

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

- *tôn meta ta phusika* = “the things after the *Physics*.”
- Not to be confused with “the study of anything non-physical.”
- Not to be confused with later conceptions of metaphysics:
 - Continental Rationalists: 2 types of metaphysics:
 - General Metaphysics (= Aristotelian metaphysics without theology)
 - Special Metaphysics:
 - Rational Theology (Aristotle includes in metaphysics)
 - Rational Cosmology (Aristotle includes in physics)
 - Rational Psychology (Aristotle includes in physics)

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

- What is metaphysics? Aristotle gives us 4 answers:
 - The study being insofar as it is being, and also the properties of being in its own right. (Book 4 (Γ))
 - The study of imperishable, immaterial substance, viz., theology. (Book 6 (E))
 - The science of first principles and causes. Book 1 (A)
 - The study of substance. Book 7 (Z)

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

The study of being insofar as it is being.

- “Being” = *to on*, literally “the being.” 3 possible interpretations:
 - As a concrete substantive.
 - As an abstract substantive.
 - As a distributive singular term denoting the class of beings.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

The study of beings insofar as they are beings.

- What is it to study Fs insofar as they are Gs?
 - E.g., F = medieval manuscript, G = work of art, H = commentary on an ancient text.
 - E.g., F = physical object, G = moving body, H = 3-dimensional solid.
- In each of these cases, we are studying those features of Fs which belong to them or hold of them insofar as or by virtue of the fact that they are Gs or Hs.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

The study of beings insofar as they are beings.

- Common features of beings (that every thing that exists has in common):
 - Unity or oneness. (*Metaph.* Books 4 (Γ) and 10 (I).)
 - Plurality, otherness, and difference.
 - Conformity with the principle of non-contradiction. (*Metaph.* Book 4 (Γ) Chapter 4)

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

The study of beings insofar as they are beings.

- There is no genus of beings.
 - *to on* ≠ a genus (*Metaph.* Book 3 (B), Chapter 3)
 - Homonymy (*Metaph.* Book Γ (4) Chapter 2)
 - Focal meaning: “being is spoken of in many ways, but always with reference to one thing—i.e. to some one nature—and not homonomously [in the normal sense].”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics – The Categories*
The Ten Categories

1.) Substance:	man, horse
Non-substance:	
2.) Quantity	two cubits, three cubits
3.) Quality	white, grammatical
4.) Relative	double, half, larger
5.) Where	in the Lyceum, in the marketplace
6.) When	yesterday, last year
7.) Being arranged	lying, sitting
8.) Having on	wearing shoes, being armed
9.) Doing	cutting, burning
10.) Being affected	being cut, being burned

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

I. What is Metaphysics?

- **The study of imperishable, immaterial substance, viz., theology. (Book 6 (E))**

... if there is no substance other than those which are formed by nature, natural science will be the first science; but if there is an immovable substance, the science of this must be prior and must be first philosophy, and universal in this way, because it is first. And it will belong to this to consider beings insofar as they are beings—both what they are and the attributes which belong to them insofar as they are beings. (*Metaph.* Book 6 (E), Chapter 1)

- **The science of first principles and causes. Book 1 (A)**

Aristotle – *Metaphysics*

The Categories – Preliminaries:

- Particulars & Universals:
 - *Particulars*:
 - May be either concrete or abstract:
 - *Concrete*: e.g., men, women, cabbages & kings
 - *Abstract*: e.g., “tropes.”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Categories*

Preliminaries:

- Types of Universals:
 - May be either monadic or polyadic:
 - *Monadic*: e.g., properties, and kinds.
 - *Polyadic*: e.g., relations. (relations can have properties, e.g., asymmetry, reflexivity, transitivity, etc.)
 - May be more or less general (e.g., the property “color” is the genus of the property “red”).
- Properties vs. Kinds:
 - *Properties*: what a particular has (e.g., redness).
 - *Kinds*: what a particular is (e.g., a dog).

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Categories*

- Substances vs. Non-substances:
 - *Substances*: concrete particulars and their kinds (e.g., this man and mankind)
 - *Non-substances*: abstract particulars and their kinds (e.g., this property or relation and their kinds)
- This yields a fourfold division of entities:

	<i>Substances</i>	<i>Non-substances</i>
<i>Particulars</i>	Concrete particulars (e.g., this man)	Abstract particulars (e.g., tropes)
<i>Universals</i>	Kinds of concrete particular (e.g., mankind)	Properties (e.g. whiteness), Relations (e.g., to the right of), & their kinds (e.g., color, spatial relation)

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Categories*

Dependence Relations

	<i>Substances</i>	<i>Non-substances</i>
<i>Particulars</i>	Concrete particulars (primary substances)	Abstract particulars (e.g., tropes)
<i>Universals</i>	Kinds of concrete particular (secondary substances)	Properties, relations & their kinds

Inherence (existing)

Kind membership (being said of)

Kind membership (being said of)

Ontological dependence: *x* is ontologically dependent on *y* just in case the existence of *y* is a necessary condition for the existence of *x*.
(blue arrows show direction of dependence)

Primary substances: “what are neither in or said of a subject”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics – The Categories*

- Purpose of the Categories
 - 2 possibilities:
 - an account of predication?
 - a classification of things that exist?
 - Problems

Aristotle – *Metaphysics – The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 1

- Being is said in many ways, viz.,
 - existing as a substance
 - inhering in a substance or being the kind of a substance
- Existing as a substance is ontologically prior.
- Other sorts of priority:
 - Priority in Formula
 - Priority in Knowledge

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 1

- What is substance?
 - *The Categories*: “Substance =_{def.} what is neither in a subject nor said of a subject.”
 - *The Metaphysics*: “Substance =_{def.} _____” Poses the question anew. Why?
 - Hypothesis:
 - *Categories*: “What things are substances?”
 - *Metaphysics*: “What makes a substance a substance?” (or “What is the substance of a substance?”)

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 2

- Survey of reputable opinions about what things are substances: Some think that substances ...
 - are bodies, viz., animals, plants, their parts, earth, air, fire, water
 - include celestial objects
 - include abstract objects like Platonic Forms and mathematical objects
- Aristotle: We will need to decide which of these views are right and why (emphasis on why).

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 3

- Four main candidates for “the substance of a given thing:”
 1. Essence (Chs. 4-6, 10-11).
 2. Universal (Chs. 13-16).
 3. Genus (dropped without comment).
 4. Subject (*hypokeimenon*) (Ch. 3).

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Road Map of Book 7:

- Starts in Chapter 3 with 4 candidates for the substance of a substance (essence, universal, genus, subject).
- Then pursues 3 separate arguments which hypothesize that either essence (Chs. 4-6, 10-11), universal (Chs. 13-16), or subject (Ch. 3) is the substance of a substance (dropping “genus” from consideration without explanation).
- Each argument is dialectical and inconclusive. Aristotle doesn’t speak in *propria persona* until Chapter 17 where he concludes that the substance of a substance is form.
- Each argument has an abstract or formal (*logikos*) stage and a concrete (*phusikos*) stage.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 3 cont'd.

- Is substance a *hypokeimenon* (subject)?
 - *Logikos* (abstract) argument: The phenomenon of predication seems to make *hypokeimenon* a likely candidate.
 - *Phusikos* (concrete) argument:
 - If the *hypokeimenon* is the substance of a substance, it must be one of these three:
 - Matter
 - Form
 - The Form/Matter Composite

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 3 cont'd.

- *Phusikos* argument cont'd.:
 - Point in favor of matter: If you strip all of the properties from a substance, what else could be left over but matter?
 - But matter \neq substance because:
 - Matter isn't separable; substances are.
 - Matter isn't discrete (i.e., a *tode ti*); substances are.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 3 cont'd.

- *Phusikos* argument cont'd.:
 - In what sense separable?
 - Strongly Separable: Separable from every form?
 - Weakly Separable: Separable through decomposition?
 - In what sense discrete?
 - Discrete *per se* (not needing anything else to make it discrete)?
 - Discrete *per accidens* (by being part of a form/matter composite that is discrete)?

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 3 cont'd.

- *Phusikos* argument cont'd.:
 - Two conclusions:
 1. Matter is neither strongly separable nor discrete *per se*, and substance must be both of these things.
 2. Matter cannot be simultaneously separate and discrete *per accidens*, and substance must be simultaneously both of these things.
 - And the form matter composite \neq substance because form is explanatorily prior to it.
 - So form is the only candidate left standing, but Aristotle doesn't declare it the winner.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 13: Is the substance of a substance a universal?

- Two reasons why the answer must be “no”:
 - A universal can’t be the substance of a substance because “the substance of a thing is the substance that is distinctive of it, which does not belong to anything else.” A universal is something shared.
 - A universal can’t be a substance of a substance because “what is called substance is what is not said of a subject, whereas every universal is said of a subject.”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 13: Is the substance of a substance a universal?

- An argument why the answer must be “no”:
 - Something is a universal if and only if it belongs to more than one thing.
 - If a universal is a substance, it must either be the substance of all or of none of its instances.
 - It can’t be the substance of all of its instances because in that case, all of its instances would collapse into one. This is the case because substance is essence in the sense of what is distinctive of something, and things with the same essence in this sense are the numerically the same things.
 - So a universal must be the substance of none of its instances.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 13: Is the substance of a substance a universal?

- So the substance of a substance \neq a universal.
- Problem: But if substances aren't universals but particulars, then they will be indefinable. But substances are supposed to be pre-eminently definable.

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 17: The substance of a substance = form.

- A “fresh start:” Substance must be some sort of principle and cause of the sort that answers the question “Why is an x F?”
- But we want to know “Why is a man a man?” Is this a tautology?
- Perhaps not, if we mean by this “Why is a man a rational animal?” Or better yet: “Why is this matter configured in the way that it is?”
- And at last we have an answer to our question:

“Since we must take it as given that the subject exists, clearly we search for why the matter is something. We ask, for instance, “Why are these things a house?”. Because the essence of a house belongs to them. Similarly a man is this, or rather is this body having this. Hence we search for the cause on account of which the matter is something, i.e., for the form; and this cause is the substance.”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Book 7, Chapter 17: Structured Wholes.

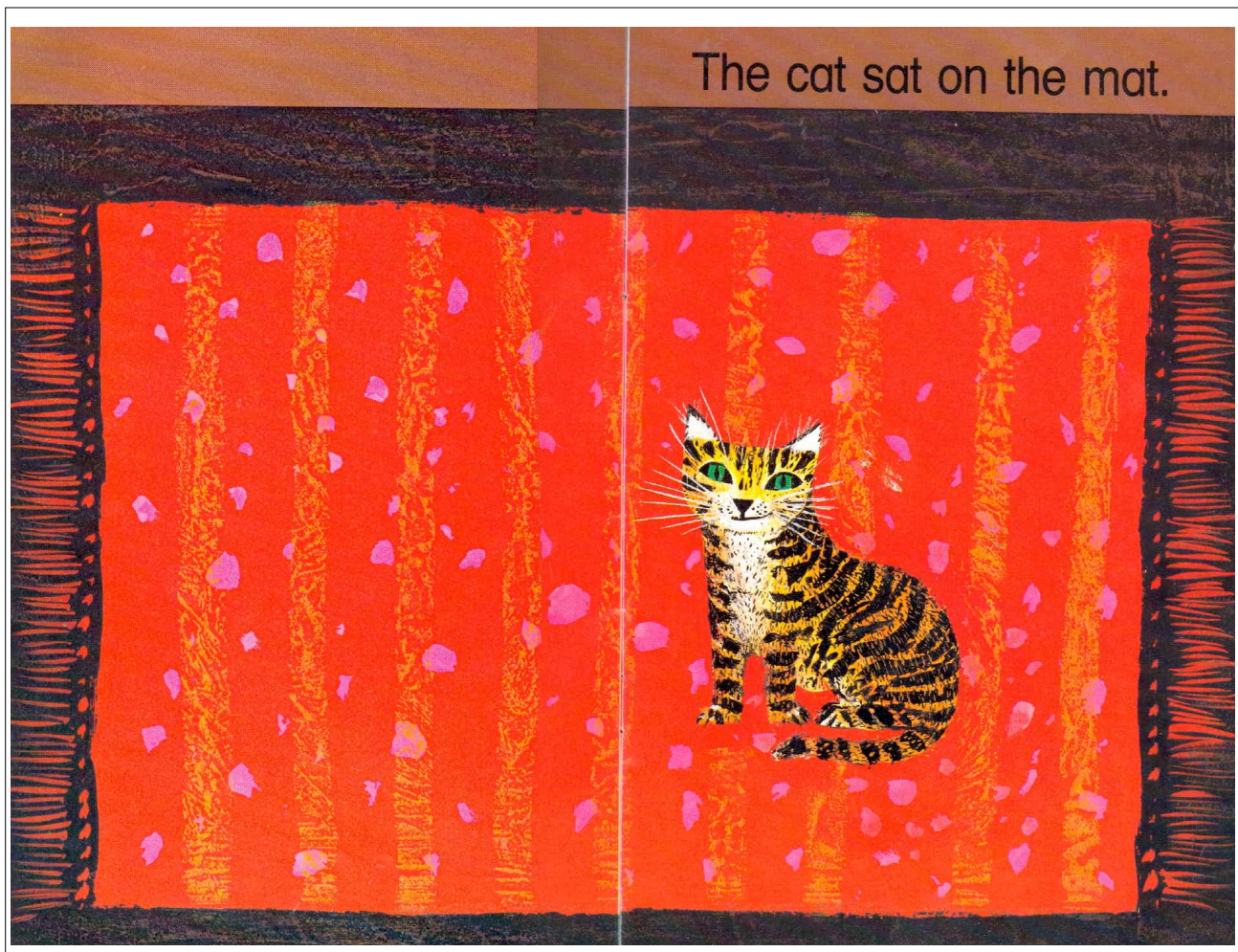
- Syllable “AB” \neq a set of elements consisting of A and B. Flesh \neq a collection of elemental bodies. There is something further: the structure of the whole.
- But structure \neq an element of the whole. Otherwise there would be a structure₁ that relates the original structure to what it is a structure of. And then there would need to be a structure₂ that relates structure₁ to what it is a structure of. And so on *ad infinitum*.
- Thus, the structure, i.e., the form, is “not an element.” It is “the cause of one thing’s being flesh and another thing’s being a syllable, and similarly in other cases.”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Parallels with Wittgenstein & Bradley

(Early) Wittgenstein:

- An isomorphism exists between reality (i.e., states of affairs) and statements of fact concerning them.
- Just as the structure of the picture is shown but not depicted, the structure of the statement of fact is *shown but not said*.
- The structure of the picture and the structure of the statement of fact *show themselves*.



Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Parallels with Wittgenstein & Bradley

- **Relevant Passages from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*:**

“4.12 Propositions can represent the whole reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it -- the logical form. To be able to represent the logical form, we should have to be able to put ourselves with the propositions outside logic, that is outside the world.

4.121 Propositions cannot represent the logical form: this mirrors itself in the propositions. That which mirrors itself in language, language cannot represent. That which expresses itself in language, we cannot express by language. The propositions show the logical form of reality. They exhibit it.”

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

Parallels with Wittgenstein & Bradley

- Bradley's Regress (*Appearance and Reality*, 1893):
 - “*a* is *F*” is true only if *a* and *F* stand in the relation of Exemplification, viz., $E\langle a, F \rangle$
 - But *a* and *F* stand in the relation of Exemplification only if *a* and *F* and Exemplification stand in the relation of Exemplification₁, viz., $E\langle a, F \rangle$ holds only if $E_1\langle\langle a, F \rangle, E\rangle$ holds.
 - But *a* and *F* and Exemplification stand in the relation of Exemplification₁ only if *a* and *F*, Exemplification and Exemplification₁ stand in the relation of Exemplification₂, viz., $E_1\langle\langle a, F \rangle, E\rangle$ holds only if $E_2\langle\langle\langle a, F \rangle, E\rangle, E_1\rangle$ holds.
 - and so on ...

Aristotle – *Metaphysics* – *The Metaphysics*

3 Responses to Bradley's Regress

- *Assumption*: The regress is real and vicious.
 - *Strategy*: Restrict the scope of the realist theory of predication to say that exemplification is “not an element” that stands in a relation. (Aristotle)
- *Assumption*: The regress is real, but not vicious.
 - *Strategy*: Claim that the explanation of attribute agreement and predication is complete at the first level of the regress. (Russell)
- *Assumption*: The regress is not real and not vicious.
 - *Strategy*: Deny that the regress is real. Insist that the holding of Exemplification, Exemplification₁, and Exemplification₂, etc. have the same truth makers (are semantically equivalent). (Armstrong)