Aristotle's First Philosophy as Analytical Epistemology

Nijaz Ibrulj

Abstract

We analyze metaphysical foundations of the logical and epistemological construction of knowledge in Aristotle’s First Philosophy. The possibility to define this construction as analytical epistemology is deduced from the fact that Aristotle used the term substance (ὁμοιότης) in many equivalent expressions and different semantic roles, but with the same meaning. The basis for that is a semantic convertibility (ἀνιντιστρατευμένος) of the concept of substance (or "what is", or the "essence" of being) in each of the fields of knowledge. Here we have listed the four most general aspects of the meaning of the term substance (ὁμοιότης) and expanded them to ten aspects in their specific use in the physical, logical, linguistic and ontological domains. Because of all of the above, we define Aristotle’s First Philosophy (πρώτη ὕλοςφιλοςφίκεια) as analytical epistemology, as a system of knowledge and cognition based on a system of many senses of the term substance or conceptual conversions of the term ὁμοιότης. In doing so, we observed these models of conversion of the meaning of the term substance through four predicative forms: synonymous, homonymous, paraonymous and analogical, which are based on four aspects of the concept of identity as logical sameness: that which is the same / identical (τὸ ἀκότον) because it belongs to the same genus (γένος), or belongs to the same / identical (τὸ ὅμοιον) species (ἐἶδος), or has the same /identical (τὸ ἱσον) number (ἄριθμος) or same/identical semantical relations (τὸ ἀνάλογον). It can be seen that conceptual analogy (ἀναλογία) is the

1 N.Ibrulj
University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Philosophy, Dept. of Philosophy
Franje Rackog 1, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina
Email:nijaz.ibrulj@ff.unsa.ba
basis of all semantic transformations through which the concept of substance \( (οὐσία) \) goes in analytical epistemology.

**Key words:** substance, \( οὐσία \), epistemology, Aristotle, *First Philosophy*, conversion, logic, metaphysics, analytical epistemology

**Introduction**

To provide a logical and epistemological construction of a system of knowledge means (1) to find a way to translate complex concepts into simpler ones and in this way to perform a reconstruction of the conceptual system in a certain area, (2) to reduce the knowledge of complex objects to the knowledge of simple objects (objects-paradigms). Analytical epistemology reduces the complex to the simple or derives the complex from the simple in the explanation of the conceptual and objective construction of knowledge. In the construction of Aristotle’s *First Philosophy* as a conceptual and doctrinal system, the central and fundamental concept is the concept of substance or essence of being \( (οὐσία) \). And this very concept is the basic and main block of all conceptual transformations that have their own logical and epistemological consequences. It is necessary to add that these transformations are also semantic transformations that establish the logical equivalence of "the way something is said" and analogy as a semantic form of identity. In this way, the analytical epistemology that is in the foreground in Aristotle becomes a model for the research of anything: the discovery of (1) the way in which something is (being: \( ἐστίν \)), (2) the way (name: \( δὸμα \)) in which something is said (\( λέγεται, \ λέγέσθ'χα \)) and (3) the way (statement: \( λόγος \)) in which something is categorized (\( κατεγορεῖται, \ κατεγερεῖσθ'αυτό \)) according to the logical-semantic identity attributed to it in a form of statement (\( λόγος \ ἀποφαντικός \)).

Aristotle founded the first scientific system of knowledge on scientific conclusion (\( σύλλογισμός \)) and scientific proof (\( άποδειξις \)) which rests on "metaphysical truths", which today, from the empirical perspective of science, looks absurd. However, Aristotle’s "physics" and "logic" or "poetics" and "politics" are only a mirror of his "metaphysics" (Cassirer)\(^2\). All human knowledge is "metaphysically based", on first

\(^2\) Cassirer, E. (1923): Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff. Berlin. S. 4: "Die Aristotelische Logik ist in ihren allgemeinen Prinzipien der getreue Ausdruck und Spiegel der Aristotelischen Metaphysik" [In its general principles, Aristotelian logic is the faithful expression and mirror of Aristotelian metaphysics] (S. 4), and in another place: "Das spezifische Fassung der Aristotelischen Logik ist somit bedingt durch die spezifische Fassung seines Seinsbegriffs" [The specific frame of Aristotelian logic is therefore conditioned by the specific frame of his concept of being], (S. 10).
causes and first principles (κά τοις ἀρχαῖς καὶ πρῶτας αἰτίαι), because what is metaphysical is actually a mirror of what exists, whether it is sense-existing, logically-existing, semantically-existing or extra-sensory existing. What "exists by itself" (καὶ τὸ ἄλλο) establishes existence in every other domain and explains the unity of the world in the unity of knowledge about the world as a whole. So "what is by itself" (τὸ τί ἑστιν, εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἄλλο) establishes existence in every other domain of being (τὸ ὅν) and explains the unity of the world in the unity of knowledge about the world as a whole. This is why it is impossible to call Aristotle's First Philosophy (πρῶτη φιλοσοφία) as metaphysics (τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά), that "what comes after", behind, or after any other knowledge, but actually that which precedes and causes all knowledge about the world and all its phenomena. It is much more accurate to say that the First Philosophy is analytical onto-theology of one chain of essence and existence that investigates the logic of beings (ὅν) and the logic of the Being (τὸ ἐναλλα) and the logic of the One (ἐν) and the logic of a god (ὁ θεός). Aristotle's First Philosophy is precisely an analytical pan-epistemology, the explanation of the connection of all levels of essence and existence in the explanation of the connection of all levels of knowledge and cognition. The basis of this analytical pan-epistemology is Aristotle's concept of the substance or essence of being (ὅσιός), which connects the Being of beings and its appearance in all domains of existence? How was it possible to give such an explanation of existence and the knowledge about existence on the concept of essence (substance)? However, here, perhaps, it is good to recall one of Hegel's (Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, II) characterizations of Aristotle's System of Substances, which is connected by the concept of being (ὅσιός) as a constant:

"It seems that Aristotle always philosophized only about the individual, about what is particular, without talking about what is absolute, general, what is god; it continuously moves forward from individual to individual. He takes into consideration the entire mass of the world of representations and studies it: soul, movement, feeling, memory, thought, - his daily work is what it is, - as a professor does his work in a half-year course; and, as it seems, he only came to know the truth about what is particular, what is only individual, to a series of special truths, - what is general he does not point out... He did not logically point out the general idea - otherwise, as a method, it would aim to learn one concept in everything; only and only one absolute, - so that it (the idea of God) appears instead of it, also, as something particular in addition to the other peculiarities, and that the whole truth is in this: 'There are plants, animals, men, besides that and god, that what is most excellent' " (Hegel, 1986, p. 151).

Analytical onto-theology is not logic in the sense in which we have that science today. This is why Aristotle did not use the term logic unless he thought that something should be investigated "according to the concept" (κατὰ τὸν λόγον), or "in
a logical way” (λογικότερων). This conceptual way of researching (1) the essence of being and its existence through (2) what is dependent only on the essence and (3) what is dependent only on existence and through (4) what is dependent on the union of essence and existence was a way to constantly reveal the truth: the essence is actual and primary and as such is the cause, existence is a possible consequence. So, this investigation of the "logic of being, being, one and God" is actually a semantic investigation of concepts through the ways in which they are said (λεγόμενα), through a discussion of the meanings of the terms in which these concepts appear. Here, in Aristotle, "logic" is literally "an organ of the semantic self-world" (as Robert B. Brandom says) and not some formal science. For Aristotle, formal science was the syllogistic presented in the First Analytics. Knowledge about how and in how many ways something is said (λεγεται, λεγέσθαι) and in how many meanings it is taken (σημαίνει) is knowledge that necessarily precedes (προϋγινώσκειν) the construction of scientific knowledge. Therefore, Aristotle's semantic epistemology must be taken as the basis of a scientific system that enables the development and foundation of science (ἐπιστήμη) about anything. And this applies to every single science: with every research, one must first know that something exists (δι τα ἔσται), and knowledge about what its name means (τι τὸ λεγόμενον ἔσται) (Ar. Second Analytic, 71a5) . The methodology is the same for truth research. The science of truth (ἐπιστήμη περὶ τῆς ἀλήθειας) which is called philosophy (φιλοσοφία) also requires prior knowledge, prior philosophy: knowledge that deals with the first causes and first principles of being as being (τὰ ὅν ἢ ὅν), and this means knowledge of battle (τὰ ἔνισται). And knowledge about being is approached through semantic onto-theology, since being also has qualities (properties) that belong to it by itself. This semantic epistemology deals with the first causes and inherent principles of being as a being and those properties that belong to it as a being, and only after that are possible sciences that deal with one area of being... That is why this primordial semantic epistemology as a pan-epistemology is actually Aristotle's First Philosophy.

The central concept of this doctrine on pan-epistemology is the concept of substance (οὐσία) and the multiplicity of its convertible meanings. In this text, we will treat this concept as a convertible currency for all domains that appear in the pan-epistemological field of human knowledge of the world.

For the essence of being in the ontological sense, Aristotle in his writings most often uses the term substance (οὐσία), then "primarily substance" (πρώτερα οὐσία; in the plural: αἱ πρῶται οὐσίαι), while in the logical sense for the essence of being he uses the term "second substances" (δεύτεραι οὐσίαι) by which he means the species and genera of the first substances.
It looks very simple: Aristotle says in the *Categories*: the first substance is τὸδε τί, that which is one in number and indivisible being, "Socrates", "this thing", "that man". Second substances are the species and genera in which the first substances are included (περιεχομένον). The first substance is the subject (ὑποκειμένον) of proposition (λόγος), the second substances are predicates (κατηγορομένον).

For example statement "Socrates is a man". It is just one form of subject-predicate relationship. The second form is when second substance, genus or species, is in the place or in the role of the subject and when the predicate refers to it. There is the relation of predication of the predicate to the predicate which has the role of the subject. Such is the statement "Man is an animal". The third form is when the predicate of the predicate is in the place of the subject: "An animal is a being that has a cause of movement within itself." Here the predicate (being) is connected to the predicate of the predicate (animal)...

The logical and linguistic position of first and second substances, that is, second and second substances, takes place in each of the ten categories that constitute the statement (λόγος). The difference is in the type of predication: one is synonymous predication, the second is homonymous, the third is paronymous predication. Synonyms (συνώνυμα) are things (not words) that are associated with synonymous words in synonymous predication!!! Other things are homonyms (ωμόνυμα) which are connected with homonymous expressions in homonymous predication. This connection in a predicative form such as λόγος ἀποφαντικός takes place through concept of identity (τὸ αὐτόν): in synonymous predication through the gender identity of things and the name of the genus that includes them (περιεχέναι), in homonymous predication through the thing and the name of the species. Problems arise when homonymous expressions are introduced into the form of synonymous predication and vice versa.

The fourth type of predication is, in the logical sense, a pseudo-predicative form and has the role of an ontological or abstract identity that is neither gender, class nor number identity, but goes beyond the highest gender. The analogy (ἀναλογία) that occurs above species and genus is more a form of identity between abstract terms, such as the analogy (sameness) between the being (τὸ ὁν) and the one (τὸ ἕν) in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Everything that is true for the being (τὸ ὁν) is also true for the one (τὸ ἕν); everything that is said about being is also said about one. Kao što kaže Aristotel (1) τὸ ὁν λέγεται πολλαχώς: the being is said in many ways (M.), i (2) τὸ ἕν λέγεται πολλαχώς: the one is said in many ways (M.).
Synonymous predicates of synonymous things in synonymous predication are convertible with a substance that has the role of subject (ὑποκειμένου) in the statement (λόγος). The subject is the bearer of the name and the bearer of essential properties and accidental properties that are related to it in the role of predicate or in the role of attribute. But not all of them are convertible with a substance, only those that express an essential property, i.e. an specific difference. Synonymous predication is a form of convertible relationship between subject and predicate, homonymous is not. Homonymous predication is the relation of subject and accidental properties.

How is it possible that one term such as the essence of being (substance, ὀνάση) has so many roles in explaining the ontological, logical, linguistic-grammatical structure of reality and also that it has a role above gender (γένος), above species (εἶδος) and above number (ζῷον) that form the basis of establishing identity (τὸ χύτον) between beings what enables their definition and science about them? Here we will state a preliminary thesis that the central concept that enables all the roles of the term substance (ὀνάση) is actually convertibility (ἀντιστρέψειν), which is understood here not only in the logical and linguistic sense but also in the ontological sense. In the ontological sense, being is convertible with one and one is convertible with being. That’s what the analogy is for.

Ὀνάση and its Convertible Logical Forms

The substance can neither be defined nor demonstrated, but it can be converted into a parts of definition / statement (λόγος τῆς ὀνάσης) or some expressions that explain it and substitute it! Aristotle calls these parts of the definition "second substances" (ἔντερεξι ὀνάσης) but I will label them as "pseudo-substances" or "non-predicative substances" or "formal substances" because of their mode of existence as hypostasis (incorporeal existence) or because they lack matter (ὕλη). The first substance (πρῶτη ὀνάση) can be called "complete substance" or "original substance", the one that is the uncaused cause (μηχανήτου κατωτέρως) of everything else and that possesses matter and form together.

Non-predicative substances and predicative substance.

One of them is an essential or necessary property (τὸ ὑδότου) and the other is a cause, i.e. that what must already be or exist, what is earlier, what precedes, in order for something else to arise as a consequence or as what is later, and in a logical sense as what follows. Substance in that role is earlier and is the subject (τὸ ὑποκειμένου) to properties (τὰ ὑπάρχοντα), so it is the cause or what must be in order for something
else to be. In the logical sense, substance is always the cause of the truth of the conclusion, that is, it is through its convertible form or pseudo-substance, which is a set of its essential properties (τὰ ὑπάρχοντα), the middle term (μέσον) and the cause of the truth of the conclusion and opinion in general. In this role of cause, essence or substance is the cause of the existence of beings, and "what was to be" or what was (cause) for something to be (effect, consequence), for which Aristotle coined the term τό τὶ ἤν εἶναι, and which is the cause of the existence of beings and the truth of the conclusion.

Here we want to consider the following question: which parts of the definition are convertible with substance? Obviously, it depends on the type of identity equivalence in the definition. If the semantic or logical equivalence is part of the synonymous predication then the definition is convertible with the substance in the place of the subject. It is therefore about the relationship between ὁσία and λόγος τῆς ὁσίας. Whether a substance is convertible by its own definition (ἐξίσου λόγου) or a common definition (κοινών λόγου). In the first case, it is a homonymous predication where the species (ἐξίσου) is a part of the definition that relates to a being, but not a distinct difference: Socrates is a man. The picture of Socrates is a representation of a man, but the painted man is different from the real man, so there are two distinct definitions, the definition of Socrates and the definition of the picture of Socrates. What is a species, "man" is their common name, but they do not have a common qualitative difference. It is different with the definition of man and ox: they have a common name (animal) as two different species of the same genus (they are of the same genus) and the genus is predicated to them equally with all the differences: all the properties that belong to an animal per se belong to both man and ox as species of animal. That is why they have a common (but not the same) name and the same (common) definition.

What is convertible with substance in these definitions? The very term human and living being are not convertible: every human is a living being, but not every living being is human. Only when the gender is taken with the excellent difference that determines man in its own way, does the gender become convertible with substance: Man is a rational living being and every rational being is a man. This means that other substances can be predicates and part of a definition, but they cannot be a definition themselves because they must have a specific difference with them.

An essential property (τὸ ἱλικόν) becomes a pseudo-substance or a convertible logical and semantic equivalence because it is expressed (λέγεσθαι, κατηγορεῖσθαι) in the meaning or category of what "is being" (τὸ τὶ ἐστὶν), that is, in the form in which being is also expressed. But "what was to be" (τὸ τὶ ἤν εἶναι) being is a paradigm
of the ontological status of the relation of cause and effect, and only then an
explanation of the logical status in which essence or substance (οὐσία) is also the
cause of the existence of beings. This expression can be converted with the
expression what "is" something only when substance is also the cause of the
existence of beings.

On Meanings of the Term "Substance" (οὐσία)

In fact, the difference between Aristotelianism and Platonism is precisely the
difference in the interpretation of the concept of substance (οὐσία). Plato uses this
term in the Phaedo (78d) and Timaeus (29c), and with this term he means separate
and reality-separated forms (ideas) that are the essence of things, while Aristotle
completely transforms this term, giving it a multiple meaning, in fact a central place
in his ontology, epistemology and logic. Aristotle concentrated his entire philosophy
around the concept of οὐσία and made it the main instrument of differentiation from
every other philosophy, both pre-Socratic and Stoic, and especially from the one that
came from Plato and his followers from the Academy.

Aristotle gave the term οὐσία multiple meanings and specified multiple uses. It is
about the numerous aspects that this term acquires when treating the ontological,
logical, phenomenological, cause-and-effect, epistemological, and even onto-
thetical aspects of the relationship between thought and the world. In each of
these contexts οὐσία mean what is the first: in ontological sense οὐσία is the first
being (τὸ πρῶτον ὄν); in logical sense, the first in the determination of the
term / definition (λόγω), in epistemological sense, the first in cognition (γνώσει),
and the first in time (χρόνῳ) (M. ζ.1.1028a31).

In Metaphysics Aristotle stated that the main philosophical question, the question of
all questions, is the one that has always been asked and the answer to it has always
been looking for (ἀξίζει ζητούμενον), the question WHAT IS BEING (τί τὸ ὄν), and for
Aristotle it was equal to the question WHAT IS SUBSTANCE (τίς ἡ οὐσία).
However, it was clear to Aristotle that this question would always be controversial,
always full of difficulties (ἀξίζει ἀπορούμενον). And it is clear that these two terms are
always, in one of the domains, convertible!

In Metaphysics (M. ζ.3.1029a), Aristotle states clearly what should be meant by the
term οὐσία. This term should be taken in four main and most general meanings:

(1) τὸ τί ἐν ζωτικόν – being (as the cause of existence of being), "what was to be" being
(2) τὸ καθολικοῦ – what is general
(3) τὸ γένος (ἔκαστον) – genus of each individual being
However, as these four most general meanings of the term ὑσία have their aspects in ontological, epistemological and logical contexts in which they have, according to the nature of each of these contexts, a different role, then this number of meanings of the term ὑσία in Aristotle increases considerably. In several places in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle stated what he meant by the being or the ὑσία in a concrete sense:

1. **Physical corporeal beings (matter + form)** that have within them the cause of movement and are dealt with by the science of physics (M.2.1028b8);

2. **Logical-linguistic substances (forms of thought and speech)** (*"second substances" - genera and species*) which are part of the categorical or predicative apparatus of cognition, categorical schemes (σχῆμα τῆς κατηγορίας) which are dealt with by syllogistics or logic (K.5.8; K.5.14);

3. **Para-aesthetic substance (pure form)** (παρὰ τὰ αἴσθητα), eternal (ἄιδιον), separate (χωρίστων) and immovable (ἀχίνητων) which is the first cause and the first beginning of being (ἀρχή καὶ αἰτίον τῶν ὄντων) dealt with by the First Philosophy (ἡ πρώτη φιλοσοφία) or the science of God (θεολογική ἐπιστήμη) (M.σ1.1025b1-2.1026b30).

According to Sorabji (1990, 133) "... book 12 of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* proposes a system of substances (οὐσίαι), a system whose unity and coherence is ensured by one and the first principle, intelligible *ousia*." This is why we will also list here the derived meanings of the term ὑσία in Aristotle that make up the system of substances that Sorabji talks about. This system of substances goes from a sensibly perceptible (aesthetic: ἀσθενέσα) substance, which is the primordial substance, to a sensibly unattainable (para-aesthetic: παρὰ τὰ αἴσθητα) substance that is known by the mind or thought perception (θεωρεῖν). Between these two basic meanings of the term ὑσία, the logical-linguistic meanings of this term are arranged according to the function that this term has in the structure of thought provisions and in the structure of statements in one of the predicative forms (synonymous, homonymous or paronymous).

1. **Sensitive Substance.** In the most basic (κυριώτατα) meaning, ὑσία denotes every single being that is (ἐστίν), that which is indivisible (ἀτομός), that which is one in number (ἐν ἀρίθμῳ), someone "this" (τόδε τι), for example
"Socrates": ὥ σύζα ἐν τῷ καὶ τὸ δὲ τῷ σημαίνει (M. ζ12.1037b27); such a substance or being is the primary substance (τὸ ὑποκειμένον πρῶτον) and at the same time the first category as the first subject in the categorical network of predications, while in the categorical network there are second substances (δεύτερα ὥσιά), which are the species and genera of the individual being. It is therefore a union of matter and form effected in a certain individual being (τὸ δὲ τῷ) (K.5.8; K.5.14; M.δ8.1017b10). In this sense, ὥσια is defined as the "primary subject" (τὸ ὑποκειμένον πρῶτον) which is said to be either matter (ἡ ὅλη) or form (ἡ μορφή) or a combination of the two (τὸ ἐκ τούτων) (M. ζ3.1029a1-3).

(2) THE ESSENCE OF AN INDIVIDUAL BEING. In another meaning, ὥσια is the essence or essence of an individual being or what the being is (τῷ ἐστιν) in itself (καθ’ αὐτός) or what is the essence of each individual being (τὸ δὲ τῷ). The fact that a being is (ἐστιν) and that it is one (Ἐν) belongs to every individually existing being (ὅν) is what is unique (κοινόν) or universal (καθόλου) to them. (M.ζ1.1028b2). For an individual being (ὅν) and for a species (ἐίδος), the essence is their genus (γένος), because genus is what is related to them in the category "what is something" (τῇ ἐστίν). Provision is the concept of being and being belongs only to beings, primarily, primarily and absolutely: ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ φυσιμόδ’ ὁ τοῦ τί ἢ ἡ ἐξακόλουθος, καὶ τῇ σοφῷ ἢ ἡ μόνον τῶν ὥσιῶν ἐστίν ἡ μάλιστα καὶ πρώτως καὶ ἀπλῶς, δῆλον (M. ζ5.1030b11-14). The essence of an individual being and the individual being itself are one (M.ζ6.1032a5); the essence of an individual being is its form (M.ζ10.1035b33); form is indivisible, imperishable (M.ζ8.1034a5-8); form does not arise and does not perish, it exists by realisation (ἐντελέχειαν ὅν), and matter receives differences and it is a possible being (δύναμιν ὅν) (M.ζ9.1034b15-20); form and essence do not arise, they are always actual ὥσια, matter is potential ὥσια (M. ζ8.1033b5-10)

(3) SUBJECT OF ACIDENTAL PROPERTIES. In the third meaning, ὥσια is a subject or ὑποκειμένον for accidental properties (τὰ συμβεβεβλημένα) which are inseparable from matter and which cannot exist without a subject. In this sense, ὥσια is all plants and animals and all their parts (M.ζ1.1028a26; M.ζ2.1028b8-15)

(4) SUBJECT OF SPECIES PROPERTIES. In the fourth place, the ὥσια is subject (τὸ ὑποκειμένον) to essential properties, or separable and immaterial properties or specific properties (τὰ ἴδια) and differences (ἀ’ διαφορά) with which it is convertible or interchangeable in definition since together they form one identity equivalence or the definition of being. There are properties that are inseparable from the subject ("being in the subject": ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ἐστίν) and are
predicated (in the definition) to the subject. These are specific properties (τὰ ἔδικα, τὸ ἔδικον), such as "reasonable" (λόγον ἔχον) that are attributed to man when he is defined as a "reasonable living being" (ζῶν τὸ λόγον ἔχον). In the definition, they can be converted with the subject: "Man is a rational living being" is valid as "A reasonable living being is a man."

(5) SUBJECT OF THE PREDICATE. The fifth meaning: being (οὐσία) is the logical subject (τὸ ὑποκειμένου) of predicates (τὰ κατηγορομένα) which are not in the subject (ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ οἷς ἐστὶν), but are only said (λέγεσθαι) about subject or predicated (κατηγορεῖσθαι) to subject. The first substance (πρώτα οὐσία) is never a predicate, it is never in the subject, it is only and always the subject. (K.5.17); What is related to the subject through ten categories are the predicables (genus, species, difference, property of the species, ingredient in the subject) from which the schemes of categories (σχήμα τῆς κατηγορίας) are made, which are the logical structure of the structure of each category.

(6) SPECIES AND GENERA / SECOND SUBSTANCES. In the sixth meaning are second substances (ὑποτρέποντα) of predicates. Other substances are genera or species or substances that serve as a thought determination or predicative part in a statement and have only immaterial or hypostatic existence (K.5.21); Primary substance is more substance (μᾶλλον οὐσία) than genera and species, species is more substance than genus (K.2b.18). So, what has a lower level of logical generality is "more substance": the ontological advantage of lower levels of logical generality is clearly stated by Aristotle with the expression μᾶλλον οὐσία. What is closer to the primary substance, which is the species, is what is more specific (τὸ ἔδικον μᾶλλον), more comprehensible (γνωριμώτερον) and more suitable (οἰκείοτερον) than what is more general (τὸ κοινότερον) (K. 2b18). A species is a more accurate and appropriate answer (predicate) to the question of what something is (τί ἐστι).

(7) CAUSE OF KNOWLEDGE / CONCLUSION. In the seventh meaning, οὐσία is the middle term (τὸ μέσον) in the syllogism and as such it is the cause of the truth of the conclusion. The middle term is the cause: τὸ μὲν γὰρ αἰτία τὸ μέσον (Ἀναλυτικὰ ὑστερά, Π.2. 90a7); the essence of a thing is the same as its cause and proof: φανερῶν ἐστὶν διὶ τὸ αὐτό ἐστι το τί ἐστι καὶ διὰ τί ἐστι (Ἀναλυτικὰ ὑστερά, Π.2.90a14 ); knowing what a thing is is the same as knowing what is its cause (why it exists): τὸ τί ἐστιν εἰδέναι τὰυτό ἐστι καὶ διὰ τί ἐστιν (Ἀναλυτικὰ ὑστερά, Π.2.90a31-32 ); since both premises affirm "what is" or essence, it is clear that the middle term will primarily be essence: εἰ δὴ τὸ τί ἐστι καὶ τὸ τί ἢν εἶναι ἢμαρ ἔχει, ἐπὶ τῶν μέσου ἐστιν πρώτερον τὸ τί ἢν εἶναι (Ἀναλυτικὰ ὑστερά,
II.4.91a25); the middle term itself is essence: τὸ μέσον εἶναι τί ἐστι (Ἀναλυτικὰ ὀστερὰ, II.8.93a11).

(8) THE CAUSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF BEINGS / THE ESSENCE OF BEINGS. In the eighth meaning, ὁνήματι is the essence of being: τὸ τί ἂν εἶναι (M.ζ.7.1032b17); what each individual being is by itself: ὅτι ἐστι τὸ τί ἂν εἶναι ἐκάστου ὤ λέγεται καθ' αὐτό (M.ζ.4.1029b14); conceptual determination of the being of each individual thing: ὁ λόγος τὸ τί ἂν εἶναι ἐκάστοφ (M.ζ.4.1029b20); the cause of being, "what was to be" (τὸ τί ἂν εἶναι); it is the uncaused cause (μὴ κινητὸν κινητοῦ) which causes all other causes; ὁνήματι is what must be or exist earlier (effective being, ἐνεργείαν ὄν) in order for the being to become at all, for it to become from a possible being (δύναμιν ὄν) (actual, ἐνεργείαν ὄν). (M.a3.983a5). Here ὁνήματι is determined as a pure form without matter (ἐἴδοσ ἔνευ ὑλής), because being (ὁνήματι) without matter is essence: λέγω ὁνήματι ἔνευ ὑλής τὸ τί ἂν εἶναι. (Μ.ζ.7.1032b14); form is the essence of every single thing and the primary being: εἴδοσ δὲ λέγω τί ἂν εἶναι ἐκάστου καὶ τὴν πρώτην ὁνήματι (M.ζ.7.1032b1-2).

(9) THE FIRST CAUSE AND THE FIRST BEGINNING. In the ninth meaning ὁνήματι is the first principle and the first cause of beings (ἐφεξῆς καὶ κινήτων τῶν ὄντων) as the subject of the first philosophy (ἡ πρώτης φιλοσοφίας), that is, the science of god: θεολογικὴ ἐπιστήμη (M.ε.1.1025b1-2.1026b30.) ὁνήματι is the first being (πρῶτον ὄν) or what is first in time, first in knowledge, first in speech (M.ζ.1.1028a31); what is said to be form (ἐἴδοσ) and being (ὁνήματι) does not arise (οὐ γίνεται), while a compound being (σύνολον ὄν) named after it arises, and that in everything created there is matter (ἐν πάντι τῷ γίγνομενῷ ὑλῇ ἐνεστὶ) (M.ζ.8.1033b18-20);

(10) SUBSTANCE BEYOND AND OVER THE SENSES. At the highest level (over logical and over ontological generality) ὁνήματι is the para-aesthetic substance or notsensitive ὁνήματι (παρὰ τά κινητά) which is eternal (ἐἴδοσ), immobile (ἐκίνητον) and separable from matter (χωρίστω); as such this substance is an absolute substance: ἐπιλοῦσα ὁνήματι (Μ.ζ.3.1.1028a31), the first cause and the first principle of all reality (Μ.ζ.2.1028b18), god (θεός), the First Unmoved Mover (πρῶτον κινούμενον ἐκίνητον), that which is not moved, but which moves all, which is eternal, th Being and activity itself: [ὁ θεός] ἐστι τί ὁ οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ, εἴδοσ καὶ ὁνήματι καὶ ἐνεργεία ὀσκα (Μ.λ.7.1072a26).

Conclusion

We could say that Aristotle's "system of substances" (ὁνήματι), which Sorabji talks about, is a physical, logical, linguistic, epistemological and ontological
(metaphysical) chain that goes from aesthetic (sensory) substances (\( \chi\iota\sigma\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma \) \( \omega\sigma\iota\zeta \alpha \)) and their parts (M.) to para-aesthetic or extra-sensory substances (\( \pi\rho\alpha \tau\acute{\iota} \chi\iota\sigma\theta\iota\tau\acute{\alpha} \)).

For Aristotle, substance (\( \omega\sigma\iota\zeta \)) is that "what is", that "what is by itself", or "what is the cause of itself ", or "what is the uncaused cause in every being that exists", and what is the cause of what exists in thinking and speaking as true. Therefore, \( \omega\sigma\iota\zeta \) is "metaphysical coin" of knowledge, beginning and end of knowledge, which must be used at every level and which is convertible in every domain, in the domain of sensory existence, in the domain of thought, in the domain of speech and in the domain of para-sensory existence. Only with such a postulate can human knowledge about the physical world, about the logical world, about the world of language and about divine things be embodied. Taking the concept of substance (\( \omega\sigma\iota\zeta \)) as a convertible "metaphysical currency" made it possible to establish a pan-epistemology which is actually Aristotle's First Philosophy.

References


Prior Analytics. Loeb Classical Library. Harvard University Press


