

## OUSIA IN ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES

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The Importance of Aristotle's views on *Ousia* in the *Categories* for the understanding of Aristotle's dictum: “τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται” in *Metaphysics*: The road to *Rhetoric* and its use in Logic and Metaphysics or Against Some of the Essentialist and Rationalist Readings of Aristotle.

### 1. Introduction: The Problem

The paper discusses the problem of the most appropriate interpretation of Aristotle's treatment of *Ousia* (οὐσία) in the *Categories*: “Substance [Ousia], in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word, is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject; for instance, the individual man or horse. But in a secondary sense those things are called substances within which, as species, the primary substances are included; also those which, as genera, include the species. For instance, the individual man is included in the species ‘man’, and the genus to which the species belongs is ‘animal’; these, therefore — that is to say, the species ‘man’ and the genus ‘animal’, — are termed secondary substances.” (*Categories*, 2a11–17, Chapter 5, transl. by E.M. Edghill).

The interpretation of this passage from the *Categories* is perhaps the most discussed topic in the history of philosophy from the Hellenistic through to Medieval, Modern and Contemporary. Relatively recent attempts from Aristotle scholars such as Julius Moravcsik leave a lot of questions unanswered. According to Moravcsik: “Aristotle did not think of the structure of language as mirroring the structure of reality. But he did believe that there are specific items of language and reality the correlation of which forms a crucial link between the two” (Moravcsik 1968, 145). Now, Aristotle himself earlier in the work (beginning of Chapter 2; 1a16–25), does make a differentiation between what can be said (τῶν λεγομένων) and what there is (τῶν ὄντων), claiming that what can be said can be further divided into what can be combined to form sentences and what can not (simple words, nouns and verbs etc.); he also makes a parallel division of what exists (meaning here the uncombined words) into what can be said of a subject but is not in a

subject ('man' does not exist in a particular man) and what we can say exists in a subject but can not be said of a subject ('knowledge'). But can one propose a theory, such as the one proposed by Moravcsik above, out of such a differentiation? In addition, both the attempt to formulate a theory about the structure of language that can mirror the structure of reality and the attempt to correlate the two structures (even in the limited sense that Moravcsik proposes) cannot answer the question of why Aristotle makes *Ousia* "neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject": If we were to accept Moravcsik's claim we would have to find some kind of a structure in the linguistic or logical subject (otherwise how could any sort of correlation be possible?) and this would be going against Aristotle's view on *ousia*, which in the *truest* and *primary* sense cannot be present *in a subject*, nor can it be predicated *of a subject*. Any attempts to incorporate some kind of developmental theory in the interpretation of the relevant passages and to indicate that the theory contained in *Categories* and *On Interpretation* is not a fully worked out metaphysical theory and that this fully worked out version exists in *Metaphysics* is also doomed to failure: Werner Jaeger's hypothesis that Aristotle moved from Platonism (in the early works) to Empiricism (in the later) has been the foundation for contradictory conclusions about the place of the *Categories* in Aristotle's logical and metaphysical development: *Categories* comes either before (and so is lacking in systematicity regarding the description of being) or after the *Metaphysics* (and so it is a complete refutation of Platonism) and (depending which side you favour) has been seen as either an immature version of *Metaphysics* or a more worked out version of it (Guthrie 1981, Vol. VI, 138, footn. 1, 2 and 139, footn. 1; see also Moravcsik 1967; Dancy 1975; Loux 1991; Lewis 1991; Graham 1987; Furth 1988); there is also a suggestion by Graham that we have two self-sustaining systems in Aristotelian thought based on his development (see Graham 1987).

My proposal is that the theory contained in the *Categories* is a fully worked out theory of Being, indicating that its description is not and cannot be contained and exhausted in linguistic and logical expressions of it, but can equally well be expressed in the use of poetry and other rhetorical means of speaking about it. This, obviously, will lead to the controversial claim that Aristotle agrees with Plato on this. But I will claim that this is controversial only for an empiricist and analytical interpretation of the relevant Aristotelian passages, an interpretation, which I do not endorse and which I will attempt to prove false.

Before we begin in detail our investigation into the proper interpretation of *ousia* in the *Categories*, we need to say few words about the problem of authenticity of the *Categories* within the Aristotelian corpus. Michael Frede has discussed this problem of authenticity of the *Categories* in detail (Frede 1983, 1987; see also the relevant discussion in Anton 1996, pp. 175–202).

His conclusion is that the work is Aristotle's and that the various interpretations according to which the work is not Aristotle's but belongs most probably to a student of his are ill-conceived. I shall not enter into a detailed discussion of his argument. Let me just point out to his claim that the apparent differentiation of the two parts of the work (the *Preadicamenta* and the *Postpredicamenta*) is not a sufficient ground for rejection of the work as Aristotle's (nor even the lack of the use of the title in the early discussions of the work). He points out in detail the unity of the work itself and how it fits quite satisfactorily with the rest of Aristotle's logical and metaphysical corpus (the *Topics* and the *Metaphysics*). He also maintains that the majority of his students (Theophrastus included) and the ancient commentators (most notably Porphyry and Simplicius — even though they differ on the specifics of the reconstruction of Aristotle's argument) are of the same opinion.

### 1. *The Commentators' Agenda*

In the tradition of Western Philosophy, there has been no other work with greater significance for the development of Logic, Metaphysics and Epistemology than Aristotle's small treatise on the Categories. According to one of its early commentators (Simplicius) Aristotle's *Categories* is not only an introduction to the study of philosophy and the starting point of all philosophical curricula but a most important discussion of the very first principles of all thought (Simplicius 2002, pp. vii, 1; Chronis 1975, p. 12). This small treatise was commented upon and discussed in detail very early. We can study today surviving commentaries that date as far back as the third century AD, only about six hundred years after the time of Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC). The surviving commentary of Porphyry (c. 233–303 AD), the famous in the Medieval times *Isagoge*, has influenced tremendously the Logic of the West via its translation into Latin by Boethius (in the 6<sup>th</sup> century). But the other early commentators on the *Categories* are not few and far too important to be ignored (Alexander of Aphrodisia, c. 205 AD, Iamblichus, 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> c., his student Dexippus, fl. c. 350 AD, Philoponus, fl. c. 500 AD, David of Armenia, fl. c. 550 AD, and the most important commentary of Simplicius, fl. c. 533 AD) (Chronis, *ibid*, pp. 12–15; Simplicius, *ibid*, pp. vii–xiv). What makes these commentaries important is that they have formulated a most comprehensive agenda of all the relevant questions that can be asked in relation to the *Categories*. These questions include issues such as the following (Simplicius, *ibid*, pp. vii–xiv; Chronis, *ibid*, pp. 11–180):

- A. Is the theory contained in the *Categories* a guide for all Aristotelian theory (including his theories in politics, ethics, poetry and rhetoric)?

- B. More specifically, is the theory contained in the *Categories* related only to Aristotle's views on Logic and Language or it does express Aristotle's views on Metaphysics and Epistemology as well?
- C. Is the theory contained in the *Categories* a nominalist theory about the categories or a realist theory about them?
- D. Are the categories related to a theory of accidents?
- E. Can all the Aristotelian categories be defined in the same way and what is the correct interpretation and definition of an Aristotelian category?
- F. How many (in number) categories did Aristotle accept?
- G. How many divisions (in terms of qualitative and quantitative properties) in the categories did Aristotle accept (e.g., there are two main categories of categories or three or four?)
- H. What is the relation of the categories to *ousia*?
- I. Can we consider the treatment of *ousia* in the *Categories* in a nominalist or a realist way?
- J. How many categories of *ousiae* did Aristotle accept in the *Categories*?
- K. How do particular existences (*τὸδε τι*) fit in the scheme of the categories and what is their relation to a genus or a species or to *ousia*?
- L. Can the existence of a genus be regarded in a nominalist or realist way? (The discussion here that is relevant is the discussion of *καθ' ὅλου* and *καθ' ἑκάστων ἐπὶ μέρους* that dominated discussions in Logic and Metaphysics in the middle and later periods of Medieval Philosophy).
- M. What is the role of the *differentiae* in Aristotle's scheme of the categories? (The differences here that are commonly discussed are those between a genus and another genus and the difference between a genus and a species).
- N. How is matter (*ὑλη*) related to the categories?
- O. What is the correct interpretation of Aristotle's position on the relation of the categories to the subject (*ὑποκείμενον*) that has them?

Now, what I think common to all the above questions is a pre-occupation with the issue of what is *ousia* in Aristotle's *Categories* and how best to describe and characterise it. This key issue in the interpretation of the *Categories* is the main focus of my work here.

Of course my emphasis on the role of *ousia* is opposed to some quite influential interpretational approaches to Aristotle's work (I shall leave out of discussion the issue of the authenticity of *Categories*; see on this Frede 1987, 24–28). For example, G.E.R. Lloyd has claimed that Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* leads us to far too many ambiguities and unclarities to make

us ascertain the true value and indeed the point of Aristotle's discussion of it (Lloyd 1968, 132; Chronis 1975, 109). In a similar line of interpretation to Lloyd's, Suzanne Mansion claims that *ousia* does not have a definite meaning in the Aristotelian corpus, the discussion of *ousia* in the *Categories* can be discarded as theoretically insignificant, and far too often the meaning of *ousia* found in the *Categories* contradicts the one found in the *Metaphysics* (Mansion 1946, 351–369; Mansion 1949, 1097; Chronis, *ibid.*, 111, 139). My interpretational approach is radically opposed to Lloyd's and Mansion's. I see Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* as of key importance in comprehending the Aristotelian corpus in a systematic way and I see Lloyd's and Mansion's interpretations as relying too much on the Latin, the English and the French translations of *οὐσία* as essence (*essentia*) and/or substance (*substantia*). But more on this, later.

In what follows, I shall discuss Aristotle's theory about *ousia*, as found in the *Categories*, and try to associate it with some of the key passages in the rest of the Aristotelian corpus, mainly the *Metaphysics*, the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*, giving in this way an indirect answer to most of the questions in the above agenda. I shall close my discussion by disentangling what I take the correct interpretation of Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* to be from some contemporary approaches and interpretations, which, even though they purport to be Aristotelian in character, in reality are quite foreign to Aristotle's view on *ousia*.

## 2. Aristotle's theory of Ousia as found in the Categories

The first time we see a direct reference to the word *ousia* in the *Categories* is at the start of Chapter 5 (2a11). Aristotle states that *ousia*, in the primary and most important and true sense (*κυριότατα τε καί πρώτως καί μάλιστα λεγομένη*), cannot be asserted of neither found in the subject (*μήτε καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινός λέγεται μήτε ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τινί ἐστί*). What the above statement actually means is that *ousia* cannot be found in the subject nor asserted of the subject, indicating indirectly that Aristotle here and from the start is against making *ousia* a kind of a predicate or an accident (which includes considering it a property in most of contemporary *Metaphysics*). Now, this is far too strange a way to start talking about *ousia*, especially taking into consideration Aristotle's fascination with giving definitions in a positive sense (i.e., x has so and so defining characteristics or x can be defined thus and so in simple and not further definable terms) and also Aristotle's conviction that someone who knows something in a positive sense has far better knowledge of this thing than someone who only knows it as what it is not (see on this especially *Metaphysics I*, 996b14–17; see also *Metaphysics Z* 1030a9–1032a12; LeBlond 1979). Aristotle however, does not proceed by giving

a positive definition of *ousia*, but only states what is not (and cannot be) *ousia*. This strange procedure of Aristotle was identified by commentators early on and most notably by Simplicius, who notes that Aristotle in the *Categories* prefers to give only indications and examples — *ὑπογραφήν μόνον καί παραδείγματα* — but no proper definitions — *ὀρισμὸν οὐκ ἦν ἀποδιδόναι* (Simplicius 1907, p. 92, 7–10, as discussed in Chronis, *ibid*, p. 120). This is not done without purpose, since this indicates that Aristotle did not want to restrict the application of this term, so that he can apply both this term and in general all categories to a variety of scientific disciplines and studies (see on this Chronis, *ibid*, pp. 50–51). It is characteristic of the way he sees *ousia* that he not only carefully avoids giving a definition of *ousia* in terms of a positive definition or *ὀρισμός* in the *Categories*, but also in *Metaphysics* (Z13, 1039a19), where he claims that there is no positive definition of *ousia* and only in some (metaphoric) way we can speak of it (*τρόπον μὲν τινά ἔσται τρόπον δέ τινά οὐ*) and *Posterior Analytics* (B7, 92b26). So, this reference of *ousia* in the *Categories* can be seen as an indication that Aristotle's theory of *ousia* is not and cannot be restricted to only a logical application of it, but extends to both the metaphysics and the rest of the Aristotelian corpus, representing in this way Aristotle's most preferred view on the issue.

In this way, from the start, Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* is an evidence of the systematic relevance of the *Categories* to the rest of the Aristotelian corpus. Aristotle starts by giving a negative characterisation of *ousia*, indicating in my opinion, first the difficulty with which one has to face something which underlies all logic and metaphysics and all science, and secondly Aristotle's agenda of systematising, transforming and criticising all previous logic and metaphysics.

Aristotle's insistence that *ousia* is neither asserted of nor found in the subject (see here his remark in *Cat.* 3a7: *κοινόν κατὰ πάσης οὐσίας τό μή ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ εἶναι* or 'it is a common characteristic of all *ousia* that it does not exist in the subject') further complicates his theory and our approach however, because it leaves us with a question of what else can *ousia* be, if it is not asserted of nor found in the subject. One obvious answer would be to make *ousia* something ideal or unattainable, completely outside of our grasp of the really existent subjects *as existing* in reality and in this way non-existent. However, this is radically opposed to what Aristotle thinks about *ousia*. Aristotle insists, in *Cat.* 2a34, that, if *ousia* does not exist, then nothing else does, since all categories have their dependence for their existence on *ousia*. So, what exactly are we to make of his claim?

### 3. Difficulties in comprehending Aristotle's theory

We can see this difficulty for a contemporary comprehension of Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* in its full consequence, if we replace *ousia* with the two most used English translations of it: *essence* and *substance* (see on this Ross, 1963 (1924), p. XCIII; Ackrill 1971 (1963), p. 77). How can one speak of something's essence or substance, if not as asserting of a specific (linguistic or logical) subject that it has this essence or substance? The main characteristic of an essence or a substance, as we use these words in English, forces us to expect that such and such essence or substance belongs to a specific thing and is *its own* defining characteristic or property, making it distinct from other things and providing for it its conditions of identity, persisting through time and change etc.

Such a consideration of *ousia* as essence has led some contemporary commentators on the Logic and Ontology of Aristotle (most notably Susan Stebbing) to claim: 'Modern theories of organic evolution have combined with modern theories of mathematics to destroy the basis of the Aristotelian conception of essence' (Stebbing 1930, p. 433). Dewey on this point also notes: 'In Aristotelian cosmology, ontology and logic [...] all quantitative determinations were relegated to the state of accidents, so that apprehension of them had no scientific standing. [...] Observe by contrast the place occupied by measuring in modern knowledge. Is it then credible that the logic of Greek knowledge has relevance to the logic of modern knowledge?' (Dewey 1938, pp. 89–90).

Irving M. Copi, trying to defend Aristotle here, observes that on the one hand Stebbing's claim is ill-conceived, since he (Copi) thinks that the fixity of species is a causal rather than an integral part of the Aristotelian system, and, on the other hand, Dewey is simply wrong in believing that the Aristotelian notion of essence cannot admit of quantitative determination, since, as Copi emphasises, Aristotle in *Metaphysics* allows for essence to have a quantitative determination by admitting ratio as essence (Copi 1968, p. 153). However, Copi's interpretation of *ousia* as essence here (even though far superior in exegetical strength than Stebbing's and Dewey's attempts), leaves still a lot to be desired: Copi, by considering *ousia* as essence believes that the main difference between Locke and Aristotle is that the former (Locke) believed that real essences do not admit change in terms of accidents and are thus unknowable, while the latter (Aristotle) had no distinction between knowable and unknowable essences (Copi, *ibid*, p. 157), allowing a far too loose (for Copi) causal relation between essence and accidents (Copi, *ibid*, p. 164). Now, obviously, Copi's identification of *ousia* with essence not only seems invalid, when one considers the beginning of Chapter 5 of *Categories* (with which I started my paper) combined with the relevant passages of *Metaphysics*, but totally misses the point of Aristotle's opening negative

statement regarding *ousia* (that in the *most important* and *true sense ousia* cannot be a species nor a genus neither it can it be a universal and thus, it is ultimately unstructured and unknowable in itself, in this most true and important sense; see *Cat.* 2b29–3a7). What we can know of it is its secondary and less important (and true) sense, found in the other categories, called by Aristotle (as we shall discuss in detail below) δευτέραι οὐσίαι (secondary *ousiai*) (see *Categories* 3b10). It seems that the traditional English translations of *ousia* thus, cast a dark and confusing cloud over our mind and produce a fog that hinders our seeing what Aristotle had in his mind when he was stating such a negative characterisation of *ousia*.

The Latin precursors of the English words (i.e., *essentia* and *substantia*) do not enlighten us either, since they also indicate that there is something to which they belong or exist as a property or in terms of which they can be identified as a *substratum* or a core element. Boethius (who probably was the first who used this translation of *ousia* as *substantia* to state in Latin the Aristotelian *ousia*) claims that he did this because ‘*substat autem id quod aliis accidentibus subjectum quoddam, ut esse valeant, subministrat; sub illis enim stat, dum subjectum est accidentibus*’ (Boetii 1891, 1344B). This reading of Boethius is transformed later on by the Scholastics, especially in the later period of Medieval Philosophy (c. 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century). Trying to focus on the logical aspects of it, they proposed a theory of Second Intentions (a modified version of Aquinas’ theory of intentions, found mainly in the work of Simon of Faversham, Radulphus Brito and John Duns Scotus; see Pini 2002). With it Logic became autonomous: the theory of the *Categories*, having the authority of Aristotle, provided them with a sufficient basis for Logic’s independent existence and differentiation from Metaphysics. Second intentions was a theoretical and methodological tool for such a differentiation: intentions are concepts, mental entities of sorts, and as mental entities they are studied by Psychology, but in terms of their universal and ‘objective’ content they are studied by this independent and self-sustained science of Logic. Logic in this way (studying only the content of intentions or as they called it ‘second intentions’) found a purpose, tools and study matter appropriate to itself: a ‘syllogism’, a ‘proposition’, a ‘genus’, a ‘species’ became the main items of study and the tools of this new trade. To the important question of what this content (second intention) represents they gave two different answers (but quite similar in our interpretation): either second intentions represent the way we understand things, or they represent things in the world as they can be conceived. This differentiation (but again, similarity, in our interpretation, since in terms of *ousia* they are just one way of thinking about it) led them to formulate an extentional and an intentional understanding of what a category is, and in addition to transform the categories (and especially the most basic or first category, such as *ousia*) into entities with a metaphysical status. A category becomes a metaphysical entity and



exists in terms of the position in the hierarchy of classifications of being that it represents: from the extreme position of Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–1280) that a *substantia* is an essence and part of logically understood being (commenting on Boethius' passage that we quoted above in *Liber de Pread.*, tr. 1, c. 1), and the moderate position of Aquinas (who maintains that in the *Categories* Aristotle talks as a Logician and in the *Metaphysics* as a metaphysician, *In Met.*, VII, lect. XIII, n. 1576), we reach the even more extreme positions of Brito and Duns Scotus, where second intentions have real being (even though 'rational' as they call it; see Brito, *Super Pread.*, q. 1; Duns Scotus, *Super Pread.*, q. 2, n. 28). I shall close my discussion about the Latin translations of *ousia* here (more details on this issue — which, needless to say, I discuss in excessive brevity here — see Pini 2002). Needless to say, that in transforming this word into something that sustains a structure or essence of a kind, the Latin commentators made the understanding of *ousia* far more problematic; they cannot agree, at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, on the meaning of *ousia* and all the related suggestions make our understanding of what exactly *ousia* is in the *Categories* impossible: i.e., whether it has a status of being at all or not (as well as what sort of being it has) and, furthermore, whether it is best understood in a logical or a metaphysical way. The issue got further complicated through the connection with the issue of nominalism and realism of the general classifications of being in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (and in particular Ockham's attack on Aquinas and Duns Scotus), but, since it is not directly related to our discussion, we shall not investigate it here.

#### 4. Return to Aristotle's theory

But, let us now go back to the Aristotelian work *Categories* itself.

Proceeding into what is (and what is not) *ousia*, Aristotle, after this negative definition, provides examples of what can be taken as *ousia* in this most important, most true, sense and he lists things such as 'this man' or 'this horse' and thus the concrete and particular individual (τόδε τι), which does not have parts and is one in number (ἄτομον καί ἐν ἀριθμῷ). For Aristotle, this one and particular and with no parts 'τόδε τι' is related to other things that can be categorized in terms of it as its mode of existence, such as for example its genus (γένος) and its species (εἶδος) (*Cat.* 2a16). Aristotle finds that the genus and the species are not *ousiai* in the primary, most important and most true sense, but they are most close to it, categorising it most accurately and most truly when compared to the other categorisations that it can have. So, he calls them secondary *ousiai* (δευτέραι οὐσίαι) and he finds that the species is more close to the primary *ousia* or τόδε τι, than the genus. For example, the species (εἶδος) of Socrates (which is that he is a man or

ἄνθρωπος) is more close to the particular τὸδε τι Socrates than the genus (or γένος) of Socrates (which is that he is an animal or ζῷον) (*Cat.* 2a14–19).

Now, this Aristotelian theory, found in the *Categories* is often forgotten and disregarded by many who discuss Aristotle's treatment of *ousia* or *on* (ὄν) having as their only source the Aristotelian work *Metaphysics*. An example of such an endeavour is Moravcsik's interpretation (see above, where language and reality are seen as separate structures of a kind of which elements can relate in some way). However, the problem that Moravcsik tried to answer still needs a satisfactory solution: If *ousia* or (as Aristotle also calls it in the *Metaphysics* Z, 1028a15–16), the Being or τὸ ὄν (since, as he believes in *Metaphysics* Γ, 1003b5–10, some beings — ὄντα — are said to exist because they are *ousiai*, or because they are their modifications or ways to them or destructions or privations or qualities or productive or generative of *ousiai*) cannot be predicated of a subject nor found in the subject, how are we to comprehend the Aristotelian dictum: the Being can be worded (or talked about) in many ways (τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται, found in many passages in *Metaphysics*, chiefly in Γ, 1003a33; ? 1018a36; Z, 1028a10)? It seems that *ousia* in the *Categories* provides difficulties in our comprehension of Being in *Metaphysics* and this issue is very important, since, let us not forget, *Metaphysics* is for Aristotle (in *Metaphysics* Γ, 1003a20) a science which studies Being (τὸ ὄν) qua Being (ἐπιστήμη τις ἢ θεωρεῖ τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν). Now, an obvious suggestion may be here that Being can be talked about in many ways but in his work on the *Categories* Aristotle provides *the schema* of our talk about it. But, I think this Kantian interpretation on Aristotle is an oversimplification here. It sees the Aristotelian corpus in a far too restrictive and partial way. And I think that the *Categories* provide one way of looking at Being (even though of key importance), the other works being some other ways of looking at (and talking about) it. But more on this later.

Now, one obvious and wrong answer, is that Being can be discussed in innumerable and infinite ways. Aristotle is against this however, when one considers that Aristotle in the *Categories* gave a definite number of categories and not an infinite or indeterminate one. He chose the number 10 (οὐσία, ποσόν, ποιόν, πρὸς τι, ποῦ, πότε, κείσθαι, ἔχειν, ποιεῖν, πάσχειν), and he claimed that these must be combined in sentences or propositions for us to be able to speak about their truth in an affirmative or negative way. The reason for this is Aristotle's conviction that we cannot know the infinite or indeterminate *as* infinite or indeterminate (see mainly *Posterior Analytics* 82b36, 94a11 and *Physica* Γ, 207a25: ἀγνωστον ἢ ἄπειρον and 207a31–2: ἄτοπον δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον τὸ ἀγνωστον καὶ ἀόριστον περιέχειν καὶ ὀρίζειν).

What then, can we make of Being (τὸ ὄν), which can be discussed in many ways, but is not infinite nor indeterminate, is categorized in ten ways, the first of which is the τὸδε τι or primary *ousia*, and cannot be found in the subject nor be categorised of it?

### 5. Putnam's suggestion

Perhaps if we look to more contemporary debates between Aristotelians and non-Aristotelians, who try to formulate something relevant to what Aristotle tried to do in the *Categories*, we might find an attractive answer. One contemporary suggestion comes in the work of Hilary Putnam, who makes a very interesting comparison between Aristotle and Wittgenstein. In discussing the way Aristotle sees the possibility of knowledge of Being (or what exists) in the Aristotelian work *On the Soul* (*De anima*), Putnam says this: '... it is worth insisting that Aristotle and Wittgenstein are both speaking to what we have come to call the problem of Intentionality; that is, the problem of how either the mind or language hook onto the world. Aristotle, writing long before the linguistic turn, takes the problem to be primarily one of how mind can hook onto the world; Wittgenstein, in the very midst of the linguistic turn, takes the problem to be how language can hook onto the world. But the problems are recognizably linked. Moreover, [...] there is a recognizably common intuition that they share; the intuition that mind and language could not hook onto the world if that which is to be hooked onto did not have intrinsic or "built in" form.' (Putnam 1993, p. 119).

Putnam's move here seems to be that the mind (soul) can hook into the structure of reality via the structure inherent in the mind (soul), indicating the way we can know the primary *ousia* (τὸδε τι) and via it Being (τὸ ὄν), through the application of the categories. Putnam becomes more explicit about this further on: 'What I am saying once again is that there is an enormous difference between taking the form of something to be the *metaphysically best description of its nature* and taking the form to be the *abstract characterization of the totality of its logical possibilities of combination with other objects*. As the model-theoretic arguments show, logic at the abstract Tractarian level does not do anything to distinguish one object from another. The idea that logic could do all the work of metaphysics was a *magnificent* fantasy, but fantasy it surely was. Now, given this notion of form, one idea that might occur to a latter-day Aristotelian [...] would be to *mimic* what Logical Atomism did, by simply substituting metaphysical form for logical form. In other words, just as Logical Atomism requires that, in a certain sense, the logical form of the proposition, of the representation, should be isomorphic to the logical form of the fact that it is represented, so, one might say (if one is a latter-day Aristotelian who has taken account of the linguistic turn), that, in a certain sense, the metaphysical form of our descriptions needs to be isomorphic to the metaphysical form of the object represented, for reference to succeed.' (Putnam 1993, p. 127).

Putnam goes on in his article to criticise the Aristotelian perspective because, as he sees it, it makes the infinite ways in which the world can be conceived (the modality of the world) unintelligible or magical (see on this

his attack against D. Lewis in pp. 128–9) and because it cannot explain efficiently and causally how we make mistakes about the world (on this see his attack on Hart and Honoré, in p. 134). Putnam says: ‘A further difficulty for a neo-Aristotelian metaphysics, descriptive or otherwise, comes to mind. I have said that the strongest line for the neo-Aristotelian to take is to say that what enables reference to take place is a matching (mere isomorphism doesn’t seem to be enough, but some kind of a matching) between the metaphysical structure our propositions project onto the objects and the metaphysical structure those objects actually have. The difficulty is that very often we have the structure of the things we refer to just dead wrong. For Aristotle, living before the successive scientific revolutions, this does not seem to have been a problem, because he could assume that at a certain point we would just get the structure right. But in fact even the structure of something as familiar as water is something that we did not succeed in getting right for over two thousand years, and even today we have only a very approximate account of the structure of water. Aristotle himself regarded water as one of the elements, as did many of his contemporaries and many other people after them. Yet (pace Thomas Kuhn) this did not keep them from successfully referring to water. The requirement that, to refer to something, the representation must get the essential metaphysical properties right seems to be much too strong.’ (Putnam 1993, p. 129).

It is clear from the above passages that Putnam’s interpretational move here is very close to the Medieval and Moravcsik approaches that we saw earlier, and in this way, is not within the spirit of the beginning of Chapter 5 of the *Categories*, with which we started our discussion of the Aristotelian categories. In Aristotle’s theory of *ousia* as *τόδε τι* and its relation to Being (or *τὸ ὄν*), the picture is far more complex than what the Medievals, Putnam and Moravcsik (and even an ‘indexical’ theory of being) present it to be. Aristotle’s insistence that the Being can be talked about in many ways (*τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται*) indicates that there is no fixed structure in the world identifiable by reason, a mental representation or a logical and/or linguistic classification. Putnam, in a paradigmatically clear and precise way, makes this relation of essence and structure, when he takes it that the Aristotelian position is that we have to know the essence of something before we can refer to it. For the same reason, an ‘indexical’ or a ‘property’ interpretation of *τόδε τι* fails: Contemporary mainstream Metaphysics remains a poor interpretational tool for Aristotelian Metaphysics (see for some relevant comments Vallicella 2002). However, Aristotle also stresses the fact that we can know in some way the world (or the Being), and this characteristic of the world is evident in our way of talking about it: we cannot talk about it in infinite nor indeterminate ways (the infinite and indeterminate, *as* infinite and indeterminate is unknowable). And this is the reason why Aristotle also

insists that the Categories of Being have a definite number (ten in the *Categories*). So, the essentialist interpretation of Aristotle's theory about *ousia* is in serious error. It seems to be very close to the 'category' mistake that Ryle was claiming about Descartes' theory of mind: having as their main resource particular passages from the *De Anima* and the *Metaphysics*, the essentialists think that all *ousiae* are secondary *ousiae* (see a relevant discussion of the issue of 'O Logos tis *ousias*' in the beginning of the *Categories* in Anton, 1996, pp. 61–86). My proposed here Aristotelian unification of Logic, *Metaphysics* and Epistemology is further augmented and enriched by Aristotle's relevant discussions in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*. And to this we shall turn our attention at this point of our investigation.

## 6. *Rhetoric and Poetics as augmenting the Categories*

If we look carefully at Aristotle's discussion about action in *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, we see that it resembles the discussion of *ousia* in the *Categories* and *Metaphysics*: it can be discussed in many ways, is one and can be categorised as *ousia*. So, what exactly can we learn about *ousia* from an investigation into the theory of action as found in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*? But before that, let us see the general relation of the Aristotelian theory found in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* to the one found in the *Categories*.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in some sense brings Aristotle closer to Plato, since both Aristotle and Plato wrote against the rhetorical textbooks of the time and their emphasis on deceit and slander. Aristotle however, tried to improve the rhetoric of his time, in opposition to Plato's outright condemnation (Hunt 1990). What Aristotle tried to do is to allow Logic and Rhetoric to interact in the form of establishing logical forms of speech: the enthymemes (which as a term pre-existed and had the meaning of smart dicta or paradoxes; see Madden 1952). This Aristotle sees as extremely important in both a metaphysical and an ethical sense: Aristotle believes that the true and the just are naturally superior to their opposites (τό φύσει εἶναι κρείττω τᾶ ληθῆ καί τὰ δίκαια τῶν ἐναντίων) and the reason for improper decisions in public deliberation is due to insufficient presentation of the 'natural' superiority of the true and the just, and this for Aristotle, as an action on behalf of the rhetorician, is reprehensible (ἀξιὸν ἐπιτιμῆσεως) (*Rhet.* 1, 1, 12, 1355a).

At the start of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Book I, 1354a1), we find Aristotle making a rather startling remark: he claims that Rhetoric is a counterpart (ἀντίστροφος) of Dialectic, because, as he claims, both have to do with things that all people know (γνωσίξειν) and are not confined to any specific science (οὐδεμιᾶς ἐπιστήμης ἀφορισμένης). He explains what he means by making an obvious connection of Logic to Rhetoric, as practiced in courts of law at Athens of his time. But, by making this rhetorical κατηγορεῖσθαι

(i.e., categorising, and in this way, similar to the categorisation of *ousia* in the *Categories*) ἀντίστροφος (counter part) of Dialectic and not confined to any special science, I think that Aristotle is making an attempt to relate his intuitions here with what he says in the *Categories* and to remind one that as τόδε τι cannot be confined in the boundaries of any science, even though it can be talked about in many ways (see τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται in *Metaphysics*) so κατηγορεῖσθαι cannot be confined to the boundaries of the science of law-making and law-arbitrating, which is the art of Rhetoric. Parallel to this, it is important to note Aristotle's conviction in *Metaphysics* (cf. *Met.* 1004b8–20), that Dialectic (Διαλεκτική) is not (true) Philosophy: ἔστι δέ ἡ διαλεκτικὴ πειραστικὴ περὶ ὧν ἡ φιλοσοφία γνωριστικὴ. The only true Philosophy is that which can know *ousia* in a positive sense (it examines Being as Being: ὄν ἢ ὄν). Dialectic can only test negatively our claims about what *ousia* is (more particularly its attributes) and it cannot offer any positive claims about it. And dialecticians are those who are concerned only with the attributes of *ousia*, since they have no knowledge of that which is prior to the attributes (i.e., *ousia*). However, in the same place in *Metaphysics Γ* (ibid), he also claims that the philosopher can and must employ dialectic in his pursuit of *ousia* (and he must stay clear of sophistry, which, even though appearing similar to Dialectic, is only concerned with the appearances and not with the true properties of *ousia*).

This association of Dialectic with Philosophy makes Aristotle's and Plato's pursuits of Being run in parallel lines (even though it makes Aristotle differ slightly from Plato, who claims that Dialectic is true Philosophy; see Plato's *Sophist* 253d2). Their accounts of the categories and of *ousia* itself seem to be different, however. Aristotle's criticism of Plato in the *Metaphysics* on the issue of *ousia* is mainly that Plato turns the categories of its existence into (primary) *ousiae*.

It is interesting at this point to see two relevant similarities between Plato and Aristotle that are noted by G.E.L. Owen.

The first comes in the discussion of Aristotle's criticism of Plato, noted above. According to Owen: 'he [Plato] took any predicate-expression to stand for some individual thing instead of for some sort of thing (e.g., *SE* 178b36–179a10; *Meta.* 1038b34–1039a3). Thereby, Aristotle held, he [Plato] committed two faults: he failed to explain how we use predicates to classify and describe actual individuals and he cluttered the scene with other individuals, which were fictions.' (Owen 1966, p. 134). However, Owen does recognise that Aristotle in the later parts of *Metaphysics*, does move close to Plato, when he (Aristotle) recognises that in terms of definition of what things are we cannot define individuals (such as Socrates), but only species (such as man). Owen describes this as 'a return to, or a renewal of sympathy with, Plato' even though 'there is nothing of pious discipleship in it', and he hastens to modify his initial claim in a footnote in the same

page by claiming: ‘That this is one thesis that Aristotle takes seriously in *Meta.* VII needs no arguing; how much of it survives the argument of the later chapters is another matter’ (Owen 1966, p. 137 and footnote 10). Even though Owen thinks that this move towards Plato does not exist in the *Categories*, since, following generally the ‘developmental’ view, he believes that the *Categories* are only ‘an early’ stage of Aristotle’s development (see *ibid.*, p. 136), a careful reader of the *Categories* will note that Aristotle makes exactly this move, when he acknowledges, in *Cat.* 3b10–38, that *a man is ousia*, since we cannot have an opposite to a man or more or less of a man (*ousia* cannot have degrees, or more or less). In the *Categories*, Aristotle also considers the species and genus as secondary *ousiai* and he thinks that these are the only categories that can be called secondary *ousiai*, the first *ousia* being defined in terms of them (but they are not them), and that they of all the categories are closest to the first *ousia*, the species (*εἶδος*) being closer to first *ousia* than genus (*γένος*) (*Cat.* 2a11–3a1). From this examination of the relevant passages, we can see that the similarity here is stronger and more serious than the one Owen acknowledges: Aristotle did not move away from the Platonic fascination with *ousia*; he just tried to make a more tidy exposition of it, in terms of avoiding problems such as infinite regresses. By following the developmental tradition, Owen here is relying too much on the apparent differences in the treatment of the *Categories* between Aristotle and Plato in the *Metaphysics* and disregards their unity of approach on the issue of *ousia*. But we do not need to follow his developmental tendencies here (as we saw at the beginning of our investigation this can lead us to more serious interpretational problems and dilemmas).

Let us turn to the second similarity that Owen recognises. Owen maintains that where we can see the real Platonism of Aristotle (or the Aristotelianism of Plato) is in the methodology of the two philosophers: both adopt dialectic and Aristotle himself allows for dialectic to play a central role in the *Topics*: it is an ‘essential equipment in constructing the sciences’ (Owen 1966, p. 144). Now, taking into consideration our earlier discussion of the usefulness of Dialectic for Philosophy in both Aristotle and Plato, we cannot but agree wholeheartedly with Owen here. Rhetoric and Dialectic use the categories to determine Being but they do not exhaust it, since they are general discussions of it (Dialectic classifying in terms of its attributes, Rhetoric being the art of persuasion in reference to any given subject and, in particular, in its power of making the possible appear probable — *ρητορική δύναμις περί ἕκαστον τοῦ θεωρηῆσαι το ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν*, *Rhet.* 1355b–1356a). Rhetoric thus, becomes the discussion of Being in terms of its possible/probable attributes, as Dialectic is the discussion of Being in terms of its actual attributes. Neither of them study Being as such, since only true Philosophy can examine Being or primary *ousia* itself. In terms of the purpose of each of these endeavours however, the Dialectic of Being and the Rhetoric

of Being are the same thing: they cannot help true Philosophy reach primary *ousia* without the help of the Categories of Being. They all discuss Being in its attributes and not true Being as such, a discussion which can be carried out only by true Philosophy (aided by these other discussions of Being's attributes).

It is interesting at this point to see one key issue about Aristotle's theory of action, as discussed in the *Rhetoric*. A focal point in the Aristotelian discussion of Rhetoric comes when Aristotle tries to ascertain what exactly the rhetoricians must have at their command at any given time, when they have to engage in their art (in its three forms: rhetoric applied to political speeches, in law courts, and in festivals and ceremonies). There (*Rhet.* I, 3, 8–9, 1359a), he claims that, since only possible (and not impossible) actions can ever be done in the present or the past, the rhetorician must have at his/her command propositions, which discuss possible actions (ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐτε πραχθῆναι οἶον τε οὐτε πραχθήσεσθαι τὰ ἀδύνατα ἀλλὰ τὰ δυνατὰ [...] ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν προτάσεις περὶ δυνατοῦ καὶ ἀδυνάτου). This is so, because (as he has shown in *Rhet.* I, 2, 14, 1357a) most of the things which we examine and judge in rhetoric can be other than they are, and human actions are such things, i.e., not necessary, but possible (τὰ γὰρ πολλά περὶ ὧν αἱ κρίσεις καὶ αἱ σκέψεις, ἐνδέχεται καὶ ἄλλως ἔχειν [...] τὰ δὲ πραττόμενα πάντα τοιούτου γένους ἐστίν, καὶ οὐδέν [...] ἐξ ἀνάγκης τούτων). It is also important to note in relation to Aristotle's treatment of actions that he believes that all the actions of men must of necessity be due to seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, anger and desire (πάντα ὅσα πράττουσιν ἀνάγκη πράττειν δι' αἰτίας ἑπτὰ, διὰ τύχην, διὰ φύσιν, διὰ βίαν, δι' ἔθος, διὰ λογισμόν, διὰ θυμόν, δι' ἐπιθυμίαν) (*Rhet.* I, 10, 8, 1369a). This makes the investigation into actions contained in the *Rhetoric* resemble the one about Being and the four causes of Being in the *Metaphysics*: formal (or cause in terms of *ousia*), material, efficient and final (*Met.* I, 2, 24–35, 983a). So, actions, very much like *ousia*, can have causes, and thus are concrete and particular, otherwise we would not be able to talk about them in a rhetorical way (the discussed actions in the *Rhetoric* are about *possible* concrete and particular actions).

Aristotle's theory about action in the *Rhetoric* enlightens us further in the relation of Dialectic and Rhetoric, and the theory of Categories and Rhetoric. Rhetoricians have to talk about possible actions and in trying to make the possible probable try to persuade their audience in taking a specific course of action. In these attempts, they must employ arguments and in doing so they are engaging in what can be considered as a counterpart of Dialectics. However, their art is not as essential to true Philosophy as Dialectics. And in his treatment of Rhetoric and Dialectics, Aristotle remains faithful to his teacher, Plato. Nevertheless, the art of Rhetoric is important, since (both metaphysically and ethically) the true and the just must prevail. Again here



Aristotle remains a true follower of Plato, providing the ethical and metaphysical context of rhetoric, even though he alters his teacher's theory to avoid his problems. The theory of categories comes in to investigate further this notion of 'action' and makes it resemble 'ousia': both concepts are a generic name of what is impossible to describe with precision and definite terms (*ousia* for the reasons we developed above; action, because it is always the action *as* possible and probable that is important in Rhetoric and action *as* probable and possible for Aristotle cannot be defined in an accurate and precise way).

Cynthia Freeland, commenting on Ackrill's rather unsatisfactory account of Aristotelian action in his attempt to interpret Aristotle's ethical works, puts forward a remarkable exegesis: she finds that what made interpreters of Aristotle remain unsatisfied with Aristotelian action is their lack of attention to Aristotle's conviction that action is 'in' the particulars (*καθ' ἑκάστων ἐπί μέρους*). In *Nicomachean Ethics* (1110a1–1111a6), we see Aristotle placing emphasis on judging actions that are concrete and not abstract; he also lists the six circumstances of an action that are pertinent in making an action concrete: 1) agent (*τίς*), 2) action (*τί*), 3) patient (*περὶ τί ἢ ἐν τίνι πράττει*), 4) instrument (*τίνι*), 5) purpose (*ἐνεκα τίνος*), 6) manner (*πῶς*). The action exists in all of these circumstances and, in the abstract (*ἀπλῶς*), only as the second of its circumstances (where we are concerned with the type of action) (Freeland 1985, p. 399). Moral virtue then, or the doing of just and ethically praiseworthy actions requires knowledge of all these circumstances (Freeland 1985, pp. 398–401), which make an action particular and concrete: as what it is, i.e., as *τόδε τι*. Freeland next considers problems in her proposal stemming from the issue of unity and individuation in *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, and she maintains, that these problems are not serious obstacles in accepting actions as particular and concrete (Freeland 1985, pp. 401–411). She closes her investigation into the Aristotelian theory of action, as found primarily in the ethical works of Aristotle, by claiming that Aristotelian action is a 'bundle theory of actions; it treats actions as instantiations of individual moral agents of certain very complex properties constructed out of at least six component parts' (Freeland 1985, p. 412). I think we cannot accept this 'bundle theory of action' as a correct interpretation of Aristotle. If we were to accept this, we would make the Aristotelian theory of action very similar to the 'Bundle Theory of the Self' put forward by David Hume (in his words 'we are never intimately conscious of anything but a particular perception; man is a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement', *Theory of Human Nature*, I, IV, vi). And we cannot accept this, due mainly to the Aristotelian insistence that a human being as a substance is one and not a bundle of individual properties or actions (see on this Scaltsas'

insistence on the characterisation of Aristotle's theory of Substance as 'Substantial Holism', in Scaltsas 1994, and the interesting relevant discussion of Aristotle as against explanatory liberalism in Wilkerson 1995, as well as Furth, 1988), and the Aristotelian emphasis on the thesis that a human's soul is what makes it one and not a bundle (or aggregate) of sensations. However, we do have to acknowledge the force of Freeland's argument for establishing the thesis that actions can be considered as particulars and in our sense and discussion as *τόδε τι*, giving us sufficient reason to make their discussion very similar to the discussion of *ousia*. And this not only supports the thesis that there is a systematic unity between the ethical works of Aristotle and the *Rhetoric*, but also that there is a unity between *Rhetoric* and the *Categories*. But surely, one may object, can one take what Aristotle says in his ethical works about real actions and apply the same theory to possible and probable actions as well? (As we saw above, *Rhetoric* has to do with possible and probable actions). To establish this and further augment our argument here, we need to examine the other major work where Aristotle discusses possible and probable action: the *Poetics*.

But, what about the *Poetics*? There, we see Aristotle making some startling remarks: he defines poetry as representation (*μίμησις*) (*Poet.* 1447a3) and he maintains that those who engage in poetry act (*ἐπεὶ δὲ μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας*) (*Poet.* 1448a1); but, since representing (*μιμεῖσθαι*) is natural (*κατὰ φύσιν δὲ ὄντος ἡμῶν τοῦ μιμεῖσθαι*) (*Poet.* 1448b7), one can easily claim that Poetry is natural to us or according to our nature. If we examine carefully one of main forms of poetry for Aristotle, tragedy, we can see even more how Poetry and *Rhetoric* are linked via their emphasis on actions: Aristotle claims that tragedy has six parts: plot (*μῦθος*), morals (*ἥθη*), words (*λέξεις*), thought (*διάνοια*), look (*ὄψις*), and singing (*μελοποιία*) (*Poet.* 1450a9–10). But Aristotle maintains that the most important of all these parts is the plot (*μῦθος*), since tragedy is a representation of an action (*ἡ γὰρ τραγωδία μίμησις ἐστὶν . . . πράξεως*) (*Poet.* 1450a12–13). Moreover, he believes that tragedy would not exist without action (action is a necessary condition for tragedy: *ἄνευ μὲν πράξεως οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο τραγωδία*) (*Poet.* 1450a14–15). And in his analysis of *διάνοια* (thought), as a part of tragedy, he comes to the most startling of all claims in the *Poetics*: *διάνοια* (thought) is the ability to say what is possible and what is appropriate and, in this sense (i.e., in terms of what it accomplishes), *Poetics* is similar to *Politics* and *Rhetoric*: [*διάνοια*] *ἐστὶν τό λέγειν δύνασθαι τὰ ἐνόητα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα, ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ρητορικῆς ἔργον ἐστὶν* (*Poet.* 1450b22–24). His further analysis of plot (*μῦθος*) indicates the primary importance of action and brings in this way *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* closer to the *Categories*; he considers *μῦθος* as the soul and the first principle of tragedy (*Ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἶον ψυχῆ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγωδίας*) (*Poet.* 1450a19–20),

but also of all poetry, as in the case of the Homeric *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (they are not mainly concerned with one man, but with one main action — even in the case of Odysseus all irrelevant details of his life are omitted) (*Poet.* 1451a12–1451a18). In further analyzing the kind of action with which Poetry is concerned, it is evident that Poetry and Rhetoric come very close in terms of actions discussed: what a poet does is not to say what actually happened, but what is possible to have happened either most probably or by necessity (οὐ τό τά γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτο ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν, ἀλλ' οἷα ἂν γένοιτο καί τά δυνατά κατὰ τό εἰκός ἢ τό ἀναγκαῖον) (*Poet.* 1451a18–19). So for Aristotle the difference between Poetry and History is exactly this: Poetry is something more philosophical and important, since Poetry gives general truths directing our attention to specific and particular aspects of actions and characters as envisaged by the poet, while History is concerned with describing and recording particular facts (διό καί φιλοσοφώτερον καί σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν ἢ μέν γάρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τά καθόλου, ἢ δ' ἱστορία τά καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει) (*Poet.* 1451b1–4). And Aristotle makes more clear the meaning of this 'καθόλου' (general truth), by insisting that this is a truth about what a certain type of man will do or say with his particular acts or words either probably or necessarily (καθόλου... τῷ ποίῳ τά ποῖα ἄττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τό εἰκός ἢ τό ἀναγκαῖον) (*Poet.* 1451b4–5). So, Aristotle concludes that the poet is a creator of stories, representations of actions (τόν ποιητήν μᾶλλον τῶν μύθων εἶναι ποιητήν... μιμνέται τὰς πράξεις) (*Poet.* 1451b9–10).

From the above discussion, it is evident that Aristotle discusses action in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* in such a way that one can safely conclude that the theory of action in these two different works of Aristotle is the same, and does not also differ greatly from the discussion of action found primarily in the *Ethics*. But how far we can accept this? One thought that makes us apprehensive is that the aims associated in the discussion of action in the two works are rather different. In the *Rhetoric*, action is discussed in terms of what the rhetorician will discuss in a court of law or a public gathering. In the *Poetics*, action is discussed in terms of what the poet is trying to do when he/she creates a world where the action described is supposed to occur. So is the discussion of possible and probable action that is found in these two works the same? Knowing Aristotle's passion for systematicity and unity of thought one may be tempted to accept this easily and at face value. However, a more careful investigation reveals a far richer picture than the one easily accepted: even though action in both works has to do with possible and probable action, it differs greatly in terms of its description and categorisation, i.e., what kind of categories we can apply in describing action. In the *Rhetoric*, action is described and discussed in terms of the real world, i.e., what the rhetorician thinks is possible and probable (or even desired) in

terms of the world within which both the rhetorician and the target audience live. However, in the *Poetics*, action is described and discussed in terms of the world that the poet wants to describe and create. In this way, the discussion of the possible and probable action in the *Rhetoric* resembles the way an engineer, let us say, thinks about action when he is drawing a bridge or a house. While in the *Poetics*, the discussion of possible and probable action is about the fictional action that the poet intends to create. The poet and the engineer may both think about the creation of a bridge, but the engineer is more committed to the metaphysics of the real world, which is a given and determined by natural boundaries and limitations, than the poet.

Let us see this important difference in more detail, taking into consideration the significant views of Mary Haight on ‘conditional essences’ in *Aesthetics*, as applied to Aristotle’s and Kripke’s views on essence (Haight 1991). (Note that I do not consider — and this is evident from my treatment of Putnam’s views on this — what is known as ‘Aristotelian essentialism’ a proper interpretation of Aristotle’s views on primary *ousia*; I shall discuss my view more on this after the discussion of Haight’s views). Mary Haight’s discussion is based on her conviction that an investigation into counterfactuals is important in our attempt to find out what words designate. Even though she agrees in this with Kripke, she nevertheless distances herself from his insistence that counterfactuals are only important here if they are “non-fictional, literal, and explicitly hypothetical — like his favourite ‘*If Nixon had only given a sufficient bribe to Senator X, he could have gotten Carswell off*’ or like a thought experiment in science” (Haight 1991, p. 49). She claims that for any general theory of language this condition is far too restrictive. She believes that fiction is counterfactual, but truth related; a successful metaphor is counterfactual but only if taken literally. This for Haight means that: ‘What underlies all successful counterfactuals, I think, is some assumption that things fall into kinds according to their essences. That point was indeed first made about fiction by Aristotle’ (ibid). The moral she tries to establish with her criticism of Kripke is exactly this: ‘if we are interested in essences, we should study success and failure in counterfactuals of every sort, or we run the risk of narrowness’ (ibid). To establish her criticism she supports the thesis that: ‘Fictional worlds may be not only counterfactual but counterlogical, and yet keep their own kind of truth — one that seems to involve essences’ and she provides the example of the Cheshire cat’s disappearance in *Alice in Wonderland*: the grin remains to provide ‘the Aristotelian differentia of a Cheshire Cat’, since according to an earlier dialogue between the Duchess and Alice we learn that that is what Cheshire-cats do (and are): they grin. ‘If it could shed its substance and keep just one attribute, wouldn’t that attribute probably be the grin?’ (Haight 1991, p. 50). This she finds is due to our way of thinking about language in general when we come to consider counterfactuals: “in the normal way even when we

think about Nixon (not to mention Cheshire Cats) or about whether if I drop this actual glass, it will break, our 'rules' about kinds are probabilistic; and we admit to not knowing all that may be relevant. As W.V.O. Quine puts it, our 'intuitive' (as opposed to our 'scientific') world-picture rests on ideas of similarity which are 'intrinsically muddy'" (ibid). What however, really interests us in Haight's interesting criticism on Kripke's essentialism is that she thinks that Kripke got his intuitions about essences and counterfactuals from Aristotle. In trying to decipher Aristotle's dictum about what is preferable when it comes to *poiesis*: 'that what is impossible but probable is better than what is improbable but possible' (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1461b27–28, as cited and discussed by Haight 1991, p. 51), Haight claims that 'he [Aristotle] maintains that even when probable, the impossible is (other things equal) a weakness. He does not seem to appreciate either multiple vision's inevitability or its advantages. He is, after all, the main ancestor of the real essentialists — that is, people who believe in real essences. For Aristotle, Nature rules: she orders things one determinate way, which is therefore the real way of all possible worlds. And if you believe that, of course multiple vision is less than ideal. Two rival views may tell us more than one, but they are possible only because they are incomplete. Again for Aristotle (I think) language — any form of representation, in fact — has as its telos the communication of truth, and the whole truth as far as possible. Documentary and fiction convey truth in different ways, but the goal is the same. Truly accurate language will therefore mirror a single coherent system, and allow no paradox.' (Haight 1991, p. 55). This is, I think, where I shall depart from Haight's reading of Aristotle's *Poetics*. I do agree with her that discussion of fictional characters and their actions can be in terms of essences ('conditional essences' in Haight's terminology) and discussion of counterfactuals is important in establishing the rational designation or determination of them: Aristotle himself states in the *Poetics* 1461b29–31 that 'τ' ἄλογα' or irrational are acceptable in poetry; contradictions in terms are allowed and sometimes may be praiseworthy in a work of poetry and sometimes it is acceptable for the irrational or unusual to occur 'παρά το εἰκός'. But, I want to stress that a serious consideration of these 'conditional essences' does not make Aristotle an essentialist in his *Metaphysics*, since he could accept that these are *ousiai* but only in a secondary sense. In the primary sense of *ousia* (as outlined in the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics*, that we saw above) as "τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται" he states that language is not being: being can be described in many ways, but being *per se* is beyond the limits and the ways of language. With my interpretation in mind, Aristotle seems to come close to Quine and Wittgenstein, who stress the fact of the 'muddiness' of our (natural) language, when it comes to describe the world. So, Aristotle is far more mystical and cryptic than many commentators want him to be. But taking into consideration our above discussion, what can we make of his

views about action in the *Poetics*? Action in the *Poetics* is fictional action and determined in a way by the intentions of the poet; but it also is determined by this undetermined and undetermining characteristic of being: “τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται”. So, even though it is different from the account of action in the *Rhetoric* (in the sense that in the *Rhetoric* it is about action as possible and probable in the real world and is related to and determined more by limitations in the real, naturalistic, world) and it is also different in its metaphysical categorisation (as closer to the secondary *ousia* in the sense of a type or general classification of being, since it is the type of action a character in the epic or the drama would do), it is similar to action in the *Rhetoric* in the sense of being related to the Being as undetermined and undetermining (even though in a lesser way than the action in the *Rhetoric*). The poet in describing a fictional action and the rhetorician in prescribing a real action are both taking action in the real world as relevant and important even though with different importance placed on this relevance (the poet places less importance on real world and the rhetorician far more). We should not however, regard the poet as not interested in this world. This would not only be a mistaken interpretation of the relevant Aristotelian passages but also of how Aristotle saw the function of both the rhetorician and the poet to be. Even though the world or Being places restrictions on the work of the rhetorician and the poet (restrictions which they have to respect), they are not bound by it in their creation of a world or a Being as it *should be*: and this the point of Aristotle’s insistence in the *Poetics* that action and specifically ideal action (even an ideal action that it is impossible in this world or Being) is more important and praiseworthy than character making, Zeuxis is far superior poet to Polygnotus (see *Poetics*, 1450a15–18 and 1461b26–28). The poet and the rhetorician are both interested about specific aspects of actions in this world and of how to improve this world (and this is the meaning of the Aristotelian dictum: ‘αἰρετώτερον πιθανόν ἀδύνατον ἢ ἀπίθανον δυνατόν in *Poetics* 1461b27–28). This is why action is more important than character and action has less of a universal or general (‘type’) categorisation than character, thus making it be closer to τὸδε τι: it is more difficult to change characters, but far more easier to change actions; and once actions are changed then characters are changed as well. In this way, the difference between history and poetry is further illuminated and enriched: history is less philosophical because it is interested in particular actions that have occurred but they can generate truths of limited universal applicability in terms of improvement of this world. The poet, being concerned primarily with improvement of this world in terms of the general truths generated by his work of art, is more philosophical, since actions as τὸδε τι can guide him/her in the investigations of how to improve the world of Being, much in the same way as a philosopher studies the τὸδε τι of the world to change and improve on it. So, even though Nature should be respected, it does not rule: what

rules is the vision and genius of the poet and the rhetorician. In this way, both the poet and the rhetorician are interested in action as a *τόδε τι* specific and ideal action (even though with the poet being torn between *τόδε τι* of the real world and *τόδε τι* as the poet envisages it to be in the world he/she is creating).

From the above, we can see that action is Aristotle's first concern both in the *Rhetoric* and in the *Poetics*, much in the same way as *ousia* is his main concern in the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics*. As it is the case with *ousia*, action is the first concern of the rhetorician and the poet, it can receive categorizations, but in principle is beyond all categorizations as being concerned with what is possible or probable. It is this action that is closer to *ousia* than any other (actions that are what happened or what is going to happen are the concern of other sciences, as being something that is more clearly categorized and classified). This conceptual fluidity of both rhetorical and poetic action as well as *ousia* make these concepts similar in exegetic and interpretational terms, and I think can guide us further in terms of comprehending the meaning Aristotle wanted to give to them.

#### 7. Final Remarks and the Agreement between Plato and Aristotle

In my above discussion of Aristotle's preferred view on *ousia*, as found in the *Categories*, I have claimed that there is an agreement between Plato and Aristotle in their theory about *ousia*. That Aristotle and Plato shared a common concept of what philosophy is in terms of *ousia* becomes quite evident by just comparing what Aristotle says about Philosophy or in his terminology 'First Philosophy' (*φιλοσοφία πρώτη*): it studies Being qua Being, i.e., what it is and what are its attributes (*φιλοσοφία πρώτη [...] καί περί τοῦ ὄντος ἢ ὄν, ταύτης ἀν εἶη θεωρῆσαι, καί τί ἐστι καί τά ὑπάρχοντα ἢ ὄν* in *Metaphysics*, 6, 1026a30–35) and Plato's insistence that when the soul studies its own Philosophy, it studies the always existent or Being (*εἰς τήν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς [...] ὡς συγγενῆς οὔσα [...] τῷ ἀεί ὄντι* in *Republic*, 611e; see also *Def.* 414b–c: *Φιλοσοφία τῆς τῶν ὄντων ἀεί ἐπιστήμης ὄρεξις* or Philosophy is the desire to know truly the always existent) (see further on this Reale 1980; Anton 1996). How far Aristotle and Plato agreed on the specifics of *ousia* however, is another matter. The debate on this point is more or less as ancient as the texts themselves. Both sides (those who believe that Aristotle was against Plato and those who believe that Plato and Aristotle had more in common than differences) have many and formidable proponents: ancient commentators, such as Diogenes Laertius (c. 200 AD), perhaps the most authoritative biographer of many intellectuals and political men of ancient Greece, claimed that Aristotle was the most genuine

disciple of Plato (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, V, 1, 6), and famous Platonists and Neo-Platonists, such as Alcinous (*Handbook of Platonism*) and Porphyry (*On the Return of the Soul; On Plato and Aristotle being adherents of the same School*) as well as Aristotelians such as Aristocles (teacher of Alexander of Aphrodisias) also claimed this (Gerson 2005; Dillon 1993, 1981; Glucker 1978; Cherniss 1944). Of course the other side has also important ancient commentators claiming that this is either a distortion of Plato or Aristotle. For example, the Platonist Atticus (c. 200 AD) wrote a treatise against the adherents of the supposed agreement between Aristotle and Plato (Gerson 2005; Dillon 1993, 1981). But in modern and contemporary interpretation a significant majority believes that Plato and Aristotle had very little in common and/or that Aristotle failed to understand the meaning of many of the platonic positions (see the Foreword in Cherniss 1944, for many significant names in the history of philosophy, such as Hegel, Trendelenburg, Natorp etc.). Of course there are others such as Merlan, Gerson, Reale, Chronis, Evangeliou and Karamanolis, who claim that Aristotle continued the agenda of the Academy and followed the Academicians even in the formulation of the *Categories* themselves (Merlan 1967; Gerson 2005; Reale 1980; Chronis 1975; Evangeliou 1988; Karamanolis 2006).

One major concern that makes interpreters think that Aristotle is quite different from Plato on the issue of *ousia* and the categories is his alleged ‘empiricism’, which is at opposite ends to Plato’s also alleged ‘rationalism’. One of the most important interpreters of Aristotle, who argued for such an empiricist approach to the work of Aristotle, is Jaeger, who claimed that Aristotle, especially in his biological works, became an empiricist in his attempt to disentangle himself from the rationalist metaphysics and epistemology of his teacher, Plato (in Jaeger 1948, pp. 337–41). John Anton however, has claimed that this ‘empiricist’ interpretation of Aristotle is due to the influence of Kant’s rationalist categorical theory mainly on the Germanic and Anglo American interpreters of Aristotle, and that it has nothing to do with the Aristotelian text or with any plausible interpretation of the Aristotelian corpus: ‘Given the early rationalist metaphysics of Kant, Aristotle cannot be other than an empiricist’ (Anton 1996, p. 210; see also Rijk 2002, pp. 361–368).

The issue of the agreement between Aristotle and Plato in terms of their account of *ousia* and of their theories of categories is not going to meet its final answer here. It is worthwhile, however, to close our investigation with a very interesting moral from the relevant discussions in the late Byzantine and early Renaissance Era. In the middle of 15<sup>th</sup> century, Georgios Gemistos or Plethon, a famous Greek scholar, who was named by many Renaissance intellectuals as ‘the most wise Hellene’ and was considered an authority on Plato from his Platonist lectures in Northern Italy during his visit while at the Councils of Ferrara and Florence (1438–9), made a significant contribution



in history of philosophy. Gemistos, living in the Byzantine Peloponnese for most of his life (the city of Mistra), wrote an extremely important text for the development of European Renaissance (and Humanism and Platonism in particular), a treatise, known as *De Differentiis*, or *On the Differences of Aristotle from Plato*.

This text is quite important in the history of philosophy, because it was written having as an aim the reversal of the intellectual climate in Europe, which up to this time was dominated by Aristotelianism, and turn it to Platonism.

During his stay at Italy, Georgios Gemistos realized that scholarship in Platonic texts was very poor in Western Europe and that even the Medieval Latin translations of the Aristotelian corpus and the commentaries themselves were too much influenced by Averroes and the poor translations, which were provided to the Latins via the Arabs by a group of Byzantine Syrian translators with little philosophical training (O'Leary 1949). In this polemical text, he argued that Aristotle misunderstood many passages from the Platonic works, and that the Aristotelian theory of *ousia* and the categories (and of many other topics, such as of ethics and political philosophy, epistemology and science, logic and metaphysics, theology and theory of mind) was inferior to Plato's. His critique had such an enormous influence (leading to a rapid growth of the arts and sciences in the early Renaissance), because it was based on deep knowledge of all the surviving original works in the Byzantine Platonic and Aristotelian Corpus (as well as many other treatises on sciences, such as Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Medicine and Geography — it is important to note here that through Gemistos and his student Bessarion, who later became a Cardinal and twice a candidate for the throne of the Pope, the West heard lectures for the first time on the texts of the famous Ancient geographer Strabo, whose ideas were used for the discovery of America by Amerigo Vespucci and Christopher Columbus). This corpus was not available in the West before this date and it was far more reliable than the small number of translated works that were the Western corpus up to that time (d'Alverny 1982; Dod 1982). In addition to the problem of the scarcity of the original Greek texts in the West, there were also the many problems of Arabic pseudo-Aristotelian works and other *spuria*, which made any authoritative commentary on the Aristotelian works till about the beginning of the Renaissance a real guesswork (Williams 1995). Gemistos' grandiose attack on Aristotelian theory however, met an adequate answer in the form of the response of a less famous Byzantine Aristotelian, who wrote against such a 'blasphemy against Aristotle'.

The Byzantine scholar was George Scholarios, ca. 1400–1472, who later became a monk and was appointed in 1454 by the Turks as a Patriarch of Constantinople, with the name of Gennadios II (not long after they executed

the previous Patriarch, Athanasius II, during their sacking of Constantinople in 1453).

In this text (*De Differentiis*), Gemistos starts his discussion by naming the Arab Averroes as the main reason for the misinterpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian texts that he saw during his visit in Italy. He, on the other hand, believes that careful attention must be paid to the texts themselves, and he proclaims that he will show the superiority of Plato over his confused student, Aristotle, based only on the relevant texts (Woodhouse 1986, p. 192). We will not be concerned here with the various points he raises, but what is of particular interest for us is his insistence on the Aristotelian use of *ὁμωνυμία* or equivocity to describe being. Aristotle himself starts his work *Categories* from the discussion of what is called homonymy (equivocation) or *ὁμώνυμα λέγεται* (*Categ.* 1, 1a1–12). Gemistos claims that in Aristotle’s way of discussing homonymy or equivocation in the *Metaphysics* and the *Categories*, he denies that all things that exist have as their single source of being one Being (Woodhouse 1986, pp. 194–5). In order to ascertain exactly what Gemistos claims here it is useful to see what Aristotle claims in the *Categories* about *homonymia*: Aristotle claims at the start of the *Categories* that *homonymia* are called the things that have only their name as common, while their definition according to their *ousia* being different (*λόγος τῆς οὐσίας ἕτερος*), and he gives the example of animal: both a man and a picture of an animal may be called ‘animal’ but they are not the same according to their *ousia*). Actually Gemistos also accuses Aristotle of being self-contradictory, when later on in the *Categories* (2a11–19), he accepts that *ousia* is in the primary sense the basis of all beings. Gemistos also observes that in Aristotle’s theory the universal is inferior to the particular in terms of *ousia* (since only the *τόδε* can be *ousia* in the primary sense); however, this means that the universal would have less being than the particular, and this for Gemistos is unacceptable, since Aristotle seems here to confuse the meaning of the universals as collectives and as something beyond this: “For if ‘every man’ is no different from ‘all men’, and ‘all men’ are no different from ‘all men taken individually’, except only in being understood collectively and severally, then how could it make sense for men individually to be superior substances to ‘every man’ and possess more being, unless it made sense to take the former term severally and the latter collectively?” (Woodhouse 1986, p. 196).

Scholarios, in his defence of Aristotle, starts by remarking that what we have of Aristotle’s theory is only brief notes from students, and that makes interpreting him a rather difficult task; however, we should attempt to interpret and comment upon his theories, because only in this way we can come close to the truth about his teachings at the Lyceum. It is important to note two main points about Scholarios’ reply: Scholarios believes that neither

Plato nor Aristotle have grasped the truth that is revealed through Christianity, even though he thinks that they came close, with Aristotle coming more close to it than Plato; it is also important to note that Scholarios, in his reply to Gemistos, makes far more detailed comments and precise references to the original works than Gemistos. Scholarios wrote the reply about four years after Gemistos circulated his work in Greece and Italy. Scholarios sent this work first to Markos Eugenikos (who was an important Byzantine philosopher and theologian of high calibre, was a student of Gemistos — as both Scholarios and Bessarion — and he participated as well in the Councils of Ferrara/Florentia taking a very hard Orthodox anti-Unionist line) and he addressed it to the Byzantine Ruler of Peloponnesos, Constantinos Palaiologos (who was his friend from the time of the Councils of Ferrar/Florence, being a brother of the Emperor, and who later became himself Emperor and was killed defending Constantinople from the Turks in 1452). In his reply, he discusses in detail Gemistos' text. Here however, we shall focus on what he says about Gemistos' thesis on the *Categories* (about *homonyma* and *ousia*). Scholarios attacks here the consequence of Gemistos' suggestion of applying the same predicate to different kinds of subjects in a univocal sense. Scholarios claims that in Aristotle we can also find a third form of predication: analogical, which is neither univocal nor equivocal (see in relation to this issue *Metaphysics T*; Owens 1951, pp. 251–266; Brentano 1975, pp. 49–148). An example of this is the word 'medical' to describe either a book or an instrument. 'Being' can be applied analogically to both *ousia* and accidents in the same way. In this way, logic corresponds to metaphysics, but in a much more complex and subtle way than previously thought: 'The logical character of things corresponds to the character of their being' (Woodhouse 1986, p. 252). This however, for Scholarios does not mean that the correspondence is only in terms of being existing univocally or equivocally. The analogical existence of being brings a far more rich and complex metaphysical and logical picture of the world at hand: 'If the first cause of all things is sufficient, once and for all, to produce everything that shares with it the common characteristic of having unlimited potentiality, then what need is there for common being?' This forces upon Aristotle the choice of denying the recognition of Being as a genus and univocal, and allows him to recognise that Being can be both described in many ways and be inseparable from particular beings. A consequence of Plethon's lack of recognition of the three forms of predication that Aristotle uses led him to fail to recognise that for Aristotle the universals are simply abstractions made by the human mind. They cannot be substances, nor sources of being nor even separate from particulars, and whatever existence they have as separate from particulars they owe it to a logical distinction. The particular has more *ousia* than the universal, since even though both can be said to exist (analogically) the one really has an *ousia* and the other is only an abstraction of it. In the above

cited Gemistos' text 'all men' and 'every man' are just two names for the same thing. What the comparison should be is between 'every man' and 'man', since 'man' is what is the true universal here. The particular in this interpretation of Aristotle is nothing else but the 'species itself embodied in its individuating characteristics' (Woodhouse 1986, p. 254). In this way, the individual becomes superior to the universal, because the universal is contained in it and it has actual, and not only potential existence. Knowledge in terms of the universal is superior to knowledge of the particular, since the particular depends too much upon sensation; but this has nothing to do with an association of knowledge to its subject-matter: the particular is the cause (in existential terms) of the universal, since the particular is a reality and the universal is only a concept and this (Scholarios finds) goes along with the story of creation by the Christian God, since the creation of Adam meant *ipso facto* the creation of 'man' (Woodhouse 1986, p. 254).

Scholarios' response to Gemistos' criticism enriches the commentary on the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics* in many significant ways. Perhaps the most significant for our purposes is his insistence on the analogical predication and its use in the Aristotelian metaphysics and epistemology. This not only solves many mysteries in Aristotle's system, but also explains the Aristotelian discussion of Simonides' dictum at the start of *Metaphysics* that there is a certain knowledge and metaphysics that can be only God's privilege: *θεός ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχει γέρας* (*Metaphysics* A, 982ab31–32). According to Aristotle, we can have knowledge only analogically of what God can have knowledge of, never univocally nor equivocally (*Met.* A, 982b29–983a24; see further on this the discussion of Theourgia-Demiourgia and other Neo-platonic themes in Byzantine Philosophy in Anton 2000, pp. 189–292).

From the exchange of these two learned Byzantine men we can ascertain two main points of interest to us: a) the Aristotelian corpus and its Commentary available to the Byzantines was far richer than the one existent in the West at that time and b) the Aristotelian theory (as evidenced by Scholarios' response) is far more complex and systematic than the one presented by Medieval and post-Medieval commentary (see further on this Anton 2000, pp. 189–292). The Aristotelian theory present in the *Categories* and in *Metaphysics* is connected to the theory of the *Politics*, the *De Anima* and the *Ethics* in many ways and at many levels. To present it in simplistic terms in order to find an easy target is not fair to its richness nor exegetically useful: at the end it is not Aristotle's theory, that is presented at the end of analysis or criticism, but a much watered down version of it, that it does not help us realise what exactly was the meaning and the systematic value of his contribution in the history of philosophy.

From our own discussion, we saw that the theory about *ousia* presented in the *Categories* can be seen as consistent with the discussion of *ousia* presented in the *Metaphysics*, and that the Aristotelian theory of action can complement our understanding of it: action in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* provides the link between humans and the world in terms of *ousia*. This also brings Platonic and Aristotelian theory of *ousia* even closer: Plato's *Republic* insists that ἐπιστήμη (true knowledge) is related to ὄν (being) and ἀγνοσία (ignorance) to μὴ ὄν (not being), and this is coming very close to Aristotle's insistence in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* (but also the theory of analogical epistemology in the *Metaphysics* Θ and Aristotle's discussion of Simonides' dictum in *Metaphysics* A) that the action that has not yet come about cannot be known, but only proposed through *Rhetoric* and expressed by *Poetry*, since it is its inexistence which makes it unknowable (see Anscombe's discussion of the relevant Platonic passages in Anscombe 1993). We also saw that the theory of the *Categories* makes both an ontological and a logical claim about *ousia* (and this is in agreement with Porphyry's interpretation of it, as well as Brentano's and other important commentator's appreciation of it; see further details on this Anton 1996, pp. 215–236; Evangelidou 1988, pp. 60–66; Sorabji 2004, pp. 5–12; Brentano 1975, pp. 49–148).

Of course there are many aspects in the above discussion, which we could not even mention here. It is clear that a more detailed exegesis is necessary, which shall examine and comment on a more unified theory of *ousia*, as found in the Aristotelian corpus. A moral from our investigation however, is that a fragmented examination of the Aristotelian theory of *ousia* (found in a partial reading of the Aristotelian corpus, which has led many — even contemporary — commentators to the identification of all *ousia* with *essence* or *substance*) is a bad and misleading interpretation of Aristotle's theory. As stated at the beginning of our investigation, the topic is perhaps the most widely discussed in the history of philosophy and led to a wide variety of interpretations and conflicting evaluations of the significance of the Aristotelian theory of *ousia*. However, what we attempted here is only to prove that the topic is still interesting for contemporary discussions in Logic, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Rhetoric and Aesthetics. The hope is that perhaps now we should be a little bit more careful and wise in our contemporary discussions of this extremely rich and complex theory of *ousia*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>I have received valuable comments from the participants in the Cambridge DPMMS Seminar on Logic and Rhetoric, organised by Prof. Thomas Forster at the Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Cambridge, October 2006. I am also grateful to Mary Haight and Pat Shaw (Department of Philosophy, U. of Glasgow) for their detailed suggestions on both form and content and their constructive criticism.

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