

ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES OF BEING AND HIS VIEW OF SUBSTANCE

Everything that exists (including God), according to Aristotle, falls within 10 categories of being:

SUBSTANCE (e.g., God, human, cat, plant, desk)

QUALITY (e.g., tall, yellow, sharp, bitter, good)

QUANTITY (e.g., much, two, 6.778, feet, yards, etc.)

RELATION (e.g., son of, student of, teacher of, left of, right of)

PLACE (e.g., here, Mesa, earth)

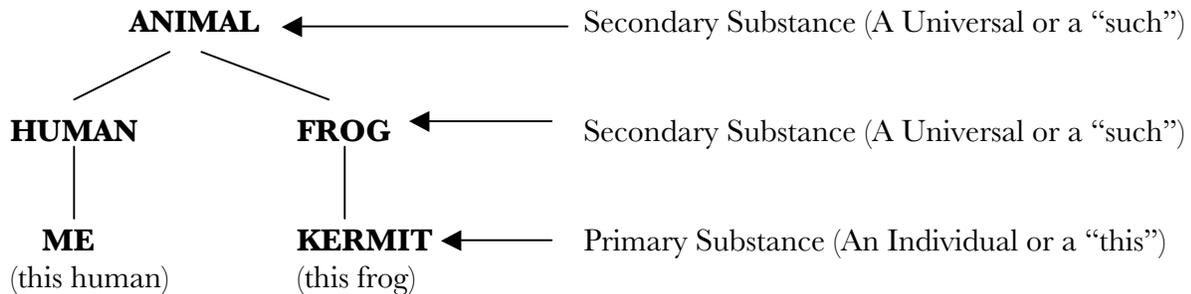
TIME (e.g., morning, evening, 10:00 a.m.)

STATE (e.g., solid, liquid, gas)

POSITION (e.g., sitting, standing, lying down, upright, upside down)

ACTIVE ACTION (e.g., walking, running, reading, philosophizing)

PASSIVE ACTION (e.g., being hit, becoming ill, ageing, being fired)



NOTES ON THE ANIMAL CHART:

- “I am a human; Kermit is a frog. I am an animal; Kermit is an animal.”
- Differentiae: Characteristics that give essential differences between two different secondary substances (e.g., humans have two legs, frogs have four legs).
- “Animal is two-footed or four-footed” (just considering Kermit and me); “Humans are two-footed.”
- “Tall is said of me”; “Short is said of Kermit.” In the sentence, “The table is green,” green is being said (or predicated) of the table (the subject or substance, according to Aristotle).
- Note that the chart is VERY simple compared to everything that exists – this is a tiny representation of several beings that exist.

THREE QUALITIES OF SUBSTANCES:

- There is no contrary to a substance: What’s the opposite of human, or desk?
- One substance cannot be more or less that substance than any other substance of that kind. E.g., one car is not more of a car than another car – if one car is missing a wheel, it is not technically a car, according to Aristotle. Why? Because it can’t perform its function.
- What is numerically one and same substance can receive contraries. E.g., the one and only Earth can be large and small – large with respect to me, and small with respect to Jupiter.

Beliefs and statements are not primary substances because, though they appear to receive contraries (they can be or become true or false), beliefs and statements do not receive truth and falsity in the same way as physical objects. Beliefs and statements are or become true or false based on whether they accurately reflect the world, and, when that happens, that is the world changing, and not the statement changing or receiving anything.