

## Is substance a πρὸς ἓν notion?

### 1. Introduction

The impressively vast literature on Aristotle's theory of substance makes comparatively little use of the standard notions through which we are used to framing Aristotle's discussion of being. The question as to whether substance is a synonymous or homonymous notion is rarely raised in the literature, and few attempts have been made to trace Aristotle's thoughts about how substance is said<sup>1</sup>. This is surprising because the issue is important, for various reasons. In his works, Aristotle is rather generous with the term 'substance' and in fact there are several entities that he is prepared to call substances. In the *Categories*, for instance, individual objects, things like Socrates and Bucephalus, as well as the species and genera individual objects belong to, are called substances – individual objects primary substances and their species and genera secondary substances. In the *Metaphysics*, but also in the *Physics* and the *De anima*, matter, form and the compound of matter and form are all called substances. So, the question naturally arises as to what the relationship is between the different things that are called substances. Are they synonymously related, i.e. is there one single notion of substance according to which all things that are called substances are so called? Or are they homonymously related, i.e. they are called substances according to different notions of substance? And if they are homonymously related, is there is any significant connection among the different accounts substance is associated with?

There is another, related reason why establishing in how many ways substance is said is important. In *Met. Γ 1* Aristotle claims that being is a πρὸς ἓν notion. Being, in other words, is said in many ways, but the different ways being is said, the different ways of being, make reference to one single thing. Like several other interpreters, I take the πρὸς ἓν structure to be a case of systematic homonymy<sup>2</sup>. The term 'being' is said of the different things that are called being according to different accounts; but the different accounts of 'being' are associated in such a way that they all make reference to one

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<sup>1</sup> Notable exceptions are D. Morrison, *The Evidence for Degrees of Being in Aristotle*, «The Classical Quarterly», 37 (1987), 382-401; F.A. Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*, «Philosophy and Phenomenological Research», 68 (2004), 1-36. Other discussions are rather partial and only focus on the *Categories*: G.E.L. Owen, *Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle*, in I. During – G.E.L. Owen (cur.), *Aristotle and Plato in the mid-Fourth Century*, Humanities Press, Goteborg 1960, 163-90; C. Shields, *Order in Multiplicity: Homonymy in the Philosophy of Aristotle*, OUP, Oxford 1999; M.V. Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance. The Categories and Metaphysics Zeta*, OUP, Oxford 2000; C. Perin, *Substantial Universals in Aristotle's Categories*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», 125–144.

<sup>2</sup> T.A. Irwin, *Homonymy in Aristotle*, «Review of Metaphysics», 34 (1981), 523–544; Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*; Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*; J.K. Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy: Dialectic and Science*, CUP, Cambridge 2007. I will not argue for this view in the present paper.

thing. Since substance is precisely the thing all the different accounts of ‘being’ refer to, substance is the primary way in which being is said, because all the other accounts of ‘being’ depend on substance-being. Since substance-being is the primary way of being, it becomes particularly important to establish how it is said. More particularly, one may wonder whether substance displays the same  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}$  structure as governs the relationship between the different ways of being, or is rather structured in some other way.

In this paper, I wish to tackle Aristotle’s theory of substance from the particular point of view of the ways in which substance is said. My hope in doing so is to bridge the gap, both in the literature and in the text, between the theory of substance and discussion of homonymy and synonymy. I take a broad compass and try to track down Aristotle’s thoughts on how substance is said from the *Categories* to the *Metaphysics*. In Section 2, I start with the *Categories* and argue that substance is synonymous in the *Categories*, though the way Aristotle characterises the synonymy of substance is not entirely unproblematic. In Section 3, I move on to the discussion of substance in *Met. Δ 8* to show that homonymy and not synonymy is the framework for the analysis of substance in the *Metaphysics*. I also argue that traditional strategies for dealing with the homonymy of substance in the *Metaphysics* are not entirely satisfactory. In Section 4, I suggest  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}$  homonymy as an alternative model for understanding the internal structure of substance, and in Section 5 I review the textual evidence, inside and outside the *Metaphysics*, for associating  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}$  homonymy with substance. My conclusion will be that Aristotle is flirting with this model, without endorsing it in a sufficiently consistent way or providing the details of the conceptual framework in which this model should be understood. In Section 6, I deal with some complications the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}$  structure generates if endorsed as a general model for the notion of substance.

## 2. The synonymy of substance in the *Categories*

Aristotle characterizes homonymy and synonymy at the very beginning of the *Categories*<sup>3</sup>. Two things are homonymous with respect to a predicate ‘F’ when they are both F but the account of ‘F’ is different in the two cases. Two things are synonymous, by contrast, with respect to the same predicate ‘F’ when

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<sup>3</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 1, 1a1-12. Like other interpreters (e.g. Irwin, *Homonymy in Aristotle*; Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*), I take synonymy and homonymy to be mainly metaphysical and not linguistic phenomena, that is, to introduce relations among *things* with respect to a certain term (for a classic, purely linguistic interpretation of homonymy, synonymy and  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\nu}$  see Owen, *Logic and Metaphysics*). It is difficult to deny, however, that synonymy and homonymy also have linguistic implications (for discussion see Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 75-102; Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy*, 12-18; 43-76). Therefore, I shall sometimes follow Aristotle’s occasional practice of saying that the term with respect to which certain things are synonymous or homonymous is synonymous or homonymous (cf. Arist., *De gen. et. corr.*, 322b29–32; *Phys.*, H 4, 248b10; *Top.*, A 15 *passim*).

they are both F and the account of 'F' is the same in the two cases. Thus, for instance, two entities are homonymously substance if they are both substances but the account of 'substance' is different in one case and in the other. They are synonymously substance if they are both substances and the account of 'substance' is the same in the two cases. Aristotle's introduction of homonymy only prescribes that the accounts of the homonyms be different, but does not rule it out that the accounts might overlap, provided that they do not completely overlap<sup>4</sup>. In his general classification of the different varieties of homonymy, Shields calls the homonymy in which the accounts of the homonyms overlap *associated homonymy*<sup>5</sup>. Cases in which the accounts of the homonyms are associated are of particular philosophical interest to Aristotle. In the interpretation that I favour, the πρὸς ἓν structure of being is a special and particularly significant case of associated homonymy, i.e. a case in which the definition of one of the homonyms, substance, is included in that of all the others. The interesting question for us is whether the different entities that Aristotle is prepared to call substances are substances synonymously or homonymously, that is, if 'substance' goes with the same account in all its applications. Should substance turn out to be homonymous, we may then wish to explore whether or not the homonymy of substance is systematic, i.e. whether or not the different accounts of 'substance' overlap in systematic way, as is the case for instance with πρὸς ἓν homonymy. Let me start with the *Categories*.

In the *Categories*, Aristotle distinguishes between primary and secondary substances. Primary substances are individual objects, like Socrates and Bucephalus, while secondary substances are the species and genera to which individual objects belong, for instance man, horse and animal<sup>6</sup>. Primary substances are particular substances, while secondary substances, species and genera, are universal substances<sup>7</sup>. Are primary and secondary substances called 'substance' synonymously or homonymously?

Aristotle's official position in the *Categories* is that substance is synonymous<sup>8</sup>. This is shown by two interesting features of the discussion of substance. The first has to do with the said-of relation. The said-of relation, which roughly corresponds to essential predication, governs the relationship among entities in the same category<sup>9</sup>. To confine ourselves to the category of substance, individual substances are not said-of anything, while universal substances are said-of all the less universal

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<sup>4</sup> For this understanding of homonymy, see T.A. Irwin, *Homonymy in Aristotle*; Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 9-42; Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy*, 12-18.

<sup>5</sup> Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 35-39.

<sup>6</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 2a11-19.

<sup>7</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3b10-13 together with 3b16-18.

<sup>8</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3a33-b9.

<sup>9</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 2, 1a20-b9.

entities in the category and of individual substances. Thus, animal is said-of man, both animal and man are said-of Socrates, while Socrates is not said-of anything. Now, the said-of relation is clearly transitive as Aristotle observes that all that is said-of the predicate will also be said-of the subject<sup>10</sup>. Thus, for Aristotle, the following inference is clearly valid (and sound):

- 1) Socrates is (a) man
- (a) Man is (an) animal
- Socrates is (an) animal.

But inference 1) is valid only if 'animal' is used synonymously, i.e. if it has the same meaning in '(a) Man is (an) animal' and 'Socrates is (an) animal'. Similarly, the following inference must also be valid (and sound):

- 2) Socrates is (a) man
- (a) Man is (a) substance
- Socrates is (a) substance.

But inference (2) is valid only if 'substance' is used synonymously, i.e. if it retains the same meaning in '(a) Man is (a) substance' and 'Socrates is (a) substance'<sup>11</sup>. Not surprisingly, Aristotle observes that the category of substance is structured around chains of synonymous predications<sup>12</sup>. Substance, in other words, is synonymous, and the distinction between primary and secondary substances does not affect its synonymous character.

Another feature of the discussion of substance in the *Categories* militates in favour of the synonymy of substance. In the text, Aristotle feels free to make comparisons between different entities as to their being more or less substance. He observes for instance that the species is more substance than the genus, and gives two arguments for this conclusion<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, he argues that individual substances are more substance than species and genera<sup>14</sup>. Now, in several texts, including one from the *Categories*, Aristotle holds the principle that only things that are synonymous in relation to a certain attribute can be compared with respect to it and so can be said to be more or less that attribute<sup>15</sup>. To borrow an example from the *Physics*, *a* can be said to be sharper than *b* only if 'sharp' applies with the same account to *a* and *b* or equivalently only if 'sharp' has the same meaning in '*a* is

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<sup>10</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 3, 1b10-15.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of these inferences, see Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance*, 29-33.

<sup>12</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3a33-b9.

<sup>13</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 2b7-22.

<sup>14</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 2a11-13; 2a34-b6<sup>c</sup>; 2b15-17.

<sup>15</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 11a12-13; *Phys.*, H 4, 248b6-11; *Pol.*, A 13, 1259b36-38.

sharp' and 'b is sharp'. Thus, one musical note can be said to be sharper than another, because 'sharp' has the same meaning when applied to both notes. But a pen cannot be said to be sharper than a note, because 'sharp' has different meanings in 'A pen is sharp' and 'A note is sharp'. We shall consider later on the question of whether this principle should be taken unqualifiedly, especially when it comes to the discussion of substance in the *Metaphysics*. What is clear, for now, is that the principle perfectly squares with the synonymy of substance in the *Categories*. 'Socrates is more substance than man' and 'Man is more substance than animal' are legitimate comparisons only if 'substance' has the same meaning in 'Socrates is substance' and 'Man is substance', and similarly in 'Man is substance' and 'Animal is substance'.

In spite of this clear evidence, Owen suspected that the expressions 'primary substance' and 'secondary substance' may introduce two different notions (or 'senses', as he would have it) of substance, and so that 'substance' is said homonymously of primary and secondary substances. Is Owen's suspicion justified? Aristotle's insistence that substance is indeed synonymous should push us to find a general account of substance that equally applies to primary and secondary substances. As Perin has shown, such an account is indeed available<sup>16</sup>. Both primary and secondary substances are subjects for the entities in the accidental categories. As Aristotle puts it, entities in the accidental categories are-in substances, both primary and secondary substances, where the being-in relation is an ontological relation of inherence that broadly corresponds to accidental predication<sup>17</sup>. Of course, there remains a difference between primary and secondary substances. Unlike secondary substances, primary substances are never said-of any other thing<sup>18</sup>. And this may explain why they are *primary* substances. Everything else, both accidents and secondary substances, are predicated of them, i.e. are either said-of or in primary substances, while they themselves are predicated of nothing<sup>19</sup>. But there does not seem to be any relevant difference between primary and secondary substances with respect to their being subjects for the entities in the accidental categories. And this, it seems, is the distinguishing mark of substantiality in the *Categories*.

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<sup>16</sup> C. Perin, *Substantial Universals in Aristotle's Categories*, «Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy», 33 (2007), 124-144

<sup>17</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 2, 1a24-b9. I agree with Perin against Matthews (G.B. Matthews, *Aristotelian Categories*, in A. Anagnostopoulos (cur.), *A Companion to Aristotle*, Chichester and Malden, MA, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 144-161) that what is common to all substances in the *Categories* is that they are subjects for accidental entities, and not that they are-not-in anything else. For differentiae are-not-in anything else, but are distinct from substances in the *Categories* (*Cat.*, 5, 3a21-24). The status of differentiae, however, remains problematic, since they, exactly like substances, are said-of what they are said of and generate synonymous predications (*Cat.*, 5, 3a25-28; 3a33-b9).

<sup>18</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 2a11-14.

<sup>19</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 2a34-35; b3-5.

However, Owen's worry may be justified in a slightly different sense. For in the *Categories* Aristotle differentiates primary from secondary substances not only on the grounds that, unlike secondary substances, primary substances are never said-of anything (besides never being-in anything else). This, we have seen, may be irrelevant to the issue of substance. Aristotle also insists that primary and secondary substances also differ in terms of signification. Primary substances signify a τόδε τι, a 'this something', which Aristotle spells out as an entity that is individual and one in number<sup>20</sup>. Despite appearances to the contrary, secondary substances do not signify a τόδε τι, because they are predicated of many things and so are universals. Secondary substances rather signify a ποιόν τι, 'a certain quality'<sup>21</sup>. This does not mean, as Aristotle hastens to say, that secondary substances are qualities or fall within the category of quality. Secondary substances determine quality in relation to substance; they indicate what kind of substance a primary substance is<sup>22</sup>. Man and animal, for instance, indicate what kind of substance a primary substance, say Socrates, is. But if this is the case, one may start to see what Owen is worried about. Perhaps, when he differentiates primary from secondary substances, Aristotle is gesturing at a distinction between two notions of substance (and so two ways of being substance), which results in different entities being called substance depending on which notion one chooses. According to one notion, to be a substance is to be an ultimate subject of predication – something of which everything else is predicated, while it itself is not predicated of anything else. On this notion, particular objects turn out to be substances. On the other notion, to be a substance is to express the essence, nature or substance of a certain particular object (or part of its essence, nature or substance, as is the case with the genus). On this second notion, substantial universals, species and genera, are substances because they express the nature or essence of particular objects. If this distinction is in place, perhaps some form of homonymy is surreptitiously creeping into Aristotle's discussion of substance in the *Categories*.

### 3. The homonymy of substance in the *Metaphysics*

It is tempting to think that the tension that lurks in the background of the discussion in the *Categories* somehow explodes in the *Metaphysics*. In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle analyses substance into matter, form and the compound of both, and clearly states that all three of them can be called substance, at least to some extent or in some sense<sup>23</sup>. Since it is difficult to find, at least *prima facie*, a unified notion

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<sup>20</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3b10-13.

<sup>21</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3b13-18.

<sup>22</sup> Arist., *Cat.*, 5, 3b18-21.

<sup>23</sup> This is evident in the case of form and the compound. For matter, see Arist., *Met.*, Z 3, 1029a2; H 1, 1042a26–29; 2, 1042b9; Θ 7, 1049a36.

of substance that applies to matter, form and the compound, it seems that the *Metaphysics* marks a shift in Aristotle's understanding of substance from synonymy to homonymy. Frede and Patzig are right that the text that sets the stage for this debate is *Met. Δ 8*, where Aristotle introduces the different ways in which substance is said<sup>24</sup>. In the chapter, Aristotle first provides a preliminary list of four ways in which substance is said<sup>25</sup>. We call substance:

- (i) the simple bodies and in general the bodies and their parts. These are called substances because they are ultimate subjects of predication;
- (ii) the constituent of the bodies that is the cause of their being, e.g. the soul of an animal;
- (iii) the limits of the bodies without which a body could not exist, e.g. planes, lines and numbers;
- (iv) the essence of a thing, which is expressed in a definition and is called the substance of each thing.

The preliminary list of four ways in which substance is said is finally reduced to two fundamental ways (τρόπους)<sup>26</sup>:

- 1) substance as an ultimate subject of predication;
- 2) substance as what is τόδε τι and separable (χωριστόν), which is identified with the structure (μορφή) and form (εἶδος) of a thing.

Both Aristotle's initial list of four ways in which substance is said and the subsequent reduction to two fundamental ways are certainly problematic in many respects. But, for our purposes, we can mainly focus on Aristotle's final list and on the two fundamental ways of being substance, i.e. (1) substance as an ultimate subject of predication and (2) and substance as form. There are three interesting features of the discussion in *Δ 8* that I would like to emphasize. First, Aristotle does not provide any unified account of substance that might bridge the gap between substance as an ultimate subject of predication and substance as form. It may certainly be argued that *Δ 8* is not the place for Aristotle to do so, given the particular nature of Book Delta. But it remains significant that the notion of subjecthood, which is a common feature of all substances in the *Categories*, is now only confined to one of the two main conceptions of substance and not extended to the structure and form. This suggests that homonymy, and not synonymy, is the general framework within which the discussion of substance should be understood. Second, although Aristotle is clearly operating within the

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<sup>24</sup> M. Frede-G. Patzig, *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, 2 vols., München, Beck 1988, vol. I, 36-42.

<sup>25</sup> Arist., *Met.*, *Δ 8*, 1017b10-22.

<sup>26</sup> Arist., *Met.*, *Δ 8*, 1017b23-26.

hylomorphic framework in the chapter, as is shown by the use of the terms μορφή, εἶδος, and ψυχή, there is no explicit reference to matter in the passage, and so no notion of substance applies, at least obviously, to matter as well. This suggests that, however important, the classification in Δ 8 cannot unqualifiedly work as a model for the theory of substance in the central books of the *Metaphysics*, where the issue of the role of matter as a substantial component of a material object is prominent. Finally, it is noteworthy that the Δ 8 passage marks a significant shift in Aristotle's use of the notion of τόδε τι with respect to the *Categories*. In the *Categories*, primary substances, i.e. particular objects, signify a τόδε τι, while secondary substances, i.e. species and genera, signify a ποιόν τι. Since particular objects are described in the *Categories* as ultimate subjects of predication, one might have expected the notion of τόδε τι to be associated with subjecthood and not with form in the *Metaphysics* as well. Contrary to expectation, in the Δ 8 passage the expression τόδε τι is applied (together with the equally important notion of χωριστόν, 'separate' or 'separable') to the second way of being substance, i.e. substance as form, and not to the first, i.e. substance as an ultimate subject of predication. This is a significant shift. Given the importance that the notion of τόδε τι has for the discussion of substance in the central books, the shift should warn us against taking the *Categories* framework as unqualifiedly applicable to the *Metaphysics* as well.

The discussion in *Met.* Δ 8 has been the starting point for a popular interpretation of Aristotle's theory of substance in the central books of the *Metaphysics*. This popular interpretation makes the most of the homonymy of substance and suggests that there are two fundamental notions of substance (or senses of 'substance') at work in the central books of the *Metaphysics*<sup>27</sup>. The first is the monadic notion of substance or substance *tout court*, according to which we say for instance that a particular human, say Socrates, is *a* substance. The other is the dyadic notion of the *substance of* an object, which is standardly identified with its essence and form: the form and essence of an object is the substance of that object. This line of interpretation, which clearly makes use of the distinction in Δ 8 between substance as subject of predication and substance as essence/cause of being/form, may seem to gain support from the opening lines of *Met.* Z 1 (1028a1013). In these famous lines, Aristotle restates the idea that being is said in many ways, and further adds that in one way being signifies τὸ μὲν τί ἐστὶ καὶ τόδε τι, 'what a thing is and a this something', where the reference is clearly to substance-being. For the supporters of the two-notion interpretation, it is easy to read the two parts of Aristotle's

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<sup>27</sup> Supporters of this interpretation include M.J. Loux, *Primary Ousia. An Essay on Aristotle's Metaphysics Z and H*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1991; F.A. Lewis, *Substance and Predication in Aristotle*, CUP, Cambridge 1991; M. Burnyeat, *A Map of Metaphysics Zeta*, Mathesis Publications, Pittsburgh 2001; Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance*. For the conceptual framework, see C. Witt, *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of Metaphysics VII-IX*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1991.



descriptions of substance disjunctively, i.e. as introducing the two notions of substance at work in the central books: the τόδε τι phrase would point to the monadic notion of substance, while τὸ μὲν τί ἐστὶ would introduce the notion of *substance of*.

What would the advantages be of endorsing the two-notion strategy? First, to present the hylomorphic model as a natural development of Aristotle's theory of substance in the *Categories* and not as an alternative model. The primary substances of the *Categories* are analysed in the *Metaphysics* as compounds of matter and form, but remain substances and actually primary substances according to the monadic notion of substance. It is still particular objects that are primary substances according to the monadic notion of substance. When this point has been agreed, we can move the argument one step further and ask what makes compounds of matter and form substances, and to answer this question we need to introduce the notion of *substance of* and to point to the constituent of ordinary objects that makes them substantial entities. Normally, form is identified with such a constituent. To raise and answer the causal or explanatory question as to what entity makes ordinary objects substances is different from raising and answering the question as what entities are substances in the monadic sense. As a consequence, entities that are substances in the monadic sense and entities that are substances in the dyadic sense are not competitors for the title of substance. For there are two notions of substance and so there is no such single title. But another advantage of this strategy is to preserve some role for synonymy in the *Metaphysics* account. Since there are two fundamental and irreducible notions of substance, substance is fundamentally homonymous. But within each of the two notions of substance synonymy is preserved. Thus, for instance, all human compounds of matter and form (i.e. all human beings) are synonymously humans, and all animal compounds of matter and form (i.e. all animals) are synonymously animals – to generalise, all compounds of matter and form are synonymously substance according to the monadic notion of substance. Similarly, one may expect, all forms are synonymously with respect to the notion of *substance of*. Appealing as this model might be, it certainly has its limitations, the most evident of which is that there seems to be no room for matter in the twofold classification. Matter is clearly not primary substance, but must be substance to some degree or in some sense. But is it substance according to the monadic or the dyadic notion? One obvious suggestion is that matter, exactly like form, should be substance according to the dyadic notion, should be the constituent that explains why a substance (according to the monadic notion) is substance. But part of Aristotle's point in *Met. Z*, and especially in Z 3 and Z 17, seems precisely to be that matter cannot be the cause or the explanation of a material object's substantiality, and that it is form that is such a cause and explanation. If this is true, matter cannot be substance in the sense of *substance of*, and so we are left in the dark as to how exactly matter is substantial.

As is known, Frede and Patzig have strongly criticised the view that, in the central books of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle operates with two distinct notions of substance<sup>28</sup>. They concede that *Met. Δ 8* distinguishes between two broad notions of substance, substance as an ultimate subject and substance as the cause of being, but still insist that these two notions of substance are unified rather than distinguished in the central books. To this effect, they remark, not unreasonably, that nowhere in *Met. Z* does Aristotle distinguish between *substance* and *substance of*, but seems to work with a general idea of substance, according to which a substance is a primary being, something on which everything else that exists depends. Thus, they famously argue that in *Met. Z* what is substance must be both an ultimate subject of predication and a cause of being. In line with this strategy, they take Aristotle's remark at the beginning of *Z 1* (1028a11-12) that substance is τὸ μὲν τί ἐστὶ καὶ τὸδε τι conjunctively and not disjunctively: what is substance in *Met. Z* must be both an essence, i.e. a cause of being, and a τὸδε τι, i.e. a particular entity that is an ultimate subject of predication<sup>29</sup>. This entity is obviously the form of material objects.

This is not the place to discuss the many assumptions on which Frede and Patzig's interpretation rests, including for instance their view that forms are particular entities or the equally controversial claim that forms are ultimate subjects of predication. One thing that is striking is that Frede and Patzig assume that being a τὸδε τι means being a particular, but we have already seen that there might be reasons to doubt that assumption<sup>30</sup>. For our purposes, however, it is more important to put emphasis on one aspect of their reading that often passes unnoticed. Frede and Patzig's combined notion of substance applies only to *primary substance* and so only to form. In their understanding, it is form, and form only, that is both an ultimate subject of predication and a cause of being, and so their characterization of substance as a primary being on which everything else depends is actually a characterization of primary substance and so of form. But what of the compound and matter? According to what notion of substance are they substances? Perhaps, both the compound and matter are substances by being subjects of sorts. The compound is certainly subject for accidental properties. And in a few places in the central books Aristotle claims that form is predicated of matter, which seems to imply that matter is a subject of predication for form<sup>31</sup>. This may suggest that the compound and matter are substances by being subjects, while form is substance by being both a subject of predication and an essence. But this solution is not entirely satisfactory. For one thing, it is not open to Frede and Patzig, who insists that form is the ultimate subject of predication and so dismisses as

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<sup>28</sup> Frede-Patzig, *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z*, 36-42.

<sup>29</sup> Frede-Patzig, *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z*, vol. II, 11-15.

<sup>30</sup> For these issues, see G. Galluzzo, "Universals in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*", in G. Galluzzo-R. Chiaradonna (cur.), *Universals in Ancient Philosophy*, Edizioni della Scuola Normale, Pisa 2013, 209-254.

<sup>31</sup> Arist., *Met. Z* 3, 1029a23-24; *Z* 17, 1041b4-9; *H* 2, 1043a5-6; *Θ* 7, 1049a34-36.

dubious or non-Aristotelian the claim that form is predicated of matter<sup>32</sup>. For another thing, even if this solution were acceptable, the connection between substance as subject and substance as essence remains entirely unexplained. Are these just two irreconcilable ways of being substance?

To sum up, it seems that the two main strategies to understand Aristotle's treatment of substance in the *Metaphysics* point to the fundamental homonymy of substance. What is more, they both fail to identify any significant connection between the different ways in which substance is said and so present the homonymy of substance as unsystematic. Finally, the way in which matter is substance seems to be unclear on both strategies. This is particularly true of the two-notion strategy, but remains an issue for Frede and Patzig's interpretation as well.

#### 4. Substance and πρὸς ἕν homonymy

In light of the previous discussion, the possibility may be worth considering of making the connection between the different ways substance is said more systematic. One obvious way of doing so would be to invoke the notion of πρὸς ἕν homonymy and apply the πρὸς ἕν relation, which structures the different ways in which being is said, to substance as well. It is not my intention here to go into the details of Aristotle's account of πρὸς ἕν homonymy. It will be enough for our purposes to recall the general idea. Sometimes, homonymy is such that the accounts of the different homonyms do not overlap at all. But there are cases of homonymy in which the accounts of the different homonyms do overlap, though of course not completely. We may follow Shields in calling cases in which the accounts of the different homonyms partly overlap cases of *associated homonymy*. The πρὸς ἕν structure is an interesting variety of associated homonymy, a variety in which the accounts overlap in a systematic way. In particular, in the case of πρὸς ἕν homonymy one of the homonyms is mentioned in the account of all of the others. Thus, in the case of being, substance and quality are πρὸς ἕν homonyms with respect to the term 'being' because the account of quality-being essentially refers to substance-being. But quality and quantity are also homonyms with respect to 'being' because the accounts of both quality-being and quantity-being essentially refer to substance-being. Thus, substance is the core homonym with respect to 'being', which is mentioned in the definition of all the others. Quite appropriately, Shields has called πρὸς ἕν homonymy *core-dependent* homonymy. If this model is to apply to substance, i.e. if all the entities that are called substances are so called according to πρὸς ἕν homonymy, we must find a core homonym with respect to 'substance' which is essentially referred to in the accounts of all other things that are called substances. Within the hylomorphic model we are

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<sup>32</sup> Frede-Patzig, *Aristoteles Metaphysik Z*, vol. I, 39-41; vol. II, 42-52.

exploring now, form seems to be an obvious candidate to play the role of core homonym with respect to 'substance'. Thus, the *πρὸς ἓν* understanding of substance seems to be, at least *prima facie*, an attractive alternative to the more traditional strategies we have explored in Section 3.

Besides the dissatisfaction with traditional strategies, there is one extra reason to explore ways of making the homonymy of substance systematic and consider *πρὸς ἓν* homonymy in particular. In the central books of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle seems to introduce the idea of degrees of substance. In Z 3, 1029a29-30, for instance, he observes that form and the compound seems to be substance more than matter<sup>33</sup>. And later on in the discussion he clearly introduces the notion of primary οὐσία, which is applied in the new hylomorphic setting not to particular objects, as it was in the *Categories*, but to the forms of such objects<sup>34</sup>. This suggests that there are degrees of substance, with form being substance to the maximum degree, the compound occupying an intermediate position and matter being the least substantial of the three.

Now, this notion of degrees of substance is clearly problematic if substance is homonymous, and particularly if substance is an instance of unsystematic homonymy. As we have already seen, in several texts Aristotle suggests that comparability, which is presupposed by the degree language, implies synonymy. And we have exploited this idea to provide arguments in favour of taking substance to be synonymous in the *Categories*. It is only if substance is synonymous that Aristotle can claim, as he does in the *Categories*, that the species is more substance than the genus, and individual substances are more substance than species and genera. No such comparisons, by contrast, would seem to be possible if substance were just homonymous. This poses a problem for the *Metaphysics*. Matter, form and the compound are not called substances synonymously and at the same time Aristotle seems to be willing to compare them as to their degree of substantiality. Of course, one could offer a deflationary reading of the degree language in the *Metaphysics* and claim that all Aristotle has in mind are relations of priority and posteriority, i.e. relations of order, among the different things that are called substances, without this implying that there is any connection among the different ways in which such entities are called substances<sup>35</sup>. In other words, matter, form and the compounds are substances in three different ways: there is no common notion of substance or no systematic connection among the ways in which these entities are called substance. But the different entities that are called substance, the different substances, are essentially ordered in a certain way. Form as a kind of substance comes first, is prior to the other substances, because for instance form plays a particular

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<sup>33</sup> See also Z 3, 1029a5-7.

<sup>34</sup> Arist., *Met.*, Z 7, 1032b1-2; Z 11, 1037a25-30.

<sup>35</sup> For the different ways of understanding the notion of degrees of existence/substance, see Morrison, *The Evidence for Degrees*.

explanatory role in physics, biology and metaphysics. Similarly, the compound as a kind of substance may be prior to matter: the compound is a determinate object, while matter is not a determinate object. But all this does not imply that the *ways* in which matter, form and the compound are called substance are significantly or systematically related. The different kinds of substances are essentially ordered, but they are not connected in terms of the notion of substance that applies to each of them.

Appealing to  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy may seem to offer a better solution than the order interpretation to the problem of making sense of the degree language in the *Metaphysics*. For  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy may be taken to preserve some systematic connection among the ways in which the different kinds of substances are called substance. Admittedly, Aristotle claims that comparability implies synonymy, and the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  relation is not synonymy, but a particular variety of systematic homonymy. However, perhaps, we should not jump to conclusions here. None of the texts in which Aristotle holds that comparability implies synonymy is from the *Metaphysics*. What is more, in none of them is there any mention of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy. This invites the thought that Aristotle may be prepared to relax his requirements for comparability in light of the growing importance he accords to the notion of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy. On this suggestion, comparability in terms of more and less, and so the degree doctrine, are not restricted to synonyms, but can also be applied to entities that stand in the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy relation. One may think that this suggestion cannot possibly work.  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy is still a variety of homonymy and so there is no single notion that might possibly come with different degrees of intensity in the different homonyms. Being, for instance, is a  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymous notion. This means that there is no single notion of being that substances and accidents share. 'Being' is applied to substances, quantities, qualities etc. with different accounts, even if the accounts are  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  related. Thus, there is no single notion of being that comes with different degrees of intensity in the different homonyms. My suggestion, however, can be made work if we think of one particular feature of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy<sup>36</sup>. In this variety of homonymy, one of the homonyms must necessarily be mentioned in the account of all the others. Thus, the account of all the secondary homonyms essentially depends on the account of the core homonym. But, if this is the case, there is a sense in which the core homonym is the source of a certain character (i.e. the homonymous character) in all the secondary homonyms and so possesses that character primarily, while the secondary homonyms derive the character from the core homonym and so possess it secondarily. Thus, it seems to be perfectly acceptable to say that the core homonym exemplifies a certain character to the maximum degree, and the secondary homonyms to lesser degrees, even if there is strictly speaking no single character that is literally shared by all the homonyms. For the way the character is exemplified in the primary

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<sup>36</sup> Although different in detail and terminology, my solution is broadly in line, if I am not mistaken, with the one in Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*, 23.

homonym is the source of the way it is exemplified in the secondary homonyms. For instance, if the accounts of quality-being or quantity-being essentially depend on the account of substance-being, then substance-being is the source of being in all other kinds of being and so has being primarily, while all other beings have being only derivatively. Thus, it seems to be perfectly acceptable to say that substance-being is being to the maximum degree, while all other kinds of beings are being to lesser degrees, even if there is no single notion of being according to which all the different kinds of being are called being. We shall see in the next section that this line of thought may be helpful in understanding how substance can come in degrees, despite the lack of any shared or common notion of substance.

#### 5. Evidence for the $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ homonymy of substance

Is there any evidence in the central books of the *Metaphysics* that Aristotle is prepared to construe substance as a case of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy? Some obvious places we may search for this kind of evidence turn out to be red herrings. At the beginning of *Met. Z 3*, Aristotle distinguishes four ways in which substance is said: substance as essence, substance as universal, substance as genus, and finally substance as subject<sup>37</sup>. Whatever one makes of this famous list, it seems clear to me that it cannot be the starting point for a discussion of the homonymy of substance in *Met. Z-H-Θ*. For one thing, the list has an obvious endoxastic character. It is actually a combination of Platonic (the universal and the genus) and Aristotelian (the essence and the subject) ways of understanding substance. As is known, the universal and the genus will not stand scrutiny and will be dismissed in *Met. Z 13-16* as inadequate to define substantiality. Substance as essence and possibly substance as subject remain central to Aristotle's discussion of substance in *Z*, but this just brings us back to two fundamental ways of being substance emerging from *Met. Δ 8* and to the unsystematic homonymy of substance that we are somehow trying to overcome. For another thing, it is not at all clear how the list of four ways in which substance is said relates to the hylomorphic model. But it is the ways matter, form and the compound are said to be substance that we are primarily interested in.

A few lines after providing the fourfold list, Aristotle does bring hylomorphism into the discussion and introduces, for the first time in *Met. Z*, matter, form and the compound<sup>38</sup>. This move may seem to be more promising. In his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, for instance, Aquinas takes the introduction of matter, form and the compound in *Met. Z 3* as a threefold division of substance. He also hastens to say that substance is said of matter, form and the compound in an analogical way (*analogice*), i.e., in

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<sup>37</sup> Arist., *Met.*, *Z 3*, 1028b33-36.

<sup>38</sup> Arist., *Met.*, *Z 3*, 1029a2-5.

our preferred terminology, according to  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy<sup>39</sup>. Whether or not Aquinas is right to say that substance is a case of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  (or ‘analogy’, as he would put it), he is technically wrong to see the introduction of matter, form and the compound in *Met.* Z 3 as an illustration of the different ways in which substance is said. For the division is certainly intended by Aristotle not as a division of substance, but as a distinction of three ways in which the subject, the fourth of the notions of substance listed at the beginning of Z 3, is said. Although the claim that matter, form and the compound are three ways of being a subject sounds problematic, this is the claim that the Greek suggests and this is what *Met.* Z 3 is about, as the question that Aristotle considers in this chapter is whether being a subject is *the* distinguishing mark of substantiality. Thus, neither the place in Book Zeta where Aristotle presents the different ways of understanding substance, nor the place where matter, form and the compound are first introduced into the discussion, seem to be particularly favourable starting points to evaluate the suggestion that substance may be a  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  notion.

As Lewis has correctly pointed out, however, there is one passage in *Met.* H where Aristotle seems to give some currency to  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy as a valid model to understand the way in which substance is said<sup>40</sup>. At the beginning of H 3, Aristotle observes that substance-terms have two different meanings<sup>41</sup>. They can stand either for the compound of matter and form or for the actuality and form alone. Thus, for instance, ‘house’ means both house as a compound, ‘a covering consisting of bricks and stones laid thus and thus’, and the actuality and form of house, ‘a covering’. Similarly, ‘animal’ means both the compound animal, ‘a (certain kind of) soul in a body’, and the form of the compound animal, ‘a (certain kind of) soul’. Aristotle hastens to say that, for instance, the compound animal and the soul are not said to be animals according to the same account of ‘animal’<sup>42</sup>. However, they are called animals  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$ , with reference to one thing. The one thing is clearly the form and actuality of the animal. This passage clearly suggests that the compound animal and the soul of the animal are homonymous with respect to the term ‘animal’, as Aristotle explicitly claims that they are not animals according to the same account of ‘animal’. But the homonymy in question, the passage also suggests, is a case of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy: the compound animal and the form of animal are animals with reference to one core homonym, i.e. animal as the form and the actuality of an animal. What is true of ‘animal’ seems to be true of all substance-terms, including the substantial term ‘substance’ itself. This invites the suggestion that, in general, the compound and form are  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonyms with respect to the term ‘substance’, and that form is the core homonym in the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  structure.

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<sup>39</sup> Aquinas, *Exp. Met.*, Lib. VII, lect. 2, ed. R. Spiazzi, n. 1276.

<sup>40</sup> Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*, 29-30.

<sup>41</sup> Arist., *Met.*, H 3, 1043a29-36.

<sup>42</sup> Arist., *Met.*, H 3, 1043a29-36.

There are two main difficulties with this suggestion. One is that it may be difficult to see the relationship between a compound of matter and form and the form of the compound as a relationship of homonymy, whether  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy or some other variety of homonymy. After all, it may be said, the compound and the form of the compound are the same in form, and things that are the same in form should be synonymous and not homonymous. To put it differently, the form of the compound is its formal cause, the essence of the compound that is stated in its definition. But, if this is true, it is difficult to see how formal causality could ground anything other than synonymy. Formal causality explains what things are essentially, and two things that are essentially the same are synonymous. On the basis of a similar argument, Ward prescribes that formal causality should be excluded from the relations that obtain among things that are homonymous according to the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  structure<sup>43</sup>. As Shields and Lewis have rightly seen, this argument is wrong and misses the point of Aristotle's remarks in *Met.* H 3 about the homonymy of substance<sup>44</sup>. In very general terms, there seems to be something awkward, perhaps bordering on a category mistake, in saying that a compound and its form are the same *in form*. Two compounds can be the same in form, but it does not seem that a compound and a form can. To use an example from *Met.* Z 8, Callias and Socrates are certainly the same in form, but there seems to be something wrong in the suggestion that Callias and his soul are the same in form<sup>45</sup>. This is perhaps because, as Shield suggests, a form taken in isolation and a form in a compound are not quite the same thing. A form in a compound and a form taken in isolation exist in different ways, and this may suggest that a form and the compound having the form are not the same in form or, if they are, are so in a way different from how two co-specific compounds are the same in form. To go back to the passage in H 3, Aristotle explicitly says that form and compound are  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonyms and that form is the core homonym. His suggestion is that the form of an animal is that in virtue of which a compound animal is an animal. More generally, form is that in virtue of which a compound substance is a substance. This perfectly squares with the causal or explanatory role that Aristotle assigns to form in the central books: form is that in virtue of which a certain compound substance is what it is<sup>46</sup>. But, if this is the case,  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy seems indeed to be the right choice on Aristotle's part. For, if my considerations in Section 4 are correct,  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy is designed to capture the relationship between the source of a certain character and the derivative instances of the character. Form is the source of substantiality for all other things that are called substances. As we have seen, this idea is naturally associated with a particular version of the degree doctrine. Since form

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<sup>43</sup> Ward, *Aristotle on Homonymy*, 81-86.

<sup>44</sup> Shields, *Order in Multiplicity*, 114-118; Lewis, *Aristotle on the Homonymy of Being*, 31-33.

<sup>45</sup> Arist., *Met.*, Z 8, 1034a5-8.

<sup>46</sup> See for instance Arist., *Met.*, Z 17, 1041a26-32; b4-9.



is the source of substantiality for all other things that are called substances, it is substance to the maximum degree, while all other substances are substance to a lesser degree.

There is another, more substantial, difficulty with the suggestion in *Met.* H 3, that is, that matter is not mentioned at all in this passage. Aristotle does not say, for instance, that the substance-term 'animal' can stand for the matter of the animal. This may seem to imply that matter is excluded from the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  ἕν homonymy of substance. In the H 3 passage, however, Aristotle describes form as actuality. Since matter relates to form as potentiality to actuality, this invites the natural suggestion that matter is substance because it is a potential substance. In other words, substance as matter relates to the core homonym of substance, i.e. substance as a form, as the potential relates to the actual.

This suggestion is possibly pursued in *De anima*, B 1, where Aristotle presents a hylomorphic division of substance:

"We acknowledge, as one determinate kind among beings, substance. And of substance (a) one is substance as matter or that which in itself is not a τόδε τι, and (b) another substance as shape or form, which is that precisely in virtue of which a thing is called a τόδε τι, and thirdly (c) substance as that which is compounded of both (a) and (b). Now, matter is potentiality, form actuality; and the latter in two ways: one as knowledge is, the other as the exercise of knowledge is."<sup>47</sup>

In the *De anima*, Aristotle is not particularly interested in exploring the metaphysical implications of considering substance in terms of the hylomorphic model. His focus is more on describing the soul as form and actuality, and in clarifying how actuality should be understood in the case of the soul. But it is interesting that in the passage quoted, substance is said in three ways, as matter, as form and as the compound of matter and form. What is more, form is described as both that in virtue of which a certain compound is what it is and as the actuality with respect to which matter exists in potentiality. This is broadly in agreement with Aristotle's assessment of the role of form in Book Z and H, and reinforces the suggestion that substance can indeed be seen as  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  ἕν homonymous. On this proposal, form is the core homonym with respect to 'substance' insofar as it is the source of substantiality for all other things that are called substance. The compound is called substance because form is that in virtue of which the compound is what it is and so is that in virtue of which the compound is substance. Finally, matter is called substance because it is potentially what the form is actually. If this is right, then it seems that Aristotle is indeed flirting with the idea of making  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$  ἕν homonymy the right framework to understand the way in which substance is said, though the evidence also shows that the framework is merely sketched and never officially developed.

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<sup>47</sup> Arist., *De An.*, B 1, 412a6-11 (my translation).

## 6. Complications and conclusions

I wish to end the paper by hinting at a couple of difficult issues that need to be addressed to complete my proposal, though a full discussion of both difficulties cannot be provided here. One has to do with how my suggested understanding of substance in terms of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy works when compared to standard cases of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy, and in particular to the case of being. The fundamental feature of  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy is that the account of the core homonym is mentioned in the account of the secondary homonyms. And the feature is certainly preserved in the model that I have just sketched out for the case of substance. Form, matter and the compound are substances according to different accounts of 'substance'. Thus, substance is homonymous. But the accounts to go with the different homonyms of substance do overlap and do so in a  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  way. For an account of the compound as substance must make reference to form as the core homonym. Similarly, an account of matter as substance must make reference to form as the core homonym. This is not so different, and actually should not be so different, from standard cases of substance-terms other than 'substance'. An account of a certain compound as a human being must make reference to the human form, the human soul, in virtue of which a certain compound is a human being. Similarly, an account of a certain chunk of matter *as a human being* must make reference to the form in virtue of which a potential human being is an actual human being.

In another respect, the case of substance as a  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonym presents some peculiarities, especially when compared to the case of being. In the case of being, the relation of dependence in account all secondary beings bear to the core instance of being is supplemented by a series of asymmetric relation of existential dependence. In other words, it is not only the case that quality-being, quantity-being etc. depends in account on substance-being. It is also the case that qualities, quantities etc. depend for their existence on the entities in the categories of substance. But in the case of the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy of substance, supplementation in terms of existential dependence is clearly off the table. It is simply not true that the compound and matter asymmetrically depend for their existence on form. For there is a sense in which form too depends for its existence on the compound and on matter. The forms of sensible substances do not and cannot exist in separation from matter. Thus, existential dependence must be replaced in the case of the  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu$  homonymy of substance by other kinds of relations of dependence. One suggestion is that we construe such relations of dependence in terms of teleology and final causation. On this view, the core homonym with respect to 'substance', i.e. form, works as the goal or  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  for both the compound and matter. This is rather straightforward for the case of matter. Matter is potentially what form is actually. Now, in *Met.*  $\Theta$  8

Aristotle explicitly describes the priority of actuality over potentiality as priority in substance and spells it out in teleological terms: the actuality is the goal of what is potential, the τέλος that the potential must realise to get to full reality<sup>48</sup>. But I think that one of the implications of Aristotle's teleology is that form works as a τέλος not only for the matter that is potentially a substance, but also for the compound as well. Form is the essence or nature of the compound and so is its teleological goal: a compound fully realizes its nature when it has its characteristic form, and so form works as a goal or τέλος for the compound as well. On the account of substance suggested, therefore, form as substance is mentioned in the accounts of both the compound as substance and matter as substance. This relation of dependence in account is then supplemented by a relation of teleological dependence of both the compound and matter on form as substance.

The second complication concerns the case of matter as substance. One would like to know, for instance, whether it is the matter from which a certain compound substance is generated (the matter of generation) that is a πρὸς ἓν homonym with respect to 'substance', or the matter that is constitutive of a certain compound substance (the constitutive matter). The short answer is that, although both kinds of matter are potentially substance for Aristotle, the examples in the *De anima* and the *Metaphysics* strongly suggests that it is the constitutive matter that is relevant here. It is the body that is described as a potential substance in the *De Anima* and it is the constitutive matter of an object that is considered in the *Metaphysics* as a serious candidate for the title of substance. Thus, it is the constitutive matter of a sensible substance that is a πρὸς ἓν homonym with respect to 'substance'. The longer answer would involve an explanation of how the constitutive matter of a substance can be said to be potentially that substance. As pointed out by Ackrill a few decades ago<sup>49</sup>, this is a difficult issue, especially in the case of living beings, which are Aristotle's paradigmatic cases of substance. For the constitutive matter of a living being, its body, counts as the constitutive matter only if it performs the characteristic functions of that living being, i.e. only if it is functioning and living matter. This is the generalized version of a principle Aristotle seems to subscribe to, according to which the parts of a living being are such only within the functioning living being, and lose their identity outside it<sup>50</sup>. Thus, a severed or dead hand is a hand in name only, i.e. by homonymy. By extension, a corpse or dead body is a body in name only. But then, if this is true, it seems that the constitutive matter of a living substance should be actually and not potentially that substance, precisely because it is actually doing

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<sup>48</sup> Arist., *Met.*, Θ 8, 1050a4-16; b2-6. For an interesting discussion of this line of thought, see F.A. Lewis, *Aristotle on the Unity of Substance*, «Pacific Philosophical Quarterly», 76 (1995), 222–265.

<sup>49</sup> J.L. Ackrill, *Aristotle's Definition of 'psyche'*, «Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society», 73 (1972/73), 119-113.

<sup>50</sup> The principle is often called 'the homonymy principle'. See Arist., *Met.*, Z 10, 1035b 23-25 (but see also: Z 10, 1035b 14-18); Z 11, 1036b 30-32; Z 16, 1040b 5-8. *De An.*, B 1, 412b 19-22; *De Par. Anim.*, A 1, 641a 3-4; B, 653b 19-25; *De Gen. Anim.*, B, 1, 734b 24-36; 741a 10-13; *Meteor.*, Δ, 11, 390a 9 ff.

the things that an actual substance does. And so it becomes unclear how it could be characterized as potentiality as well, and indeed how anything else could be so characterised, because any thing that could possibly count as the matter of a living being should perform the functions of a living being in actuality. Although a discussion of this issue far exceeds the scope this paper, attempts have been made to provide an answer to Ackrill's problem by pointing towards different ways of understanding the notion of a body and of the matter of living beings. And some of these ways allow us make sense of the idea that the constitutive matter of a substance is potentially that substance<sup>51</sup>. If these solutions are on the right track, as I think they are, perhaps we have one more ingredient in the explanation of how πρὸς ἑν homonymy could be applied to substance as well.

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<sup>51</sup> See in particular J. Whiting, *Living Bodies*, in M. Nussbaum-A.O. Rorty (cur.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992, 75-91; F. Lewis, *Aristotle on the Relation between a Thing and its Matter*, in T. Scaltsas-D. Charles-M.L. Gill (cur.), *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Oxford Clarendon Press, Oxford 1994, 247–77.