4.1 There is a science which investigates being as being and the attributes which belong to this in virtue of its own nature. Now this is not the same as any of the so-called special sciences; for none of these others deals generally with being as being. They cut off a part of being and investigate the attributes of this part—this is what the mathematical sciences for instance do. Now since we are seeking the first principles and the highest causes, clearly there must be some thing to which these belong in virtue of its own nature. If then our predecessors who sought the elements of existing things were seeking these same principles, it is necessary that the elements must be elements of being not by accident but just because it is being. Therefore it is of being as being that we also must grasp the first causes.

4.2 There are many senses in which a thing may be said to 'be', but they are related to one central point, one definite kind of thing, and are not homonymous. Everything which is healthy is related to health, one thing in the sense that it preserves health, another in the sense that it produces it, another in the sense that it is capable of it. And that which is medical is relative to the medical art, one thing in the sense that it possesses it, another in the sense that it is naturally adapted to it, another in the sense that it is a function of the medical art. And we shall find other words used similarly to these. So, too, there are many senses in which a thing is said to be, but all refer to one starting-point; some things are said to be because they are substances, others because they are affections of substance, others because they are a process towards substance, or destructions or privations or qualities of substance, or productive or generative of substance, or of things which are relative to substance, or negations of some of these things or of substance itself. It is for this reason that we say even of non-being that it is non-being. As, then, there is one science which deals with all healthy things, the same applies in the other cases also. For not only in the case of things which have one common notion does the investigation belong to one science, but also in the case of things which are related to one common nature; for even these in a sense have one common notion. It is clear then that it is the work of one science also to study all things that are, qua being.

—But everywhere science deals chiefly with that which is primary; and on which the other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names. If, then, this is substance, it is of substances that the philosopher must grasp the principles and the causes.
There are several senses in which a thing may be said to be, as we pointed out previously in our book on the various senses of words; for in one sense it means what a thing is or a ‘this’, and in another sense it means that a thing is of a certain quality or quantity or has some such predicate asserted of it. While ‘being’ has all these senses, obviously that which is primarily is the ‘what’, which indicates the substance of the thing. For when we say of what quality a thing is, we say that it is good or beautiful, but not that it is three cubits long or that it is a man; but when we say what it is, we do not say ‘white’ or ‘hot’ or ‘three cubits long’, but ‘man’ or ‘God’. And all other things are said to be because they are, some of them, quantities of that which is in this primary sense, others qualities of it, others affections of it, and others some other determination of it. And so one might raise the question whether ‘to walk’ and ‘to be healthy’ and ‘to sit’ signify in each case something that is, and similarly in any other case of this sort; for none of them is either self-subsistent or capable of being separated from substance, but rather, if anything, it is that which walks or is seated or is healthy that is an existent thing. Now these are seen to be more real because there is something definite which underlies them; and this is the substance or individual, which is implied in such a predicate; for ‘good’ or ‘sitting’ are not used without this. Clearly then it is in virtue of this category that each of the others is. Therefore that which is primarily and is simply (not is something) must be substance.

Now there are several senses in which a thing is said to be primary; but substance is primary in every sense—in formula, in order of knowledge, in time. For of the other categories none can exist independently, but only substance. And in formula also this is primary; for in the formula of each term the formula of its substance must be present. And we think we know each thing most fully, when we know what it is, e.g. what man is or what fire is, rather than when we know its quality, its quantity, or where it is; since we know each of these things also, only when we know what the quantity or the quality is.

And indeed the question which, both now and of old, has always been raised, and always been the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is substance? For it is this that some assert to be one, others more than one, and that some assert to be limited in number, others unlimited. And so we also must consider chiefly and primarily and almost exclusively what that is which is in this sense.
Metaphysics 7.2

Substance is thought to belong most obviously to bodies; and so we say that both animals and plants and their parts are substances, and so are natural bodies such as fire and water and earth and everything of the sort, and all things that are parts of these or composed of these (either of parts or of the whole bodies), e.g. the heaven and its parts, stars and moon and sun. But whether these alone are substances, or there are also others, or only some of these, or some of these and some other things are substances, or none of these but only some other things, must be considered. Some think the limits of body, i.e. surface, line, point, and unit, are substances, and more so than body or the solid. Further, some do not think there is anything substantial besides sensible things, but others think there are eternal substances which are more in number and more real, e.g. Plato posited two kinds of substance—the Forms and the objects of mathematics—as well as a third kind, viz. the substance of sensible bodies. And Speusippus made still more kinds of substance, beginning with the One, and making principles for each kind of substance, one for numbers, another for spatial magnitudes, and then another for the soul; and in this way he multiplies the kinds of substance. And some say Forms and numbers have the same nature, and other things come after them, e.g. lines and planes, until we come to the substance of the heavens and to sensible bodies.

Regarding these matters, then, we must inquire which of the common statements are right and which are not right, and what things are substances, and whether there are or are not any besides sensible substances, and how sensible substances exist, and whether there is a separable substance (and if so why and how) or there is no substance separable from sensible substances; and we must first sketch the nature of substance.
Things are said to be (1) in an accidental sense, (2) by their own nature.

(1) In an accidental sense, e.g., we say the just is musical, and the man is musical and the musical is a man, just as we say the musical builds, because the builder happens to be musical or the musical happens to be a builder; for here ‘one thing is another’ means ‘one is an accident of another’. So in the cases we have mentioned; for when we say the man is musical and the musical is a man, or the white is musical or the musical is white, the last two mean that both attributes are accidents of the same thing; the first that the attribute is an accident of that which is; while the musical is a man means that musical is an accident of man. In this sense, too, the not-white is said to be, because that of which it is an accident is. Thus when one thing is said in an accidental sense to be another, this is either because both belong to the same thing, and this is, or because that to which the attribute belongs is, or because the subject which has as an attribute that of which it is itself predicated, itself is.

(2) Those things are said in their own right to be that are indicated by the figures of predication; for the senses of ‘being’ are just as many as these figures. Since some predicates indicate what the subject is, others its quality, others quantity, others relation, others activity or passivity, others its place, others its time, ‘being’ has a meaning answering to each of these. For there is no difference between ‘the man is recovering’ and ‘the man recovers’, nor between ‘the man is walking’ or ‘cutting’ and ‘the man walks’ or ‘cuts’; and similarly in all other cases.

(3) ‘Being’ and ‘is’ mean that a statement is true, ‘not being’ that it is not true but false,—and this alike in affirmation and negation; e.g. ‘Socrates is musical’ means that this is true, or ‘Socrates is not-white’ means that this is true; but ‘the diagonal of the square is not commensurate’ means that it is false to say it is.

(4) Again, ‘being’ and ‘that which is’, in these cases we have mentioned, sometimes mean being potentially, and sometimes being actually. For we say both of that which sees potentially and of that which sees actually, that it is seeing, and both of that which can use knowledge and of that which is using it, that it knows, and both of that to which rest is already present and of that which can rest, that it rests. And similarly in the case of substances we say the Hermes is in the stone, and the half of the line is in the line, and we say of that which is not yet ripe that it is corn. When a thing is potential and when it is not yet potential must be explained elsewhere.
We call substances: (1) the simple bodies, i.e. earth and fire and water and everything of the sort, and in general bodies and the things composed of them, both animals and divine beings, and the parts of these. All these are called substance because they are not predicated of a subject but everything else is predicated of them.

(2) That which, being present in such things as are not predicated of a subject, is the cause of their being, as the soul is of the being of animals.

(3) The parts which are present in such things, limiting them and marking them as individuals, and by whose destruction the whole is destroyed, as the body is by the destruction of the plane, as some say, and the plane by the destruction of the line; and in general number is thought by some to be of this nature; for if it is destroyed, they say, nothing exists, and it limits all things.

(4) The essence, the formula of which is a definition, is also called the substance of each thing.

It follows, then, that substance has two senses, (a) the ultimate substratum, which is no longer predicated of anything else, and (b) that which is a ‘this’ and separable—and of this nature is the shape or form of each thing.

---

We have treated of that which is primarily and to which all the other categories of being are referred—i.e. of substance. For it is in virtue of the formula of substance that the others are said to be quantity and quality and the like; for all will be found to contain the formula of substance, as we said in the first part of our work. And since ‘being’ is in one way divided into ‘what’, quality, and quantity, and is in another way distinguished in respect of potentiality and fulfillment, and of function, let us discuss potentiality and fulfillment. First let us explain potentiality in the strictest sense, which is, however, not the most useful for our present purpose. For potentiality and actuality extend further than the mere sphere of motion. But when we have spoken of this first kind, we shall in our discussions of actuality explain the other kinds of potentiality.
We have pointed out elsewhere that 'potentiality' and the word 'can' have several senses. Of these we may neglect all the potentialities that are so called homonymously. For some are called so by analogy, as in geometry; and we say things can be or cannot be because in some definite way they are or are not.

But all potentialities that conform to the same type are starting points, and are called potentialities in reference to one primary kind, which is a starting-point of change in another thing or in the thing itself qua other. For one kind is a potentiality for being acted on, i.e. the principle in the very thing acted on, which makes it capable of being changed and acted on by another thing or by itself regarded as other; and another kind is a state of insusceptibility to change for the worse and to destruction by another thing or by the thing itself qua other, i.e. by a principle of change. In all these definitions is contained the formula of potentiality in the primary sense.—And again these so-called potentialities are potentialities either of acting merely or of being acted on, or of acting or being acted on well, so that even in the formulae of the latter the formulae of the prior kinds of potentiality are somehow contained.

Obviously, then, in a sense the potentiality of acting and of being acted on is one (for a thing may be capable either because it can be acted on or because something else can be acted on by it), but in a sense the potentialities are different. For the one is in the thing acted on; it is because it contains a certain motive principle, and because even the matter is a motive principle, that the thing acted on is acted on, one thing by one, another by another; for that which is oily is inflammable, and that which yields in a particular way can be crushed; and similarly in all other cases. But the other potentiality is in the agent, e.g. heat and the art of building are present, one in that which can produce heat and the other in the man who can build. And so in so far as a thing is an organic unity, it cannot be acted on by itself; for it is one and not two different things. And want of potentiality, or powerlessness, is the privation which is contrary to potentiality of this sort, so that every potentiality belongs to the same subject and refers to the same process as a corresponding want of potentiality. Privation has several senses; for it means that which has not a certain quality and that which might naturally have it but has not got it, either in general of when it might naturally have it, and either in some particular way, e.g. when it completely fails to have it, or when it in any degree fails to have it. And in certain cases if things which naturally have a quality lose it by violence, we say they suffer privation.
καὶ εὐδαιμόνηκεν. ὑγίασται. εὖ ζῇ καὶ εὖ ἔζηκεν ἅμα, καὶ εὐδαιμονεῖ ἀλλ' οὐ μανθάνει καὶ μεμάθηκεν οὐδ' ὑγιάζεται καὶ φρονεῖ καὶ πεφρόνηκε, καὶ νοεῖ καὶ νενόηκεν, καὶ ἡ πρᾶξις. οἷον ὁρᾷ ἅμα καὶ ἑώρακε, καὶ γὰρ τέλος· ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ᾗ ἐνυπάρχει τὸ τέλος κίνησις, οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα πρᾶξις ἢ οὐ τελεία γε (οὐ ἐστὶν ἐν κινήσει, μὴ ὑπάρχοντα ὧν ἕνεκα ἡ ἰσχνασία αὐτό, αὐτὰ δὲ ὅταν ἰσχναίνῃ οὕτως τέλος ἀλλὰ τῶν περὶ τὸ τέλος, οἷον τὸ ἰσχναίνειν Ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶν πράξεων ὧν ἔστι πέρας οὐδεμία ἐνέργειαν, τὸ δὲ χωρίζεσθαι οὔ. διαίρεσιν ἀποδίδωσι τὸ εἶναι δυνάμει ταύτην τὴν χωριστόν, ἀλλὰ γνώσει. τὸ γὰρ μὴ ὑπολείπειν τὴν οὐχ οὕτω δυνάμει ἔστιν ὡς ἐνεργείᾳ ἐσόμενον ὁρᾶται, τὸ δὲ ὅτι ὁρᾶσθαι δυνατόν)· τὸ δ' ἄπειρον ἀληθεύεσθαί ποτε (τὸ μὲν γὰρ ὁρώμενον ὅτι καὶ ὁρωμένῳ. ταῦτα μὲν γὰρ ἐνδέχεται καὶ ἁπλῶς πολλοῖς τῶν ὄντων, οἷον τῷ ὁρῶντι καὶ βαδίζοντι ὅσα τοιαῦτα, λέγεται δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ ή ὑλήν. ἄλλως δὲ καὶ τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ τὸ κενόν, καὶ κίνησις πρὸς δύναμιν τὰ' δ' ὡς οὐσία πρὸς τίνα τοῦτο, τόδ' ἐν τῷδε ἢ πρὸς τόδε· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ὡς ἀλλ' ἢ τῷ ἀνάλογον, ὡς τοῦτο ἐν τούτῳ ἢ πρὸς τὸ δυνατόν. λέγεται δὲ ἐνεργείᾳ οὐ πάντα ὁμοίως μορίῳ ἔστω ἡ ἐνέργεια ἀφωρισμένη θατέρῳ δὲ τὸ ἀνέργαστον. ταύτης δὲ τῆς διαφορᾶς θατέρῳ ὑλῆς πρὸς τὴν ὕλην, καὶ τὸ ἀπειργασμένον πρὸς πρὸς τὸ καθεῦδον, καὶ τὸ ὁρῶν πρὸς τὸ μῦον οἰκοδομοῦν πρὸς τὸ οἰκοδομικόν, καὶ τὸ ἐγρηγορὸς ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἀνάλογον συνορᾶν, ὅτι ὡς τὸ βουλόμεθα λέγειν, καὶ οὐ δεῖ παντὸς ὅρον ζητεῖν δῆλον δ' ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα τῇ ἐπαγωγῇ ὃ θεωροῦντα, ἂν δυνατὸς ἦτοι καὶ ἐπιστήμονα καὶ τὸν μή θεωρώντα, ἂν δυνατός ἦθελήσῃ· τὸ δ' ἐνεργείᾳ.
If not, the process would have had sometime to cease, as the process of making thin ceases: but, as it is, it does not cease; we are living and have lived. Of these processes, then, we must call the one set movements, and the other actualities. For every movement is incomplete—making thin, learning, walking, building; these are movements, and incomplete movements. For it is not true that at the same time we are walking and have walked, or are building and have built, or are coming to be and have come to be—it is a different thing that is being moved and that has been moved, and that is moving and that has moved; but it is the same thing that at the same time has seen and is seeing, or is thinking and has thought. The latter sort of process, then, I call an actuality, and the former a movement.

What pleasure is, or what kind of thing it is, will become plainer if we take up the question again from the beginning. Seeing seems to be at any complete moment, for it does not lack anything which coming into being later will complete its form; and pleasure also seems to be of this nature. For it is a whole, and at no time can one find a pleasure whose form will be completed if the pleasure lasts longer. For this reason, too, it is not a movement. For every movement (e.g. that of building) takes time and is for the sake of an end, and is complete when it has made what it aims at. It is complete, therefore, only in the whole time or at the final moment. In their parts and during the time they occupy, all movements are incomplete, and are different in kind from the whole movement and from each other. For the fitting together of the stones is different from the fluting of the column, and these are both different from the making of the temple; and the making of the temple is complete (for it lacks nothing with a view to the end proposed), but the making of the base or of the triglyph is incomplete; for each is the making of a part. They differ in kind, then, and it is not possible to find at any and every time a movement complete in form, but if at all, only in the whole time. So, too, in the case of walking and all other movements. For if locomotion is a movement from here to there, it, too, has differences in kind—flying, walking, leaping, and so on. And not only so, but in walking itself there are such differences; for the whence and whither are not the same in the whole racecourse and in a part of it, nor in one part and in another, nor is it the same thing to traverse this line and that; for one traverses not only a line but one which is in a place, and this one is in a different place from that. We have discussed movement with another work, but it seems that it is not complete at any and every time, but that the many movements are incomplete and different in kind, since the whence and whither give them their form. But of pleasure the form is complete at any and every time. Plainly, then, pleasure and movement must be different from each other, and pleasure must be one of the things that are whole and complete. This would seem to be the case, too, from the fact that it is not possible to move otherwise than in time, but it is possible to be pleased; for that which takes place in a moment is a whole.
Nature is a principle of motion and change, and it is the subject of our inquiry. We must therefore see that we understand what motion is; for if it were unknown, nature too would be unknown.

When we have determined the nature of motion, our task will be to attack in the same way the terms which come next in order. Now motion is supposed to belong to the class of things which are continuous; and the infinite presents itself first in the continuous—that is how it comes about that the account of the infinite is often used in definitions of the continuous; for what is infinitely divisible is continuous. Besides these, place, void, and time are thought to be necessary conditions of motion.

Clearly, then, for these reasons and also because the attributes mentioned are common to everything and universal, we must first take each of them in hand and discuss it. For the investigation of special attributes comes after that of the common attributes.

To begin then, as we said, with motion. Some things are in fulfilment only, others in potentiality and in fulfilment—one being a ‘this’, another so much, another such and such, and similarly for the other categories of being. The term ‘relative’ is applied sometimes with reference to excess and defect, sometimes to agent and patient, and generally to what can move and what can be moved. For what can cause movement is relative to what can be moved, and vice versa.

There is no such thing as motion over and above the things. It is always with respect to substance or to quantity or to quality or to place that what changes changes. But it is impossible, as we assert, to find anything common to these which is neither ‘this’ nor quantity nor quality nor any of the other predicates. Hence neither will motion and change have reference to something over and above the things mentioned; for there is nothing over and above them.

Now each of these belongs to all its subjects in either of two ways: namely, substance—the one is its form, the other privation; in quality, white and black; in quantity, complete and incomplete. Similarly, in respect of locomotion, upwards and downwards or light and heavy. Hence there are as many types of motion or change as there are of being.

We have distinguished in respect of each class between what is in fulfilment and what is potentially; thus the fulfilment of what is potentially, as such, is motion—e.g. the fulfilment of what is alterable, as alterable, is alteration; of what is increasable and its opposite, decreasable (there is no common name for both), increase and decrease; of what can come to be and pass away, coming to be and passing away; of what can be carried along, locomotion.
That this is what motion is, is clear from what follows: when what is buildable, in so far as we call it such, is in fulfilment, it is being built, and that is building. Similarly with learning, doctoring, rolling, jumping, ripening, aging.

The same thing can be both potential and fulfilled, not indeed at the same time or not in the same respect, but e.g. potentially hot and actually cold. Hence such things will act and be acted on by one another in many ways: each of them will be capable at the same time of acting and of being acted upon. Hence, too, what effects motion as a natural agent can be moved: when a thing of this kind causes motion, it is itself also moved.

This, indeed, has led some people to suppose that every mover is moved. But this question depends on another set of arguments, and the truth will be made clear later. It is possible for a thing to cause motion, though it is itself incapable of being moved.

It is the fulfilment of what is potential when it is already fulfilled and operates not as itself but as movable, that is motion. What I mean by ‘as’ is this: bronze is potentially a statue. But it is not the fulfilment of bronze as bronze which is motion. For to be bronze and to be a certain potentiality are not the same. If they were identical without qualification, i.e. in definition, the fulfilment of bronze as bronze would be motion. But they are not the same, as has been said. (This is obvious in contraries. To be capable of health and to be capable of illness are not the same; for if they were there would be no difference between being ill and being well. Yet the subject both of health and of sickness—whether it is humour or blood—is one and the same.)

We can distinguish, then, between the two—just as colour and visible are different—and clearly it is the fulfilment of what is potential as potential that is motion.
De anima 2.5

Διαρισμένων δὲ τούτων λέγομεν καθὴ περὶ πάσης αισθήσεως. ἡ δ' αίσθησις ἐν τῷ κανείσθαι τε καὶ πᾶσχεν συμβαίνει, καθάπερ εἰρήται. ὅκει γὰρ ἀλλοίωσις τί εἶναι, φασὶ δὲ τυνεὶ καὶ τὸ ὁμοιόν ὑπὸ τοῦ ὁμοίου πᾶσχεν. τούτῳ δὲ πῶς δυνατὸν ἢ ἀδύνατον, εἰρήκαμεν ἐν τοῖς καθολοῦ λόγοις περὶ τοῦ ποιεῖν καὶ πᾶσχεν. ἔχει δ' ἀπορίαν διὰ τί καὶ τῶν αἰσθήσεων αὐτῶν ὃ ἔχεται αἰσθήσεις, καὶ διὰ τί ἀνεῖν τῶν ἔξω οὐ ποιοῦσιν αἰσθήσεις, ἐνότος πυρὸς καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων στοιχείων, ὃν ἔστω ἡ αἰσθήσις καθ' αὐτὰ ἡ τὰ συμβεβηκότα τοῦτοι. δήλον οὖν ὅτι τὸ αἰσθητικὸν οὐκ ἔστω ἐνεργεία, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει μόνον, διὸ οὐκ αἰσθάνεται, καθάπερ τὸ καυστὸν τούτοις ὃ ἔχεται, καθὰ περὶ τοῦ καυστικοῦ ἐκαίεται γὰρ ἀνεῖν, καὶ οὐκ ἐνεργεῖ οὕτως ἐνεργεία, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει μόνον ἐστὶ οὕτως ἐνεργεία. ἀκούειν καὶ ὁρᾶν λέγομεν, κἂν τύχῃ καθεῦδον, καὶ λέγομεν διχῶς (τὸ γὰρ δυνάμει ἀκοῦον καὶ ὁρῶν ἐντελεχεὶα πυρὸς ὄντος). εἰρήκαμεν δὲ τῶν αἰσθήσεων τὰς ἔστις· ἡ μὲν ὡς δυνάμει, ἡ δὲ ὡς ἐνεργείᾳ. ἐπειδὴ δὲ τὸ αἰσθητικὸν οὐκ ἔστω ἐνεργεία, ἀλλὰ δυνάμει, ἀκούειν καὶ ὁρᾶν λέγομεν, κἂν τύχῃ καθεῦδον, καὶ λέγομεν διχῶς (τὸ γὰρ δυνάμει ἀκοῦον καὶ ὁρῶν ἐντελεχεία πυρὸς ὄντος).

Having made these distinctions let us now speak of sensation in the widest sense. Sensation depends, as we have said, on a process of movement or affection from without, for it is held to be some sort of change of quality. Now some thinkers assert that like is affected only by like; in what sense this is possible and in what sense impossible, we have explained in our general discussion of acting and being acted upon.

Here arises a problem: why do we not perceive the senses themselves, or why without the stimulation of external objects do they not produce sensation, seeing that they contain in themselves fire, earth, and all the other elements, of which—either in themselves or in respect of their incidental attributes—there is perception? It is clear that what is sensitive is so only potentially, not actually. The power of sense is parallel to what is combustible, for that never ignites itself spontaneously, but requires an agent which has the power of starting ignition; otherwise it could have set itself on fire, and would not have needed actual fire to set it ablaze.

We use the word 'perceive' in two ways, for we say that what has the power to hear or see, 'sees' or 'hears', even though it is at the moment asleep, and also that what is actually seeing or hearing, 'sees' or 'hears'. Hence 'sense' too must have two meanings, sense potential, and sense actual. Similarly 'to be a sentient' means either to have a certain power or to manifest a certain activity. To begin with let us speak as if there were no difference between being moved or affected, and being active, for movement is a kind of activity—an imperfect kind, as has elsewhere been explained. Everything that is acted upon or moved is acted upon by an agent which is actually at work. Hence it is that in one sense, as has already been stated, what acts and what is acted upon are like, in another unlike; for the unlike is affected, and when it has been affected it is like.

But we must now distinguish different senses in which things can be said to be potential or actual; at the moment we are speaking as if each of these phrases had only one sense. We can speak of something as a knower either as when we say that man is a knower, meaning that man falls within the class of beings that know or have knowledge, or as when we are speaking of a man who possesses a knowledge of grammar; each of these has a potentiality, but not in the same way: the one because his kind or matter is such and such, the other because he can reflect when he wants to, if nothing external prevents him. And there is the man who is already reflecting—he is a knower in actuality and in the most proper sense is knowing, e.g. this A. Both the former are potential knowers, who realize their respective potentialities, the one by change of quality, i.e. repeated transitions from one state to its opposite under instruction, the other in another way by the transition from the inactive possession of sense or grammar to their active exercise.
δ’ ὡμοίωται καὶ ἔστιν οἷον ἐκεῖνο. πάσχει μὲν οὖχ ὅμοιον ὄν, πεπονθὸς ἔστιν οἷον τὸ αἰσθητὸν ἤδη ἐντελεχείᾳ, καθάπερ ἀναγκαῖον τῷ πάσχειν καὶ ἀλλοιοῦσθαι ὡς περὶ αὐτῶν ὅτι ἕτερα καὶ πῶς ἕτερα, χρῆσθαι δ’ ἀνώνυμος αὐτῶν ἡ διαφορά, διώρισται δὲ ἐν ἡλικίᾳ ὄντα, οὕτως ἔχει τὸ αἰσθητικόν. ἐπεὶ τὸν παῖδα δύνασθαι στρατηγεῖν, τοῦ δὲ ὡς τὸν λεγομένου, ἀλλὰ τοῦ μὲν ὥσπερ ἂν εἴποιμεν τοσοῦτον, ὅτι οὐχ ἁπλοῦ ὄντος τοῦ δυνάμει γένοιτ' ἂν καὶ εἰς αὐτό· νῦν δὲ διωρίσθω ἀλλὰ περὶ μὲν τούτων διασαφῆσαι καιρὸς αἰσθητὰ τῶν καθ’ ἕκαστα καὶ τῶν ἔξωθεν. τῶν αἰσθητῶν, καὶ διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν, ὅτι τὰ ἀναγκαῖον γὰρ ἔχει τὸ αἰσθητόν. αὐτῷ, ὁπόταν βούληται, αἰσθάνεσθαι δ’ οὐκ ἐπ’ ἐν αὐτῇ πώς ἐστι τῇ ψυχῇ. διὸ νοῆσαι μὲν ἐπ’ ἐπιστήμην, τὰ δ’ άιτιον δ’ ὅτι τῶν καθ’ ἐνέργειαν ἀκουστόν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν αἰσθητῶν. ποιητικὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἐξωθεν, τὸ ὁρατὸν καὶ τὸ λέγεται τῷ θεωρεῖν· διαφέρει δέ, ὅτι τοῦ μὲν τὰ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν διαφερόμενα, τὸ κατ’ ἐναντίον τὰ κατὰ τὸ νοοῦν καὶ φρονοῦν οὐ διδασκαλίαν μὲν οὖν εἰς ἐντελέχειαν ἄγειν ἐκ δυνάμει λέγεται τὸ φρονοῦν, ὅταν φρονῇ, ἀλλοιοῦσθαι, ἑτέρον γένος ἀλλοιώσεως. διὸ οὐ καλῶς ἔχει αὑτὸ γὰρ ἡ ἐπίδοσις καὶ εἰς ἐντελέχειαν) ἢ ἐπιστήμην, ὅπερ ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλοιοῦσθαι (εἰς ἐντελέχειαν· θεωροῦν γὰρ γίνεται τὸ ἔχον τὴν ὑπόκοψιν, ὡς ἐπιστήμην κατὰ τὸ νοοῦν καὶ φρονοῦν οὐ διδασκαλίαν.
The word ‘substance’ is applied, if not in more senses, still at least to four main objects; for both the essence and the universal and the genus are thought to be the substance of each thing, and fourthly the substratum. Now the substratum is that of which other things are predicated, while it is itself not predicated of anything else. And so we must first determine the nature of this; for that which underlies a thing primarily is thought to be in the truest sense its substance. And in one sense matter is said to be of the nature of substratum, in another, shape, and in a third sense, the compound of these. By the matter I mean, for instance, the bronze, by the shape the plan of its form, and by the compound of these (the concrete thing) the statue. Therefore if the form is prior to the matter and more real, it will be prior to the compound also for the same reason.

We have now outlined the nature of substance, showing that it is that which is not predicated of a subject, but of which all else is predicated. But we must not merely state the matter thus; for this is not enough. The statement itself is obscure, and further, on this view, matter becomes substance. For if this is not substance, it is beyond us to say what else is. When all else is taken away evidently nothing but matter remains. For of the other elements some are affections, products, and capacities of bodies, while length, breadth, and depth are quantities and not substances. For a quantity is not a substance; but the substance is rather that to which these belong primarily. But when length and breadth and depth are taken away we see nothing left except that which is bounded by these, whatever it be; so that to those who consider the question thus matter alone must seem to be substance. For I mean that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined. For there is something of which each of these is predicated, so that its being is different from that of each of the predicates; for the predicates other than substance are predicated of substance, while substance is predicated of matter. Therefore the ultimate substratum is of itself neither a particular thing nor of a particular quantity nor otherwise positively characterized; nor yet negatively, for negations also will belong to it only by accident.

For those who adopt this point of view, then, it follows that matter is substance. But this is impossible; for both separability and individuality are thought to be belonging chiefly to substance. And so form and the compound of form and matter would be thought to be substance, rather than matter. The substance compounded of both, i.e. of matter and shape, may be dismissed; for it is posterior and its nature is obvious. And matter also is in a sense manifest. But we must inquire into the third kind of substance; for this is the most difficult.
It is agreed that there are some substances among sensible things, so that we must look first among these. For it is in an advantage to advance to that which is more intelligible. For learning proceeds for all in this way—through that which is less intelligible by nature to that which is more intelligible; and just as in conduct our work is to start from what is good for each and make what is good in itself good for each, so it is our work to start from what is more intelligible to oneself and make what is intelligible by nature intelligible to oneself. Now what is intelligible and primary for particular sets of people is often intelligible to a very small extent, and has little or nothing of reality. But yet one must start from that which is barely intelligible but intelligible to oneself, and try to understand what is intelligible in itself, passing, as has been said, by way of those very things which one understands.

We must inquire whether each thing and its essence are the same or different. This is of some use for the inquiry concerning substance; for each thing is thought to be not different from its substance, and the essence is said to be the substance of each thing.

Now in the case of things with accidental attributes the two would be generally thought to be different, e.g. white man would be thought to be different from the essence of white man. For if they are the same, the essence of man and that of white man are also the same; for a man and a white man are the same, as people say, so that the essence of white man and that of man would be also the same. But probably it is not necessary that things with accidental attributes should be the same. For the extreme terms are not in the same way the same.—Perhaps this might be thought to follow, that the extreme terms, the accidents, should turn out to be the same, e.g. the essence of white and that of musical; but this is not actually thought to be the case.

But in the case of so-called self-subsistent things, is a thing necessarily the same as its essence? E.g. if there are some substances which have no other substances nor entities prior to them—substances such as some assert the Ideas to be? If the essence of good is to be different from the Idea of good, and the essence of animal from the Idea of animal, and the essence of being from the Idea of being, there will, firstly, be other substances and entities and Ideas besides those which are asserted, and, secondly, these others will be prior substances if the essence is substance.
Metaphysics 7.6 (cont.)

καί εἰ μὲν ἀπολελυμέναι ἄλληλων, τῶν μὲν οὐκ ἔσται ἐπιστήμη τὰ δ’ οὐκ ἔσται ὑπάρχει ὅλον ἀπολελυθῇ οἱ μὴ τῷ ἀγαθῷ αὐτῷ ὑπάρχει τὸ ἐναι ἀγαθῷ μὴ τοῦτο τὸ ἐναι ἀγαθόν· ἐπιστήμη τε γὰρ ἐκάστου ἔστιν ὅταν τὸ τί ήν ἔκειν, οἷον ἔσται τοὺς ᾧ ὤν ὑπάρχει ἀγαθόν, οὐδὲ τὸ οὐτὶ ὁ ὕπογεις ὧν ὑπάρχει ἀγαθὸν· οὐδὲ τὸν ἄλλων ὁμοίως ἔχει, ὡστε εἰ μὴ βίω τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐναι ἀγαθόν, οὐδὲ τὸ οὐτὶ ὧν ὑπάρχει ἀγαθὸν, ὡστε ἤτοι διαφέρει οὔτε ἐξ ὧν ἐρωτήσει εἶναι ταὐτόν καὶ ἰδίον ταὐτόν· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστι, δῆλον· οἱ δὲ σοφιστικοὶ ἔλεγχοι πρὸς τὴν λεγομένων τὸ ἑκάστῳ εἶναι καὶ ἕκαστον τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ λόγος. ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τῶν πρῶτων καὶ καθ’ αὑτὰ ἕνος τὸ δὲ τὸ ἕν, ὥστε καὶ ἐπ’ ἐκείνων ὁ αὐτὸς ἔσται εἰς ἄπειρον εἴσαι· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἔσται τί ἦν εἶναι τοῦ συμβεβηκὸς ἓν τὸ ἑνὶ εἶναι καὶ ἕν. ἔτι εἰ ἄλλο εἴσαι, αὐτῶν, ὡς δῆλον καὶ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων· οὐ γὰρ κατὰ ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐ μόνον ἕν, ἀλλὰ καθ’ αὑτὰ ἕνια εὐθὺς τί ἦν εἶναι, εἰπείς οὐσία τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι; ἔσται γὰρ καὶ τῷ πάθει ταὐτό. καίτοι τί κωλύει καὶ νῦν εἴσαι παρ’ ἐκείνο ἄλλο, οἷον τῷ τί ἦν εἶναι ἵππῳ τί ἦν ὑπάρχον τοῦτο ἐστι, τῷ μὲν λευκόν καὶ τὸ συμβεβηκός, ὥστ’ ἔστι μὲν ὡς ταὐτόν, ταὐτὸ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι καὶ αὐτό· καὶ γὰρ τὸ συμβεβηκός λευκὸν, διὰ τὸ διττόν σημαίνει οὐκ ἀληθὲς εἰπείς, δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς λεγόμενον, οἷον τὸ μουσικὸν ἢ ἕκαστον τοῦτό ἐστι, τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι ἐπίστασθαι, ὥστε ἕκαστον καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, καὶ ὅτι γε τὸ ἐπίστασθαι τῶν λόγων ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸ οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς αὐτὸ δέ· ἔσονται γὰρ κατὰ μέθεξιν. ἐκ τε δὴ τούτων γὰρ οὐσίας μὲν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι, μὴ καθ’ ὑποκειμένου τινές φασιν, οὐκ ἔσται τὸ ὑποκείμενον οὐσία· ταύτας ἔρει εἴδη (ἅμα δὲ δῆλον καὶ ὅτι εἴπερ εἰσὶν αἱ ἰδέαι οἵας ἶκανὸν ἂν ὑπάρχῃ, κἂν μὴ ἔσται, μᾶλλον δ’ ἴσως κἂν λέγεται, ἀλλὰ καθ’ αὑτὰ καὶ πρῶτα· καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ καλὸ καὶ καλῷ εἶναι, καὶ ὅσα μὴ κατ’ ἄλλον ἔσται.
Τί δὲ χρὴ λέγειν καὶ ὁποῖόν τι τὴν οὐσίαν, πάλιν ἄλλην ὅνων ἀρχὴν ποιησάμενοι λέγομεν· ἵσως γὰρ ἐκ τούτων ἔσται δήλω· καὶ περὶ ἐκείνης τῆς οὐσίας ἦτις ἐστὶ κείμεναι τῶν αἰσθητῶν οὐσιῶν, ἔπει οὖν ἢ οὐσία ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία τις ἐστίν· ἐνετέθην μετιτεῖν. ζητεῖται δὲ τὸ διὰ τί ἀλλ′ ἄλλην τινι ὑπάρχει. τὸ γὰρ ζητέων διὰ τί τὸ μοισυκός ἀνθρωπός μοισυκὸς ἀνθρώπος ἐστίν· ἦτοι ἐστὶν τὸ εἰρημένον ζητέων. διὰ τί τὸ ἀνθρωπός μοισυκός ἐστίν· ἦ ἄλλα. τὸ μὲν ὅνων διὰ τί αὐτὸ ἐστῖν αὐτῷ, οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ζητεῖν (δεῖ γὰρ τὸ ὅτι καὶ τὸ εἶναι ὑπάρχειν δῆλα ὄντα· λέγω δ' οἷον ὅτι ἡ σελήνη ἐκλείπει, αὐτὸ δὲ ὅτι αὐτὸ εἶναι· ἐνιαίος λόγος καὶ μία αἰτία ἐπὶ πάντων). διὰ τί οὖν αὐτό πρὸς ἄλλο τινι πρὸς αὐτό ἐστὶν· οἰκία ἔστιν; φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι ζητεῖ τὸ αἴτιον· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, ὡς εἰπεῖν λογικῶς, ὃ ἐπ' ἐνίων μέν ἐστιν τίνος ἕνεκα, οἷον δ' ἐν τοῖς λεγομένοις, διὰ τί γίγνεται; διὰ τί ψόφος γίγνεται ἐν τοῖς νέφεσι; αἴτιον γὰρ οὕτω κατ' ἄλλου ἐστὶ τὸ ζητούμενον. καὶ διὰ τί ταδί, οἷον πλίνθοι καὶ λίθοι, οἰκία ἔστιν; φανερὸν τοίνυν ὅτι ζητεῖ τὸ αἴτιον· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι· ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τοιοῦτον αἴτιον ἐπὶ τοῦ γίγνεσθαι ζητεῖται καὶ φθείρεσθαι, θάτερον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ εἶναι. λανθάνει δὲ μάλιστα τὸ ζητούμενον ἐν τοῖς μὴ κατ' ἀλλήλων λεγομένοις· διὰ τί ἦν εἶναι· αἴτιον γὰρ οὗτος εἶναι. ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν τοιοῦτον αἴτιον ἐπὶ τοῦ γίγνεσθαι ζητεῖται καὶ φθείρεσθαι, θάτερον δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ εἶναι.
As regards that which is compounded out of something so that the whole is one—not like a heap, however, but like a syllable,—the syllable is not its elements, ba is not the same as b and a, nor is flesh fire and earth; for when they are dissolved the wholes, i.e. the flesh and the syllable, no longer exist, but the elements of the syllable exist, and so do fire and earth. The syllable, then, is something—not only its elements (the vowel and the consonant) but also something else; and the flesh is not only fire and earth or the hot and the cold, but also something else. Since, then, that something must be either an element or composed of elements, if it is an element the same argument will again apply; for flesh will consist of this and fire and earth and something still further, so that the process will go on to infinity; while if it is a compound, clearly it will be a compound not of one but of many (or else it will itself be that one), so that again in this case we can use the same argument as in the case of flesh or of the syllable. But it would seem that this is something, and not an element, and that it is the cause which makes this thing flesh and that syllable. And similarly in all other cases. And this is the substance of each thing; for this is the primary cause of its being; and since, while some things are not substances, as many as are substances are formed naturally and by nature, their substance would seem to be this nature, which is not an element but a principle. An element is that into which a thing is divided and which is present in it as matter, e.g. a and b are the elements of the syllable.

To return to the difficulty which has been stated with respect to definitions and numbers, what is the cause of the unity of each of them? In the case of all things which have several parts and in which the whole is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the totality is something besides the parts, there is a cause of unity; for as regards material things contact is the cause in some cases, and in others viscidity or some other such quality. And a definition is a formula which is one not by being connected together, like the Iliad, but by dealing with one object.—What then is it that makes man one; why is he one and not many, e.g. animal—biped, especially if there are, as some say, an ideal animal and an ideal biped? Why are not those Ideas the ideal man, so that men would exist by participation not in man, nor in one Idea, but in two, animal and biped? And in general man would be not one but more than one thing, animal and biped.
Metaphysics 8.6

Clearly, then, if people proceed thus in their usual manner of definition and speech, they cannot explain and solve the difficulty. But if, as we say, one element is matter and another is form, and one is potentially and the other actually, the question will no longer be thought a difficulty. For this difficulty is the same as would arise if 'round bronze' were the definition of cloak; for this name would be a sign of the definitory formula, so that the question is, what is the cause of the unity of round and bronze? The difficulty disappears, because the one is matter, the other form. What then is the cause of this—the reason why that which was potentially is actually, what except, in the case of things which are generated, the agent? For there is no other reason why the potential sphere becomes actually a sphere, but this was the essence of either. Of matter some is the object of reason, some of sense, and part of the formula is always matter and part is actuality, e.g. the circle is a figure which is plane. But of the things which have no matter, either for reason or for sense, each is by its nature essentially a kind of unity, as it is essentially a kind of being—a 'this', a quality, or a quantity. And so neither 'existent' nor 'one' is present in definitions, and an essence is by its very nature a kind of unity as it is a kind of being. This is why none of these has any reason outside itself for being one, nor for being a kind of being; for each is by its nature a kind of unity, not as being in the genus 'being' or 'one' nor in the sense that being and unity can exist apart from particulars.

Owing to the difficulty about unity some speak of participation, and raise the question, what is the cause of participation and what is it to participate; and others speak of communion, as Lycophron says knowledge is a communion of knowing with the soul; and others say life is a composition or connexion of soul with body. Yet the same account applies to all cases; for being healthy will be either a communion or a connexion or a composition of soul and health, and the fact that the bronze is a triangle will be a composition of bronze and triangle, and the fact that a thing is white will be a composition of surface and whiteness.—The reason is that people look for a unifying formula, and a difference, between potentiality and actuality. But, as has been said, the proximate matter and the form are one and the same thing, the one potentially, the other actually. Therefore to ask the cause of their being one is like asking the cause of unity in general; for each thing is a unity, and the potential and the actual are somehow one. Therefore there is no other cause here unless there is something which caused the movement from potentiality into actuality. And all things which have no matter are without qualification essentially unities.
The nature of the divine thought involves certain problems; for while thought is held to be the most divine of phenomena, the question what it must be in order to have that character involves difficulties. For if it thinks nothing, what is there here of dignity? It is just like one who sleeps. And if it thinks, but this depends on something else, then (as that which is its substance is not the act of thinking, but a capacity) it cannot be the best substance; for it is through thinking that its value belongs to it. Further, whether its substance is the faculty of thought or the act of thinking, what does it think? Either itself or something else; and if something else, either the same always or something different. Does it matter, then, or not, whether it thinks the good or any chance thing? Are there not some things about which it is incredible that it should think? Evidently, then, it thinks that which is most divine and precious, and it does not change; for change would be change for the worse, and this would be already a movement. First, then, if it is not the act of thinking but a capacity, it would be reasonable to suppose that the continuity of its thinking is wearisome to it. Secondly, there would evidently be something else more precious than thought, viz. that which is thought. For both thinking and the act of thought will belong even to one who has the worst of thoughts. Therefore if this ought to be avoided (and it ought, for there are even some things which it is better not to see than to see), the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. Therefore it must be itself that thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking. But evidently knowledge and perception and opinion and understanding have always something else as their object, and themselves only by the way. Further, if thinking and being thought are different, in respect of which does goodness belong to thought? For being an act of thinking and being an object of thought are not the same. We answer that in some cases the knowledge is the object. In the productive sciences (if we abstract from the matter) the substance in the sense of essence, and in the theoretical sciences the formula or the act of thinking, is the object. As, then, thought and the object of thought will belong even to one who has the worst of thoughts. Therefore if this ought to be avoided (and it ought, for there are even some things which it is better not to see than to see), the act of thinking cannot be the best of things. Therefore it must be itself that thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking. Further a question is left—whether the object of the thought is composite; for if it were, thought would change in passing from part to part of the whole. We answer that everything which has not matter is indivisible. As human thought, or rather the thought of composite objects, is in a certain period of time (for it does not possess the good at this moment or at that, but its best, being something different from it, is attained only in a whole period of time), so throughout eternity is the thought which has itself for its object.