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## FOUNDATIONS OF REALITY IN ARISTOTLE

**Abstract.** In my contribution, I analyse some aspects of Aristotle's interpretation of the organisation of ontology. Aristotle, in many of his works, is looking for a new ontology: through his investigation, Aristotle aims to discover the correct components of the ontology and to put them in the right place. Aristotle's way of proceeding consists in a progressive opening of the curtains of ontology: concepts such as categories, one, being, this something, such, this such, quality, universals and so on are clarified, step by step, in the different works of Aristotle.

In the present analysis, I concentrate my attention on the two districts of entities and on the four levels of entities present in Aristotle's ontology. The two-district scheme is the structure of reality composed of individual and universal entities; the four-level scheme consists in the structure of reality composed of individual substantial entities, individual non-substantial entities, universal substantial properties, and universal non-substantial properties. In both schemes, entities should be put in the due ontological places and, conversely, they should not be assigned to false ontological places.

Individual entities are instances of properties (or: instantiated properties); universal properties are programmes / dispositions instantiated by individual entities. The field of the instances is always constituted by individuals (by individual entities), while the whole field of existence is constituted both by individuals (by individual entities) and by universal properties (in the case of the universals connected to biological properties, universals are deputies for properties inscribed in the reality).

**Keywords:** Realms of reality, Aristotle, *Categories*, *Metaphysics*, *De Ideis*, typological ontology, One over Many, Third Man

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## 1. Preliminary observations

In this first section<sup>2</sup> of my inquiry, I am going to expose a few preliminary observations regarding my general positions on some of Aristotle's basic concepts such as substance, properties, and universals<sup>3</sup>.

- a) The terms "individual" and "particular", whenever they refer to the realm of reality of the instances, are, in this text, reciprocally interchangeable.
- b) I believe that substance ( $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\alpha$ ), in the main, signifies<sup>4</sup>:
  - entity belonging to the biological field and being able to independently exist, such as a man, a horse, or a tree<sup>5</sup>.

This is, in my interpretation, the sense which should be attributed to the first substance of the *Categories*<sup>6</sup>. In further works of Aristotle such as in

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<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of my contribution, I would like to mention three studies which I regard as fundamental for my way of interpreting Aristotle's texts: Joan Kung's article, *Aristotle on Theses, Suches and the Third Man Argument*, Michael-Thomas Liske's book, *Aristoteles und der aristotelische Essentialismus: Individuum, Art, Gattung*, and Edward Jonathan Lowe's book, *The Four-Category Ontology. A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*. I would like to shortly introduce some themes dealt with in the mentioned inquiries which have proved to be the most important for me: Kung's article opened for me a new view of Aristotle through her analysis of the presence of a typological ontology in Aristotle; Liske's book gave me new perspectives regarding the aspects which can be assigned to Aristotelian essences interpreted as vital forces; Lowe's investigation gave me, through his interpretation of a four-category ontology, a new way of interpreting Aristotle's differentiation between entities in *Categories* 2 and a new way of connecting Aristotle's ontology to the discovery of models for natural sciences.

<sup>3</sup> I decided to insert this paragraph, which mainly consists in general definitions, to avoid misunderstandings as regards my interpretation of the fundamental concepts of Aristotle's ontology.

<sup>4</sup> The values for substance which are mentioned are not the only ones which Aristotle's concept can assume. I refer to my study, *Semantik und Ontologie: Drei Studien zu Aristoteles* for my positions regarding the different values which substance can have.

<sup>5</sup> See, for the value of substance, for example, *Categories* 4, 1b27-28 (man and horse), *Categories* 5, 2b13-14 (tree), and *Metaphysics Zeta* 7, 1032a18-19 (man and plant).

<sup>6</sup> The editions of Aristotle's works which I have used for this analysis are the following: *Aristotelis Categoriae et Liber De Interpretatione. Recognovit Brevique Adnotatione Critica*

*De Anima* or in the *Metaphysics*, substance can either maintain this value<sup>7</sup> or assume the following values:

- form, or essence, or soul of an entity belonging to the biological field, *i.e.*, the factor which brings about the development of the biological entity<sup>8</sup> (for instance, the soul of man leads all the manifestations and development of man: the soul makes of the man what the man is as such)<sup>9</sup>.
- c) Property is, in this analysis, understood as universal property. Instances of properties are individual properties. When I speak of property without any further specifications. I mean universal property, *i.e.*, a programme for realisation in the instances which is itself not an instance of the programme<sup>10</sup>.

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*Instruxit L. Minio-Paluello, and Aristotelis Metaphysica. Recognovit Brevique Adnotatione Critica Instruxit W. Jaeger* (I mention only those works of Aristotle from which I have directly quoted some passages). For the lost work *De Ideis* I used the edition of W.D. Ross contained in *Aristotelis Fragmenta Selecta. Recognovit Brevique Adnotatione Instruxit W.D. Ross*, and the edition of D. Harlfinger contained in W. Leszl, *Il "De Ideis" di Aristotele e la teoria platonica delle idee. Edizione critica del testo a cura di Dieter Harlfinger*.

<sup>7</sup> I do not agree with the positions which support the presence of a caesura between Aristotle's interpretation of substance in the *Categories*, on the one hand, and Aristotle's interpretation of substance in the central books – *Zeta*, *Eta*, and *Theta* – of the *Metaphysics*, on the other hand. The interpretations which maintain that there is a caesura in Aristotle's conception of substance contend that the value of substance is, in the *Categories*, the biological entity such as the individual man whereas, in their view, the primary value of substance in the *Metaphysics* is the form of the individual (biological) entity. Within these interpretations, a shift regarding the entity to which the primary value of substance is to be attributed comes about between *Categories* and *Metaphysics*: the value of primary substance has shifted from the value of individual entity to the value of form of the individual entity. In my opinion, the value of substance as individual entity belonging to the biological domain is never abandoned by Aristotle as a primary value for substance: it remains a primary value for substance.

<sup>8</sup> See for this value of substance the chapter *De Anima* II 1.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, for the value of substance as form, fulfilment, and essence of a living entity, the whole chapter *De Anima* II 1.

<sup>10</sup> Instead of property, I could have used also, for example, concepts such as characteristic, attribute, feature (within this inquiry, I use the concept "feature" in another context). With the use of the term "property" I exclusively aim to contend that there are contents of

- d) In my analysis, I prevalently refer, while using the concept “property”, to properties belonging to the biological field, such as “being man”, and “being horse” (for properties corresponding to species – in these cases, to the species “man” and to the species “horse”), on the one hand, and such as “being animal” (for properties corresponding to genera), on the other hand.
- e) Aristotle considers, in my opinion, all the biological properties as properties belonging to reality (*i.e.*, they do not correspond to mere instruments of classifications invented by the speaking subjects): the property “being man” exists, even though it does not exist at the same ontological level as the ontological level at which the instances of this property (*i.e.*, individual men) exist.
- f) Properties, at least biological properties such as “being man” or “being animal”, are programmes / dispositions which are concretised through and in their instances: their existence does not depend on the existence of one instance, it does not depend on the existence of a determined plurality of instances, but it does depend, however, on the existence of at least one instance.
- g) The field of the existing entities does not coincide with the field of the individual entities, *i.e.*, with the instances. The realm of individual entities is exclusively one realm of the existing realms of reality.
- h) By using the concept “property” in my analysis I do not refer to fictitious properties. The properties which I consider are properties belonging to the objective reality. These properties exist independently of their being acknowledged, or of their being thought of, or of their being known by a (thinking, speaking, knowing) subject; properties exist independently of whichever subject.
- i) Aristotle distinguishes in many passages of his works (for example, in *Categories* 5, 3b10-21, in *Metaphysics Zeta* 8, 1033b19-1034a8 and in *Metaphysics Zeta* 13, 1038b34-1039a3) between entities being (having the ontological status of) a “this

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dispositions, of faculties, of capacities which determine a species or a genus. The individual man, who instantiates the property “being man”, has dispositions, faculties, and capacities which are contained in the complex of characteristics composing the property “being man”. I do not assign to property any other sense than this.

something" or a "this such", on the one hand, and entities being (having the ontological status of) a "quality" or being (having the ontological status of) a "such", on the other hand. "These somethings / These suches", on the one hand, and "Qualities" and "Suches", on the other hand, constitute realms of reality which should not be mutually confused. These realms of reality are incompatible with each other.

By differentiating between entities which have the ontological structure of this something (τόδε τι)<sup>11</sup>, on the one hand, and entities which have the ontological position of such (τοιόνδε)<sup>12</sup> or of quality (ποιόν)<sup>13</sup>, on the other hand, Aristotle aims to distinguish between different fields of existence. Likewise, he aims to assign the entities to their realm of reality; he is not aiming at an exclusion either of universal properties or of universals from the field of existence. Biological properties are not and should not be deemed as classifications invented by speaking subjects. The properties which correspond to natural kinds, on the one hand, and natural kinds as the natural kind "horse", or the natural kind "man", on the other hand, exist in a mind-independent way<sup>14</sup>: these properties compose the space of the possible instances.

- j) The field of instances is always represented by individual entities.
- k) The field of existence is constituted by both individual entities and universal properties (universals).
- l) Individual entities are instantiated properties since they are inseparable from their properties (*i.e.*, individual entities are inseparable from their essential properties). As regards entities such as the biological entities, any entity is essentially something. Within Aristotle's ontological order individual entities are their essences: without their essences, individual entities are nothing<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> See, for example, *Categories* 5, 3b10-21.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, *Metaphysics Zeta* 8, 1033b19-1034a8 and *Metaphysics Zeta* 13, 1038b34-1039a3.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, *Categories* 5, 3b10-21, and *Metaphysics Beta* 6, 1003a5-17.

<sup>14</sup> I consider the species "horse" or the species "man" as natural kinds; I recommend for a different interpretation of the concept "natural kind" the studies of Brian Ellis: Ellis interprets species such as "horse" or "man" as cluster kinds (see, for Ellis' interpretation of natural kinds, Ellis' book, *Scientific Essentialism*).

<sup>15</sup> See, for instance, *Topics Delta* 5, 125b37-39.

- m) The universals' way of existence is different from the way of existence possessed by the instances of properties. Due to this difference, individual entities and universal properties exist on different levels: they correspond to different ontological types.
- n) Aristotle's ontology is a two-district ontology. The realm of instances is constituted by individual entities (by entities which are numerically one), in the sense that we do not meet a universal instance (an instance of a man is always a concrete man, an instance of colour is always a concrete colour, an instance of a letter is always a concrete letter<sup>16</sup>).
- o) Individual entities, at least individual biological entities, are instantiated properties. They are concretised properties. To exist, for an individual biological entity, is to concretise a determined complex of biological properties; these properties will dictate and direct the life development of the corresponding individual entity.
- p) One of the central problems which we have to face when we discuss propositions containing universals is the question regarding the existence of universals. Usually, the question with which the analysis regarding the existence of universals in Aristotle begins, is whether universals exist or do not exist. I think that the question should rather be whether universally holding properties exist or do not exist, *i.e.*, whether a property such as "being man", which is identical for every man, exists. If a property which is identical for a given plurality exists (for example, if an identical property "being man" exists), then, as a consequence of the existence of this property, the universal which corresponds to the property exists (in this case, if an identical property "being man" exists, then the universal "man" exists)<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> See *Metaphysics Mu* 10, 1087a7-25

<sup>17</sup> I believe that the existence of universal properties in Aristotle could find evidence in Aristotle's texts such as *De Generatione et Corruptione* II 6, where Aristotle supports the existence of a nature which dictates an identical development for the elements of a biological set. Throughout Aristotle's analyses of the concept of nature, it appears that all the elements of a biological set – under normal conditions – have and will have the same development since they instantiate the same biological property (all men instantiate the biological property "being man"). Every biological property is a

In other words, any question regarding the existence of universals should be methodically preceded, in my opinion, by the question of whether universal properties (at least universal properties belonging to the biological field) exist, so that individuals instantiating the same universal property (individuals instantiating the property “being man”) are connected with each other by a sameness relationship, or whether no universal property exist, so that individuals are endowed with instances of properties which are only similar (*i.e.*, not identical) to each other. In this case, individuals are not mutually connected by any sameness relationship.

The question regarding the existence or non-existence of universal properties is decisive for the destiny of universals. The existence of universals proves to be, in my opinion, a consequence of the existence of universal properties; vice versa the non-existence of universals would turn out to be a consequence of the non-existence of universal properties. Aristotle, in my opinion, supports the existence of universal properties: in his interpretation of entities, universals are deputies for universal properties.

I believe, therefore, that the central question on universals should not regard the existence or non-existence of universals: the primary question ought rather to determine the way in which properties are interpreted by Aristotle. Universals, in my opinion, perform the function of deputies for the corresponding properties: the universal “man” is, for example, a deputy for the property “being man”; universals exist, in my opinion, as expressions of natures or of properties which are instantiated

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potential programme which is concretised, realised, and actualised by its instances: therefore, instances of a biological property have an identical biological development. The uniformity of development of the elements belonging to a natural set attests to the existence of a universal nature which is the same for all the elements of the natural set. In my opinion, throughout his inquiry Aristotle does not deny that universals exist. He explains the ontological features which a universal cannot have, such as being numerically one, being substance, and being separated (see, for example, *Metaphysics Zeta* 13 and *Metaphysics Zeta* 16). It does not seem to me that Aristotle therewith explicitly backs the position of the non-existence of universals: to say what the universal is not, is different from saying that the universal does not exist. I believe that Aristotle’s strategy consists in eliminating, from the features belonging to universals *qua* universals, all the features which wrong ontological positions have attributed to the universals themselves; Aristotle’s aim consists in denying the existence of the wrong features of universals *qua* universals, not in denying the existence of universals as such.

in the individual. Properties, at least biological properties, contribute to the constitution of the natural world: they are rooted in the natural world.

Every instance of a biological property is the same (specifically or generically) as every other instance of the same biological property.

Every instance of the biological property “being man” is specifically the same as every other instance of the property “being man” – it is the same in the sense that, under normal conditions, it possesses the same functions determining the species “man” as every other instance of the property “being man”.

Every instance of the biological property “being animal” is generically the same as every other instance of the property “being animal” – it is the same in the sense that, under normal conditions, it possesses the same functions determining the genus “animal” as every other instance of the property “being animal”.

## **2. Dimensions of reality**

Coming now to the organisation of the entities, I would like, first of all, to express that this organisation precedes every particular property and every particular entity which we could meet in the reality. It does not matter which properties in particular exist (we could have, for example, other species in the reality): we shall have the organisation of reality expressed in the two districts and in the four dimensions together with the relationships which hold between the two districts and between the four levels of existence.

Aristotle aims to discover the foundations of reality. In my view, the curtains of this ontological enterprise are opened in different works of Aristotle: hence, the reconstruction of Aristotle’s strategy should be built, in my opinion, on the basis of different passages from different works. This, of course, makes the analysis of the structure of reality in Aristotle much more difficult than if Aristotle’s observations were concentrated in the same work; on the other hand, the fact that Aristotle’s observations concerning the very foundations of reality are present in different works testifies the importance, for Aristotle, of the discovery of the foundations of ontology and of the correct interpretation of these foundations.



The passage corresponding to *Categories* 2, 1a20-1b10 can be enlightening as regards the organisation of reality. This organisation precedes any further organisation of entities. The four levels which we meet in the following passage regard the structure of reality before the emergence of whichever particular entity; the four levels are possible ways of relations between the entities<sup>18</sup>:

“Of the entities some are said of a subject, but are in no subject, as, for example, man is said of a subject, the individual man, but is in no subject; some entities, then, are in a subject, but are said of no subject – I call in a subject that which, being in something not as a part, cannot exist separately from that which it is in –, as, for example, the individual knowledge of grammar is in a subject, the soul, but is said of no subject; and the individual white is in a subject, the body – for every colour is in a body –, but is said of no subject, some entities, then, are both said of a subject and in a subject, as, for example, knowledge is in a subject, the soul, and is also said of a subject, knowledge of grammar; some entities, then, neither are in a subject nor are said of a subject, such as, for example, the individual man or the individual horse – for none of such entities either is in a subject or is said of a subject. Entities that are individual and numerically one, but nothing prevents that some of them are in a subject: for the individual knowledge of grammar is one of the entities in a subject.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> I used the following English translations of Aristotle’s works: for the *Categories* I consulted the translation of J.L. Ackrill. For the whole *Metaphysics* I consulted the translation of W.D. Ross (contained in J. Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Volume Two*); for the books *Gamma* and *Delta* of the *Metaphysics* I consulted the translation of Ch. Kirwan; for the book *Mu* of the *Metaphysics* I consulted the translation of J. Annas. For *De Ideis* I consulted the translation of G. Fine. The translations of the quotations of Aristotle’s works present in my analysis are based on these translations but show some modifications in comparison with these translations: these modifications are due to my own choice. I assume the responsibility for my translations.

<sup>19</sup> I used the following commentaries of Aristotle’s works: for *De Ideis* I used the commentary of W. Leszl, *Il “De Ideis” di Aristotele e la teoria platonica delle idee. Edizione critica del testo a cura di Dieter Harlfinger*, and the commentary of G. Fine, *On Ideas*:

The structure of reality is organised in four different subdivisions corresponding to the different positions of the elements of a proposition:

- i. entities which are said of a subject but are not in a subject.
- ii. entities which are in a subject but are not said of a subject.
- iii. entities which are said of a subject and are in a subject.
- iv. entities which are not in a subject and are not said of a subject.

The entity which are said of a subject appears to constitute an essential property of the subject to which it is referred, whereas the entity being in a subject does not constitute an essential property of the subject. The assignation of the feature “being numerically one” belongs both to what is neither in a subject nor said of a subject and to what is in a subject but not said of a subject.

A comparison with Lowe’s four-category ontology can be interesting in this context. Lowe’s ontological scheme is the following<sup>20</sup>:

- Lowe’s individual substances (objects) = Aristotle’s entities which are not in a subject and are not said of a subject.
- Lowe’s property / relation-instances (tropes) = Aristotle’s entities which are in a subject but are not said of a subject.
- Lowe’s substantial universals (kinds) = Aristotle’s entities which are said of a subject but are not in a subject.

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*Aristotle’s Criticism of Plato’s Theory of Forms*; for the *Categories* I used the commentary of J. Ackrill, *Aristotle’s Categories and De Interpretatione, Translated with Notes*; for the whole *Metaphysics*, I used the commentary of W.D. Ross, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics. A Revised Text with introduction and commentary by W.D. Ross*; for *Metaphysics Gamma* and *Delta*, I used the commentary of Ch. Kirwan, *Metaphysics, Books Γ, Δ, and Ε*; for *Metaphysics Zeta*, I used the commentary of M. Burnyeat (ed.), *Notes on Book Zeta of Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, the commentary of M. Frede and G. Patzig, *Aristoteles ‘Metaphysik Ζ’. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar. Erster Band Einleitung Text und Übersetzung. Zweiter Band Kommentar*, and the commentary of D. Bostock, *Aristotle Metaphysics. Book Ζ and Η*.

<sup>20</sup> See for Lowe’s description of the four-category ontology chapter 1 and 2 of *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*. Lowe’s meditation represents an example of a four-level scheme. For different interpretations of ontology in the contemporary discussion, I refer to D.M. Armstrong, who presents a two-level scheme constituted by individual and by universal entities, and to K. Campbell, who presents an ontology of tropes. A comparison of Aristotle’s ontology with these ontological interpretations is to be postponed to a future analysis.

- Lowe's non-substantial universals (property / relations)<sup>21</sup> = Aristotle's entities which are said of a subject and are in a subject.

Lowe's interpretation of reality as consisting in substantial and non-substantial universals, on the one hand, and in individual substances and property / relation-instances, on the other hand, can represent an instrument to interpret the relationships between individual entities and universal entities in Aristotle. Likewise, Lowe's interpretation of substantial and non-substantial universals as dispositions, on the one hand, and of individual substances and of property / relation-instances as occurrences<sup>22</sup>, on the other hand, correspond, in my opinion, to Aristotle's aims when Aristotle speaks of individual entities such as the individual man and speaks of properties such as being man.

"The four-level ontology<sup>23</sup> represents a model of metaessentialism applied to the structure of reality qua reality. I use the word 'metaessentialism' in order to express that the deep structure of reality consists in the four levels of substantial instances, non-substantial instances, universal kinds and non-substantial universals. Independently of what entities we can meet (men, dinosaurs, Martians and so on), the deep structure of the four levels is always present. This structure precedes every particular nature: it precedes any manifestation and any appearance of entities in the reality. The ontological model in Aristotle is constituted not only by individual entities but also by programmes for instantiation in the instances. Every individual entity is, as regards its ontological position, an instance of something (*i.e.*, it cannot be considered only as an individual entity: its position as an instance is ontologically basic), while every universal property is a potentiality for realisation in its instances (*i.e.*, it cannot be detached by its being a potentiality for instantiation: it does not exist without instances, it is immanent and not transcendent in relation to its instances)."

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<sup>21</sup> See *The Four-Category Ontology. A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*, p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> See, for the definition of the concepts "occurrence/occurrent" and "disposition/ dispositional", *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science*, chapter 1.

<sup>23</sup> For my analysis, I prefer to use concepts such as four-level scheme in order not to generate interference between the four mentioned categories of Lowe and the categories of Aristotle.

The four-level scheme which I propose for Aristotle's ontology is the following:

- ✓ Substances (in the sense of entities such as the entities belonging to the biological realm – men, horses, trees and so on).
- ✓ Instances of non-substantial entities such as qualities and quantities.
- ✓ Substantial properties (such as being man, being horse, being tree).
- ✓ Non-substantial properties (such as being a quality, being a quantity).

The conception of the four-level ontology represents an extension of the conception of the typological ontology, which is introduced by Aristotle to free the ontology from the dangers of the Third Man: I believe that Aristotle's introduction of the typological ontology, in general, and Aristotle's insistence on the incompatibility between features of the individual entities and features of the universal entities, in particular, correspond to Aristotle's aims of proposing as a model of ontology a healthy ontology, *i.e.*, an ontology which is not exposed to problems such as the Third Man.

The deep structure of reality is constituted by the two districts "individual entities / universal properties" and by the four levels "substances / non-substantial instances / universal substantial properties / universal non-substantial properties": any entity which belongs to the reality belongs to one of these districts and to one of these levels. An entity does not necessarily need to belong to precisely one of these districts / levels, but an entity certainly belongs to one of these districts / levels.

### **3. Two-district ontology**

The aim of Aristotle's ontology, in my opinion, consists in assigning to the right realms of existence individual entities, on the one hand, and universal properties, on the other hand; at the same time, Aristotle aims to determine the relationships of a substance with the factor which is the cause of that substance's being what the substance is. This factor does not constitute something which exists apart from the entities to which it is related. The problems which are to be coped with are, therefore, the following:

- i. the determination of the ontological levels of the different entities,
- ii. the determination of the level of existence of the factor which makes a thing what the thing is.

Coming to the universal, the existence of any universal presupposes the existence of a plurality to which the universal is referred. I would like to mention, first, Aristotle's differentiation between universals and individuals expressed in *Metaphysics Beta* 4, 999b33-1000a1:

"For there is no difference between saying numerically one or saying particular: for we call the particular in this way, the numerically one, but we call universal (καθόλου) what is said of these."

The condition of being particular is equivalent to the condition of being numerically one. The entity which is predicable of a plurality of particulars is universal. Universals are, therefore, different from or opposed to the entities which are numerically one<sup>24</sup>. The distinction between the two realms of existence begins therewith to loom.

To give a more articulated example of Aristotle's typological ontology, I am going to quote the text *Categories* 5, 3b10-21, where the differentiation between first substance and second substance can be observed. In this text, Aristotle's strategy of distinguishing

- between entities which are instances of properties, and which therefore are numerically one, on the one hand,
- and entities which only express the essential identification of the entities which are instances of properties, without being themselves instances of properties and without being, therefore, themselves numerically one or individual, on the other hand,

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<sup>24</sup> For a further consideration of the function of a universal, see, for example, this passage contained in *Metaphysics Delta* 26, 1023b29-32:

"For the universal, and that which is said in a whole way, as being a whole, is universal in the sense that it contains many entities because it is predicated of each, and because all, each respectively, are one, for example man, horse, God, because they are all animals."

In this passage, universals seem to have the function of containers of entities and of units of measurement of the entities themselves.

comes to light:

“Every substance seems to signify a this something (τόδε τι). Certainly, as regards the first substances, it is indisputable and true that it signifies a this something: for the entity revealed is individual and numerically one. But, as regards the second substances, it appears, on the one hand, because of the form of the name, whenever one speaks of man or of animal, that a second substance likewise signifies a this something (τόδε τι); this is not really true, but, rather, it signifies a certain quality (ποιόν τι), – for the subject is not, as the primary substance is, one, but the man and the animal are said of many entities; – however, it does not signify simply a certain quality, as the white does; the white signifies nothing but a quality, but the species and the genus determine the quality concerning substance, – for they signify substance of a certain quality.”

We observe the following contrapositions holding between the features belonging to the first substance and the features belonging to the second substance.

- The features of the first substance are: this something, numerically one, τόδε τι, individual.
- The features of the second substance are: not this something, predicated of a plurality, not numerically one, ποιόν.

The following correlation between the first substance and the features belonging to the first substances qua first substances holds:

- If an entity is a first substance, it is individual, numerically one and a this something<sup>25</sup>.

As regards second substances qua second substances, the following correlation between features holds:

- If an entity is a second substance, it is not numerically one, it is not a this something. It is a quality (within the substantial properties).

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<sup>25</sup> Entities which are in something are numerically one and individual too without being a τόδε τι (see *Categories* 2, 1b6-9).

We obtain the following results:

- Since entities being said of many are not numerically one, they cannot be counted together with the entities that are numerically one.
- Second substances are not individual entities, *i.e.*, they are not instances existing besides the entities of which they are predicated.
- Second substances constitute the way of existence, of being, of the entities of which they are predicated. They are a synthesis of the complex of properties of individual substances.
- The quality which is signified by the second substance is not simply a quality: it expresses a substance of a certain quality.
- Second substances cannot be reduced to qualities; the position of the second substances in the field of reality is different from the position of mere qualities<sup>26</sup>.

The proposition:

- Socrates is man,

assigns to Socrates the essential property “being man”: Socrates instantiates the property of being man. The essential property “being man” attributed to Socrates is not an entity which is a concretisation and which exists besides Socrates as a further instance. What is attributed to Socrates is not another thing (another man) existing independently of Socrates.

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<sup>26</sup> The relation between first substances and second substances could be interpreted, among other things, as a relation of dependence from first substances on second substances: the first substance “Socrates” would depend on the second substance for its being something. I do not agree with this interpretation, since I think that a first substance is immediately an instantiated property. To be is to be something: there is no individual entity which first exists and which then is a determined property: if an individual entity exists, it is an individual entity. Biological entities are constitutively the complex of properties contained in their souls; without these properties, they do not exist. In other words, in Aristotle’s view, there is no entity which exists, and it is something in addition to its existence. To exist is to be something; existing means instantiating a property (or a complex of properties). It is not possible to divide being existent from being an instantiation of a property. In case of the biological entities, to exist is to be a biological property such as being man.

Every individual entity is an instance of a property. There is no bare entity: there is no entity that can be neutral in relation to all its properties in the sense that it could lose all its properties. For an entity, to exist means to instantiate a property which is the essence of the entity itself. Without essence, there is no entity. Instances are never bare entities: instances constitute, as such, the realisation of a determinate range of properties. They cannot assume and lose every property. They cannot lose their essential properties, otherwise, they would disappear from the realms of existence<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> It is fundamental to analyse some consequences which follow in the case of the invalidity of the principle of contradiction (*Metaphysics Gamma 4*, 1007a20-33):

“And in general, those who use this argument do away with substance and essence. For it is necessary that they say that all attributes are accidents, and that there is no being essentially man or being essentially animal. For, if being essentially man is something, this will not be being not man or not being man (and yet these are negations of it); for that which it meant was one thing, and this was the substance of something. Signifying substance means that the essence of a thing is not something else. But if, for it, being essentially man is either being essentially not man or essentially not being man, the essence will be something else, so that it is necessary for them to say that there will not be such notion of anything, but that all attributes are accidental; for in this aspect substance and accident are distinguished from each other: for the white is accidental to the man, since man is white, but he is not what white is.”

If the principle of contradiction has no validity, then there is no possibility of speaking of essences: the individual entity cannot have an essence, since no essence has content if the principle of contradiction does not hold. There are neither essences nor individual entities which are determined by essences. Everything is *f* and not-*f*: therefore, there is no point in speaking of an essence of an entity which determines the entity as such, and which differentiates this entity from the other entity of reality. There is no point in speaking of differences between entities, since, as everything can have every property and of everything can be denied every property, then there is no way of distinguishing entities from each other<sup>27</sup>. Reality disappears. Aristotle's using concepts such as essence and substance implies his having an ontological scheme which comprehends properties, plurality, distinguishable plurality, and entities as instances of essences. By using the concept of essence, Aristotle does not use only the concept of essence: he uses the whole apparatus of entities and of concepts connected to essence. By resorting to the essence in order to defend the validity of the principle of contradiction, Aristotle is resorting to a constituent of reality which, in his opinion, cannot be refused in a healthy ontology: an ontological system cannot function without essences. Reality would be no longer reality if the essence disappears. Reality is constituted of properties and of essences. Independently



The property “being man” can exist despite the absence or the disappearance of a particular instance; this property, like every other biological property, cannot exist, on the other hand, if there is no instance of it. There are no not-instantiated properties in Aristotle<sup>28</sup>. First substances constitute instances of properties (the man Socrates represents, for example, an instance of the property “man”); both entities, *i.e.*, substances and properties, exist; they do not exist, nonetheless, at the same level of existence. First substances are instances of properties; properties are – at least biological properties – programmes (dispositions) which, once instantiated, direct every aspect of the development of an entity<sup>29</sup>.

The fields of entities which are numerically one and entities which are not numerically one are rigidly separated. Reality is divided in two fields: individuals, and universals. Universals (at least universals corresponding to a biological set) and second substances:

- correspond to a set (the universal “man” corresponds to the set of men);
- refer to a property which is instantiated by the individual entities (the universal “man” corresponds to the property “being man”, which is instantiated in every element of the set “man”);
- are not instances (*i.e.*, universals belong to a different level of existence from the level of existence to which the individual entities belong: individual entities and universals – or individual entities and properties as programmes for instances – belong to different realms of reality);
- are furthermore immanent and not transcendent, *i.e.*, universals need to have at least one instance to exist<sup>30</sup>;
- presuppose the existence of the instances of which they are predicated.

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of what individual entities exist, individual entities have essences. Substance and essence are not expendable: substance and essence belong to the very structure of reality.

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle’s refusal of the existence of non-instantiated properties can be found in *Categories* 11, 14a6-10.

<sup>29</sup> In my view, *De Anima* represents Aristotle’s clearest exposition regarding the soul (*i.e.*, the essence of living entities) as a complex of dispositions which will be concretised – under normal conditions – in the individual during the individual’s life. Soul as the complex of dispositions is the programme which is realised in the different ages of the individual’s life.

<sup>30</sup> I refer, for the difference between immanent universals and transcendent universals, to the analyses of Armstrong in *Universals & Scientific Realism, Volume I: Nominalism and Realism; Volume II: A Theory of Universals*.

#### 4. *Metaphysics Mu 10: instances and universals*

The passage contained in *Metaphysics Mu 10*, 1087a7-25 can offer some elements clarifying what I have been saying up to now. Thanks to this passage we can see that the structure of instances and universals corresponds to the very foundation of reality:

“...but if, as in the case of the elements of speech, nothing prevents that many *alphas* and *betas* exist, and if nothing prevents that no *alpha* itself and no beta itself exist apart from the many, in consequence of this there will be infinite similar syllables. The statement that all knowledge is universal, so that it is necessary both that the principles of entities are universal and are not separated substances, presents indeed, of all the points that were mentioned, the greatest difficulty, nonetheless the statement is, in a sense, true, but, in a sense, it is not true. For knowledge, like knowing, has two senses, one of which is in potentiality, the other of which is in actuality. The potentiality, being, as matter, universal and indefinite, deals, then, with the universal and indefinite; but the actuality, being definite, deals with a definite entity, being a this something, it deals with a this something; the sight, accidentally, sees universal colour, though, because this colour which it sees is colour and this *alpha* which the grammarian studies is *alpha*...”

In this passage the structure of the entities as instances of universals is proposed as the solution to the problem of the relationship between individuals and universals. This gives, in my opinion, a solution to the question concerning the levels of existence and their mutual connection, since the individual entity is treated as an instance of a universal: every individual entity is a *πὸδε τι* a this something, in the sense that it is an instance (*πὸδε*) of a property (*τι*). Aristotle's example of the individual colour and of the individual *alpha* can be extended, in my opinion, to every instance which belongs to reality. Every individual entity constitutes a concretisation of a property: the individual *alpha* is an *alpha*, the individual colour is a colour. It could be said that, as an extension of this

relation, the individual man is a man, *i.e.*, he is the instance of the universal “man” and of the property “being man”. Reality consists, therefore, in the following components:

- i. Properties such as “being an *alpha*” or “being a colour”. I believe that the examples proposed by Aristotle can be extended to every individual entity: hence, the individual entity “man” is to be considered as the instance of the property “being man”.
- ii. Instances of properties such as “the individual *alpha*” or “the individual colour”.
- iii. Universals as predicates which represent properties (the universal “man” represents the property “being man”, it is a deputy for the property “being man”).

The predication of the universals represents the ascertainment of the instantiation of a property in an individual entity.

The field of instances is represented by individual entities<sup>31</sup>; however, the field of existence of substantial and non-substantial universals too possess a right of citizenship: substantial and not-substantial universals exist (they are not constructions of the mind; the mind finds them, it does not invent them)<sup>32</sup>. The field of instances is certainly always represented by individuals; notwithstanding, the whole field of existence is constituted by both individuals and universals, even though the universals’ way of existence is different from that of the instances. Individuals and universals exist on different levels, they represent different ontological realms. Reality consists in the following realms:

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<sup>31</sup> It does not matter, in the present context, whether the substance is a material or an immaterial one. Both are individual: individuality is the connection between them, the common point between them. The difference between realms of reality is constituted, in Aristotle, by the difference between individual entities and universal entities, not by the difference between material substances and immaterial substances.

<sup>32</sup> At least as regards biological properties, biological species and biological genera, Aristotle seems to consider these entities as given and as indestructible. Biological species and genera are eternal (see *De Anima* II 4, 415a22-b7 and *De Generatione Animalium* II 1, 731b22-732a1). Biological properties are already given. Individual biological entities will instantiate this or that property, but the range of the properties which they concretise is already given.

- Instances, concretisations, individuals (entities which are numerically one).
- Universal properties (entities which depend for their existence on the existence of the instances)<sup>33</sup>.

The system of relationships between entities is fundamental. Aristotle shows, through this system, that individual entities – it does not matter

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<sup>33</sup> The difference between individuals and universals or between individual entities and predicated entities is, in my opinion, foundational in Aristotle's system. It constitutes the right way of avoiding the third man: Aristotle's intention of avoiding the third man is, in my opinion, both the origin and the mainspring of the way in which Aristotle's ontological and predicative systems are built up. Throughout *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Sophistical Refutations* and the *Metaphysics* there are many assertions that, in my opinion, can attest to this aim, since they attest to the attention paid by Aristotle to avoid any confusion between individuals (and features belonging to individuals qua individuals) and universals (and features of universals qua universal). The oppositions and incompatibilities which, in my opinion, should be considered are, for example:

- between τόδε τι and ποιόν (first substance and second substance: *Categories* 5, 3b10-21),
- between numerically one and not numerically one generally (*i.e.*, concerning not only substances but also, for example, qualities, as in *Categories* 2),
- between numerically one and not numerically one (as regards the different meanings of substance: *Categories* 5, 3b10-23),
- between particular and universal (*De Interpretatione* 7, 17a38-b1),
- between τόδε τι and τοιόνδε (*Sophistical Refutations* 22, 178b36-179a10),
- between particular / numerically one and universal (*Metaphysics Beta* 4, 999b33-1000a1)
- between τόδε τι and universal (*Metaphysics Beta* 6, 1003a5-17),
- between τόδε τοιόνδε and τοιόνδε (*Metaphysics Zeta* 8, 1033b19-26),
- between substance and universal (*Metaphysics Zeta* 13, 1038b8-16),
- between τόδε τι and τοιόνδε (*Metaphysics Zeta* 13, 1038b34-1039a3),
- between universally predicated and substance (*Metaphysics Zeta* 13, 1038b8-16),
- between universals and the feature of existing separately besides the particulars (*Metaphysics Zeta* 16, 1040 b25-27),
- between substance and one over many (*Metaphysics Zeta* 16, 1040b16-1041a5),
- between substance and predicate (*Metaphysics Iota* 2, 1053b16-24),
- between instances and universals (*Metaphysics Mu* 10).

The assertion of the mentioned oppositions and incompatibilities aim to avoid the risk of the third man regress, since they put a rigid border between entities which are instances, and, therefore, are individual and numerically one, on the one hand, and entities which are not instances, on the other hand. The realms of reality of individual entities, on the one hand, and of entities which are not individual, on the other hand, have to be rigidly distinguished between each other.

whether they are substantial or non-substantial entities – are always concretisations of properties. It does not matter what entities exist. reality presents in any case this structure of entities and this structure of dependence of a kind of entities on another kind of entities. Non-substantial individuals are concretisations of non-substantial properties; substantial individuals are concretisations of substantial properties. Substantial individuals are the basis for the concretisation of non-substantial individuals.

### 5. Aristotle's polemical targets: The One over Many Argument and the Third Man Argument

I would now like to consider some arguments of Aristotle's lost work *De Ideis* to show the consequences which come about if the distinction between realms of reality is not respected. I am going to consider the One over Many Argument and the Third Man Argument. The argument of the One over Many solves the problem of the univocal common predication of predicates such as "man" and "animal". The logic of the argument is, in my opinion, the following:

- if there is uniform common predication (*i.e.*, if the predication is not merely equivocal or homonymic),
- then there is an entity besides the plurality which is rigorously different from the plurality, separated from the plurality and eternal;
- since there is common and uniform predication,
- then this entity exists. The contents of the argument are the following<sup>34</sup>:

"They also use such an argument to establish that there are ideas. If each of the many men is man, and if each of the many animals is animal, and the same applies in the other cases; and if, in the case of each of them, there is not something which is predicated, itself, of itself, but there is something which is predicated of all of them,

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<sup>34</sup> For studies concerning the *De Ideis* see, for example, the book of Walter Leszl *Il "De Ideis" di Aristotele e la teoria platonica delle idee. Edizione critica del testo a cura di Dieter Harlfinger* and the book of Gail Fine *On Ideas: Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms*.

without being the same as any of them, then it exists this which is besides the particular beings, separated (κεχωρισμένον) from them and everlasting<sup>35</sup>.

For it is in every case predicated in the same way of all the numerically successive particulars. And what is a one in addition to many, separated from them, and everlasting, this is an idea. Therefore, there are ideas." (*De Ideis*, 80.9-16)

The attempt at building conditions for a uniform predication is clear. The reason for the predicated entity's not being one element of the plurality which is predicated of the other elements of the plurality, or the reason for the plurality's not being self-predicated in each individual case of the plurality, lie in the necessity of establishing a uniformity of predication. This uniformity would not hold:

- both if one entity of the plurality were predicated of the entities of the plurality, – since the relationship of the entity which is predicated with itself would not be the same as the relationship between the entity which is predicated and the other components of the plurality –; there would be a privileged predication in case of the self-predication of an entity and a secondary predication in all the other cases of the plurality itself: thus there would not be any uniformity of predication in all the cases of the plurality which have been considered;
- and if a self-predication in every case of the plurality takes place – since the entity which is predicated would change in every case: the entity "a" would be predicated of the entity "a", the entity "b" would be predicated of the entity "b" and so forth.

Therefore, a new entity needs to be found which could show an equidistant relationship towards the plurality. This equidistance exists

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<sup>35</sup> I follow here the version of the Ancient Greek text proposed by G. Fine (see p. 14 of her commentary for the translation and pp. 242-243 of her commentary for the reconstruction of the passage).

- only if the entity which is predicated exists besides the plurality of which it is predicated and
- only if the entity which is predicated is different from every element of the plurality which has been considered (the entity which is predicated has to be different from every entity of which it is predicated).

The uniformity of predication is guaranteed by the existence of this entity besides the plurality. If the entity is predicated in common and in the same way of a plurality of entities, this entity has to be besides the plurality, therefore it has to be separated from the plurality. The predicated entity represents an entity which is one in addition to the plurality.

As regards the logic of the argument, the argument functions in the following way:

- i. since there is uniformity of predication,
- ii. there has to be an entity with features such as being one in addition to many, separated and everlasting,
- iii. since the entities endowed with these features are ideas,
- iv. there are ideas.

The concealed assumption is that the entity searched for is always an entity which is numerically one. Since the entity is predicated in the same way of the entities of the plurality, then it cannot but be separated, everlasting and one in addition to many. The entity which is searched for is another entity which is numerically one. There is no attempt at searching for something belonging to a realm of reality which is different from the realm to which the instances belong. In order to be different from the entities of which it is predicated, the entity which is predicated has to be separated from the entities of which it is predicated<sup>36</sup>. The entity which is predicated exists independently of whether the elements of the plurality exist or not: the possession of the feature of everlastingness

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<sup>36</sup> Aristotle contends that the entity which is predicated of a plurality is different from the plurality without this entity needing to be separated: in order to be different from the entities of which it is predicated, this entity has to be a such. Aristotle opposes to the feature of being-separated the feature of being such: this opposition entails an opposition as regards the whole interpretation of the entities.

attests to this entity's complete independence, and it represents the guarantee that a predication will be always uniform as regards the future predication directed to the future individual entities. The entity which is predicated transcends the particulars of which it is predicated<sup>37</sup>.

I shall now analyse the Third Man Argument. The contents of the Third Man Argument are the following:

“The third man is also proved in this way. If what is predicated truly of some plurality of entities is also another entity besides (παρά) the entities of which it is predicated, being separated (κεχωρισμένον) from them (for this is what those who posit the ideas think they prove: for this is why, according to them, there is a man-itself (αὐτοάνθρωπος), because the man is predicated truly of the particular men, these being a plurality, and it is another entity than the particular men) – but if this is so, there will be a third man. For if the man predicated is another entity than the entities of which it is predicated, and subsists on its own, and if the man is predicated both of the particulars and of the idea, then there will be a third man besides (παρά) the particulars and the idea. In this way, there will also be a fourth man predicated of this, of the idea, and of the particulars, and in the same way also a fifth, and this on to infinity.” (*De Ideis*, 84.22-85.3)

Here are the main assumptions of the argument:

- a) What is predicated is something different from the plurality of which it is predicated (“if what is predicated truly of some

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<sup>37</sup> In the quoted passage from *Categories* second substances such as man (which is predicated of a plurality of entities).

- are not a this something.
- are not individual.
- are not numerically one.
- are a quality (within the substantial properties).

In the argument of the One over Many the entity which is predicated (such as man)

- is besides the individual beings.
- is separated from individual beings.
- is everlasting.



plurality of things is also some other thing besides the things of which it is predicated”).

- b) What is predicated is separated from the plurality of which it is predicated (“being separated from them”).
- c) What is predicated has an independent existence (“it subsists on its own”).
- d) The idea itself is a subject of predication (“if the man is predicated both of the particulars and of the idea”).

The property of separation possessed by the entity which is predicated is mentioned in the argument: this is an important point, since Aristotle contends that only substances are separated, whereas universals never have this property. In this argument, a thing which is predicated in common is separated from the entities of which it is predicated, while in Aristotle a thing which is predicated in common is never separated from the entities of which it is predicated.

Coming now to the general reconstruction of the third man argument, it can be seen that the premises which are necessary to produce the third man regress are:

- One over many: whenever a plurality of things is *f*, they are *f* in virtue of having some one thing, the *f*, predicated of them (nothing which is *f* is *f* in virtue of itself).
- Non-identity: whatever is predicated of a plurality of things is something besides the things of which it is predicated.
- Property-exemplification: what is predicated in common of entities which are *f* is itself *f*.

Through the application of the premises represented by the non-identity and by the property-exemplification one can arrive at a regress to the infinite. The logic of the argument functions in the following way:

- There is a plurality with a property “*f*” (“man”).
- In correspondence with the plurality having the property “*f*” (man) there is an entity, “*f*-itself” (“man-itself”), which is predicated of the plurality.

- The “*f*-itself” (“man-itself”) that is predicated of the plurality is different from all the entities of which it is predicated.
- The *f*-itself (“man-itself”) exists independently of that of which it is predicated.
- Then there is an entity besides the first plurality.
- This entity is itself “*f*” (“man”).
- Nothing is what it is in virtue of itself.
- Therefore, there will then be another entity (“the third man”) which is predicated of the first plurality and of the first predicated entity due to which the elements of the new plurality have the property “*f*”.
- Thus, there will be another entity besides the first plurality and besides the entity that constitutes the first predicated entity; this new entity is itself *f*, so that there will be a fourth man.

In other words:

1. for the One over Many, if there is a given plurality with a property *f* there is an entity, *f* itself, which is predicated of the plurality (due to this entity the elements of the plurality have the property *f*),
2. this entity is *f* too, for the property-exemplification, and
3. since nothing is *f* in virtue of itself, for the not-identity,
4. there is, therefore, another entity in virtue of which the first plurality which has been considered, on the one hand, and the *f*-itself, on the other hand, are *f*.
5. now the property-exemplification assumption is used another time for the new entity and the same comes about, therefore, for the non-identity assumption, and so on up to an infinite multiplication of entities.

It follows that, to explain a plurality’s (or also a single thing’s) having a property, an infinite series of entities has to be introduced. This result opposes Plato’s reason for introducing ideas, since Plato’s reason consisted in giving exclusively one factor for a plurality to possess a property. Two kinds of critiques can therefore be expressed:

- epistemologically, it can be said that, in order to explain and know – the ground why a plurality of entities has a property, an infinite series of entities has to be introduced into the ontology.
- ontologically, one can say that, if there is a thing in virtue of which a plurality has a property, then there will be an infinite series of things in virtue of which a plurality has a property. The ontology explodes. The point is that ideas were introduced to find a unitary explanation of entities which possess a property. Therefore, if ideas cannot represent a unitary explanation, ideas are to be abandoned<sup>38</sup>.

Aristotle's not considering in *Categories* 5 as a valid feature of the entity which is predicated the property-exemplification of the entity predicated itself (second substances are not individual entities themselves, *i.e.*, they are not instances of the properties which second substances express) clearly shows Aristotle's intention to distance himself from the ontological incongruities leading to the third man regress. Since the thing predicated is not a *πόδε τι*, but exclusively a *ποιόν*, it follows that the thing predicated cannot be the property it expresses.

The difference between individual entities and entities which are predicated has to be correctly interpreted: the difference between individuals of the plurality and the entities which are predicated in the argument of the One over Many and in the argument of the Third Man is not the right kind of difference. The right difference between subjects of predication and predicated entities is exclusively the difference between individuals and universals. Right ontology is not only a matter of difference but also a matter of explaining the way in which the different is different.

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<sup>38</sup> Aristotle in different passages explains what the universal is not. *Metaphysics Zeta* 13, *Metaphysics Zeta* 16, *Posterior Analytics* I 11 and *Posterior Analytics* I 24 determine what the universal, the universally predicated and the predicated in common are not. Aristotle's strategy concerning what the universal is not, is, in my opinion, as important as his strategy concerning what the universal is.

## 6. Conclusions

The concept of typological ontology, which can be extended and specified into the four-level ontology, represents, in my opinion, the fundamental organisation of Aristotle's ontology: the distinction between individual entities and universal properties exists before every particular state of affairs. The main components of Aristotle's new ontological proposal are the following:

- Individual entities are instances of essences (of universal properties).
- Individual entities that are specifically identical to each other are instances of the same essence.
- Essences, *i.e.*, universal properties constituting the programme or the way of existence of instances, exist (*i.e.*, Aristotle is neither a conceptualist nor a nominalist; the introduction of a typological ontology aims to safeguard the existence of universal properties).
- The organisation of reality follows the scheme of a typological ontology dividing the entities in individual entities as instances of essences and in properties constituting the essences of the individual entities.
- Universals are predicates representing names of properties (the universal "man" represents the property – is the deputy for the property – "being man").
- The fact that universals are predicates does not exclude that universal properties exist.
- The fact that universals are predicated of individuals is the consequence of the fact that individuals instantiate the same universal property.
- The predication of universals corresponds to the condition and to the acknowledgement of the instantiation of a property in an individual entity.

The fundamental differentiation of Aristotle's ontology regards, in my opinion, individuals as instances of properties, on the one side, and properties as programmes to be realised in their instances. Every individual (every individual entity) is the instance of a property which represents

the essence (*i.e.*, the way of existence) of the instance itself: the individual entity “Socrates” is the instance of the property “being man” (*i.e.*, it is the result of the process of instantiation of this same property).

The property “being man” represents the essence of Socrates, *i.e.*, it represents the way of existence of Socrates: the essence is the complex of all the faculties belonging to Socrates as man, *i.e.*, of all the faculties which are inherent in Socrates’ soul, and which leads life and life’s development of the entity “Socrates”. Biological properties such as “being man” are programmes for the life and for the life development of their instances: a property such as “being man” contains all the dispositions and all the faculties which belong under normal conditions to every man *qua* man and which emerge under normal conditions during the life of every man *qua* man.

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