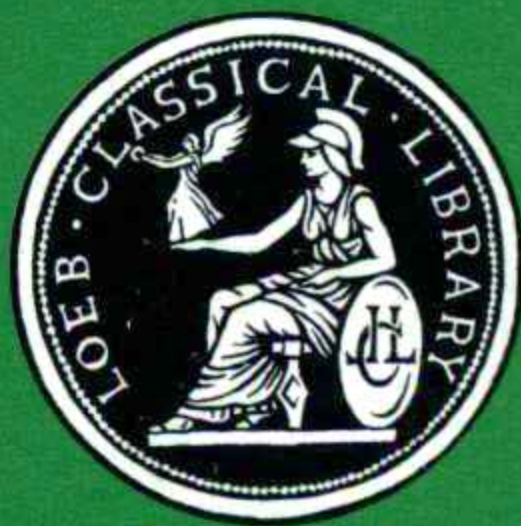


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ARISTOTLE
CATEGORIES
ON INTERPRETATION
PRIOR ANALYTICS



Translated by
H. P. COOKE
HUGH TREDENNICK

ARISTOTLE

THE CATEGORIES ON INTERPRETATION

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
HAROLD P. COOKE

PRIOR ANALYTICS

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
LONDON, ENGLAND

First published 1938
Reprinted 1949, 1955, 1962, 1967, 1973,
1983, 1996, 2002

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ISBN 0-674-99359-4

Printed in Great Britain by St Edmundsbury Press Ltd,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, on acid-free paper.
Bound by Hunter & Foulis Ltd, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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PREFACE

WITH an eye to the English reader, who knows, perhaps, little of logic and less in that case of Aristotle's, I have tried in translating these texts to bring out the philosopher's meaning as clearly as was in my power. How far I have succeeded in doing so, provided I interpret it rightly, the reader alone can determine. I cannot, in consequence, pretend that I literally translate the Greek, where it seemed that a literal translation would fail to achieve this main purpose. Some scholars may possibly object that at times I paraphrase Aristotle. I can in that case only plead that a more or less intelligible paraphrase *does* convey something to the reader, unlike strict adherence to the letter. Moreover, a literal translation might often repel English readers and read like some alien jargon, as well as in all probability demanding rather copious notes, which are foreign from the scope of this series.

The Greek text here printed is Bekker's, except for some slight deviations that are noted at the foot of the page.

The short introduction that follows was submitted to the Provost of Oriel. I have to thank my friend and former tutor, Lt.-Col. A. S. L. Farquharson, for help and advice on certain points in regard to the meaning of the texts.

H. P. C.

Cambridge, 1934

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THE TRADITIONAL ORDER of the works of Aristotle as they appear since the edition of Immanuel Bekker (Berlin, 1831), and their division into volumes in this edition.

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ARISTOTLE
THE CATEGORIES

INTRODUCTION

WHAT is the subject of the *Categories*? In ordinary usage *κατηγορία*, rendered in English as 'category,' meant nothing more than 'a predicate.' This meaning it seems highly probable that it retains in this text. The ten categories, then, are ten predicates. What sort of predicates, however, and predicates also of what? Let us first raise another point here. If we ask how Aristotle came by them, the critics are not in agreement. The following seems, on the whole, the most plausible view of the matter.

Aristotle,' says Theodor Gomperz, 'imagines a man standing before him, say in the Lyceum, and passes in successive review the questions which may be put and answered about him. All the predicates which can be attached to that subject fall under one or other of the ten heads, from the supreme question: What is the object here perceived? down to such a subordinate question, dealing with mere externalities, as: What has he on? What equipment or accoutrements, *e.g.* shoes or weapons? Other questions are concerned with his qualities and his size (white, instructed in grammar, so many feet tall); under the head of relation (Related to what) come answers in which a term such as Greater or Less, Handsomer or Uglier, implies a reference to an object or objects of comparison. The "When" is explained by a

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Yesterday or To-morrow, the Doing and Suffering by the sentences: "He is cutting or burning," "He is being cut or burnt." The enumeration is intended to comprise the maximum of predicates which can be assigned to any thing or being. A maximum, be it observed; for it can hardly be by chance that the full number is found in only two passages of the work, while the two which are at once the most special and the least important, those relating to Having, or possession, and to Lying, or attitude, are in every other case passed over without mention. And indeed, what sense could there be in speaking of the possessions of a stone or a piece of iron, or of the attitude of a sphere or a cube? We further observe that several others of the categories are often lumped together under the one name of "Affections," while others are collectively designated "Motions." ^a Grote took a similar view. 'Now what is remarkable,' he wrote, 'about the ninth and tenth Categories is, that individual persons or animals are the only Subjects respecting whom they are ever predicated, and are at the same time Subjects respecting whom they are constantly (or at least frequently) predicated. An individual person is habitually clothed in some particular way in all or part of his body; he (and perhaps his horse also) are the only Subjects that are ever so clothed. Moreover animals are the only Subjects, and among them man is the principal Subject, whose changes of posture are frequent, various, determined by internal impulses, and at the same time interesting to others to know. Hence we may infer that when Aristotle

^a *Greek Thinkers* (Eng. tr.), vol. iv. p. 39. 'A maximum,' too, for a man, for a man might have no clothing on!

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lays down the Ten Categories, as *Summa Genera* for all predications which can be made about any given Subject, the Subject which he has wholly, or at least principally, in his mind is an individual Man. We understand, then, how it is that he declares *Habere* and *Jacere* to be so plain as to need no further explanation. What is a man's posture? What is his clothing or equipment? are questions understood by every one.' ^a

If the views thus expressed are correct (and they seem to admit of no doubt) in regard to the source of the doctrine, we can draw, I think, certain conclusions respecting the nature of the categories, as they appear in this text, as distinct from other texts of Aristotle, and, at least, in their primary significance. They constitute the most general predicates assignable to one single subject. That subject can only be either an individual man or an animal. Of any other subject whatever not all of them are possible predicates. They constitute, therefore, 'a maximum,' as Theodor Gomperz well puts it. To certain other namable entities a number may, doubtless, belong; and, moreover, on a secondary view, at least one may belong to all others. We may thus describe everything existing as a substance or quantity or quality or refer it to one of the others.

This latter point brings us, I think, to a common explanation of the doctrine. Dr. Ross, for example, considers that 'the categories are a list of the widest predicates which are predicable essentially of the various namable entities, i.e., which tell us what kinds of entity at bottom they are.' ^b If I understand

Aristotle (ed. 2, 1880), p. 79.

Aristotle, p. 23.

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this statement correctly, this means that the ultimate answer to the question what is red is 'a quality,' the ultimate answer to the question what space is or time is 'a quantity.' On that view each namable entity falls under only one category, having one only for predicate. And surely one category only can tell us what a thing is at bottom.' Now, a careful inspection of the text shows, I think, that this view is correct. Aristotle, in particular, of quantity enumerates several examples, such as time, space, speech, lines, solids, numbers. And if you were to ask what these are, then the ultimate answer to the question is 'quantities discrete or continuous.' Moreover, he expressly reminds us that only some things, strictly speaking, belong to the category of quantity. This implies that all namable things can be classed under one or another. And the fact that he admits the possibility of a thing's falling under two categories scarcely affects the main point. And this view is consistent with our statement that one of the categories, at least, will belong to each namable entity.

These contentions, I think, will hold good. Not, however, of the classification in its earliest form and significance. For nothing, indeed, in that case appears clearer, at least to my mind, than that *all* of the ten were envisaged as the predicates of *one single* subject. This is not to deny that the doctrine has additional aspects or meanings and that it might come to be made to serve purposes other than the primal and, possibly, far more important.

So, again, we may properly argue that one subject of our text is the meanings of 'uncombined,' 'isolated words' (or of terms as opposed to propositions) and the things signified by those terms. Thus the

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doctrine of the categories may serve as a classification of such meanings. It is only again in regard to the primary sense of that doctrine that I do not quite follow Dr. Ross. 'It would seem,' so he says very briefly, 'that in its earliest form the doctrine was a classification of the meanings of, *i.e.* of the *things* meant by, "uncombined words," in other words an inventory of the main aspects of reality, so far at least as language takes account of them.'^a This seems to me only to be true of the doctrine 'in its earliest form,' if 'reality' is taken as meaning an individual man or an animal.

Then the terms of the text make it evident, as Gomperz has rightly observed, that the doctrine had a definite bearing, in the uses to which it was put, on the theory and practice of disputation—a matter of small interest now. Otherwise we should not find it dealing with the subject of dialectical questions.

That the subject of all the ten categories is an individual man or an animal may be possibly due in some measure not only to actual observation of men in the market-place of Athens but also to Aristotle's holding that the real is the concrete individual. And what better instance could he take with a view to illustrating his lectures than a Plato, a Callias, a Socrates, or (being possessed of some humour) some member of his logical classes?

This view presupposes, of course, that the doctrine derives from Aristotle. Some scholars deny this or doubt it, supposing he found it ready-made and took it over complete from the Academy. Certain points may lend colour to this theory, among them the fact

* *Aristotle*, p. 23.