

**Ph.D Program in Philosophy**  
**North Western Italian Philosophy Consortium (FINO)**

**PhD Student:** Beatrice Michetti

**University:** Università degli Studi di Pavia (UniPv)

**Cycle:** XXXIII

**Curriculum:** Storico C3

**Tutor:** Prof.ssa S. Gastaldi

**Suggested Supervisor:** Prof. F. Trabattoni

**Title:** Aristotle's theory of substance and Plato's Academy in *Metaphysics Z*

**(A) Didactics**

**List of curricular courses:**

**. Argumentation seminar – February/March 2018**

2 February – 9 February – 16 February – 23 Febbraio – 9 March – Università degli Studi di Genova/ Prof.ssa C. Amoretti e Prof.ssa M. Benzi

**. Rolling Seminar – Philosophical Methodology – February/March 2018 – Università degli Studi di Genova**

2 February – C1 - Prof. T. Piazza, *Thought Experiment*

9 February – C3 - Prof.ssa D. Steila, *How can we study different philosophical culture and their interaction?*

16 February – C2 - Prof. F. Magni, *Free Will*

23 February – C2- Prof. L. Fonnesu, *Moral Responsibility*

9 March – C4 - Prof. L. Vanzago, *Phenomenology*

16 March – C1- Prof. M. Vignolo, *Intuition*

23 March – C4 - Prof. M. Pagano, *Hermeneutics*

**Paper:** The Rolling Seminar paper was written under the supervision of Prof. Luca Fonnesu.  
Title: *Responsabilità e Causalità: Etica Nicomachea III 1-5*

## **B) Complementary activities**

### **Conferences, seminars, doctoral lectures**

#### . Discussant

13-14 October 2017 – *FORMS. New perspectives on Ancient Metaphysics and Epistemology* – International Conference – Università degli Studi di Milano

#### . Auditor

26 October 2017 – *Incontro con Aristotele* – Presentazione del libro di M. Vegetti e F. Ademollo e conferenza – Università degli Studi di Roma ‘La Sapienza’

6 November 2017 – Ermanno Bencivenga. *Il bene e il bello: etica dell’immagine* – Lezione dottorale – Università degli Studi di Torino

27 November 2017 – Andrea Beccaro – *Il ritorno della religione nelle Relazioni Internazionali: tra Jihad e guerra al terrorismo* – Vercelli/UNIPO

1-2 December 2017 – SIFA Conference. *Individual and Collectivities* – Università degli Studi di Genova

18-20 December 2017 – Jennifer Hornsby. *On Human Agency* – Università degli Studi di Genova

5 March 2018 – Franco Ferrari. *La dottrina dell'anamnesi nel Menone di Platone* – Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano

12 April 2018 – *Aristotele e la tradizione aristotelica* – Paolo Fait. *La sillogistica di Aristotele dal punto di vista della matematica antica* – Università degli Studi di Padova

23 April – Doctoral lecture – F. Petrucci e S. Aerts – *Le auctoritates nel pensiero antico e tardo-antico* – Università degli Studi di Milano

8-9 May – *Cantieri di Primavera. Spazio e Tempo* – Università degli Studi di Pavia

28 May 2018 - *Aristotele e la tradizione aristotelica* – Andrea Falcon. *La filosofia della natura di Aristotele nella tradizione aristotelica* – Università degli Studi di Padova

30-31 May 2018 – *Politica e Storia in Vico*. Convegno internazionale in occasione del 350 anniversario della nascita di Giambattista Vico – Collegio Ghislieri - Pavia

25 June - *Aristotele e la tradizione aristotelica* – Anna Marmodoro. *La divisione ilomorfica* – Università degli Studi di Padova

26-27 June – GC: *Contemporary Issues Across Ethics and Epistemology* – Università degli Studi di Pavia

### Speaker

17-18 September – GC: History of Philosophy. *Human and Nature* – Università degli Studi di Pavia

Contribution: *Defining Human Being: Metaphysics Z11 and De Anima II 1*

### **Workshops**

28 February – 4 March 2018 - *The Analogy of Being* – Ligerz, Switzerland – University of Lucern  
Paper: *The verb 'to be' and the concept of Being: an ontological interpretation of Plato's Sophist*

3-8 September 2018 – Summer School + International Conference – *Philosophies in the Mediterranean: Aristotle's Metaphysics yesterday and today* – Sicilia (Falconara/Palermo) – University of Lugano/University of Lucern

### **C) Dissertation Project**

The first year of the PhD has been devoted to the analysis of the book Z of *Metaphysics* which is the focus of the dissertation thesis. Therefore, a consistent part of the research has been dedicated to the in-depth study of the Greek text and its translation, paying special attention to the chapters at the core of the project: Z4-6; Z10-11; Z13-16; Z17. The reference texts adopted are the following: Frede M./Patzig G., *Il libro Z della Metafisica di Aristotele*, trad. it. di G. Reale, ed. Vita e Pensiero, 2001; M. Burnyeat, *A map of Metaphysics Z*, Mathesis Publications, Pittsburgh, 2001; D. Bostock, *Metaphysics Z and H*, translation with commentary by D. Bostock, Clarendon Aristotle Series, Oxford 1994.

Another part of the research focused on researching and studying the secondary literature concerning the commentary and the interpretation of Book Z. This work proves useful as a further clarification of the *status quaestionis*. It also provides the contextual framework for the emergence of the Platonic and the Academic background, as the specific exegetical perspective by means of which I aim to analyse Aristotle's own theory.

Concerning this aspect, the reading of S. Menn's unpublished work (*The aim and the argument of Aristotle's Metaphysics*) has been highly illuminating. Against the widely accepted «candidate-criteria-view» of Book Z - according to which its main target, as an inquiry into the notion of οὐσία, would be to render the form as the primary substance – Menn proposes to read the above-mentioned treatise as an investigation of the causes and ἀρχαί of being as said of the categories (as stated in the program established in *Met. E*), and so, primarily, of being as οὐσία, especially of sensible substances. Hence, «we should read ZH as a critical examination of whether the causes of being-as-said-of-the-categories to sensible things (especially, causes of being as οὐσίαι to sensible οὐσίαι) lead up to the ἀρχαί». By doing so, Aristotle's strategy is based upon a continuous

confrontation and revision of ideas and theories found in the philosophical tradition, most notably of Plato and the Academics. Two points of Menn's discussion are particularly significant for my project:

a) Book Z is mainly concerned with οὐσία understood in its relative sense, thus, as οὐσία of ordinary or agreed upon substances. Given such concept, the project of Book Z, with its causal-explanatory perspective, could be read as compatible with the *Categories*' ontology of concrete particulars. Consequently, while the form could be considered as conceptually prior to the compound, the particular composite substance maintains the ontological priority over its form, in so far as the form is unable to exist as separate from it (M.L. Gill, *Matter against Substance*, 1993).

b) Book Z should not be read as a self-contained treatise, oblivious of the rest of *Metaphysics*. On the contrary, Z is to be understood as a contribution to first philosophy and a part of the overall project of *Metaphysics* as an enquiry into the first principles and the causes of everything. The Z's study of the οὐσία of sensible substances is for the sake of knowledge of non-sensible οὐσία (Z2-3-11-17), whether these are Plato's separate Forms or separate mathematical entities, or perhaps an Aristotelian replacement for these rejected candidates. Hence, it is vital to consider the backward (*Met.* B) and the forward (*Met.* M-N) connections between Z and other parts of *Metaphysics*.

Finally, the last part of the year has been eminently dedicated to Z10 and 11 where Aristotle investigates the structure and the content of the definition of substances. I focused on the Aristotelian criticism against Socrates the Younger, concerning whether the formula of the natural compound should include the matter as well as the form. This issue was the topic of my paper, *Defining Human Being: Metaphysics Z11 and De Anima II 1*, presented during the FINO Graduate Conference in Pavia (17-18/09/2018). My aim is to further develop the considerations outlined in the above-mentioned essay into a chapter for the dissertation.

The thesis will be structured as follows:

- 1) A general introduction concerning the project, the structure and the content of Book Z, by including it in the broader framework of the *Metaphysics*, especially concerning Book B.
- 2) A philosophical interpretation of Z10-11, particularly regarding Aristotle's criticism of the reductionist thesis developed by the Academics. In order to do so, a careful study of Books M and N of *Metaphysics* will be crucial.

- 3) A philosophical interpretation of Z13-16 – the chapters devoted to the analysis of universals - as the *locus classicus* of Aristotle's criticism of Platonic forms within Z.
- 4) A concluding analysis of Z17 whose discussion is widely considered as a turn from the mostly aporetic-dialectic argument outlined throughout Z3-16 to the constructive part of a hylomorphic theory of substance (Book H).