

## SUMMARY NOTES ON ARISTOTLE'S UNIVERSALS AND CAUSES:

384 BC-322 BC.

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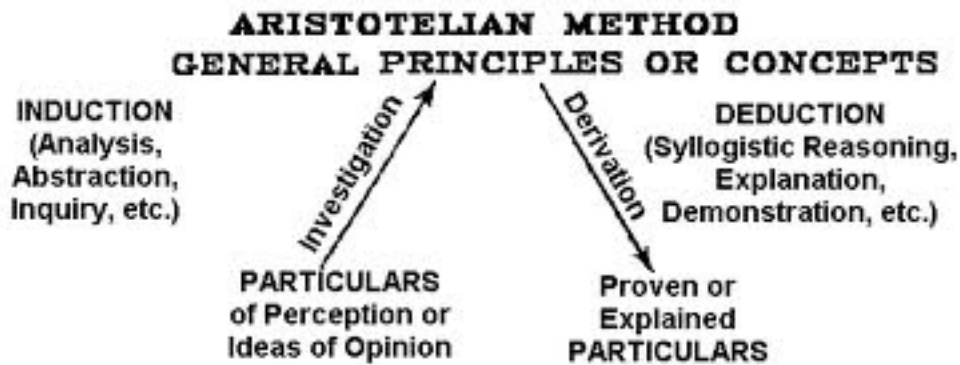
1. Aristotle's Theory of Universals:
  - a. Universals are simply properties, relations, and types that are common to their various instances (instantiated). From these particular objects we are able to abstract an identical type that is common in each object (e.g., human being; canine; horse).
    1. In other words, universals only exist in things, never apart from them. This stands in contrast to Plato's Theory of Forms that universals do exist in the intelligible realm apart from material objects. So, Aristotle disagreed with Plato about the location of universals. Aristotle maintained that universals exist within each thing on which each universal is predicated. So, according to Aristotle, the form of grape exists within each grape, rather than in the intelligible realm.
    2. For example, all objects that are circular are similar in that there is the same universal, circle, in each object. Or, all blue objects are similar in that there is the same universal, blueness, in each object. In contrast, there is no Platonic form of circle or blueness apart from circular objects or blue objects.
    3. Therefore, while Aristotle agrees that universals do exist, they always exist in objects, not apart from them.
    4. Step 1: Start with a particular object. Examine one particular object (for example, a dog).

Step 2: Examine the object's particular properties. In other words, what makes this dog a dog?

Step 3: Examine other instances of dogs (whether black, white, multicolored, tall, small, fat, and skinny).

Step 4: Extract the concept "canine" (type) from all the instances of dogs. Dogs will have that exact same type in common and this allows us to form the concept of canine that applies to all dogs (Collies; Cocker Spaniels; poodles).

5. Therefore, the type, canine, appears identical in each and every dog. This type is called the essence of the "doginess."
6. THE UNIVERSAL EXIST IN PARTICULAR OBJECTS OR SUBSTANCE THAT HE CALLED THE ESSENCE OF THINGS.
7. In sum, the ascent from the study of particular phenomena to the knowledge of essences. This stands in contrast to Plato's method which is descent from a universal Form to a particular objects. For Aristotle, the "form" or type refers to the unconditional basis of phenomena but is "instantiated" in a particular object or substance.



2. Aristotle's Four Causes:
  - a. Material Cause is a description of the material out of which something is composed. For example, the material cause of my lamborghini is metal, wood, leather, and rubber.
  - b. Formal Cause informs me what an object is, that any thing is determined by the archetype, definition, essence, pattern, or synthesis. In other words, it is the determining cause that found initial expression in the mind of the creator, inventor, or manufacturer. For example, the blueprint of my lamborghini is the formal cause.
  - c. The efficient cause is that which sets the object in motion. For example, the people who build the lamborghini are the efficient cause of it.

- d. The Final cause is the end, purpose, or *telos*. What is the purpose for the lamborghini?

