

The Conformity of Knowledge with the Real

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[Editor's introduction: This paper gathers in one place several discussions of Yves R. Simon, originally occurring in diverse writings, on the relation of the objects of our cognition to reality. According to Jacques Maritain, the most fundamental question of epistemology is the nature of truth, since epistemology evaluates and truth is the goal by which the success of inquiry is judged.ⁱⁱ Aristotelians solve problems concerning truth by making crucial distinctions found together in no other philosophy. No one has discussed those distinctions more profoundly than Simon.

The first uniquely Aristotelian distinction, explained in Section 1, is between mental instruments such as concepts and the objects which we are made aware of by means of them. The second distinction, introduced in Section 2, is between the objects we are made aware of by means of mental instruments and what extramental things are. To be an "object," in Aristotelian vocabulary, is to be in relation to a conscious subject. The truth of the mental instruments we call *propositions* requires a prior conformity between mental *concepts* and things. Knowledge of truth, however, is not a matter of making a comparison between something mental and something extramental, which are really distinct from each other, but of knowing a relationship between what an object we are made aware of by means of a concept is and what a thing is, which are really identical and only logically distinct when there is truth.

In Section 2, Simon uses the distinction between things and objects to answer, for perhaps the only time in the history of philosophy, two fundamental questions concerning truth. One question is this: if truth is conformity of the mind with what is outside the mind, how can we ever know truth? We cannot compare the known to the unknown, so we can only compare what is "in the mind" to what is "in the mind."

The truth of affirmative propositions requires that the same thing(s) is made an object in different ways. We can grasp the truth of "Socrates is a philosopher" because we are already aware of a thing made object by the name "Socrates" and of a thing made object by the predicate "philosopher." So each of these objects must, to begin with, be known to be identical with something that is not just an *object*, here not just something related to a knowing subject as *named-by* and *described-by*, but an (actual or possible) mind-independent *thing*, and thus something potentially objectified in more than one way. Grasping the truth of the mental constructs called propositions results not from directly comparing the

mind with reality, but from comparing one object already known not just as an object but as a transobjective thing with different object already known as a transobjective thing. (We can call mind-independent things “transobjective” only after the mind's reflection on itself gives us the concept of “object,” but that reflection itself could not occur unless we were already aware of what we can after reflection call the “transobjective”: attributes pertaining to things as things.)

In comparing thing with thing we are aware that the thing has been diversely objectified; if it was not diversely objectified, we could not compare it to itself. So awareness of truth also requires an at least implicit reflection of the mind on its own acts of objectification, and the awareness of the identity of objects as things that gives us knowledge of truth is also awareness of the mind's conformity with things.

This leads to the answer to the second question: what is the epistemological purpose of forming propositions when we are already aware of things by means of concepts and sensations? The mind forms propositions in order to express to itself an alleged — there can be falsehood — identity of distinct objects with the same thing, an identity that the mind can know to hold only by comparing the known to the known, for example, comparing what is objectified by the name “Socrates” and what is objectified by the predicate “philosopher.” Propositional comparisons of the known to the known can express the truth about what exists “outside the mind” because each of the compared objects is already known to be identical with an, at least putatively, possible thing: What is objectified by “Socrates” is known as one possible cognition-independent entity and no other; what is objectified by “philosopher” is known as a possible entity possessing certain characteristics that are cognition-independent.

Maritain believed that “the first and most important of philosophic problems,” not “in itself” but “for us” concerned the relations between thing and object.ⁱⁱⁱ (The most important in itself is the distinction between existence and essence in everything but God.) The philosophical handling of truth requires a way of describing the sense in which objects can be known to be identical that preserves their diversity and a way of describing the sense in which they are diverse that preserves their identity. In Sections 1 and 2, Simon emphasizes the diversity of psychological concepts and their objects, on the one hand, and the identity of object and thing, on the other. Sections 3 and 4 focus on describing the *diversity* of objects from things in the way necessary to preserve their *identity*. Section 3 develops the diversity, implicit in the thing/object distinction, between real existence and objective existence and applies it to the problem of

universals.

The third distinction required for understanding our knowledge of truth, explained in Section 4, is between attributes pertaining to things as things and as objects of knowledge. When in addition to being something that really exists, a thing also becomes something present in awareness, it becomes associated with attributes, like being named “Socrates” or being in the extension of “philosopher,” that it can be associated with only as a result of and for the sake of its status as an object of awareness.^{iv} Thus, we have (1) *that which* exists as a thing and is present as an object: the same; (2) existence as a thing and presence as an object: different; (3) attributes pertaining to something as a thing or as an object: different.

For truth, the distinction between that which is a thing and that which is an object of knowledge must be only a “distinction of reason”; what is a thing (actual or possible) and what is an object must be really identical. But the same object unites attributes pertaining to things as things, like being this entity and no other or being a philosopher, and pertaining to things as objects, like being the referent of a name or in the extension of a predicate. The latter attributes are “beings of reason,” that can have no status other than that of being objects (being in apprehension). *Logical* beings of reason, like being the antecedent of a conditional or the middle term of a syllogism, are not the only kind, and Simon does not offer conditions both necessary and sufficient for a being of reason to be logical. But he does not need to. To avoid some perennial philosophical traps, it is enough to know that some attributes pertain to things not as things but only as objects.

One trap is the false dichotomy that logic must be either a branch of psychology or the study of abstract objects. Logic is not about laws of *thought*. Logic’s laws govern *objects* of (rational) thought as objects, because those laws result from the nature of certain beings of reason that happen to be properties pertaining to objects of reason as objects of reason. Another trap is the fallacy of trying to model ontology on logical properties of our knowledge of the real. Contrary to what so many philosophers believe, the conformity of knowledge with the real that makes statements about things as things true cannot be between things and *logical* characteristics belonging to things as objects of concepts and propositions. With respect to logical properties, thing and object must *differ*, since truth requires that thing and object be at least logically distinct, though only logically, not really, distinct. The attributes of objects as

objects that make the laws of logic true differ from the attributes that statements about things as things objectify.

So the thing/object identity analysis of truth is not Frege's "identity theory of truth." The truth condition of a proposition is not identity between a proposition (in the objective sense) and a state of affairs, which would require that states of affairs share a logical structure with propositions. The truth condition is a prior identity between each of the diverse objects compared in the proposition and the same transobjective thing.

The calculational treatment of abstract objects such as models is an incomparably powerful tool of logical knowledge somewhat different from logical knowledge, the grasp of logical necessity, per se. (Does the fact that mathematical knowledge differs from physical knowledge per se diminish the status of mathematics as an indispensable tool of physics?) So while Simon clearly preferred the subject-copula-predicate way of expressing propositions, the thing/object analysis itself does not commit him to the existence of such things as the true "logical form" of sentences or of their true "logical subjects and predicates." Having an analysis of propositions from the point of view of their essential *epistemological* purpose, he would be free to say that, as long as that purpose was served, *other* purposes could be legitimately served by different logical syntaxes, purposes like using calculational methods as tools of logic. It has been shown that the function-argument syntax is as consistent with the thing/object identity analysis of truth as is the subject-copula-predicate syntax.^v

So the thing/object identity analysis of truth is not based on an interpretation of the verb "to be"; in particular it is not an interpretation of "is" as an identity sign.^{vi} The awareness of the identity of an object with a thing that is prior to the awareness of truth is also prior to the awareness of the function that "to be" has in propositions.^{vii}]

1.

A formal concept is the psychological reality designated by the word "concept"; it is an accident, a quality or disposition by reason of which the intellect is able to know a certain object. An objective concept is the object of a concept; it is an aspect of the thing known; it is that aspect of the thing known which is delivered to the intellect by a certain (formal) concepts. "We lay hold of a thing 'by' our mental concepts ['mental concept' is synonymous with 'formal concept'] just as we lay hold of an animal by our hands or

see a monument by our eyes. We seize it by such and such an objective concept as we seize an animal by the paws or the ears, or as we see a monument by the façade or the apse.^{viii} This distinction of a formal (or mental, or psychological) meaning and an objective meaning holds for all terms designating intentional realities: image, memory, representation, idea, notion, concept, etc. The common use of these terms evidences the spontaneous distinction of these two meanings; when we say “I believe your story because it is told by you, but, so far as I am concerned, I have lost the memory of this event,” we mean that our power of remembering – a psychological reality – lacks a certain quality or disposition – again, a psychological reality – without which the past event cannot be present to me as remember event. When, on the other hand, we say: “This event is the happiest memory of my whole life,” ‘memory’ is identified with ‘past event’; the word ‘memory,’ in the latter case, is taken in the objective sense; in this sense, a memory is the remembered event, or, more precisely, it is that aspect of the past event which is tendered present by a ‘formal,’ or ‘mental’ memory.

The theory of the two-sided character of intentional realities was clearly outlined by Aristotle^{ix}; it plays a central part in St Thomas’ philosophy of knowledge; John of St. Thomas gave it a new power through extreme accuracy of expression. In our time it has often been point out that idealism makes itself plausible by taking advantage of an easy confusion between the formal and the objective meaning of such terms as concept, idea, etc. Recall the criticism of Berkeley by Bertrand Russell. “Berkeley’s view, that obviously the color must be in the mind seems to depend for its plausibility upon confusing the thing apprehended with the act of apprehension. Either of these might be called an ‘idea’; probably either would have been called an idea by Berkeley. The act is undoubtedly in the mind; hence, when we are thinking of the act, we readily assent to the view that ideas must be in the mind. Then, forgetting that this was only true when ideas were taken as acts of apprehension, we transfer the proposition that ‘ideas are in the mind’ to ideas in the other sense, i.e., to the things apprehended by our acts of apprehension. Thus, by an unconscious equivocation, we arrive at the conclusion that whatever we can apprehend must be in our minds. This seems to be the true analysis of Berkeley’s argument and the ultimate fallacy upon which it rests.”^{x xi}

2.

In everyday English “thing” and “object” are synonymous. In epistemology “object” is opposed to

“subject” and a thing need not be an object, nor an object a thing. A thing becomes an object as it becomes known or knowable. Thus, to be an object (objectivity) always involves a relation to a subject. So, what I dream about is an object and exist objectively, that is, as something being known by me in my dream, but it need not be a thing that exists outside by mind. To put it in another way, an object is that with which an operation, be it cognitive or appetitive, is concerned.^{xii xiii}

If we understand by “thing” the concrete reality whose act is extramental being, made up of an essence joined to its properties, its contingencies, and finally its existence (actual or possible), and by “object” whatever of that thing is made manifest in knowledge,^{xiv} we have to say, first, that there is no sense in which the object and the thing make two – as if the object could be something other than the thing^{xv} – but also, second, that the thing and the object do not necessarily coincide totally. Total coincidence of object and thing is found only in an exhaustive knowledge, in which the entire thing is constituted as an object. The object is always identical with the thing, but this identity may be only partial, and in every knowledge that is not exhaustive, there is more in the thing than in the object. Now, it is this lack of total coincidence between the object and the thing, wherever such is the case, that gives rise to the problem of the identity of the thing and the object in our knowledge. Not that this identity can be purely and simply unknown; it is the essence of the object to represent the thing or, better, to be the thing as it manifests itself in knowledge. Thus the skeptical position, which despairs of knowing whether there is, beyond the phenomenal object, some reality identical with what is perceived, goes contrary to the natural movement of the intellect, and can be refuted by reduction to absurdity. In fact, it is worth noting that despite the most systematic determination to contradict the spontaneous certitudes of the intellect, skeptical doubt concerning the identity of the object and the thing – of the phenomenal object and the thing itself – has never been extended to the phenomenal object considered in its phenomenality.^{xvi} The skeptic gives up on knowing the truth because he does not know where to go from there; namely, how to verify that the object is identical with the thing. And so even though truth consists in the relation of conformity between thought and reality,^{xvii} rather than in the identity between the object and the thing, and even though that identity is never *unknown* – it can only be *unacknowledged* at the price of an arbitrary forcing – knowing the truth certainly involves an explicit recognition of the identity of object and thing, which a simple grasping of the object does not always provide. For how could the mind recognize its

conformity to reality if it did not recognize that its object is identical with the real. And if the mind sees its object as identical with the real, how could it not see that it itself conforms to reality? The act of knowing the conformity of the mind to reality and the act of recognizing the identity of the object and the thing must go hand in hand. When simple perception of the object includes knowledge of truth, it is because that perception is sufficient for knowing expressly that the object is identical to a thing. When in addition to simple perception a further act is required for knowing the conformity of the mind with the real, it is because the identity of the object and the thing is not adequately expressed by simple perception.

In an exhaustive knowledge, the identity of the object and the thing is as fully manifest as the object itself. For a mind sufficiently penetrating to grasp immediately and without any remainder everything knowable in the thing, leaving no transobjective element, the recognition of the identity of the object and the thing does not require a distinct act, because such a mind knows that thing fully at the same time as it knows the object. There is no skepticism among the angels; the skeptical doubt that the human intellect cannot really live with cannot even be feigned by the angelic intellect. Regardless of the state of his will, an angel can no more feign doubt about the object-thing than the skeptic can feign doubt about the object-phenomenon, and for the same reason: the thing known exhaustively has entered wholly the order of phenomenality.^{xviii}

But in knowledge that is not exhaustive, the identity of the thing and the object, even though never in doubt, cannot be expressed by the mind to itself except through comparing the object with the thing. And this is where the skeptical doubt comes in. Because the thing extends beyond the perceived object, if our human, less than exhaustive perception is unable to express their identity, how, then, are we to get hold of the thing to compare it with the object and its idea? To the extent that it exceeds the object, the thing in itself, by itself, is something unknown. Therefore, comparing the object with the thing that does not totally coincide with the object would mean comparing the known with the unknown, which is something evidently impossible.

And yet it has to be done. We have to be able to compare the object with the transobjective thing in order to verify not only their identity but also the conformity of our thought to reality. But because one cannot compare the known with the unknown, and since the object of the non-exhaustive perception is presented to the mind surrounded by an area of the unknown, somehow the object must be made to

reveal more than what it is showing. We must find a way to use the certainty of its presence to get beyond it and to penetrate the transobjective thing in its very transobjectivity. And there seems only one way to do this. Comparing the limited object with the thing, clearly absurd if it is a matter of comparing the known and the unknown, is possible by means of a comparison of two objects, which would tell us what goes on in the transobjectivity of the thing and make that transobjectivity, so to speak, pass into objectivity.

This is the way, unknown to the skeptic, that an intellectual realism has found to solve the paradoxical problem of comparing the object and the thing. We compare one object with another object, the known with the known, and if either rational analysis or experience reveals the need to identify them, the problem is solved. That need posits an identity that is not realized in the phenomenality of the object – otherwise the two objects would be one – and can only be in the transobjectivity of the thing.^{xx} For instance, the object Socrates is not identical with the object man. So, if I have to say that Socrates is a man, this can be only because of their identity in the transobjective realm. The thing that is Socrates, and that manifests itself in the object of thought “Socrates,” is the same thing that is man, and that manifests itself in the object of thought “man.”^{xx} But when I thus verify the identity of these objects in the transobjective realm, by an operation that is strictly the work of my own mind, I know at the same time that my mind conforms to the real thing.

It is in this way that we come to understand the role of the enunciative synthesis [the proposition], how necessary it is for the preparation of the judicative synthesis [the judgment], and in what essential way the latter differs from it. Judgment consists in saying *Yes* or *No*. *Yes*, the thing is just as the thought presents it; *no*, it is different. An exhaustive perception requires no comparison between the mind and the real, since it testifies directly to the mind that the thing is just as it reveals itself. But lacking an exhaustive perception, we carry out the necessary comparison between our thought and the real by way of the enunciative synthesis, in which the mind both reflects upon itself and transcends objectivity to attain reality in its most distinctive otherness.^{xxi}

3.

In so far as our language habits were shaped by the problems of modern idealism, ‘objective’ is used in opposition to ‘subjective’ and means ‘pertaining, not to some state of consciousness or mode of the psyche, but to the real world, independently of the knowledge that we have of it’; so understood,

'objective' is synonymous with real and, in fact, is often used as an emphatic way of expressing reality as opposed to subjectivity. For St. Thomas and his disciples, states of consciousness and modes of the psyche are not 'that which' is known-except in secondary process of reflective knowledge – but 'that by which' what is known is known. In direct and primary forms of knowledge, the thing is that which is known. Inasmuch as it is known or at least knowable, a thing is an object. If the whole of a thing were known, with no residual amount of not yet explored reality, the coincidence of thing and object would be complete and knowledge would be exhaustive. In relation to inexhaustive knowledge, an object is never more than an aspect of a thing. From any given standpoint, it is impossible to see simultaneously the six faces of a cube. The faces unseen are not less real than the faces seen. So far as the 'to be of thing' is concerned, the faces enjoy no advantage over the faces unseen; but the faces seen alone are, in relation to sight, object in act. The 'to be of object' is actual in the case of the faces seen, not in the case of the faces unseen. Real existence is actual both in the case of the seen and in that of the unseen; objective existence is actual in the first case alone. Between object and thing, there is a distinction of reason resulting from the fact that the object implies a system of relations of reason – to a power, a habitus or an act – which the thing does not imply. Objective existence, thomistically understood as 'to be of object,' implies the relations of reason which bring about a distinction of reason between object and thing. Real existence, understood as 'to be of thing,' is in no way affected by these relations.^{xxii}

A failure to distinguish between real existence and objective presence, existence as a thing and existence as an object . . . supposes that the intellect has no work to perform in knowing, but passively receives the thing according to one-to-one correspondence in which every mode of objective presence has its exact and actual counterpart in the ontological structure of things. This is at once a realism and a confident sort of rationalism which in effect models the ontological upon the logical (the intentional logical), i.e., upon the rational and dialectical mode of the human intellect.^{xxiii}

The treatment of universality achieved decisive progress when Thomas Aquinas explained that the predicates "universal" and the "individual" pertain not to the intelligible constitution of any nature but to the states in which natures exist, to their way of existence.^{xxiv} There are within each thing features which belong necessarily to its constitution, without which this thing would not be what it is and without the grasp of which it is not understood for what it is. Think of the plan of a building in the mind of the architect; when

the phase of planning is over, the determination of the building with regard to situation, materials, arrangements, size, etc., is complete. The problem that remains to be solved is one of execution or realization; it concerns the difference between not to be and to be, it does not concern any of the constitutive features of "that which was to be."^{xxv} All the difference between the building as planned in the architect's mind and the actually existing building concerns the way in which the thing exists, not the system of features that cause it to be what it is and to be intelligible as a definite sort of being. The actually existing building, in case of a real storm, shelters real humans, and the merely planned building shelters but imaginary dwellers against imaginary storms. Yet it is, in various states, the same building, same location, same size, same materials, same arrangement. How is it that one and the same thing admits of conditions so different from each other as merely objective existence in the mind and actual existence in the world of reality? What makes both conditions possible is that neither pertains to the necessary constitution of the thing. Examine this building in detail; you will find that it contains seven bedrooms, one living-room, one kitchen, one dining-room, etc.; but this inquiry, no matter how thorough, will never yield, as one feature among other features, "merely objective existence in the mind," "actual existence in the world of reality" – such existential conditions are foreign to the constitution that causes a thing to be what it is. Similarly, the analysis of a nature will never yield, as a feature to be included in a definition or derived from it, the predicate "universal" or the predicate "individual." Let "man" be the universal under analysis; we may consider the features constitutive of its definition; then the properties connected with its differentia; then the properties connected with its genus; then its remote genera, etc. We shall find such intelligible features as rationality, progressivity, sociability, morality, sensibility, life, corruptibility, etc., but never individuality" or "universality"; these are not features, but existential modalities. A nature is not, of itself, either universal or individual, and this is why it is capable of assuming both the state of individuality in the real and, in the mind, a state of universality produced by a process of abstraction and positive unification.^{xxvi}

Asserting the reality of a human nature, one and the same in all men, does not imply belief in any Platonic type. It is in the mind alone that human nature, or any nature, possesses a condition of positive unity. In the real the features which make up the universal human nature exist in the state of individuality, which means that human nature exists in James as identical with the individual reality of James. The

same human nature exists in Philip in the state of individuality, which means that it exists in Philip as identified with the individual reality of Philip. (Yet James is not identical with Philip. As John of St. Thomas says, two things each of which is identical with the same third thing are not necessarily identical with each other if the third thing is virtually multiple: "But the universal nature is virtually multiple because it is communicable to several things; therefore, identity with it does not entail the identity of the individuals among themselves" ^{xxvii}) ^{xxviii}

4.

A being of reason is an object, which neither does nor can exist except in the mind in the capacity of object. ^{xxix} You have in this definition all you need in order never to do what has been done by so many people: to confuse a being of reason with a psychological reality. That is the ambiguity of the expression "being of reason," but the Latin *ens rationis* is just as bad. Ignoramuses may take it to designate psychological realities, but a psychological reality is an *ens reale*, a real being of a particular kind that is just as real as anything else. Take a man with plenty of happy memories who is unfortunately involved in a head-on collision, so that as a result of brain injuries his memory is gone. A certain faculty that he had to remember what he did as a child and as a young man is gone. Something real is gone. We may elaborate indefinitely on the nature of such psychological realities, our sensations, our images, our recollections, our acts of understanding, our acts of reasoning, our concepts and so forth and so on; that these are real things is not questionable. You may say that they are reducible to movements of particles if you are a very staunch materialist after the fashion of a hundred years ago – that is one way to see things. Then psychological realities would ultimately be of the same nature as the so-called physical realities. Real they are anyway, whether you interpret them materialistically or not. A being of reason is that which neither does nor can exist except in the mind and in the capacity of object. This is the distinguishing part, the differentiating part of the definition. "In the capacity of object," not in the capacity of disposition, not in the capacity of habit, not in the capacity of memory or image or concept but in the capacity of object.

Let us consider some examples. Beings of reason are found in several domains. There is one where they are overwhelming because they are alone. It is logic. Logical properties are beings of reason. That is the first thing to get in order to define logic and to distinguish it from its unscrupulous neighbors. Logic is surrounded by neighbors that have absolutely no scruples, for instance, the psychology of the

intellect, the critique of knowledge and, worst of all, the ethics of thought. These neighbors of logic are always ready to swallow it up. There are on the market indefinitely many books of logic, especially perhaps since the beginning of the nineteenth century, where there is a little logic and much that may be very good in itself but is not logic. However, what is very good in itself and is not logic becomes vicious when it is called logic. What we have to understand here is exceedingly simple. Just take a little fact such as an incident in the jungle. A beast of prey, a lion, devours a deer. That is a real event that does not belong to the logical world; it belongs to the real world. When you have observed a number of the same such facts you are perfectly entitled to generalize and to say that the lion is a carnivorous animal. Here you are no longer considering an individual, real event, but a general property. I would even say an essential one. We approach very clumsily, imperfectly and unclearly such essences as that of lion. If you ask me exactly where this species of lion begins and exactly where it ends, you know that we do not know those things. Opinions on it change from generation to generation of zoologists. Though we are very uncertain about those things, when I say a lion and a deer, I am sure that I speak of two different things, things that have different natures. Without being able to ascertain their natures with much clarity, when I say "lion" I circumscribe one thing, and when I say "deer" I circumscribe something else. A lion is carnivorous so that if there are too many deer in a jungle it is a good thing to let the lions do their job. And a deer is herbivorous so that if you grow corn it is better to destroy a deer. All that is clear. We are talking about the real world all the time. We start with individual happenings, then we consider, no matter how clumsily, universal types. We speak of the real world all the time.

Then a day comes when I consider the proposition: "The lion is carnivorous." That proposition refers to the real world but I may reflect upon the proposition and say, "In the proposition, 'the lion is carnivorous,' 'lion' is subject and 'carnivorous' is predicate."^{xxx} But there are no subjects or predicates in the jungle. Those objects exist in the mind alone. It is as simple as that in principle. The development of those principles may involve tremendous difficulties. In principle it is as simple as that: a lion belongs to the real world, the devouring of a deer by a lion belongs to the real world, the lion's property of being a carnivorous animal belongs to the real world, and when I stop to think that I understand those properties in arrangements of objects, my understanding belongs to the real world to. But as I arrange those objects in such a way as to understand them, what happens to those objects in this mental arrangement? They

acquire properties that they never have in the jungle or in the desert. We can put it in a slightly different way. The lion and the deer exist twice, in the jungle and as objects in the mind. As a result of the second existence that they enjoy in the mind, they acquire new properties that depend on their first existence but that follow in part too from the distinguishing characteristics of this second existence. That is the difference between the logical and the real world. It is these new properties that are the object of logic. You can think of indefinitely many examples of them. To be a subject, to be a predicate, to be a major term, to be a minor term, to be a middle term, to be a middle term in a syllogism of the first figure; these are so many logical properties that belong to things, not in their real but in their objective existence.^{xxxii}

We ought then to try to rule out the confusion of beings of reason and psychological realities.^{xxxiii} I understand the lion through a disposition of my psyche (call it a concept if you please), which is something real, a psychological reality. A memory of a lion, which is simply an image by which I remember it and which can be destroyed if a hammer is suddenly applied on my skull – that is a psychological reality. I understand subject, predicate, middle term, and so on, also through psychological dispositions which are realities, just as real as anything else. The relevant point here concerns not that through which I understand but the object understood, Lion: real; deer: real; devouring: real; carnivorous: real; subject in the proposition “The lion is a carnivorous animal”: that is a logical property. You see that it does not exist in the jungle. And it cannot exist anywhere else than in the mind in the capacity of object. Why? Because it is a property that things acquire as a result of the peculiarities of the second existence that they enjoy as objects of consideration, as objects of knowledge. It should be clear, then, why the possibility of making real a being of reason, a logical property, is excluded. These are properties that result from existence as objects. So, in the real world it is simply contradictory to fancy that they may exist. Those logical properties are not contradictory in themselves. There is nothing contradictory about a predicate or a subject. What would be contradictory would be the realization of a predicate. The day will never come when you can tell me, “I shook hands with a predicate in the street.” That is impossible because it is a strict contradiction.

It is obvious that we have here a linguistic and almost a social problem concerning the word “object.” A young friend of mine who taught logic to freshmen told me that they all come to college with the interpretation of “object” as the thing that you aim at, an end, a goal, an aim. That is not astonishing at all because they are practical boys. And the object of practice and of the arts has the character of an end. So

it is no wonder if object and end are lumped together in the mind of freshmen. When they are so in the mind of philosophers too it is less excusable, and it is too bad that it should happen. On the other hand, there is something much more serious, which is the identification of object with thing. Many people tell you, "This table exists objectively," meaning thereby that if I cut my throat and go out of existence and you also and all men, the table will still exist. Now, pay attention to the role of object in all theory of knowledge, including the theory of knowledge that you are using every day, and you will see that far from meaning real, "object" mean almost the opposite. For instance, there are objects in a dream, represented objects. Do they exist objectively? It is even the only way they exist. They do not exist as things, but they do exist as objects. We just have to reflect upon those things and upon our spontaneous use of words to see the difference between real existence and objective existence. I beg you to pay attention to that. Words have an awfully tyrannical power and can pervert anything.

When speaking of beings of reason, the first domain to consider is obviously that of logic. Logic could be defined as the science whose object is constituted exclusively by beings of reason. Does this mean that any consideration of reality is out of place in book of logic? That is another question. Just remember the example of the lion and the deer and it is clear enough that the logical beings of reason are grounded in reality. It is because the lion actually devours the deer that in the proposition, "The lion is a carnivorous animal," "carnivorous" is predicate. You see how the logical is grounded in the real. So far as I can see, in order to be understood, in order to be intelligible, the logician should be constantly considering the real foundation of logical properties. So, even if a book of logic is supposed to give you an understanding of logical objects, do not be surprised if it is filled with considerations relative to the real world, under either its physical, metaphysical or psychological aspects. For example, in his treatise *On Interpretation*, Aristotle considers the logical division of propositions into contingent and necessary. That involves a physics and a metaphysics of contingency and necessity. In a philosophy like that of Spinoza, if Spinoza could be absolutely consistent, *non datur contingens in natura rerum*, there is nothing contingent in reality. That is a motto of Spinoza. How consistently he lives up to that, I do not know. Suppose that a philosopher is absolutely consistent in developing a philosophy of universal and absolute necessity; for him the division of propositions into propositions whose matter is contingent and propositions whose matter is necessary would make no sense. Aristotle, however, is quite normally led apropos of this logical

division to expound his philosophy of contingency, so that if you want to write a paper on contingency in Aristotle, you will have to consult not only the physical and the metaphysical writings but also his logical works. Wherever he is concerned with the division of propositions into necessary and contingent, you are likely to find some remark on necessity and contingency in the real world because that is where the logical properties of these propositions are grounded.^{xxxiii}

Notes

i. [Edited with title, introduction, translation revisions and editor's notes by John C. Cahalan. All selections from Simon are copyrighted by the indicated publishers and used with their permission. Ed. note.]

ii. [*Distinguish to Unite or The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959) p. 76; *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale. 1926) pp. 9-11; *An Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953) p. 159, n. 1. Ed. note.]

iii. [In *An Introduction to Philosophy* (pp. 159 and 193), he calls the problem of universals "the first and most important of philosophic problems," not "in itself" but "for us." And while other Aristotelians were focused on Cartesian idealism, he said that nominalism's degrading of the value of the intellect was the deeper vice of modern philosophy (*The Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 1). After articulating the problem of thing and object in *The Degrees of Knowledge*, he considered the problem of universals an instance of the problem of thing and object, since the problem of universals is solved by recognizing that "universal" expresses a condition pertaining to objects only as objects, not things, as Simon explains in Section 3 below. For valid intuitions to do successful philosophic work, they must be properly conceptualized. The biggest difficulty in that conceptualization is keeping what pertains to things as things and as objects distinct without separating thing and object, or keeping thing and object identical without identifying what pertains to them as things and as objects. If we fail, we will attribute to things as things logical properties of our modes of knowing, or deny our ability to know the real, or both. Ed. note.]

iv. [That language exists not only as a result of but also for the sake of making things objects of awareness can be seen by the fact that it exists, at the very least, for the sake of making something that is the object of one person's awareness the object of another person's awareness. Ed. note.]

v. [See John C. Cahalan, *Causal Realism: An Essay on Philosophical Method and the Foundations of Knowledge* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1985) pp. 87-102; "Wittgenstein e Maritain: verità, esistenza, logica". *Per la filosofia*, 1995. The following is a translation and revision of a pertinent section from the latter: The thing/object account of truth does not depend on the subject/predicate sentence structure, with "is" expressing identity, nor on any syntactical structure or any interpretation of "is." In "aRbc," (for example, "Joe gave a cup to Sue") a is objectified by "a" and by "...Rbc" (that is, as something standing in relation R to b and c). b is similarly objectified by "b" and by "aR...c"; c is similarly objectified by "c" and by "aRb...". And R is objectified by "R" and by "a...bc" (that is, as a relation holding for things a, b, and c). And "aRbc" is true if and only if what are objectified by "a," "b," "c," and "R," respectively, each have that kind of identity with what are objectified in those other ways. Ed. note.]

vi. [See Cahalan, *Causal Realism*, p. 89 ff. Ed. note.]

vii. [*Ibid.*, p. 181-189. Ed. note.]

viii. See Jacques Maritain, *Formal Logic*, tr. By Imelda Choquette (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946), pp. 18-19.

ix. *On Memory*, 1.450^a25.

x. *The Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1912), p. 65 ff.

xi. [Source: *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas: Basic Treatises*, ed. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, G. Donald Hollenhorst (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955) p. 588, n. 19. All selections from this source are used with the permission of the publisher. Ed. note.]

xii. For a full discussion of the meaning of object and subject, see L M Regis, *Epistemology* (New York:

Macmillan, 1959), especially pp. 175-252.

xiii. [Source: *The Great Dialogue of Nature and Space*, ed. Gerard J. Dalcourt (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2001) p. 111. All selections from this source are used with the permission of the publisher. Ed. note.]

xiv. Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, pp. 90ff.

xv. [Simon is not saying that an object is never something other than a thing. The context of this statement is an analysis of knowledge of the truth of affirmative propositions in terms of diverse "objects" — so called because they are related to a conscious subject as named-by or described-by the subject — being identical with the same thing. When an affirmative proposition is false and a negative proposition true, an object is other than a thing. Ed. note.]

xvi. Victor Brochard, *Les Sceptiques grecs* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1887), pp. 137, 171-72, 361, 410, 426.

xvii. John of St. Thomas, *Curs. Th.* I, disp. 2, a. 2 (Vives, III, 93B).

xviii. [Omitted here is a lengthy note, n. 68, p. 143, comparing human knowledge to God's knowledge and to the angels' knowledge of essences. Ed. note.]

xix. As Maritain pointed out (*Formal Logic*, p. 84, n. 1), "The essential distinction between the act of the mind (the judgment) and the logical work constructed by it (the proposition or enunciation) has been obscured for many modern logicians, particularly under the influence of Kant." Also interesting is the following comment by John Stuart Mill: "[A]lmost all the writers on Logic in the last two centuries whether English, German, or French, have made their theory of Propositions, from one end to the other, a theory of Judgments. They considered a Proposition, or a Judgment, for they used the two words indiscriminately, to consist in affirming or denying one idea of another. To judge, was to put two ideas together; or to bring one idea under another, or to compare two ideas, or to perceive the agreement or disagreement between

two ideas: and the whole doctrine of Propositions, together with the theory of Reasoning (always necessarily founded on the theory of Propositions), was stated as if Ideas, or Conceptions, or whatever other term the writer preferred as a name for mental representations generally, constituted essentially the subject-matter and substance of those operations . . . To determine what it is that happens in the case of assent or dissent besides putting two ideas together, is one of the most intricate of metaphysical problems. But whatever the solution may be, we may venture to assert that it can have nothing whatever to do with the import of propositions; for this reason, that propositions (except sometimes when the mind itself is the subject treated of) are not assertions respecting our ideas of things, but assertions respecting the things themselves." *A System of Logic* I, 5, 1. These few lines are sufficient evidence that John Stuart Mill was fully aware that the notion of judicative assent is irreducible to that of simple enunciation.

The notion of judicative assent is explained with unexcelled clarity by Franz Brentano. All his psychology is dominated by the division of psychic phenomena into presentations (*Vorstellungen*), judgments (*Urteile*), and affective movements (*Gemütsbewegungen*), from which there arises an urgent need to show in what way judgment is distinguished from simple presentative knowledge. . . . Brentano writes (*Von Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* [Leipzig: Duncker & Humbolt, 1889], p. 14) . . . "[Before Descartes' time] judgments and presentations were grouped together as constituting a single fundamental class. [The same error has been made in more recent times; people have supposed that judging is essentially a matter of combining or relating presentations.] But this is a gross misconception of the nature of judgment. On the one hand, we may combine and relate presentations at will – as we do when we think of a green tree, or a golden mountain, or a father of a hundred children, or a friend of science – but if we have only combined and related, we have made no judgment. (To be sure, every judgment is based upon some presentation or other and so, too, is every desire.) On the other hand, we may make a judgment without thereby combining ideas or relating them as subject and predicate. Thus consider the judgment 'There is a God' as distinguished, say, from 'God is just.' What [then] is distinctive about judgment? It is this: in addition to there being an idea or presentation of a certain object, there is a second intentional relation that is directed upon that object. The relation is one of either affirmation or denial – either acceptance or rejection. If a man says 'God,' he gives expression to the idea of God. But if he says 'There

is a God,' then he gives expression to his belief in God.”

Thus not only would judgment be quite different from a synthesis of presentations, but synthesis as such could be left out altogether. This notion that *it is not at all necessary for judgment to rest on an enunciative synthesis* is developed at length by Brentano in his booklet *Von der Klassifikation der psychischen Phanomene* (Leipzig: Dunker & Humbolt, 1911), pp. 35ff. For instance, when one says A is, one must not think, as is so often done, that this is a predication in which existence as predicate is joined to A as subject; the object of the assent is not this relation but the term A itself. “A itself is the subject that we are acknowledging” (p. 45). More than that, Brentano holds that all propositions are reducible, either immediately or mediately, to existential propositions of the type *A is*. It is in this way that the hypothetical proposition *If a man acts badly, he harms himself*, reducible to the categorical proposition *All men acting badly harm themselves*, is finally reduced to *A man acting badly who does not harm himself does not exist* (pp. 49ff.).

In spite of Brentano's criticism (and he does not hesitate to call upon St. Thomas [*Sum. Th.* I, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2] in support of his position), we think that a proposition of the type *A is* is a genuine predication, one in which the verb to be plays the role of both copula and predicate, and that the assent given in this proposition bears not on the term A itself, but on the synthesis of A and existence. As we see it, a judgment that would not bear upon an enunciative synthesis could be nothing but a totally unspecified activity, a blind act.

xx. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. th.* I, q. 85, a. 5, ad 5; Maritain, *Reflexions sur l'intelligence*, chap. 1; *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 84.

xxi. [Source: *Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, trans. Vukan Kuic and Richard J. Thompson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990) pp. 141-148. Used with permission of the publisher. Some translations in this section have been revised. Ed. note.]

xxii. [Source: *Material Logic*, p. 623, n. 44. Ed. note.]

xxiii. [Source: *Material Logic*, p. 624, n. 52. Ed. note.]

xxiv. *On Being and Essence*, chap. lii, trans. A. A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949), pp. 38-39 “ . . . we can consider it [i.e., nature or essence] in two ways. First, we can consider it according to its proper meaning, which is to consider it absolutely. In this sense, nothing is true of it except what belongs to it as such; whatever else is attributed to it, the attribution is false. For example, to man as man belongs rational, animal and whatever else his definition includes, whereas white or black, or anything of this sort, which is not included in the concept of humanity, does not belong to man as man. If someone should ask, then, whether the nature so considered can be called one or many, neither should be granted, because both are outside the concept of humanity and both can be added to it. If plurality were included in the concept of humanity, it could never be one, although it is one inasmuch as it is present in Socrates. Similarly, if unity were contained in its concept, then Socrates' and Plato's nature would be one and the same, and it could not be multiplied in many individuals.

“Nature or essence is considered in a second way with reference to the act of existing [esse] it has in this or that individual. When the nature is so considered, something is attributed to it accidentally by reason of the thing in which it exists; for instance, we say that man is white because Socrates is white, although whiteness does not pertain to man as man.

“This nature has a twofold act of existing, one in individual things, the other in the mind; and according to both modes of existing, accidents accompany the nature. In individual beings, moreover, it has numerous acts of existing corresponding to the diversity of individuals. Yet, the nature itself, considered properly – that is to say, absolutely – demands none of these acts of existing. It is false to say that the nature of man as such exists in this individual man, because, if existing in this individual belonged to man as man, it would never exist outside this individual. Similarly, if it belonged to man as man not to exist in this individual, human nature would never exist in this or that individual, or in the intellect. Considered in itself, the nature of man thus clearly abstracts from every act of existing, but in such a way that none may be excluded from it. And it is the nature considered in this way that we predicate of all individual beings.”

xxv. This phrase, *to ti nv eivai*, is one of the synonyms of essence in Aristotle. The use of the past tense,

nv, may be accounted for by an unexpressed reference to the production of things in time. The thing produced in time is to be before it actually is; in actual existence it may be considered as that which was to be.

xxvi. [Notice that “individual” and “universal” are themselves universals. Tom is an individual, and Dick is an individual; “human” is a universal, and “canine” is a universal. As beings of reason, individuality and universality are secondary “natures” to which the distinction between nature and mode of existence also applies. They are properties that accrue to *other* natures in the objective existence of those natures, but since they can be objects of knowledge themselves, properties pertaining to objects as objects must accrue to them also. As a (secondary) nature grasped by a universal concept, individuality does not include what is unique to Tom’s individuality; if it did, “individual” would only be true of Tom. As a (secondary) nature grasped by a universal concept, universality does not include what is unique to the universality of “man” or “canine,” their respective extensions; if it did, attributing “universal” to “man” would require attributing “canine”’s universality and that of every other universal to “man.” Ed. note.]

xxvii. John of St. Thomas *Cursus philosophicus*, *Logica* ii, q.3, a. 2, ed. Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1930), p. 320, b, 11. [Human nature’s being “virtually multiple” means that in real existence the human natures of Al and Tom are only similar, not identical, but they are sufficiently similar that each nature is identical with the same nature that has objective existence as a universal. For the reason that human nature can have the property of universality in its status as object of concept is precisely that this object does not include what is unique to Al’s human nature or Tom’s. (This fact about what is not included in an object is what “abstraction,” in the logical, not psychological, sense means.) So the objective concept of human nature is identical with what each of Al and Tom’s human natures is *as far as it*, that objective concept, *goes as known object*. Likewise, the objective concepts of animal, living and body are identical with what each of Al and Tom’s individual natures are *as far as they*, these objective concepts, *go as known objects*. The objective concept of animal is identical with what Al is, but as a known object, it does not go so far as to include Al’s human characteristics. The objective concept of living is also identical with what Al is, but as a known object, it does not fo so far as to include Al’s animal characteristics; etc. And since these objective

concepts do not go so far as to include what is unique to AI, or to humans, or to animals, respectively, the concept of human does not go so far as to be identical with what AI is to the exclusion of being identical with what Tom is, and the concept of animal does not go so far as to be identical with what humans are to the exclusion of being identical with what lions are, and the concept of living does not go so far as to be identical with what animals are to the exclusion of being identical with what plants are. The standard properties of identity apply at each universal level. Human nature and animal nature are specifically and generically identical, respectively, with Tom's human nature, and Tom's human nature is specifically and generically identical, respectively, with human nature and animal nature. And if AI is identical with Tom with respect to universal U, Tom is identical with AI with respect to U. If AI and Tom are identical with respect to U, and Tom and Joe are identical with respect to U, AI and Joe are identical with respect to U. For more on universals' identity with individuals, including an application to Wittgenstein's problem of carrying on a series, see John C. Cahalan, "If Wittgenstein Had Read Poincaré: Recasting the Problem of Signs and Mental States," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (1994). As that article indicates, the more familiar notions of the identity of individuals and of sets of individuals presuppose this identity of universals with individuals. Ed. note.]

xxviii. [Source: *Philosophy of Democratic Government* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press) pp. 197-200. Used with permission of the publisher. Ed. note.]

xxix. [Language being public, the first purpose it serves must be the objectification of real, as opposed to merely conceived or imagined, existents. (See John C. Cahalan, "Wittgenstein as a Gateway to Analytical Thomism" in *Analytical Thomism*, ed. by Craig Paterson and Matthew Pugh (Ashgate: 2006.) But once language has objectified real existents, we can use language for other objects, like beings of reason, imaginary objects and fictions, including objects that come into apprehension only as attributes belonging to *other* objects as objects. Ed. note.]

xxx. [On Simon's preference for the subject-copula-predicate way of expressing propositions, see the "Editor's introduction." Ed. note.]

xxxi. [Nominalism (in the original, not the set-theoretic, sense) would say that it is the word "lion," not the lion, that is a subject and the word "carnivorous," not the activity of eating meat, that is a predicate. Simon could reply, correctly, that it is not the word "lion" that we are describing as carnivorous or the word "carnivorous" that we are asserting to be a property of lions. But Simon's basic point here would hold even if nominalism was correct. Being subjects and predicates are not among the physical properties of strings of shapes like "lion" and "carnivorous." They are beings of reason that come into apprehension only as result of the fact that we use such physical strings of shapes as means of objectifying things like lions and acts like – and dispositions to perform acts like – eating meat. So even if nominalism was true, the truth conditions of statements still could not include "correspondence" between the way things exist in the real world and any *logical* properties, properties belonging to objects as such or means of objectification as such, of statements. Ed. note.]

xxxii. Care must be taken not to confuse the object of logic as a science, viz., the second intentions, which are also the rules of logic as an art, with the 'matter to be set in order; by those rules. Such matter is twofold: proximately it is the whole realm of objects taken as such, in particular the complex sets that form the objects of a rational 'movement' or reasoning; remotely it is the cognitions of those objects, both the actual and the habitual cognitions, i.e., the acts of understanding as well as the mental products engendered by them – all pointing toward or intending the proximate matter, the objects. The remote matter, formal intentions or "intendings," is automatically regulated when the proximate matter – the objects as objects, the objects as intended – is regulated or set in order. This is why it is called remote. [Source: *Material Logic*, p. 587, n. 10. Ed. note.] By 'syllogism' and 'demonstration' are meant the objective rational disposition of objects, not the mental intending of such disposition, not the act or the mental utterance of syllogizing or demonstrating. Syllogism and demonstration are second intentions in the objective sense. [Source: *Material Logic*, p. 591, n. 26. Ed. note.] Mental concepts have an entitative existence and thus might possibly serve as matter of action, if there were need for such artistic action. Now, as has been explained, objects are already presented (in direct knowledge) as first intentions and set in order (by logical reflection) through second intentions accruing to them in the object realm, and mental concepts are

nothing other than natural references to the objects so ordered. In consequence, the mental concepts are already set in order. Thus there is no need of a practical art having those concepts as its matter of action. All this is in line with John of St. Thomas' stand against psychologism. [Source: *Material Logic*, p. 591, n. 31. Ed. note.]

xxxiii. [Source: *The Great Dialogue*, pp. 94-101. Ed. note.]