

# Aristotle's First Philosophy

A. What is he talking about? What are we talking about?

First philosophy (Aristotle's word)

Metaphysics (most scholars)

Ontology

“The broad structure of reality” (Jonathan Lear)

B. *WHY* is he putting us through this?

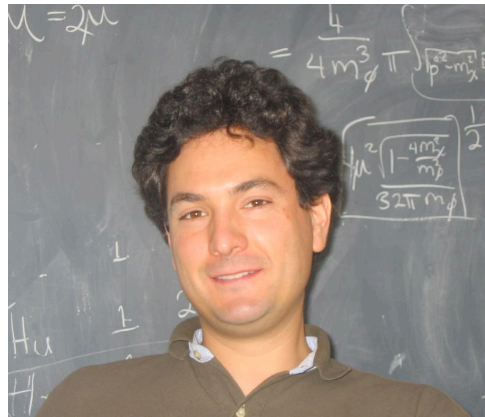
# Being, version I: *Categories*

If things only have a name in common and the account of the essence corresponding to the name is different for each, they are called homonymous...

If things have the name in common and also have the same account of the essence corresponding to the name, they are called synonymous.

# Being, version I: *Categories*

**Homonymous:** same name, not same kind of thing



**Synonymous:** same name, same kind of thing



# Being, version I: *Categories*

Among beings some are said of a subject but are not in any subject, but are not in any subject; man, e.g., is said of a subject an individual man, but is not in any subject. Some are in a subject, but are not said of any subject... An individual [instance of] grammatical knowledge, for example, is in a subject, but is not said of any subject...

# Being, version I: *Categories*

Said of a subject: intrinsic properties

“Socrates is a man” (vs. “Socrates is pale”)

In a subject: accidental properties

“Socrates is pale”

# Being, version I: *Categories*

“English grammar possesses a distinction  
between *that* and *which*”

(the distinction is said of English grammar)

“Socrates distinguishes between *that* and *which*”

(the distinction is in Socrates)

# Being, version I: *Categories*

What about Socrates? Can he be a predicate?

# Being, version 1: *Categories*

Some things are neither in a subject nor said of a subject. This is true, for instance, of an individual man or horse...



# Being, version I: *Categories*

## Ten types of things

Substance	(man, horse)
Quantity	(3-foot long)
Quality	(white, grammatical)
Relative	(double, half, more)
Place	(in the Lyceum, in the marketplace)
Time	(yesterday, last year)
Position	(lying, sitting down)
Having	(having shoes on, having armor on)
Acting Upon	(cutting, burning)
Being Affected	(being cut, being burnt)

# Being, version I: *Categories*

“What is called substance (*ousia*) most fully, primarily, and most of all, is what is neither said of any subject nor in any subject - e.g. an individual man or horse.”

# Being, version I: *Categories*

## Properties of Primary Substances:

1. No predication from PSs
2. Nothing is contrary to PSs  
(what is the opposite of Greg?)
3. The same PS can receive contraries  
(Socrates is cold; Socrates is hot)

# Hylomorphism: Form and Matter

What is the nature of a thing?

1. Matter: “Some people think that the nature and substance of a natural thing is the primary constituent present in it, having no order in its own right, so that the nature of a bed, for instance, [would be] the wood.” (*Physics*, Book II, p. 200B [193a10])

2. Form: “In another way, the nature is the shape, i.e. the form [*eidos*] in accord with the account [*logos*]... what is only potentially flesh or bone does not have its nature... until it acquires the form in accord with the account by which we define flesh or bone and say what it is.” (*Physics*, Book II, p. 201A [193a31-b3])

# Hylomorphism: Form and Matter

Nature, as applied towards coming to be, is really a road towards nature; it is not like medical treatment, which is a road not towards medical science, but towards health. For medical treatment necessarily proceeds *from* medical science, not *towards* medical science. But nature [as coming to be] is not related to nature in this way; rather, what is growing, insofar as it is growing, proceeds from something towards something [else]. What is it, then, that grows? Not what it is growing from, but what it is growing into. Therefore, the shape is the nature.

(*Physics*, Book II, 201A-B [193b12-18])

# Hylomorphism: Form and Matter

Artificial change

sick person → healthy person

medical treatment



Natural change

baby → adult human



# The Four Causes

Material cause - from *what stuff* is it made?

Formal cause - *what* is the (account of the) essence?

Efficient cause - *what* is the agent of change?

Final cause - to *what* does some change tend?

# The Four Causes

Material cause - from *what stuff* is it made?

**Formal cause** - *what* is the (account of the) essence?

**Efficient cause** - *what* is the agent of change?

**Final cause** - to *what* does some change tend?

Form



# Being, version II: Metaphysics

The *subject* is that of which the other things are said, but which is not itself in turn said of any other thing, hence we must first determine what it is, since the primary subject seems to be substance most of all.

What is spoken of this way is in one way the matter, in another way the form, and in a third way the thing composed of these.

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Being separable and being a *this* seem to belong to substance most of all; that is why the form and the [compound] of both [matter and form] would seem to be substance more than the matter is.

And so the substance composed of both - I mean composed of the matter and the form - should be set aside, since it is posterior to the other two, and clear. The matter is also evident in a way. We must consider the third type of substance, since it is the most puzzling

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Constraints on substance:

1. Substance must be a “this” (must be definite, have definite features)
2. Substance must be “separate” (must be ontologically independent, or be able to exist on its own)

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Form

Composite

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#1 ~~Matter~~

Form

#2 ~~Composite~~

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Essence = “the what it is to be” [*to ti ên einai*]

The essence of a thing is what the thing is said to be in its own right... [But it is not] *all* of what you are in your own right. For a thing's essence is not what belongs to it in its own right in the way that pale belongs in its own right to a surface; for being a surface is not the same as being pale.

*Metaphysics*, Book VII, 4 (241B [1029b14-19])



# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Essence = “the what it is to be” [*to ti ên einai*]

Essence will belong only to species of a genus and to nothing else, since [only] these seem to be spoken of in a way that does not consist in one thing's participating in another, or in one thing's being an attribute or coincident of another.

*Metaphysics*, Book VII, 4 (242A [1030a13-15])

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Where does essence reside?

Animal

*(genus)*

Human

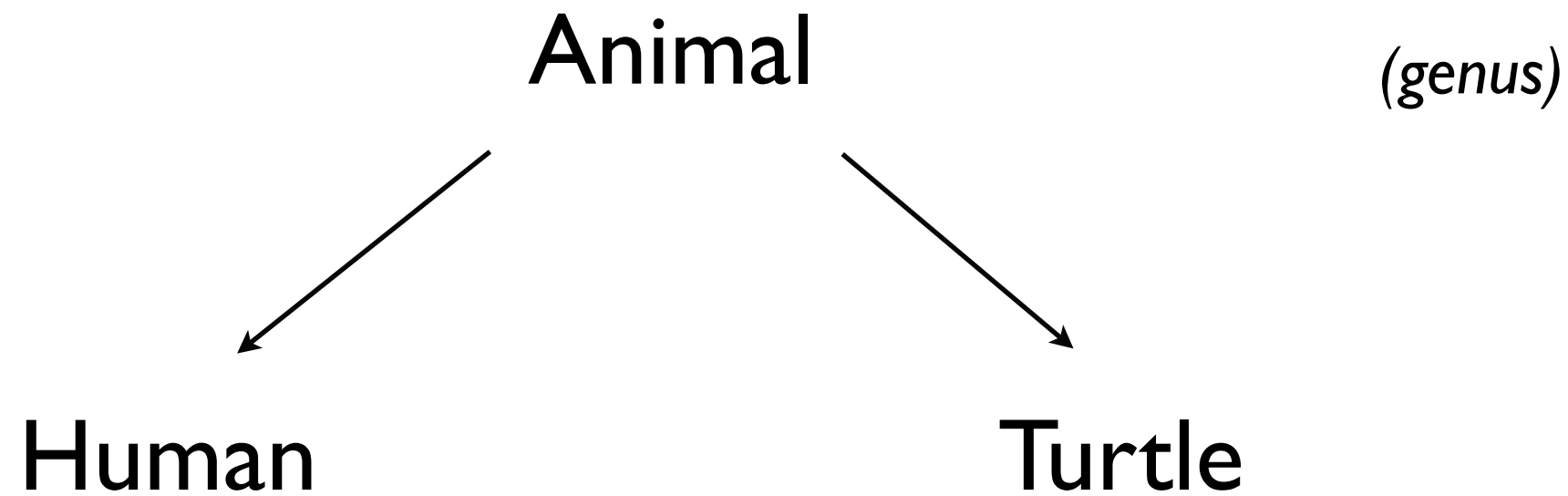
*(species)*

Socrates

*(individual, member of species)*

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Where does essence reside?



Genres refer to too many distinct things (species)  
if no species, no genus (akin to a universal)

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Where does essence reside?

Socrates      *(individual, member of species)*

Individuals can't be defined (they have both essential and inessential qualities)

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Where does essence reside?

Human

*(species)*

Species are the most particular “this” that can have  
an essence

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

## Constraints on substance:

1. Substance must be a “this” (must be definite, have definite features) [can't be matter]

2. Substance must be “separate” (must be ontologically independent, or be able to exist on its own) [can't be composite subject]

3. Substance looks to be the same as essence... therefore it has to happen on the species level [can't be at individual or genus level]

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Animal

*(genus)*

Human

*(species)*

*Categories*



Socrates

*(individual, member of species)*

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Animal

*(genus)*

Human

*(species)*

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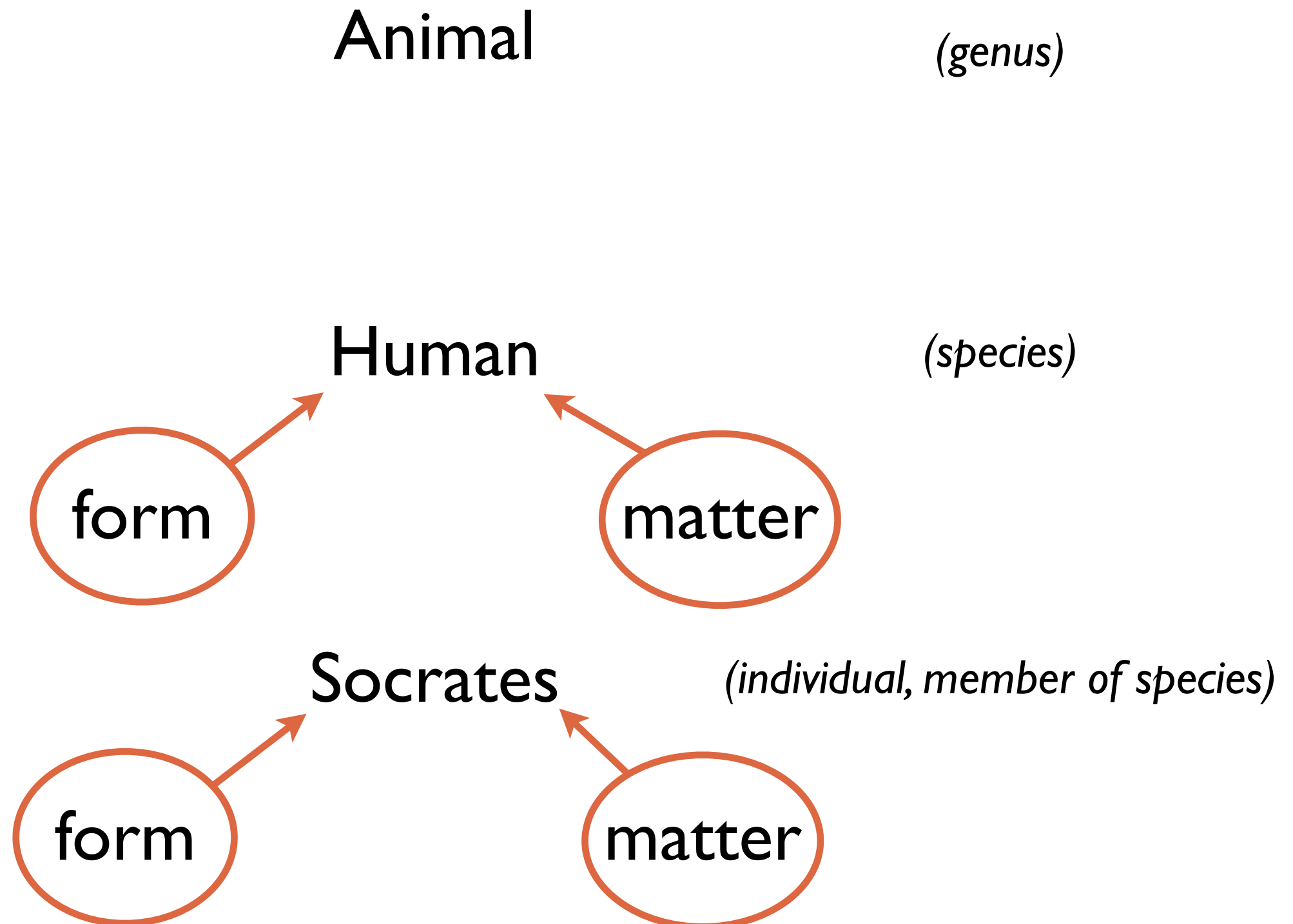
form

matter





# Being, version II: Metaphysics



# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Animal

*(genus)*

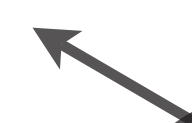
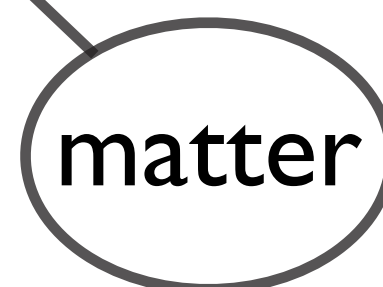
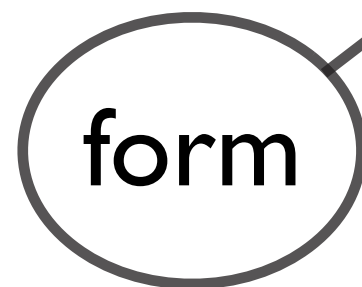
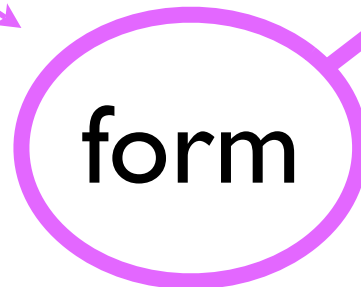
Human

*(species)*

Socrates

*(individual, member of species)*

*Metaphysics*



# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Primary substance is the form of the species

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Primary substance is the form of the species

*(Why is this not so great?)*

1. More complicated system
2. Makes reality more unintuitive
2. Seems more like Plato (*good or bad?*)

# Being, version II: Metaphysics

Primary substance is the form of the species

*(Why is this so great?)*

1. Makes sense of the form-matter distinction
2. Creates an ontological bridge between reality and our understanding (ontology and epistemology become one thing)

# Aristotle's First Philosophy

A. *What is he talking about? What are we talking about?*

First philosophy (Aristotle's word)

Metaphysics (most scholars)

Ontology

“The broad structure of reality” (Jonathan Lear)

B. *WHY is he putting us through this?*

# Aristotle's First Philosophy

B. *WHY* is he putting us through this?

“All human beings by nature desire to know.”

*Metaphysics, Book I, I*

Aristotle is committed to a reality in which:

1. Human understanding and the world are compatible
2. The link between the world and the understanding is a “real” one

“In questions about action, our task is to advance from what is good to ourselves, and so to make what is good without reservation good to ourselves; in the same way, then, we should advance from what is better known to ourselves, and so make what is well known by nature well known to ourselves.”

*Metaphysics*, Book VII, 4 (241B [1029b6-9])