

Particulars and Universals

Now of actual things some are universal, others particular. I call universal that which is by its nature predicated of a number of things and particular that which is not; man, for instance is a universal, Callias is a particular. (Aristotle)

Universal: an entity that may be instantiated at multiple locations by distinct entities at the same time—it can be located in multiple locations at the same time.

Particular: an entity that cannot be multiply instantiated—it cannot be located in multiple locations at the same time.

Three General Ontological Strategies

X is ontologically dependent on Y if and only if X cannot exist without Y existing.

Alternatively: X exists in virtue of standing in some relationship to Y.

X is ontologically independent of Y if and only if X can exist without Y existing.

Alternatively: X exists independently of any relationship it has to Y.

Conceptualism: X exists and X is ontologically dependent on some mind or other.

Realism: X exists and X is ontologically independent of any mind whatsoever.

Nominalism: X does not exist at all.