλὴ (ἢ γὰρ ῥίς ἢ σιμὴ ῥίς ῥίς κοιλὴ ἔσται), διὸ ἄτοπον τὸ ὑπάρχειν τοῖς τοιούτοις τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι εἰ δὲ μή, εἰς ἄπειρον εἶσιν ῥίνι γὰρ ῥίνι σιμῆ ἔτι ἄλλο ἐνέσται. δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι μόνως τῆς οὐσίας ἔστιν ὁ ὁρισμὸς.

<sup>14</sup>See my full interpretation and contextualization of Z 4: G. Uhlmann, *Metaphysics Z 4: Aristotle’s Arguments and his Audiences – Preliminary Studies on Audience-Driven Dynamics in Aristotle*, in: Working Papers des SFB Episteme in Bewegung, Working Paper No. 9, 2017.

The whole issue does not have an end only in itself but serves as a means to better understand what it is for the first substances to be a being in a primary sense:<sup>15</sup> what is the sufficient reason for their being something which *is* in the strong sense of the term.<sup>16</sup>

In order to clarify things in and around this complex of questions, Aristotle addresses a property of first substances that is likely to prepare for such an answer, i.e. the what-it-is-to-be (*ti ên einai*), and a criterion which leads to a what-it-is-to-be-something, i.e. to be something ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*).

In *Z* 5 the snub nose case is considered in terms of predicational logic and in terms of ontology with respect to preparing definitions in the primary sense of the term. Snubness is the way in which noses are concave. That means, it is a certain quality on a certain given or fixed *substratum*, namely an affection of the (human) nose. Aristotle describes this close relation between ‘snub’ and ‘nose’ by saying that it belongs ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auten*) to snubness to be an affection of the nose.

However, ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*) is a term with multiple meanings or to put it more precisely: a term that can be used differently in Aristotle’s discussions and lectures.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Aristotle felt the necessity or was asked by his students and fellow debaters – we always have to bear both options in mind –, to define the concrete meaning in the context of *Z* 4 more precisely and responds to this task by distinguishing between several different meanings of ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auto*).<sup>18</sup>

For the snub nose the ‘by itself-relation’ becomes clear in contrast to the relation between ‘white’ and ‘Kallias’ or between ‘white’ and ‘man’. ‘White’ has no necessary connection and relation to ‘Kallias’ or, put predicationally, what-it-is-to-be-white can be said and defined without ‘Kallias’ or ‘man’.<sup>19</sup> This is not the case

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<sup>15</sup>*Z* 1, 1028a13-15; 1028a25-27; 1028a29-33; 1028b2-7.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Frank A. Lewis, *Substance and Predication in Aristotle*, Cambridge 1991, 158ff.

<sup>17</sup>One major passage of reference is the argumentation in *Posterior Analytics* I,4: 73a34-73b5.

<sup>18</sup>*Z* 4, 1029b14-18, cf. Uhlmann 2017a (*Metaphysics Z 4: Aristotle’s Arguments and his Audiences*).

<sup>19</sup>It is interesting to consider the discussion between Frede/Patzig and the authors of “Notes on *Z*” about 1030b20-21 (Frede/Patzig, II, 81; Burnyeat et alii, 30) and the question, for what does the causal clause give a reason? The authors of “Notes on *Z*” think it provides a reason why ‘white’ is accidental to ‘Kallias’. Frede/Patzig argue that it gives the reason why ‘white’ is accidental in relation to ‘man’, which makes perfect sense considering that it explains the indirect relation between ‘white’ and ‘man’. However, Frede/Patzig remark that the difficulty arises because of a sloppy way of expressing the relationship between ‘white’ and ‘Kallias’, for the text gives “because Kallias is white (masculinum!), to whom ‘man’ belongs accidentally”, insinuating that ‘to whom’ refers to ‘Kallias’. But this seems to be not compatible with many other instances where Aristotle assigns *genos*-qualifications to species or individuals. It is, however, much more likely and appropriate to take ‘to whom’ as referring to ‘white’. It is possible in Greek to express this in the way Aristotle has built the sentence, it is just not as smoothly understandable as the al-



with ‘snub’: ‘snub’ cannot be said without reference to ‘nose’, i.e. it has a necessary relation to ‘nose’.

At this point Aristotle provides a comparison that is surprising at first sight: he states that ‘snub’ in relation to ‘nose’ is similar to the predicate ‘male’ in relation to ‘animal’ or the predicate ‘equal’ to ‘quantity’.<sup>20</sup> The explanation for this comparison is that they are both ‘in respect of itself’ (*kath’auta*) predicates, defined as follows:

“And such attributes are those in which either the formula (*logos*) or the name to which this affection attaches inhere, and which cannot be explained without.”  
(*Metaph.* 1030b23-25)<sup>21</sup>

This means that the comparison contributes directly to the overarching task of distinguishing between different forms of things which are in some way composites. There are composites where there is no conceptual connection, like in ‘white’ and ‘Kallias’ and others, where to understand and define something requires the reference to something different, like in ‘male’ and ‘animal’ (ὥσπερ τὸ λευκὸν ἄνευ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐνδέχεται ἀλλ’ οὐ τὸ θῆλυ ἄνευ τοῦ ζώου (1030b25-26)), since ‘male’ or ‘female’ cannot be defined without ‘animal’ (and: you cannot know what ‘male’ or ‘female’ means without knowing what ‘animal’ is). Therefore, ‘snub’ is an example for something which requires in its definition the formula (*logos*) of the *substratum* of which it is an affection (as a ‘this in that’ (τὸδε ἐν τῷδε)).

Aristotle thus draws the conclusion that in every similar case such a composite (*syndedyasmenon*) has no what-it-is-to-be (*ti ên einai*) and cannot be defined self-for-itself (*auto kath’auto*) (1036b26-28).<sup>22</sup>

ternative expression. This discussion is relevant for our perspective since it works as an example for this discussion practices performed in schools and oral contexts where it is (1) easily possible to make sure of the intended meaning and where (2) the discussion partners are acquainted with certain basic and recurring ways of expressions and questions. If we start from the hypothesis that Aristotle’s intended audience in *Metaphysics Z* is such an audience, then problems in correlating certain terms in a sentence to each other almost vanish.

<sup>20</sup>Frede/Patzig criticize Aristotle ad locum (Frede/Patzig, II, 80f.) by stating that Aristotle was misled by a linguistic peculiarity; for ‘snub’ (in German: ‘stubsnasig’ which contains the *substratum*, or the made-up word ‘stupsig’), Frede/Patzig argue, is nothing else than a particular kind of being concave and can be realized elsewhere and not only in noses, whereas Aristotle treats it as if it were exclusively bound to noses. However, this is exactly, what Aristotle claims: ‘snub’ is the special way to be concave as concavity is realized in noses, whereas in other matters concavity is called otherwise. It is an ontological argument: there are properties that are distinguished by the matter in which they are received: these matter change the property in such a way that it is adequate to call these properties by a special name, which indicates a certain kind of being.

<sup>21</sup>ταῦτα δ’ ἐστὶν ἐν ὅσοις ὑπάρχει ἢ ὁ λόγος ἢ τὸ ὄνομα οὐ ἐστὶ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, καὶ μὴ ἐνδέχεται δηλῶσαι χωρίς..

<sup>22</sup>ὥστε τούτων τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ ὀρισμὸς ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδενὸς ἧ, εἰ ἔστιν, ἄλλως, καθάπερ εἰρήκαμεν.

Michael Wedin<sup>23</sup> has suggested for this kind of non-accidental predication the term ‘per se2-attribution’, in order to underline that such terms are not substantially predicated in the primary sense, i.e. predicates that belong substantially to the *substratum*, of which they are predicated. The term is also useful for presenting the different approaches that Aristotle tests, one after the other, towards his research question. For, he is heading for an answer to the question regarding the sufficient reason for the first substances, the *tode ti*, to be ontologically prior. To do so, he first and foremost needs to identify something that can be defined self-for-itself, and which owns this predicate by itself.

This will be the topic of Z 10 and 11 and is not touched directly in Z 4 and 5,<sup>24</sup> but these chapters provide preliminary studies and warm-ups,<sup>25</sup> as it were, which try out paths to distinguish between multiple ways of something that can be defined without reference to something else (like in the case of the ‘this in that’ (τόδε ἐν τῷδε)). The self-sufficiency in regard to determinability and definability is thus pivotal in Z 4 and 5.

This is the underlying driving force for research where the first part of the snub case in Z 5 intersects with other instances in *Metaphysics* E, but also with the *Physics* and the *De anima*, notwithstanding the fact that these instances serve different tasks and fit different contexts.

## 2.1 Snub Nose and Deviation

Before I discuss these cases we must deal with two passages in which snub noses are used in a similar way on a rather simple level of argument: As in *Politics* V, 9 (1309b23-29)<sup>26</sup> Aristotle in *Rhetoric* I, 4 (1360a27-29) uses the example of a snub nose and of a hooked nose in order to explain how something can deviate from being good or ideal. Although a snub nose deviates from the ideal straightness of a nose, he argues in the *Politics* that it is still recognizable as a nose and as something beautiful. And it is not before the deviation once again becomes stronger that the snub nose is no longer considered as being a nose. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle argues very similarly but shorter, and only hints as the excesses that would lead to a dissolution of the being-a-nose or even something at all that functions as a nose.

The passage in the *Rhetoric* deals with the laws as part of the political topics.

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<sup>23</sup>Wedin, Aristotle’s Theory of Substance: The Categories and *Metaphysics* Zeta. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000, 63, 67-70, on Z 5: 247-257

<sup>24</sup>There is indeed a close relationship between Z 5 and 10, as Burnyeat has pointed out: Map, 38.

<sup>25</sup>Frede/Patzig, II, 54; Myles Burnyeat, A Map, 23-24; on the connection between Z 4 and 5 cf. Michael Wedin, 2000, 247-257.

<sup>26</sup>Pol. 1309b22-31.

It does so in the frame of the exposition of how to give a deliberative speech. Aristotle argues that the rhetorician does not need to have knowledge in the primary sense of the subjects he is dealing with,<sup>27</sup> but underlines that it is important for the rhetorician to know which kind of laws are beneficial for which kind of government and where and which kind of excesses can be detrimental for a state. Since in *Politics* V, 9 Aristotle discusses in a similar way which kind of laws are beneficial and how and which kind of excesses can destroy a state, it is likely that the two passages or the two discussion contexts are correlated with each other.<sup>28</sup> Because of the fact that the topic primarily belongs to political science and because of the elaborateness of the passage<sup>29</sup> it seems to be more likely that the passage in the *Rhetoric* refers to the *Politics*, or rather: to a discussion conducted by Aristotle in the framework of his political discourses.

With regard to the use of the snub nose in *Metaphysics* Z 5 and other related passages the two texts present rather simple cases in which the necessary connection of ‘snub’ with ‘nose’ is only implicitly present. However, it is present because Aristotle emphasizes that the nose is recognized as being snub as long as the deviation from the straightness does not destroy the recognizability as a nose (and as something beautiful). ‘Snub’ is, thus, a specific property of a nose which ceases to exist together with its *substratum*. We have therefore in the two passages from practical philosophy a usage which – in a simple way – touches upon the entanglement between snub and nose, or between form and *substratum* by reflecting on cases of excessive assumption of the shape of snubness and its aftermath for the *substratum*. It is this entanglement which becomes crucial in the *Metaphysics*, and *Physics* (among others) and is discussed there as a paradigm for the ontological structure of singular beings in general.

## 2.2 Physics, Mathematics, and the Snubness

In *Metaphysics* E 1 Aristotle introduces the snub-nose-example as something that is not a special case with a limited spectrum of applications. On the contrary, Aristotle says that every object of the physicist’s perspective is just like the snub nose, and it becomes clear that in this argument the crucial point is the definability,

<sup>27</sup>Christof Rapp, *Aristoteles: Rhetorik*, übersetzt und erläutert von Christof Rapp, Berlin, 2002, 310-320.

<sup>28</sup>I am grateful to Christian Vogel for discussing the role of the two examples from practical philosophy in the wider context of the school practices with me.

<sup>29</sup>Eckart Schütrumpf, *Aristoteles: Politik*. Band 9 der Werke in deutscher Übersetzung, übersetzt und erläutert von Eckart Schütrumpf, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, Buch IV-VI (Band 9.3, zusammen mit Hans-Joachim Gehrke, 1996), ad loc. 536-538; cf. also id., *Platonic Methodology in the program of Aristotle’s political philosophy*. *Politics* IV 1, in: *Transactions of the Amer. Philol. Assoc.*, 119, 1989, 209-220.

the reason of which lies in the indetachability of being snub from its *substratum* ‘nose’.

“Here, we must not forget how the essential being and the *logos* are, for without them it is useless to inquire. Of things that can be defined and belong to the what-it-is, some are like the snub, some like the concave. These things differ, because the snub is bound together with matter (for ‘snub’ is ‘concave nose’), while concavity is without sensible matter. If all natural things are predicated like the snub, e.g. nose, eye, face, flesh, bone, and, in general animal, leaf, root, bough, bark, and in general plant (for none of these can be defined without reference to motion), but has always matter, it is clear how we have to seek and define the ‘what’ in the physical objects; and therefore it is also the work of the physicist to contemplate on the psyche/soul, so far as it is independent of matter.” (Metaph. E 1, 1025b28-1026a6)<sup>30</sup>

In defining physical entities we always face the same problem as in the case of the snubness: they are not definable without their *substratum*, i.e. that in which they are as a ‘this in that’ (τόδε ἐν τῷδε), and that, of which they are predicated as a ‘this of that’ (*ti kata tinos*).<sup>31</sup>

The snub, Aristotle explains, is just like every physical entity like eye, face, leaf, plant etc. It is *as a property* necessarily bound to a *substratum* (a matter) and therefore to be considered just like a compound in terms of definability. In each case, the *logos* or definition is not without motion (or: without matter (ὄση μὴ ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης ἐστίν (1026a6)), and that means that the definition is bound to a particular matter that is different from the *definiendum* and is therefore responsible for a lesser degree of unity of the defining *logos*.

This serves as an explanation for the wide distribution of the example, since it gives valuable clues for ontological analyses and predicational handlings of the *tode ti*, the first substance, the proper understanding of which is one major or the major concern in Aristotle teaching First philosophy. This major question is elaborated in a context-dependent way.

<sup>30</sup>δεῖ δὲ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ τὸν λόγον πῶς ἐστὶ μὴ λανθάνειν, ὡς ἄνευ γε τούτου τὸ ζητεῖν μηδὲν ἐστὶ ποιεῖν. ἔστι δὲ τῶν ὀριζομένων καὶ τῶν τί ἐστὶ τὰ μὲν ὡς τὸ σιμὸν τὰ δ' ὡς τὸ κοιλόν. διαφέρει δὲ ταῦτα ὅτι τὸ μὲν σιμὸν συνειλημμένον ἐστὶ μετὰ τῆς ὕλης (ἔστι γὰρ τὸ σιμὸν κοιλὴ ῥίς), ἡ δὲ κοιλότης ἄνευ ὕλης αἰσθητῆς. εἰ δὴ πάντα τὰ φυσικὰ ὁμοίως τῷ σιμῷ λέγονται, οἷον ῥίς ὀφθαλμὸς πρόσωπον σὰρξ ὀστοῦν, ὄλως ζῶον, φύλλον ῥίζα φλοιός, ὄλως φυτὸν (οὐθενὸς γὰρ ἄνευ κινήσεως ὁ λόγος αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ ἔχει ὕλην), δῆλον πῶς δεῖ ἐν τοῖς φυσικοῖς τὸ τί ἐστὶ ζητεῖν καὶ ὀρίζεσθαι, καὶ διότι καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ἐνίας θεωρῆσαι τοῦ φυσικοῦ, ὄση μὴ ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης ἐστίν.

<sup>31</sup>On the difference between the definability of compounds and attributes/properties like snubness cf. David Bostock, Aristotle: Metaphysics Books Z and H. Oxford 1994, ad loc., and Michael Wedin, 2000, 247f.

In *Metaphysics* E 1 Aristotle distinguishes between three basic objects of knowledge which are considered by three different and basic disciplines: namely Physics, Mathematics, and First philosophy. Since it is the task of the outline in *Metaphysics* E to locate First philosophy in the context of other sciences, Aristotle presents a rough distinction the function of which is to give a first and general clue to the relations and entanglements between the basic branches of knowledge. What we learn about snubness is that it is something that is bound to matter.

In the *Physics* this focus is repeated, but put more concretely.<sup>32</sup> Again, Aristotle discusses questions about the definability of – in this case – physical entities. He criticizes those who speak of forms because they are not aware of the methodological impact of their handling of physical beings and the fact that the matter-aspect in physical substances is in a physical analysis not or less separable and therefore, has to be included or at least considered in the defining endeavour. (In any case, we should not understand the relation between the two instances of repetition in a fixed chronological sense, since *Metaphysics* E refers to a discussion which can be found in the *Physics* as we have it today. This relation cannot be used as an argument for an earlier or later date of origin for either of the texts. It is more probable to assume that the text from First philosophy refers to an argument from considerations in physics, not necessarily to a version which later was included in the lectures on physics.)

In this context Aristotle mentions the snub case only en passant and elliptically:

“these are defined like ‘snub nose’ not like ‘bent’” (Ph. 194a6-7)<sup>33</sup>

‘These’ (ταῦτα) refers to the physical objects which have their being “not without motion”. The difference between ‘snub’ and ‘bent’ is not elaborated, but as in *Metaphysics* E 1, presupposed. Aristotle has the full explanation elsewhere (namely in *Metaphysics* Z 5 and Z 11). This observation does not mean that these other instances have to be presupposed as the texts as we have them now but that there was an ongoing discussion about and with this example and the ontological and predicational difference between ‘snub’ and ‘bent’ in the teaching and research contexts that was conducted by Aristotle or to which Aristotle contributed.

What is focussed here becomes even clearer in the sequel of this text:

“Since ‘nature’ has two senses, the form and the matter, we must investigate its objects as we would the essence of snubness. That is, such things are neither independent of matter nor can be defined in terms of matter only. Here too indeed

<sup>32</sup>Ph. II, 2, 194a1-11, Ph. II, 2, 194a12-26, Ph. I, 3, 186b14-26.

<sup>33</sup>ἀλλὰ ταῦτα ὄσπερ ῥίς σιμῆ ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὡς τὸ καμπύλον λέγεται.

one might raise a difficulty. Since there are two natures, with which is the physicist concerned? Or should he investigate the combination of the two? But if the combination of the two, then also each severally. Does it belong then to the same or to different sciences to know each severally?

If we look at the ancients, physics would to be concerned with the matter. (It was only very slightly that Empedocles and Democritus touched on the forms and the essence.) But if on the other hand art imitates nature, and it is the part of the same discipline to know the form and the matter up to a point (e.g. the doctor has a knowledge of health and also of bile and phlegm, in which health is realized, and the builder both of the form of the house and of the matter, namely that it is bricks and beams, and so forth): if this is so, it would be the part of physics also to know nature in both its senses." (Ph. II 2,194a12-26, Transl. by R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye)<sup>34</sup>

Instead of distinguishing between considering objects with or without matter like in *Metaphysics* E 1, Aristotle introduces a second distinction which builds on the differentiation of two meanings of 'physis', one according to the form aspect and the other according to the matter aspect – a differentiation that has been just delivered in *Physics* II, 1. Aristotle states that in physics physical objects are considered with motion or with matter but not *according to matter*. In some sense qualities of the matter are to be taken into account in physical theory. The concept of four causes to which Aristotle refers to in the following argument suggests that matter will be part of the physical practices as a necessary cause but not as a sufficient *definiens*.

Aristotle, thus, entangles the application of the matter-form distinction on different meanings of the term 'physis' and uses the snub as an example for the further distinction between different theoretical practices and approaches to things that are (like the *tode ti*) enmattered entities. The focus thereby changes slightly compared to the usage in *Metaphysics* E 1 and Z 5, without losing the immediate connection to other instances. This dynamic ordering and re-ordering of material can be explained as contextualizing and re-contextualizing of conceptual and disputational elements and material.

An important part of these dynamics is the option to elliptically refer to other

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<sup>34</sup>ἐπεὶ δ' ἡ φύσις διχῶς, τό τε εἶδος καὶ ἡ ὕλη, ὡς ἂν εἰ περὶ σιμότητος σκοποῖμεν τί ἐστίν, οὕτω θεωρητέον ὥστ' οὐτ' ἄνευ ὕλης τὰ τοιαῦτα οὔτε κατὰ τὴν ὕλην. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ περὶ τούτου ἀπορήσειεν ἂν τις, ἐπεὶ δύο αἱ φύσεις, περὶ ποτέρας τοῦ φυσικοῦ. ἢ περὶ τοῦ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν· ἀλλ' εἰ περὶ τοῦ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, καὶ περὶ ἑκατέρας. πότερον οὖν τῆς αὐτῆς ἢ ἄλλης ἑκατέραν γνωρίζειν· εἰς μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἀρχαίους ἀποβλέψαντι δόξειεν ἂν εἶναι τῆς ὕλης (ἐπὶ μικρὸν γὰρ τι μέρος Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ Δημόκριτος τοῦ εἶδους καὶ τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι ἦσαντο) εἰ δὲ ἡ τέχνη μιμεῖται τὴν φύσιν, τῆς δὲ αὐτῆς ἐπιστήμης εἰδέναι τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν ὕλην μέχρι τοῦ (οἶον ἰατροῦ ὑγίειαν καὶ χολὴν καὶ φλέγμα, ἐν οἷς ἡ ὑγίεια, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ οἰκοδόμου τό τε εἶδος τῆς οἰκίας καὶ τὴν ὕλην, ὅτι πλίνθοι καὶ ξύλα ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων), καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς ἂν εἴη τὸ γνωρίζειν ἀμφοτέρας τὰς φύσεις.

instances without being forced to fix a (static) standard form of the example. We can observe such cases also in de an. III, 4. Here, the snub example is applied in order to explain the difference between things the what-it-is-to-be(-something) of which (the *to ti ên einai*) is identical with the object itself which is to be defined.

“Since ‘magnitude’ is different from what-it-is-to-be-a-magnitude, and ‘water’ from what-it-is-to-be-water (and equally with many other things, but not with all: with some it is the same), what-it-is-to-be-flesh and ‘flesh’ are distinguished either by different <faculties> or by the same, that is in another state. For, ‘flesh’ is not without matter, but, like ‘snub’, a ‘this in that’.” (de an. 429b10-14)<sup>35</sup>

Aristotle introduces the distinction between things of which the what-it-is-to-be (*ti ên einai*) is identical with the actual being of the thing, and things where this is not the case. This serves as an introduction and preparation for the definition of the intellect as something which is in every regard separate from matter and has in no way an enmattered existence (de an. III,4,429b21-22). The elliptic reference to the snub example comprises two aspects: ‘snub’ (1) implies a material (and potentially sensible) *substratum*, and (2) cannot be defined in the first sense of the term but only by including the reference to something that is different from the definiendum. This, so to speak, short cut cannot be wholly understood or applied without the context of a school or institution where it has been discussed and coined for certain usages or certain kinds of usage.

This instance leads us directly back to the circles of discussion in *Metaphysics* Z, namely to Z 10-11, where Aristotle continues his approaches and re-approaches from Z 4-5 by discussing explicitly which aspects and parts of a substance can be accepted to be proper parts of a definition (in a first or secondary sense).

The snub case in the dynamic shape, that we have just reconstructed, can obtain pivotal functions in this approach, since it represents objects the definition of which needs to include – in a certain sense and to a certain degree – aspects of the matter part of the compound (Z 10, 1035a1-6).

“If, then, matter is one thing, form another, the compound of these a third, and matter, form and the compound out of these are ‘substance’, even the matter is said to be in some sense part of something, in some sense not, but only that out of which the *logos* of the form consists. E.g. of concavity flesh is not a part (for it is the matter in which it is generated), of snubness it is a part; and the bronze is a part of the whole statue, but not of the statue when it is said in the sense of the form (for the form and insofar as each thing has a form, should be said (sc. to be

<sup>35</sup>ἐπεὶ δ' ἄλλο ἐστὶ τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ μεγέθει εἶναι, καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ὕδατι εἶναι (οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέρων πολλῶν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπὶ πάντων ἐπ' ἐνίων γὰρ ταῦτόν ἐστι), τὸ σαρκὶ εἶναι καὶ σάρκα ἢ ἄλλῳ ἢ ἄλλως ἔχοντι κρίνει ἢ γὰρ σὰρξ οὐκ ἄνευ τῆς ὕλης, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὸ σιμόν, τότε ἐν τῷδε.

the thing), but the material part should never by itself be said so.”(Metaph. Z 10, 1035a1-9)<sup>36</sup>

The perspective in Z 10 has changed in comparison to Z 5. Aristotle considers the definability of beings in another approach: Since a definition is a *logos*, i.e. a speech which connects something with something else, it necessarily has parts. Therefore, in order to answer the question of whether something can be defined, one first has to ask (1) whether the object that is to be defined has parts and aspects that are inseparable and must be included in a definition and (2) whether these are parts of one single unit or infer different things/elements that belong to something different. For, only in cases like the intellect (cf. de an. III,4) where the *ti ên einai* is identical with the being of the object, will parts of the definition be identical with the parts of the definiendum.

In this wider context Aristotle answers the need for clarification of different relations between parts and whole and plurality of parts and oneness of the whole.

The whole complex is approached in two attempts. At the end of the first Aristotle notes that the questions have been led to a sufficient answer. Still, Aristotle says, it should be approached just one more time in order to gain more concrete results.

“The truth has been said, indeed, but still let us say more distinctly, taking up the question again...” (Metaph. Z 10, 1035b3-4)<sup>37</sup>

The issue is another instance of Aristotle’s practice of contextualization and re-contextualization in his philosophical practices. In its wording, however, it is remarkable because Aristotle uses the expression “ἐπαναλαμβάνοντες” only in this single case, this also holds true for the simpler verb “ἀναλαμβάνειν” (to take up): in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* it is not used for methodological purposes, i.e. to reflect on Aristotle’s argumentational practice.

This leads to the assumption that Aristotle uses it as a reference to one or multiple other texts in the *Corpus Aristotelicum* or to a different author: If we look for such a point of reference in a similar and affiliated argumentational context we are referred to a passage in Plato’s *Theaetetus*. In this dialogue Plato uses the verb in the context of the discussion of Protagoras’ homo-mensura-sentence.

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<sup>36</sup>εἰ οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ μὲν ὕλη τὸ δὲ εἶδος τὸ δ’ ἐκ τούτων, καὶ οὐσία ἢ τε ὕλη καὶ τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὸ ἐκ τούτων, ἔστι μὲν ὡς καὶ ἡ ὕλη μέρος τινὸς λέγεται, ἔστι δ’ ὡς οὐ, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ὧν ὁ τοῦ εἶδους λόγος. οἷον τῆς μὲν κοιλότητος οὐκ ἔστι μέρος ἡ σάρξ (αὕτη γὰρ ἡ ὕλη ἐφ’ ἧς γίγνεται), τῆς δὲ σιμότητος μέρος καὶ τοῦ μὲν συνόλου ἀνδριάντος μέρος ὁ χαλκὸς τοῦ δ’ ὡς εἶδους λεγομένου ἀνδριάντος οὐ (λεκτέον γὰρ τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ εἶδος ἔχει ἕκαστον, τὸ δ’ ὑλικὸν οὐδέποτε καθ’ αὐτὸ λεκτέον)

<sup>37</sup>εἴρηται μὲν οὖν καὶ νῦν τὸ ἀληθές, ὁμῶς δ’ ἔτι σαφέστερον εἴπωμεν ἐπαναλαμβάνοντες.



Socrates here discusses why it is important to criticize for a second time the sentence and concept of the sophist.

“If he himself were present and agreed on this, instead of us making the concession and helping him out, there would be no need of taking up the question again and reinforcing <sc. the argument>. But, as it is now, perhaps someone might say that we do not have the authority to make the consensus in his place; therefore, it is better to make the consensus even more distinct; for it makes a great deal of difference whether it is so or otherwise.” (Tht. 169d10-e5)<sup>38</sup>

As in Z 10 the issue under discussion is already clear at that point, however, the circumstances of the dialectical examination and a slight shift in perspective call for another turn.

There is no need (albeit the possibility) to connect the two *particular* passages.<sup>39</sup> What I am claiming, though, is that Aristotle, by using this expression, invokes and takes up on discussion practices in the Platonic Academy as they are mirrored and shaped in and through the Platonic dialogues. It comes as a side effect and additional benefit that the whole snub case is particularly connected and multiply entangled with the Platonic *Theaetetus*, and that our methodological link leads from the discussion on knowledge in the *Theaetetus* to the discussion on the definability of beings that are the objects of first philosophy. More important however are the links between the Platonic Corpus and the Aristotelian Corpus.

Z 10, then, continues with the second approach and highlights different perspectives of the relationship between parts and whole in a definition. By doing so Aristotle prepares for the basic assumption that only parts of the form (*eidōs*) can be properly included in the definitory practices (1035b33-1036a6).<sup>41</sup> In this context Aristotle again recalls the distinction which we already considered in *De anima* III,4 between things whose substantial being is identical with their existence as this or that object, and those for which this is not the case. The latter case comprises all things that are compounds where substantial qualifications of the thing under consideration and qualities of something else are put

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<sup>38</sup>Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν αὐτὸς παρὼν ὁμολόγει ἀλλὰ μὴ ἡμεῖς βοηθοῦντες ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ συνεχωρήσαμεν, οὐδὲν ἂν πάλιν ἔδει ἐπαναλαβόντας βεβαιοῦσθαι νῦν δὲ τάχ' ἂν τις ἡμᾶς ἀκύρους τιθεῖ τῆς ὑπὲρ ἐκείνου ὁμολογίας. διὸ καλλιονῶς ἔχει σαφέστερον περὶ τούτου αὐτοῦ διομολογήσασθαι οὐ γάρ τι σμικρὸν παραλλάττει οὕτως ἔχον ἢ ἄλλως.

<sup>39</sup>There are other entangled passages: i.e. in the *Phaedo*, where after the sufficient proof for the immortality of the rational part of the soul has been elaborated and finished by the introduction of the theory of forms, Echecrates, i.e. one of the dialogue partners of the framework story, intervenes in Phaedo's narration and explicitly states his agreement with the results (Phd. 102a2-9). After this Socrates introduces a “more select (*kompsotera*)” consideration of the question (Phd. 105c2)<sup>40</sup>, i.e. a more precise approach to the conceptual relations between soul and life.

<sup>41</sup>W.D. Ross emphasizes the relatedness of the two research questions in Z 10: 196.

together. However, the former is what interests Aristotle in this context: no single instance that is a compound of sensible matter and form, can fulfill this criterion, since it cannot – like the snub nose – exist without a (different) *substratum*; but only mathematical objects and the soul (sc. that is only intelligible and not sensible) can.

Aristotle in our context of Z 10 (in connection to the discussion circles in Z 4-5) is interested in these objects not for the sake of the contemplation about intelligibles but because they are an object for scholarly purposes to present a complicated issue in a more easily accessible form: In contrast to cases like the snub nose or every single sensible object they allow the students to see the substantial parts and parts of the definitions without prior abstracting matter qualities that do not belong to the *definiendum*.

That these approaches are pivotal for the whole issue of book Z becomes obvious in the continuation and repetition of the question in Z 11: Once more, Aristotle appeals to the snub nose for the simple reason that in the school discussion in which Aristotle is engaged, together with his students and fellow philosophers ‘snub’ has become something like a short formular for one crucial quality of every *tode ti*, namely that they always imply qualities that are derived from the matter aspect of a *tode ti* and are therefore to be excluded from the definition.

“What the what-it-is-to-be is and how it is self-for-itself, has been said universally about everything, and also why the *logos* of the what-it-is-to-be contains parts of the *definiendum*, while others do not, and that in the *logos* of the substance the matter parts will not be included, because they are not parts of that substance but of the concrete compound; and of this there is in a sense a *logos*, and in a sense, there is not; for there is no *logos* of it together with its matter (for this is indefinite), but there is a *logos* of it with reference to its primary substance; e.g. in the case of man the *logos* of the soul. For the substance is the inherent form, the compound of which together with matter is called substance, e.g. concavity (out of which and of the nose ‘snub nose’ and ‘snubness’ arise [for ‘nose’ occur twice in these] – in the compound substance, such as ‘snub nose’ or ‘Kallias’, matter is also present; And we have said that the what-it-is-to-be is and the singular thing are in some cases the same, as in the case of the first substances, e.g. being bent/curvedness and the substantial being of curvedness if it is primary. (By primary I mean that which is not said through being as something in something and underlying as matter); but things which are like matter or of wholes that include matter, not the same as their substantial being, nor are accidental unities like that of ‘Socrates’ and ‘well-educated’: for these are the same only accidentally...” (Z 11, 1037a20-b7)<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Τί μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ πῶς αὐτὸ καθ’αυτό, καθόλου περὶ παντὸς εἴρηται, καὶ διὰ τί τῶν μὲν ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ τί ἦν εἶναι ἔχει τὰ μέρη τοῦ ὀριζομένου τῶν δ’ οὐ, καὶ ὅτι ἐν μὲν τῷ

Snubness is presented along with ‘Kallias’ as standard example for a single human being or a *tode ti* in general. ‘Snub nose’ is taken together with ‘Kallias’ to represent the compound substance (*synolon ousia*). As in *Metaphysics* E 1 it is thereby underlined that the example does not introduce a special case here, but adds specifically to the general discussion circles in which book Z is involved. Our passage adds concrete differentiations about the indefinability of the compound substance as a whole, which consists out of form- and matter-aspects. Z 11 is clear in that matter aspects cannot be ranked among the parts of the *definiens* because of the indefiniteness of the thereby constructed *definiendum* (ἀόριστον γάρ). Therefore, compound substances can and cannot be defined. They cannot be defined in the way they exist.

Once more – corresponding to *De anima* III, 4 and *Metaphysics* Z 10 – Aristotle refers to the distinction between things, of which the what-it-is-to-be (*ti ên einai*) is identical with their being as substances and connects the snub nose with this argumentational tool (1037a33-b2), which prepares for solutions to the question of what has to be comprised in a proper or secondary definition.

As an intermediary result we can conclude that the snub case as a school practice can be described as a circling form of argumentational practice which does not consider or analyze a problem only from one perspective and in one approach, but the issue is – so to speak – zeroed in by posing questions from slightly different perspectives and by addressing different aspects of a problem, allowing it to be defended against possible misunderstandings.

This kind of orbiting practice which intends to check out hidden flaws or insufficient distinctions, is likely to reflect the argumentational practices in the teaching and discussion contexts of the school institutions in which Aristotle developed his *pragmateiai*. It is also plausible that these practices were entangled with the instruments and rules of such practices presented by Aristotle in his *Topics*. Building on this connection we can assume that some of the argumentational waves and objections are issues that were introduced by students or other participants in Aristotle’s research circles and lessons.<sup>43</sup>

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τῆς οὐσίας λόγῳ τὰ οὕτω μόρια ὡς ὕλη οὐκ ἐνέσται—οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐκείνης μόρια τῆς οὐσίας ἀλλὰ τῆς συνόλου, ταύτης δὲ γ’ ἔστι πως λόγος καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν μετὰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ὕλης οὐκ ἔστιν (ἀόριστον γάρ), κατὰ τὴν πρώτην δ’ οὐσίαν ἔστιν, οἷον ἀνθρώπου ὁ τῆς ψυχῆς λόγος ἢ γὰρ οὐσία ἔστι τὸ εἶδος τὸ ἐνόν, ἐξ οὗ καὶ τῆς ὕλης ἢ σύνολος λέγεται οὐσία, οἷον ἡ κοιλότης (ἐκ γὰρ ταύτης καὶ τῆς ῥινὸς σιμῆ ρίς καὶ ἡ σιμότης ἐστὶ [ῥίς γὰρ ἐν τούτοις ὑπάρξει ἡ ρίς])—ἐν δὲ τῇ συνόλῳ οὐσίᾳ, οἷον ῥινὶ σιμῆ ἢ Καλλία, ἐνέσται καὶ ἡ ὕλη καὶ ὅτι τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ ἕκαστον ἐπὶ τινῶν μὲν ταυτό, ὡσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν πρώτων οὐσιῶν, οἷον καμπυλότης καὶ καμπυλότητι εἶναι, εἰ πρώτη ἐστὶν (λέγω δὲ πρώτην ἢ μὴ λέγεται τῷ ἄλλο ἐν ἄλλῳ εἶναι καὶ ὑποκειμένῳ ὡς ὕλη), ὅσα δὲ ὡς ὕλη ἢ ὡς συνειλημμένα τῇ ὕλη, οὐ ταυτό, οὐδ’ εἰ κατὰ συμβεβηχὸς ἐν, οἷον Σωκράτης καὶ τὸ μουσικόν ταῦτα γὰρ ταῦτα κατὰ συμβεβηχὸς.

<sup>43</sup>It is important to resist the temptation to imagine Aristotle as a modern or 19th century university professor giving his lectures and seminars. Needless to say, there are numerous dif-

This also includes the practice which structures the approach and analysis of a problem by collecting and reaffirming the results that have been achieved and upon which the discussing community has agreed; and the practice of cross-reference to other disciplines and treatises.

For example, at the beginning of Z 12 Aristotle connects the following argumentation on definitions and on different primary and secondary forms of definitions (which is the continuation of arguments in Z 4-5) in 10-11, with chapter B 10 in the *Posterior Analytics*.

“Now, we want to say what has not been said in the *Analytics* about definition. For, the *aporia* that has been expressed there is fruitful for the arguments about substance.” (Z 12, 1037b8-10)<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, the orbiting and transferring of argumentational instruments and distinctions are not limited to the argumentation in one discipline or *pragmateia*, but also have the potential to transgress disciplinary borders.<sup>45</sup> This can be further substantiated by the following instance and passage, namely the second part of the snub case in Z 5.

### 2.3 The Snub Nose Nose

A sentence in Z 11, which is text-critically problematic, directs us back to the second part of Z 5, which I have not yet discussed. The text part (or insertion) runs as follows: Z 11, 1037a31-32:

ferences – starting with the difference between an institutionalized lecture format and (silently or explicitly) accepted and applied rules and protocols in modern universities right up to the differences in the social situation of the students and their relation to their teachers or the function and social status of the professors. However, this must not force the interpreter to totally abstain from contextualizing Aristotle’s teaching and his students’ learning also in the historical social and institutional contexts and perspectives. Although in most cases we are not able to identify particular students and discussion partners, what we can do is reconstruct their educational and curricular history, their syllabus and their (presumable) expectations, interests and questions which must have been articulated at least in some way. It is not anachronistic or an act of illegitimate transfer across the centuries if we only presuppose that there must have been a place, an institutional context (taken in a wide notion of ‘institution’), people who interact with the intent to grasp on certain objects of knowledge, all of which placed Aristotle in the position to accomplish knowledge by way of asking questions and distinguishing between different meanings and properties.

<sup>44</sup>Nῦν δὲ λέγωμεν πρῶτον ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐν τοῖς ἀναλυτικοῖς περὶ ὀρισμοῦ μὴ εἴρηται ἢ γὰρ ἐν ἐκείνοις ἀπορία λεχθεῖσα πρὸ ἔργου τοῖς περὶ τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶ λόγους.

<sup>45</sup>Another example for this is presented by Balme (D.M. Balme, *The Snub*, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 4, 1984, 1-8): de gen. an. 778a4-9 (βούλεται μὲν οὖν ἡ φύσις τοῖς τούτων ἀριθμοῖς ἀριθμεῖν τὰς γενέσεις καὶ τὰς τελευτάς, οὐκ ἀκριβοῖ δὲ διὰ τε τὴν τῆς ὕλης ἀοριστίαν καὶ διὰ τὸ γίγνεσθαι πολλὰς ἀρχὰς αἱ τὰς γενέσεις τὰς κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τὰς φθορὰς ἐμποδίζουσαι πολλάκις αἰ- τια τῶν παρὰ φύσιν συμπιπτόντων εἰσίν.) which refers to matter as a factor of indeterminacy.

“Twice, then, in these the nose is extant.”<sup>46</sup>

The commentator Ross excluded it from his text and argued that it is irrelevant here and assumed that the scribe might have thought of Z 5, 1030b32 and therefore amended the text in Z 11.

“but if snub and concave are not the same (because it is impossible to speak of snubness apart from the thing of which it is an attribute propter se, for snubness is concavity-in-a-nose), either it is impossible to say ‘snub nose’ or the same thing will have been said twice, ‘concave nose nose’; for ‘snub nose’ will be ‘concave nose nose’. And so it is absurd that such things should have an essence; if they have, there will be an infinite regress; for in ‘snub nose nose’ yet another ‘nose’ will be involved. Clearly, then, only substance is definable.” (Z 5, 1030b30-1031a2, transl. by W.D. Ross)<sup>47</sup>

In order to judge by means of well-founded arguments it is necessary to – finally – consider the second part of the snub case in Z 5, since it is there that Aristotle introduces a second argumentational context and task that is different from the first one, which has up to now been our primary concern in all instances.

It is by the very combination of two argumentational lines in Z 5 that the snub-nose-example is fanned-out in different functions and contexts and embedded into a network of similar argumentational series, this time into the logical value and faultiness of conclusions and definitions.

## 2.4 *Sophistici Elenchi* as Repertoire for Argumentational Practices

The second part of the snub example refers to a sophistic fallacy which is described and resolved in Aristotle’s *Sophistici Elenchi*. We can insist on the connection between our metaphysical discussions and exercises in fallacies for the simple reason that Aristotle mentions in Z 5 two problems which are also discussed and solved in a chapter of our *Sophistici Elenchi* and solved.

“In the case of terms that are predicated of the terms through which they are defined, you should say the same thing, that the term defined is not the same in abstraction as it is in the whole phrase. For ‘concave’ has a general meaning

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<sup>46</sup>δὲς γὰρ ἐν τούτοις ὑπάρξει ἡ ῥίς; I have marked this passage in its context above as problematic by including it in square brackets.

<sup>47</sup>εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ τὸ ἀδύνατον εἶναι εἰπεῖν τὸ σιμὸν ἄνευ τοῦ πράγματος οὗ ἐστὶ πάθος καθ’ αὐτό (ἔστι γὰρ τὸ σιμὸν κοιλότης ἐν ῥινί), τὸ ῥίνα σιμὴν εἰπεῖν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ δις τὸ αὐτὸ ἔσται εἰρημένον, ῥίς ῥίς κοίλη (ἢ γὰρ ῥίς ἢ σιμὴ ῥίς ῥίς κοίλη ἔσται), διὸ ἄτοπον τὸ ὑπάρχειν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι εἰ δὲ μή, εἰς ἄπειρον εἶσιν ῥινὶ γὰρ ῥινὶ σιμῆ ἔτι ἄλλο ἐνέσται. δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι μόνης τῆς οὐσίας ἐστὶν ὁ ὀρισμός.

which is the same in the case of a snub nose, and of a bandy leg, but when added to either substantive nothing prevents it from differentiating its meaning; in fact it bears one sense as applied to the nose, and another as applied to the leg: for in the former connexion it means ‘snub’ and in the latter ‘bandy-shaped’; i.e. it makes no difference whether you say ‘a snub nose’ or ‘a concave nose’. Moreover, the expression must not be granted in the nominative case: for it is a falsehood. For snubness is not a concave nose but something (e.g. an affection) belonging to a nose: hence, there is no absurdity in supposing that the snub nose is a “nose possessing the concavity that belongs to a nose”. (SE 31, 181b35-182a6, translated by W.A. Pickard-Cambridge)<sup>48</sup>

The first problem runs as follows: if ‘snub nose’ is the same as ‘concave nose’, ‘snub’ and ‘concave’ are the same, too. This can be resolved fairly easily by reminding of the fact that a certain predicate can have different meanings if used in different concrete contexts. That means that ‘concave’ has a different meaning in the conjunction ‘concave nose’ in comparison to the conjunction ‘concave lens’. This explanation refers to Aristotle’s rough description of ‘snub’ as ‘concavity of a nose’ or ‘bow-leggedness’ as ‘concavity of the legs’.

The second problem arises if one equalizes ‘snub’ with ‘concave nose’, for it follows that ‘snub nose’ means ‘concave nose nose’. Aristotle resolves the problem by clarifying that to equalize ‘snub’ and ‘concave nose’ is a sloppy way of speaking, for ‘snub’ is not the same as ‘concave nose’ but signifies the property of being concave which can only belong to a nose. Therefore, ‘snub nose’ is ‘a nose which owns the concavity that can belong to a nose’.

Phil Corkum convincingly concludes from this intratextuality that Aristotle presupposes for his Z 5 example an audience that is acquainted with the exercises in avoiding fallacies like that presented in the *Sophistici Elenchi* (as we have it today).<sup>49</sup> However, this must be further reflected and elaborated by asking: what connects the logical problem in the *Sophistici Elenchi* and the predicational and ontological question in the *Metaphysics*? Can we assume a connection at all?

This paper suggests as a hypothesis that it is characteristic for scholarly practices and exercises to undertake multiple and iterating approaches to a particu-

<sup>48</sup>ἐν δὲ τοῖς ‘τούτων’ δι’ ὧν δηλοῦται κατηγορουμένοις τοῦτο λεκτέον, ὡς οὐ τὸ αὐτὸ χωρὶς καὶ ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τὸ δηλούμενον. τὸ γὰρ κοῖλον κοινῆ μὲν τὸ αὐτὸ δηλοῖ ἐπὶ τοῦ σιμοῦ καὶ τοῦ ῥοικοῦ, προστιθέμενον δὲ οὐδὲν κωλύει ἄλλα, τὸ μὲν τῆ ῥίνι τὸ δὲ τῷ σκέλει, σημαίνειν ἔνθα μὲν γὰρ τὸ σιμόν, ἔνθα δὲ τὸ ῥοικόν σημαίνει, καὶ οὐδὲν διαφέρει εἰπεῖν ῥίς σιμῆ ἢ ῥίς κοίλη. ἔτι οὐ δοτέον τὴν λέξιν κατ’ εὐθύ ψευδὸς γὰρ ἔστιν. οὐ γὰρ ἔστι τὸ σιμόν ῥίς κοίλη ἀλλὰ ῥίνος τοδί, οἷον πάθος, ὥστ’ οὐδὲν ἄτοπον εἰ ἡ ῥίς ἢ σιμῆ ῥίς ἔστιν ἔχουσα κοιλότητα ῥίνος.

<sup>49</sup>Phil Corkum (Critical notice for Michail Peramatzis’s Priority in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011, in: Canadian Journal of Philosophy 2013, 8) underlines that the audience of the *Metaphysics* will have been familiar with the solutions reached in SE 13 and 31, i.e. there is a connection or even partial identity between the audiences of the *Metaphysics* and the audience and students of the *Sophistici Elenchi*.

lar question and problem as part of the teaching and learning practices and disputational protocols. There is no hierarchical or systematically deducing order of arguments, but the disputants approach the issue under consideration by touching upon different perspectives, by solving different objections, and by testing different properties in regard to their status.

In our case, we have to ask if or how the snub discussion in the *Sophistici Elenchi* touches upon the argumentation about the inclusion of (a particular) matter in the definition: since the fallacy is produced by an inaccuracy in the description of the relation between snub and nose, it refers to the same range of questions about including or excluding elements in or from the definition of an item: Is snubness definable after all, if it depends in its definition on something that is external to the property of being ‘concave’ a fact that can be exploited by a fallacy that identifies ‘snub’ with a ‘nose that has the property of being snub’? Or is ‘concavity’ definable, whereas ‘snubness’ is not, because it is nothing other than the enmattered instance of being concave?<sup>50</sup>

### 3 Snub and the Friends of the Forms

So far we have been following the entanglements of Aristotle’s scholarly practices in wavelike movements. Thereby, the material has been rearranged, i.e. the dynamic order of scholarly practices has become apparent, which directs the attention of the disputants from one aspect and problem to the other.

However, there is one more move to make, i.e. towards a side path in the trial runs to snubness: in *Physics* II, 2 Aristotle includes in his discussion about the scope of the physicist in comparison with that of the mathematician a critique of the Platonic theory of forms.

“We have distinguished, then, the different ways in which the term ‘nature’ is used. The next point to consider is how the mathematician differs from the physicist. Obviously physical bodies contain surfaces and volumes, lines and points, and these are the subject-matter of mathematics. [...] Now the mathematician, though he too treats of these things, nevertheless does not treat of them as the limits of a physical body; nor does he consider the attributes indicated as the attributes of such bodies. That is why he separates them; for in thought they are separable from motion, and it makes no difference, nor does any falsity result, if they are separated. The holders of the theory of Forms do the same, though they are not aware of it; for they separate the objects of physics, which are less separable than those of mathematics.” (Ph. II,2, 193b22-194a1, translated by R. P. Hardie and R.

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<sup>50</sup>Balme considers the problem discussed in SE as not yet resolved: D. Balme, The Snub, in: *Ancient Philosophy* 4, 1984, 1-8.

K. Gaye)<sup>51</sup>

Here, Aristotle discusses which objects can be considered without motion, i.e.: what, according to Aristotle, is not an object of physics. Snubness here does not come into play until properties are contemplated which are indicative for ontological relations and definitions.<sup>52</sup> ‘Snub’ is, then, taken as an example for objects from which matter cannot be abstracted, since it is the nose as the matter component by which the form of the snubness achieves its specific shape (i.e. the way in which noses are concave). Therefore, the matter is not separable from the form – neither in re nor in the definition.<sup>53</sup>

In this context Aristotle refers to Platonic Academic discourses and presents a certain continuity and similarity between the two institutions: the Platonic Academy and the Lykeion. Those who speak of ‘Forms’ treat physical objects by separating all kinetic, i.e. material, aspects from them. Aristotle makes clear that he claims the leadership in the conceptualization of physics and in defining the specific methods of the natural sciences by the assumption that the ‘Friends of the Forms’ carry out the same operations, without however being aware of it. By this it is implicitly supposed that because of the general possibility to separate form aspects from matter components it is in some way possible and acceptable – even in the case of physical objects – to do so, although the physical objects are less separable from matter than mathematical objects.

Interestingly, Aristotle does not refer to the ‘Friends of the Forms’ in order to exemplify false practices in *Physics*, but as an *argumentum a maiore*: It is in fact without fault, he insinuates, to separate mathematical objects from matter, while the members of the Platonic Academy separate even physical objects from all matter aspects – however without being aware of it, i.e. without reflecting on it methodologically.

But, why does he do that? What is the reason for addressing the ‘Friends of the Forms’ in our context (i.e. in the context of the snub example)? First of all, it entangles ongoing Academic discussions explicitly in his conceptualizing approaches to *Physics*. That means, that a scholarly debate between the school of the Academy and the Lykeion is promoted; second, Aristotle claims the leadership in defining and re-ordering of natural sciences since he denies that the ‘Fri-

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<sup>51</sup>Ἐπει δὲ διώρισται ποσαχῶς ἡ φύσις, μετὰ τοῦτο θεωρητέον τίνι διαφέρει ὁ μαθηματικὸς τοῦ φυσικοῦ (καὶ γὰρ ἐπίπεδα καὶ στερεὰ ἔχει τὰ φυσικὰ σώματα καὶ μήκη καὶ στιγμὰς, περὶ ὧν σκοπεῖ ὁ μαθηματικὸς)[..] περὶ τούτων μὲν οὖν πραγματεύεται καὶ ὁ μαθηματικὸς, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ἡ φυσικοῦ σώματος πέρας ἕκαστον οὐδὲ τὰ συμβεβηκότα θεωρεῖ ἢ τοιούτοις οὔσι συμβέβηκεν διὸ καὶ χωρίζει χωριστὰ γὰρ τῇ νοήσει κινήσεώς ἐστι, καὶ οὐδὲν διαφέρει, οὐδὲ γίγνεται ψεῦδος χωριζόντων. λανθάνουσι δὲ τοῦτο ποιῶντες καὶ οἱ τὰς ιδέας λέγοντες τὰ γὰρ φυσικὰ χωρίζουσιν ἥττον ὄντα χωριστὰ τῶν μαθηματικῶν.

<sup>52</sup>Ph. II,2, 194a1-2.

<sup>53</sup>Ph. II,2, 194a3-12.



ends of the Forms' know what they are doing; third, he lays emphasis on the importance of the snub example for basic epistemological discussions. Since Aristotle does not refer to a particular passage in a written Platonic dialogue, the impression is supported that the claim about the Platonists is contextualized in the oral teaching and research contexts of the two institutions rather than as an hermeneutical debate on the interpretation of texts; fourth, the consideration of the forms can add something to the understanding of the relation between form and matter in singular entities: and that is, that the attention is directed towards the status of the enmattered form (*enhylon eidos*) and its separability.

## 4 Beyond the *Corpus Aristotelicum*

### 4.1 Theaetetus and His Socratic Snubness

As we have seen, cross-references to oral or written discussion contexts are not restricted to the entanglements between different texts of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, but go beyond the limits of the Aristotelian *pragmateiai* and touch upon Platonic dialogues and discussion contexts from the Platonic Academy.

In this perspective the snub nose in Aristotle is a recurring motif for the ontological structure of a (sensible) *tode ti*. It functions as a recognizable motif for a fundamental argumentational practice in first philosophy which postulates sufficient reasons for the recognition of something whose definition is required. I will argue in the last part of my paper that Aristotle takes up a question that Plato presented and discussed in the *Theaetetus* (and elsewhere). As in the case of the possible methodological reference to Plato's *Theaetetus*, which we already contemplated, the example of the snub nose leads us back from Z 5 to Academic discussions, which are reflected and performed in the *Theaetetus*.

The instances of 'snub' as a school example are more concretely entangled with Plato's description of Theaetetus' snubness than it might seem at first sight. The verification of this claim allows us to go beyond the simple hypothesis that Aristotle was inclined to use examples in the assumption that his audiences in the Lykeion were acquainted with them, because they were frequently used in the Academy.

It seems that it is not by chance or without thought that Aristotle used the example for particular contexts. One hint at this is that Aristotle is concerned with the topic of the *Theaetetus* in central passages of the *Metaphysics* and the *Physics* and continues the Platonic challenge, as Plato refers to 'snubness' at the beginning and end of his central epistemological dialogue, the topic of which is the question: How it is possible to understand the very being of an object (in Aristotelian terminology: the substance or what-it-is-to-be), on sufficient grounds

and without the danger of error.

In the *Theaetetus*<sup>54</sup> Plato argues that sensible or imaginary properties are not suitable as parts of a definition in the proper sense of the word and that one must distinguish between the identification of something by the recognition of sensible features on the one hand and a real, sufficient recognition on the other.<sup>55</sup>

Aristotle answers the question as to the difference between merely identifying something and defining something in a proper sense in a different way and by different methods from Plato. However, it is one of the merits of school examples like the ‘snub nose’ that they can be transferred into another context and fulfill their task in a flexible fashion.

Let us now read the snub case in the *Theaetetus* closely so that it becomes plausible that (1) Aristotle chooses this text as a point of reference for his use of ‘snub’ in *Metaphysics Z* and similar cases; and (2) that the argumentation in the *Theaetetus* provides more than the mere image of a snub-nosed Theaetetus and a snub-nosed Socrates but models the image and produces a basic shape of a school example with a flexible, but certain meaning and function.

In Plato’s dialogues Socrates is imagined as a satyr-like figure, of which one of the characteristics is the snubness of his nose. However, Socrates is not the only protagonist whose outward appearance is specified by this feature. For the young mathematician Theaetetus also has such a snub nose. The similarity between the two is striking and thus becomes a subject matter at the beginning of the dialogue.

Theaetetus is not only similar to Socrates in regard to his outward appearance but is like no other pictured as Socrates’ younger self. At first glance one could assume that the snubness is discounted as being of minor importance, however this falls short of an analysis of the entanglements between different levels of argumentation in Plato’s *Theaetetus*. For it is already in the *Theaetetus* that ‘snub’ becomes indicative of the question about how something can be distinguished sufficiently from other objects of recognition.

At the beginning of the dialogue Theodorus introduces Theaetetus by saying that “he is not beautiful” (οὐκ ἔσται καλός (Tht. 143e8) and equals Socrates with regard to his snubness and his bulgy eyes, although these features are not as

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<sup>54</sup>Commentaries and interpretations ad loc. which have been used for the development of this interpretation are by F.M. Cornford, *Plato’s Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and The Sophist*, Dover, 2003 [first published in 1935]; Timothy Chappell, *Reading Plato’s Theaetetus*, Hackett, 2004; Rosemary Desjardins, *The Rational Enterprise: Logos in Plato’s Theaetetus*, SUNY, 1990; S. Benardete, *Commentary to Plato’s Theaetetus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1984; Myles F. Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, transl. of the *Theaetetus* by M. J. Levett, revised by Myles Burnyeat, Indianapolis 1990.

<sup>55</sup>This is the impact of the argumentation in Tht. 206b-210b: see my interpretation below.

prominent in him as in Socrates (Tht. 143e8-144a1). However, with regard to his character and intellect he is said to excel everyone else.

The very reference to the discrepancy between the lack of corporeal beauty and an extraordinary inner beauty of the soul reminds the reader of Socrates himself, who is described by this contrast in the *Symposium* in a memorable image (Smp. 216d2-217a2). Thomas Alexander Szlezák discloses in a paper from 2004<sup>56</sup> the multiple entanglements regarding the characterization of the protagonist Theaetetus with other dialogues, and underlines that Theaetetus is presented in the dialogical performance as a paradigm for Socrates' successful midwifery (*maieutike techne*).<sup>57</sup>

But again: this is not only a question of visual aspects and motifs but touches upon fundamental philosophical issues in which Plato is interested: Not only for the relation to the *Symposium* but also to the *Charmides*, *Meno*, *Republic*, *Sophistes*, *Parmenides* (etc.) the field of reference is the battle of belief (*doxa*) and rational knowledge (*logos*). In this battle the young Theaetetus is a central figure among several of Plato's dialogues, and – since it is reasonable<sup>58</sup> to consider the dialogues as reflexes of Academic discussions<sup>59</sup> – he becomes central also in the discussion in the Academy, where Plato discussed the issue again and again.<sup>60</sup> These issues are negotiated and renegotiated in different contexts (and across the dialogues) through the repetition of examples, argumentation practices, que-

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<sup>56</sup>Thomas A. Szlezák: *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie: Das Bild des Dialektikers in Platons späten Dialogen*, Berlin 2004, 103-109.

<sup>57</sup>Alfred Dunshirn in his book on the Logos and the Logoi in Plato (*Logos bei Platon als Spiel und Ereignis*, Würzburg: Königshausen u. Neumann 2010) has presented close connections between the dialogues of the tetralogy *Cratylus*, *Theaetetus*, *Sophistes* and *Politicus*, in which the character Theaetetus is entangled in regard to multiple ethical and dialectical issues.

<sup>58</sup>Cf. on the 'often said things' (*polythryleta*) Dorothea Frede, *Platon*, Phaidon, 1999, 122, who connects the expression only to earlier arguments from the *Phaedo*: 65d, 75c, 76d, 78d. Cf. also Christoph Horn, *Kritik der bisherigen Naturforschung und die Ideentheorie* (95a-102a), in: J. Müller (Hg.): *Platon*, Phaidon, Berlin: Akademie 2011, 127-142, cf.: p. 137f.

<sup>59</sup>Cf. also Gyburg Uhlmann, *Metaphysics Z 4: Aristotle's Arguments and his Audiences – Preliminary Studies on Audience-Driven Dynamics in Aristotle*, in: *Working Papers des SFB Episteme in Bewegung*, Working Paper No. 9, 2017.

<sup>60</sup>This approach adds up to David Sedleys convincing interpretation of the *Theaetetus* (*The Midwife of Platonism. Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus*, Oxford 2004) which describes the *Theaetetus* as Plato's account of the importance and influence of Socratic dialectics and the Platonic theory of the Forms. Sedley claims that there is a second-order midwifery by which Socrates brings to birth central elements of Platonism without however claiming the authorship for himself. If we take the context of the Platonic Academy and the audiences which are part of the discussions in the Academy seriously, another horizon is opened up in which we can consider the argumentational lines and waves as reflexes of the actual interaction between Plato and his fellow philosophers and students. Below I will focus on the practices in which the definition of sensible objects and other composites are at stake. The approach, however, could and should be applied to further parts of the argumentations in the *Theaetetus*.

stions, and models of solution.<sup>61</sup>

In the *Theaetetus* Socrates picks up the issue of the similarities between Theaetetus and himself right at his first address to his younger discussion partner, and places emphasis on the need to not only believe the assertion of such a similarity but each time to critically call it into question and ask whether the person who has made the claim is competent in the field (Tht. 144e3).

By doing so the central subject of the philosophical discussion is already implicitly present and gives the snubness of Theaetetus the status of an epistemological *leitmotif*. This will become evident in the re-discussion of Theaetetus' snub nose at the very end of the dialogue. For, in the concluding passage of the dialogue, after sense perception, mere opinion (*doxa*), and true belief, and true belief 'with reason' (*meta logou*) have been discussed as aspirants for the definition of true knowledge – after all this, again the discussion takes up the property of Theaetetus' snubness. Once again, this is not only a structural characteristic and evidence of Plato's true excellence as an author, but the entanglements between the protagonists of the dialogue with the central theme of the dialogue go beyond all this.

The argumentation, in which Socrates challenges the third definition (*doxa meta logou*) has two parts: first, a series of arguments called "dream"<sup>62</sup> discusses the definition of "knowable" (*episteta*) and "not knowable" (*ouk episteta*). What is accomplished is a discussion about the possibility to start at an absolute beginning in order to achieve unerring knowledge. Aristotle picks up this question in his *Posterior Analytics* – the entanglements of which with Platonic and Academic practices are not yet sufficiently analyzed in scholarship.<sup>63</sup>

The second part presents considerations on the way in which a clear-cut distinction between mere belief and knowledge could be achieved and consolidated and discusses two options: (1) by representing that which has been recognized in and through a verbal expression; or (2) through an exhaustive enumeration of all features of the *definiendum*, or rather through indicating the specifically distinguishing feature (i.e. the in Aristotelian terms the *differentia specifica*) (Tht. 208c4-6).

In this last approach to the question, in the course of which our example has a crucial role, the question is discussed as to whether there is a sufficient criterion to distinguish the thing that is to be defined from everything else (an

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<sup>61</sup>Cf. Michael Erler, *Der Sinn der Aporien in den Dialogen Platons. Übungsstücke zur Anleitung im philosophischen Denken*, Berlin/New York 1987, 81f.

<sup>62</sup>Cf. Myles Burnyeat, Introduction, in: id., *The Theaetetus of Plato*, 164ff.

<sup>63</sup>David Sedley has pointed out how Plato in the discussion of giving an exhaustive list as a candidate for knowledge/*logos* added to true opinion, rejects the "Presocratic bottom-up programme for knowing the world by starting from primary elements simply given in direct experience" (*The Midwife of Platonism. Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus*, Oxford 2004, 160).

interpreter of its distinctness, as Sokrates says (Sph. 209a6: τῆς σῆς διαφορότητος ἐρμηνεία)). It complements and builds a contrast to the antecedent attempt to give a definition by naming all features in an all-comprising list.<sup>64</sup>

It is characteristic for the second approach that Sokrates directly constricts the impact of the defining procedure to a certain meaning: If belief and knowledge are to be distinguished on the basis of the assumption that knowledge adds the specifically distinguishing aspect, then it seems that pure belief (*doxa*) will only present something general (*koinon*), which is in no way more characteristic of one object than of another one (Tht. 209a10f.). Is it thus true that an opinion about a single person comprises only characteristics of humans in general? Or, is it rather true that someone who has a certain opinion of a person will also have recognized specific features by which he can distinguish between different persons? Theaetetus accepts this assumption with the consequence that the distinguishing criterion between opinion and knowledge has once again been lost.

That means: Sokrates compares the image of a person with the rational recognition and grants the image (or: the imagination) the power to identify something specifically, too.<sup>65</sup> At this point the snub example is applied.

“Socr. In fact, there will be no notion of Theaetetus in my mind, I suppose, until this particular snubness has stamped and registered within me a record distinct from all the other cases of snubness that I have seen; and so with every other part of you. Then, if I meet you tomorrow, that trait will revive my memory and give me a correct notion about you. Theaet. Quite true.” (Tht. 209c4-9, translated by Francis C. Cornford))<sup>66</sup>

If this is true, there is no more need for the *logos* as a “conveyance of difference” (*hermeneia diaphorotetos* (209a6)). What has happened in the dialogical movements is that – subtly – the search for elements (resp. principles) (*stochia*), which are expected to specifically distinguish between certain objects, has

<sup>64</sup>David Sedley names several possible meanings of *logos* as a basis for the whole third part and assumes ‘definition’ to be the most likely and fitting meaning of *logos* (The Midwife of Platonism, 153). By considering the contemporary readership and audiences of Plato’s dialogues one can add to this interpretation that different concepts of definition and the unity in multiplicity that is required in a definition are tested and rejected in a way that is analogous to (but of course not identical with) Aristotle’s approaches to describe the unity of definitions of compounds in his *Metaphysics*.

<sup>65</sup>Burnyeat underlines that this argumentation builds on what has been achieved as a result in the discussion of the wax-block-image: Myles Burnyeat, The Theaetetus of Plato, 92 and 228-234.

<sup>66</sup>Ἄλλ’ οὐ πρότερόν γε, οἶμαι, Θεαίτητος ἐν ἐμοὶ δοξασθήσεται, πρὶν ἂν ἡ σιμότης αὐτῆ τῶν ἄλλων σιμοτήτων ὧν ἐγὼ ἐώρακα διάφορόν τι μνημεῖον παρ’ ἐμοὶ ἐνσημηναμένη κατάρθῃται—καὶ τᾶλλα οὕτω ἐξ ὧν εἶ σύ — ἦ με, καὶ ἐὰν αὖριον ἀπαντήσω, ἀναμνήσει καὶ ποιήσει ὀρθὰ δοξάζειν περὶ σοῦ. ΘΕΑΙ. Ἀληθέστατα.

been transferred into the search for memorials (*mnemeia*), i.e. features that are capable of identifying something and by which our memory can accomplish the individual identification of something or someone.

Just as it has become obvious in the preceding argumentation that the integrity of sensible features cannot be taken as knowledge, there are sufficient reasons to doubt that by the identification of external features a sufficiently specific *logos* has been accomplished. As long as the search for defining characteristics takes place on the level of imagination and with memorable images, the outcome can never be true knowledge, which needs to be conceptual. The problem in the last approach of the *Theaetetus* is that the *logos* that is tested to be added to true beliefs is taken to be just another element alongside the sensible characteristics.

However, doubts about the identity of knowledge and (context-dependent) identification are nourished in many related passages throughout the *Corpus Platonicum*, especially in the passage in the *Republic* where Socrates introduces the distinction between real philosophers in the primary sense of the word and people who claim to be philosophers but are in fact only lovers of sights (R. 477eff.).

In the *Theaetetus* the discussion of the example ends in *aporia*. However, by contextualizing the example in the Platonic, so to speak, discussion rooms, the example can unfold its capacity to direct reasoning to the relevant aspects of rational definitions or the lack of these aspects in approaches which are essentially imaginary (in the sense of: bound to imagination).

By using the snub-example Plato invokes discussions on the process of defining the very essence of singular objects of knowledge inside the dialogues and inside the walls of the Academy. Granted, Plato does not use the snub nose as example for objects, whose definition is prevented or impeded by matter aspects that are inseparable from the object as Aristotle does. The connection to Aristotle's use of the example, though, is that difficulties will arise if one tries to define singular things which are compounds of form and matter and that it is a tough question to deal with the issue of how it is possible to achieve knowledge of those objects in some sense of the word (if not in the primary sense).

These are aspects which Aristotle could approach and take up directly. They were at the disposal of every member of Plato's Academy and could therefore be used as elements of a dynamic school repertoire in discussions dealing with the challenge of defining something sufficiently.

## 5 Conclusions: Discussion Practices in the Academy

Already in Plato – in his dialogues and presumably also in the oral discussions of the Academy – Theaetetus becomes an example for philosophical disputational practices. E.g. the proposition “Theaetetus flies” is used as material in order to sound out the differences between true and false propositions.<sup>67</sup>

Aristotle ties up to these discussion practices and habits when he uses his snub example and endows it with basic argumentational functions. For, it is used in order to tackle the problem of conceptual definitions of something whose being has the structure of ‘this in that’ (*tode en tôide*). The snub nose carries this compoundness in an easily accessible form.

Granted, the choice of examples in a school institution is somehow random. Why does Aristotle use ‘Kallias’ as an example for a *tode ti*, a singular entity, instead of picking Simmias for this purpose? The answer to questions like that can never be absolute, or provided with sufficient reasons. What is possible, however, is to explore contexts and narratives of origins and practices. Just like quotations, examples refer to a certain author and a certain context of usage, to be specific: they do so as long as they are not completely transferred and digested in the repertoire of the argumentational practices of a tradition or institution. In the case of Aristotle’s *pragmateiai* it is probable that the contexts in which Plato and other members of the Academy developed and made use of particular examples are still sensible or at least capable of being re-contextualized.

In this paper I have argued that Aristotle by using snubness as an example, takes up discussions about the definability and epistemic recognizability of singular entities, which were lively and ongoing in Plato’s Academy and which are mirrored in the reflections of Theaetetus’ snubness in Plato’s dialogue *Theaetetus*. Aristotle, though, develops his own agenda and his own questions and answers and by doing this he distinguishes himself from his teacher *and* ties up to him.

The example of the snub nose works without the implicit reference to certain (extant) texts and certain situations in Academic contexts. This potential to be decontextualized and re-contextualized without losing its epistemic functions is the *condicio sine qua non* for every scholarly use of examples.

However, if the reference and former context or contexts are remembered and made explicit again, yet another level of discussion culture and entanglements in the discussions, the reflexes of which we find in the *Metaphysics*, can be added,

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<sup>67</sup>Cf. David Wiggins, Sentence Meaning, Negation, and Plato’s Problem of Non-Being, in G. Vlastos, ed., *Plato I: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Vol. I: *Metaphysics and Epistemology*, Garden City, NY, Anchor Books 1971, 268–303.

since without these practices of transfer and re-contextualizations the historical space of discussions, which was filled by Plato and Aristotle in their school institutions and in which their different discourses intersect, and the idea of the role of the audiences, remain vague.