

AFTERWORD:
ON PURELY OBJECTIVE REALITY¹

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Bishop Berkeley was the first to point out to the moderns (1710: 45) that if the secondary qualities of bodies exist only in the mind and are yet the sole means by which the primary qualities can be known, then the assumption that the primary qualities exist not in the mind alone is without foundation. Poinot had made exactly the same point earlier in his *Treatise on Signs* (1632: Book III, Question 2, 312/2–6) when treating of the question whether sensation involves a *species expressa*, but the moderns were not to be deterred from setting out on their Way of Ideas, refusing to believe that it would require the conclusion that *ens reale* is unknowable and intersubjectivity an illusion (and anyway, not a one of them read the semiotics of Poinot).

The modern putting of *ens reale* under erasure is precisely what came to be embodied in the modern usage established for the words “subject” and “object”. Enlightenment thinking refused to see that if the experience that semiotic animals acquire simply by virtue of having the bodies that they do has no independent validity, then neither could the specialized knowledges developed by the inhabitants of human bodies have any

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validity either. That is the realization embodied in the distinction between *cænosopic* and *ideoscopic* knowledge, a terminology originally proposed by Jeremy Bentham (1816), but which I myself take rather from Charles Peirce (c.1902: 1.238–242), albeit with my own spelling.²

The terms as proposed have a Greek etymological root, “*cænosopic*” meaning “directly viewed”, as in unaided sense perception; “*ideoscopic*” meaning “specially viewed”, as in observation enhanced by instruments and controlled experimentation.³ But the spelling I have adopted for the latter term substitutes an “e” for what would in a more etymologically correct derivation be an “i” (so as to connote rather ‘ideas’ than ‘idiots’, frankly).

² “All knowledge whatever comes from observation; but different sciences are observational in such radically different ways that the kind of information derived from the observation of one department of science (say natural history) could not possibly afford the information required of observation by another branch (say mathematics).”

“I recognize two branches of science: Theoretical, whose purpose is simply and solely knowledge of God’s truth; and Practical, for the uses of life. In Branch I, I recognize two subbranches, of which, at present, I consider only the first, [the sciences of discovery]. Among the theoretical sciences [of discovery], I distinguish three classes, all resting upon observation, but being observational in very different senses.

“The first is mathematics, which does not undertake to ascertain any matter of fact whatever, but merely posits hypotheses, and traces out their consequences. It is observational, in so far as it makes constructions in the imagination according to abstract precepts, and then observes these imaginary objects, finding in them relations of parts not specified in the precept of construction. This is truly observation, yet certainly in a very peculiar sense; and no other kind of observation would at all answer the purpose of mathematics.

“Class II is philosophy, which deals with positive truth, indeed, yet contents itself with observations such as come within the range of every man’s normal experience, and for the most part in every waking hour of his life. Hence Bentham calls this class, *coenosopic*. These observations escape the untrained eye precisely because they permeate our whole lives, just as a man who never takes off his blue spectacles soon ceases to see the blue tinge. Evidently, therefore, no microscope or sensitive film would be of the least use in this class. The observation is observation in a peculiar, yet perfectly legitimate, sense. If philosophy glances now and then at the results of special sciences, it is only as a sort of condiment to excite its own proper observation.

“Class III is Bentham’s *ideoscopic*; that is, the special sciences, depending upon special observation, which travel or other exploration, or some assistance to the senses, either instrumental or given by training, together with unusual diligence, has put within the power of its students. This class manifestly divides itself into two subclasses, the physical and the psychical sciences”, or, as they are more commonly called, the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the sciences of φύσις and the sciences of νομός.

³ See the discussions in Ashley 2006: *passim*.

The Key Dilemma

As Peirce put it, “in half a dozen ways” the idea of anything completely unknowable “has been proved to be nonsensical” (for the very reason given by Aquinas in his pointing out that awareness of anything is necessarily pregnant with the possibility of coming to know what that something is), yet the idea of what anything known is as such — that is, as object — has so far as I know never been directly clarified, never thematically addressed.

Our most private thoughts or feelings are sometimes made public by facial expressions or bodily movements, can even be put into words for a sympathetic companion; things we have never heard of before intrude into our awareness; things we thought to be real turn out to be fictions; creatures we invent come to be objectively famous and influential.

So some things, but not all things, that become an object have an existence apart from being known. And yet many things that do exist apart from being known come to exist also as known, become objects as well as things. How? Is all this an illusion? If it is not illusion, as I am convinced and as common sense suggests as strongly as it is able to suggest anything, then how can what is and what is not apart from being known come together equally in the being of object, in objective being?

Objects are always public in principle for one simple reason: because, whatever else they may be or fail to be as well, they are always and in every case the terminus of a relation according with its ontological status.

Although other animals are content to deal with the things as they appear and according to the evaluations made of those appearances on the basis of biological constitution and heritage, the human animal wants to know further *why* things appear as they do; and to this end inquires not merely into the objects as they appear but further into the dimension of subjectivity which is the source of their interaction with and effects upon our bodies in making us feel, hear, see, taste or smell other bodies around us. We not only smell smoke and fear fire, we are able to come to understand *why* wood ignites when a match is set to it while glass or stone do not. It is because of the subjective constitution of wood and glass, respectively, that a kitchen match suffices to ignite the one but only to heat the other.

For the human mind adds to the awareness of objects a consideration of these same objects taken in relation to themselves: and when inquiry takes this route it discovers soon enough that not all *objects* are things, but that all *things* have a subjective constitution or being which cares not what we think or believe in determining the effects one body will have or not have upon another — again, according to the subjective constitution of each.

It is for this reason that the cœnoscopic sciences had to come first, to establish a ground from which the ideoscopic or specialized scientific researches could eventually spring. The idea of the latter completely displacing the former (as the Enlightenment thought would occur) is understandable but, after all, laughable — a chimera indeed if ever a chimera there was. Cœnoscopic knowledge, the awareness of our world made possible by the type of bodies that we have as semiotic animals, is the only beginning possible for us, the horizon from which inquiry takes rise and to which it must always return as to a measure, even if in the process the ideoscopic developments that experimentation, mathematization, and systematization make possible often show the folly of and are obliged essentially to correct cœnoscopic views that erred not by reason of being cœnoscopic, but by reason of mistaking the limits circumscribing the possibilities of such knowledge unaided by ideoscopic developments. The case of Galileo was a salutary warning of the essential need for cœnoscopia always to push forward into ideoscopia, for that is only to say that our unaided senses are not sufficient to plumb the depths of the subjectivities first opened to us by cœnoscopic observations.

The objectivity of science consists in the grasp it achieves of the subjective constitution of the physical environment, in the objectification of subjectivity, precisely that. Helas! for the Kantians: it is nothing less than a knowledge of the things in themselves, of the things of the environment objectified according to the subjective constitution which makes them be as they are independently of human opinion, belief, and desire, that is the essence of modern physical science. To realize this is to mark without mourning the end of modernity in philosophical culture.

For objectivity itself has quite eluded the understanding of the modern world. It is not so surprising. The things that lie closest to us are often the hardest to realize in their proper being. Even today, after all these mil-

lions of years of animal life, thousands of years of human civilization, and hundreds of years of scientific development in the modern world, the difference between physical environment as such and Umwelt as objective world is understood only by a handful of semioticians. And modernity, which gave birth to science, gave birth also to the 'critical' philosophy (the 'epistemology') which belies the possibility of what science has achieved and denies the very essence of the scientific enterprise as the natural fulfillment of the orientation of the human mind to an understanding — not simply an objective awareness, which is the common heritage of all animals, but an *understanding*, which essentially presupposes objective awareness but extends it by the thematic incorporation of subjectivity, the subjective constitution of the things of the environment (which is what their "essence" consists in), *into* that objective awareness — of what is external to our bodies, namely, the surrounding physical world.

And of course this subjective constitution of material and physical things extends into our own bodies as well: it is the 'essence' of all bodies that they have a constitution that makes them what and as they are, and it is the 'essence' of human understanding to be able to objectify that subjectivity and make it known — an ability not given to other animals simply because within their Umwelt the objects are considered only in relation to *the animals themselves*, with no opening further to consider the constitution of objects in relation to *the objects themselves*; because this requires a semiotic ability, the ability to consider relations as distinct from (even if not independent of) the objects that are related.

Science, then, principally achieves not objective knowledge (there is no other kind; it is hardly a privilege of science "to be objective"), but the objectification and knowledge of subjectivity, the subjectivities of the physical world. "Being objective" is not what distinguishes science. Not at all. "Being objective" is what distinguishes animal life *tout court*. The systematic objectification of subjectivities beyond what the bodily senses of themselves can manifest is what distinguishes physical science.

The social sciences, which do not precede modernity, come much closer to "purely" objective knowledge, for they move further and further from physical subjectivity in what they distinctively objectify and study or make known. What the social sciences study depends more upon what is created by social relationships than upon what physical

subjectivity as such directly brings about. But their development has been, as it were, largely blind, hindered from the start by a complete failure on all hands to grasp the essential nature and meaning of “objective being”. The moderns have not the foggiest idea of what “objectivity” properly consists in, or what the term “objectivity” ought usefully to mean as an item of common discourse. It falls to a postmodern intellectual culture to tackle the ancient *νομος/φύσις* (culture/nature) problem, and with the best chance of success. For it is the understanding of what it means “to be objective” that holds the key to the problem. And the problem of objectivity had to await the emergence of semiotics in order to be dealt with in the terms that it requires, which are those neither of science nor of traditional philosophy but, precisely, those of the doctrine of signs as consisting in a being which transcends the oppositions of nature to culture, inner to outer, *ens reale* (being independent of mind) to *ens rationis* (being dependent upon mind).

Root of the Semiotic Resolution of the Problem of Objectivity

The root of the problem of objectivity lies in the understanding, or misunderstanding, of the notion of relation, or, perhaps better said, of the being proper to relation — *ens minimum*, Aquinas called it,⁴ “minima distinctio realis quae possit esse”, “the most tenuous difference possible” — in the *ens reale* order of *τὸ ὄν*. Yet, as Aquinas found when he considered the being of God as three in person, relation proves rather to be *ens maximum*.

Substance is the original Greek notion of the subjective. It is not to subjectivity that objectivity is opposed, as what is “real” to what is “dependent upon mind, personal feelings, tastes or opinions”, as the dictionaries suggest we should think. Not at all. There is not here a binary opposition. What objectivity oppositionally presupposes, without reducing to it, above all is *intersubjectivity*. Subjectivity is “opposed”, properly speaking, not to objectivity, but to intersubjectivity. Indeed, in order for there to be intersubjectivity, there has to be subjectivity. But it is intersubjectivity, not subjectivity, and *suprasubjectivity* even beyond *intersubjectivity*, that is directly presupposed to there being an object.

⁴ Aquinas c.1245/6: *Super Sent.*, lib. 1 d. 26 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2.

“The world”, said Aristotle,⁵ pondering the controversies of his day, “is either one or many; but if many, each of the many must be a one”. And that is what Aristotle deemed substance to be: the natural unit, the individual which by nature exists in its own right and not in another as in the subject of existence. *Esse in se*.

The principle of unity, then, is substantial form, substantial form being that aspect of substance which makes it actually be this or that kind of individual, from the moment it began to be (“generation”) to the moment it ceases to be (“corruption”). Thus substances begin to be and cease to be with their inherent characteristics or “accidents” which individualize them as members of a species. Their hallmark is unity from within, however heterogeneous and diverse may be their parts and the other substances with which they interact and interdepend as they develop in time. Substantial form is the ground of subjectivity, that from which subjectivity arises and to which all subjectivity returns.

But to have subjectivity is to be separated from the rest of things. Subjectivity is everything that separates the individual from the rest of the universe, everything that makes the individual be other than whatever it is not, everything that exists in itself or in another as in the subject of existence in itself.

Where are relations in this traditional way of summing up Aristotle’s scheme?⁶ The distinction between mind-independent and mind-depen-

⁵ Cf. Aristotle c.348/47d: *Metaphysics*, Book III, 1001a3–b26, esp at 1001b6–7.

⁶ Aristotle never finalized his list of categories. The various lists he left are all compatible, and the list of ten was simply the most complete list, the one that became canonical, so to speak, for the Latin Age. In all his accounts, substance is the basis of the whole scheme, followed by the inherent accidents of quantity (the first accident distinguishing a substance as material), quality (the accident immediately consequent upon form), and the two categories of interaction: action (initiating an influence on something else) and passion (receiving an influence from another), which are yet subjective — *in se* — because they are *in* the one acting and *in* the one acted upon, respectively. Relation arises from and as a consequence of the interaction, but it does not reduce to the interaction. The interaction requires proximity and contact, the consequent relation does not. In an intriguing text on relation in Aristotle’s categorial sense (from the *Treatise on Signs*, Second Preamble, Article 1, 84/45–85/12ff.), Poinot comments that “a relation accrues to a subject without any change that is directly and immediately terminated at the relation, but not without a change that is terminated mediately and indirectly at that relation. Just as risibility results from the same action by which a man is produced, so from the production of a white thing is produced similitude to another existing white thing. But

dent being was of course known to the ancient Greeks (how could it not be?), but it had not yet been systematically drawn and thematized. The “being” which interested Aristotle, $\tau\omicron\ \delta\upsilon\nu$, was principally the being of $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$, “nature”, the being which is what it is regardless of what human beings think, feel, believe, or say. It was *this* being which he sought to determine the “senses” or “ways” of in his list of “categories”, or ways in which being can be verified in experience as obtaining independently of the experience within which it is verified.⁷ The categories, in short, were an attempt to enumerate the fundamental modes or varieties of what the Latins would term *ens reale*, mind-independent being, beginning with substance, the being most independent of its surroundings as providing the subject of existence in every case; and then enumerating, after substance, the irreducible ways in which substance could be modified and individualized.

The accidents, or “beings *in alio*”, contrast with substance in point of independence (it is the substance that gives independent existence to the individual as a whole unto itself, the accidents only qualify and modify that independence), but not in point of subjectivity. The substance as subjective does not contrast with the accidents as subjective. Indeed, the accidents, if anything, only deepen and confirm the subjectivity of the substance, stamping its individuality, and enabling it to stay in existence.

Relations, however, in sharp contrast, are not *in* the substances that are related. Relations are *over and above* subjectivity *tout court*. Relations,

if another white thing did not exist, by virtue of the generation of the first white thing, that similitude and any other relation that would result from the positing of its terminus would remain in a virtual state. Whence distance neither conduces to nor obstructs the resultance of a pure relation, because these relations do not depend upon a local situation; for far or near, a son is in the same way the son of his father.”

After relation in Aristotle’s most complete list come ‘when’, ‘posture’, ‘where’ and ‘habitus’ or ‘vestititon’. But a little noticed feature of these last four categories in the traditional way of simply opposing substance/accident is that they all depend for their function on the category of relation being understood in its own terms as an intersubjective reality. Thus the most basic categories in the long list of ten reduce in fact not to the substance/accident contrast but rather to the *inse/adesse* contrast, where ‘inse’, subjectivity, divides into substance/inherent accident, and ‘adesse’ consists in relation and those further characteristics or modifications of subjectivity that depend on relation in order to themselves be — namely, when, posture, where, and vestititon. For the details of this situation I refer the reader to the complete discussion in Deely 2001: 73–78.

⁷ Aristotle c.360bc: *Categories*.

if they are anywhere in *ens reale*, are *between* individuals, and “between” is not a subjective mode of “in”, as “in se” and “in alio” are subjective modes of “in”: what is *in between* two subjectivities is *in* neither of the subjectivities. It is *over and above* them, *suprasubjective*, if you like, or, more precisely and restrictively in Aristotle’s limited categorial sense (limited, that is, to the order of *ens reale* within $\tau\omicron\ \delta\upsilon\nu$), *intersubjective*.

But of course relations may not be in the order of *ens reale* at all. Relations as “between” subjects may simply result from comparisons made by some mind — our own, say — when two subjects are considered together. This is what the modern philosophers generally would come to think.⁸ This is not what Aristotle thought. Aristotle took extraordinary pains to establish that relation is a *distinct* category of *ens reale* under $\tau\omicron\ \delta\upsilon\nu$, not merely a perspective of thought. The difficulty he had in accomplishing this is clearly marked in his own texts, in the pains he took twice to revise his formulations of relation until he had succeeded to establish its distinctness as a category.⁹ The difficulty that he had in doing this is also reflected in the fact that, across the ages, from Theophrastus in the 3rd century BC to Grote in the 19th century AD, by far the greater part of Aristotle’s followers have quite missed the point of what is most distinctive about Aristotle’s category of relation as a distinct category.

For make no mistake. After Aristotle, no one rejects “relation” as a category of being. But while retaining relation in their list of categories, for many authors, what they *mean* by relation, that is to say, the content which they assign to this category, is not distinctive in being irreducible to the subjective being of the things deemed as “relative” or “related”. In other words, while retaining the label and the category, they do not use it to point to the same aspect of $\tau\omicron\ \delta\upsilon\nu$ that Aristotle finally arrived at, but attain only the aspect Aristotle initially attained in the two of three attempts he himself deemed to fail in establishing what “relation” had to mean if it was properly to be recognized as an aspect or feature of mind-independent being. This point should be clear from the articles that appear in the present reader.

⁸ See Weinberg’s 1965 essay on relation.

⁹ For the textual details of this difficult matter, the reader may consult the AfterWord (Deely 1985) to the California edition of Poinset 1632.

But in precisely what does the alleged uniqueness of relation consist? In that relation alone among all the modes of being does not reduce to subjectivity as the distinguishing characteristic of substance. What distinguishes relation as an accident of substance is not that it is in the substance but that by virtue of relation one substance is toward another, whether in thought or in reality or both.

Now here is where we have to be careful. John is the father of Matthew: there is a relation of parenthood between John and Matthew. John is believed to be the father of Matthew: there is believed to be a relation of parenthood between John and Matthew; but in fact Matthew's mother was unfaithful to John and Matthew was conceived outside their wedlock. In fact Matthew's father is Alvin, but neither Matthew nor Alvin (nor, for that matter, John) are aware of this relation. All three believe that the fictitious relation is a 'real' relation, that is to say, a relation independent of thought and opinion.

But what is this relation, you may ask, beyond Alvin's genes in Matthew? The genes are a subjective reality in either case. The relation over and above them is only a consideration made by some finite mind, rightly or wrongly. To say that John is the father is to say no more than that Matthew got his genes from John. To say that John is not the father is to say no more than that Matthew got his genes from a man other than John. In either case, the "relation" has no reality of its own, no "betweenness" as such. The relation is no more than a way of considering or not considering two subjectivities.

Convincing as far as it goes, such reasoning does yet not go far enough. Consider an army on the march, and that same army in disarray. Or consider the furniture in a room, one time piled in a corner, another time arranged to accommodate a gathering. The subjectivities are the same in either case, but the intersubjectivity is not the same. And surely that intersubjectivity is not nothing: for is there no difference in a room able to accommodate a gathering and a room in which the same furniture is useless for the gathering unless "rearranged"? To rearrange furniture may or may not be much; but the end result, even if engineered by mind, obtains mind-independently among the things arranged.

Already here too note a singularity: a fictitious relation is not real but is still really a relation, while a fictitious individual is not really an indi-

vidual; for a relation need only exist "between", over and above subjectivities real or imagined, in order to be a relation; but an individual needs to exist in itself in order to be an individual. So there can be fictitious individuals just as there can be fictitious relations. But fictitious individuals are not individuals, while fictitious relations are relations. In fact, as we shall shortly see, fictitious individuals are really relations, purely objective relations at that (although they may be based on actual subjectivities and intersubjectivities otherwise known). Norris Clarke (1994: 102–103), with quite another point in mind, nonetheless describes exactly the condition of purely objective being: the known "is reduced to nothing more than a pattern of relations with no subjects grounding them, ... a pattern of events with no agents enacting them. The fundamental polarity within real being between the 'in-itself' and the 'toward others,' the self-immanence and the self-transcendence of being, collapses into the one pole of pure relatedness to others."

Consider. A substance which is not real is neither a substance nor can it properly be put in the category of substance, because the categories — Aristotle's categories, remember — are classifications of the ways in which things can exist independently of the finite mind. A relation which is not real cannot be put in the category of relation for the same reason that a substance that is not real cannot, but a relation that is not real is nonetheless still a relation. The categories of subjectivity as such — "being in", whether "in se" or "in alio" — identify beings which cannot be what they are alleged to be (substances or inherent accidents) unless they are also mind-independent. But the category of intersubjectivity identifies a being which can be what it is alleged to be (relation) even when it is not mind-independent.

Of course, if a relation is falsely identified as mind-independent, it is falsely placed in the category of relation insofar as relation is construed exclusively as a category of mind-independent being. But a relation falsely identified as mind-independent is not falsely identified as a relation. By contrast, a substance falsely identified as mind-independent is *both* falsely placed in the category of substance *and* falsely identified as a substance. A falsely identified substance — a fictitious individual, let us say — has no being apart from the relation or relations through which it is identified, whereas it needs subjective being in order truly to be a

substance. A relation needs intersubjective being in order to belong to the category of relation in Aristotle's sense of category, but it does not need subjective being of any kind, not even intersubjective being, in order truly or really to be a relation. A relation between two gargoyles is still a relation, even though there be no gargoyle substances. But in order for gargoyles to be substances, there must be gargoyles possible to exist independently of finite mind.

In the categorial scheme, the point of the category of substance is to identify subjects of existence, real individuals in nature. The point of the category of inherent accidents is further to identify what separates or distinguishes those individuals from one another. But the point of the category of relation is to identify how real individuals are not *separated from* but *connected with* other real individuals or substances in the physical environment. Thus, one triangular shape as belonging to individual A distinguishes individual A from individual B, which also has its own triangular shape. But when A and B both exist here and now, the shape of one serves as the *basis or foundation* whereby it is *similar* to the other, and conversely. The *similarity* is *in* neither one, but *between* them. What is *in* each of them is their individual shape, an inherent accident of a substance. But that subjective shape, in the case of A, is the foundation for a relation of similarity to B, and conversely. Equally conversely, the shape of B serves as terminus for the relation of similarity founded on the shape of A, while the shape of A serves as terminus for the relation of similarity founded on the shape of B.

Aristotle's achievement in this area is considerable. He has managed to stake out the realm of what the Latins will term *ens reale* in the whole of its scope. This demarcation will provide nothing less than a survey of the realm proper to the central development of science even in the early modern sense, as Peirce will point out.¹⁰

Relation is an accident, of course — that is to say, it is not a substance, not a being able to exist as an individual in its own right. But it is not an accident which *belongs as such* to the subjectivity of the substance, and that is the point that is missed, not only in the traditional way of presenting the Aristotelian scheme, but also in the understanding of

¹⁰ Cf. Peirce c.1898: CP 1.12.

those who have presented the scheme in the traditional way. Traditionally, focal discussion of the scheme of Aristotle's categories emphasizes only that accidents are modifications of substance and as such are dependent upon substance, a proposition which applies to all accidents equally, yes, but tells us nothing whatever that is distinctive of relation vis-à-vis the other accidents — notably,¹¹ that the proposition in question, while *true* of all accidents, yet applies only *indirectly* to relation, through the being of the fundament of the relation rather than through the being proper to the relation as such; while it applies *directly* to all the accidents other than relation. Relations depend upon a fundament, and this fundament is a modification of subjectivity, and hence so too is the relation consequent upon the fundament a modification of subjectivity. But the fundament is a modification directly: the subjectivity of the individual is directly modified by the fundament as itself subjective. The consequent relation, by contrast, is not itself subjective but intersubjective, and so modifies the subject not directly but indirectly through its fundament.

Thus the point that Aristotle struggled so hard to establish in his texts, the irreducibility of relation to the subjectivity of *both* substance *and* the inherent accidents, tends to remain hidden in the categories traditionally discussed as a dichotomous division of being into "substance" and "accidents". It is not the dichotomy of the division that is the problem, but the location of the base of the dichotomy on the contrast between "in se" and "in alio". This is the cause of the misdirection in the traditional discussions. If we shift the location of the base rather to the contrast between "in" and "toward", the picture at once opens up clearly, and we see in the foreground the point and ground of Aristotle's struggle to introduce into the understanding of *ens reale* an aspect of being which is not substance and yet is not materially sensible.

Whatever exists only dependently upon substance is, in that sense, an "accident" in Aristotle's sense, including relation, yes. But this way of speaking conceals not only the proper positive uniqueness of relation *within* the order of *ens reale*, as we have seen. This way of speaking *also*, and perhaps more crucially, further conceals completely the fact that relation is the only form or mode of *ens reale* that is not in its positive

¹¹ See Poinset 1632: Second Preamble, Article 2, 89/5–20, esp. 13–17.

structure realizable actually *only* in the order of *ens reale*. This further point, doubtless as a consequence of the misplaced substance/accident dichotomy in explanation of the categories, no one or almost no one in the Latin tradition grasped as anything more than an anomaly.¹² The first to harbour suspicions about the semiotic import of relation's being — its implications for the objectivity of theoretical formulations, for example, or for the socially constructed aspects of reality experienced — was John Poinsot, and with him the insight dawned too late to be exploited and properly developed, for the Latin Age was already over and the Modern Age dawning, with the interest in *ens reale* not abandoned but given over to experimental means and mathematical formulations within science, while philosophy abandoned the way of signs entirely in favor of a misbegotten idea of ideas as self-representations rather signs (other-representations) that led to the modern distinction between "epistemology" and "ontology" where experience is reduced to an aspect of psychological subjectivity instead of being seen as constituting from the first the correlation of Umwelt with Innenwelt grounded in sensations as

¹² The first trace of it that I know of is found in par. 9 of the 1507 *Commentary* Cajetan makes upon the 1266 *Summa theologiae prima pars*, q. 28, art. 1:507 of Thomas Aquinas. "A rose formed by thought is not a rose," he says cryptically, "but a relation formed by the mind is a true relation." Then, as if on the idea that what is cryptically begun should conclude obscurely, he adds: "Nec distinctio rosae in esse naturae et esse rationis, est distinctio diversarum quidditatum, quarum una sit ens reale, et altera sit ens rationis, ut in relatione contingere diximus: sed est distinctio unius et eiusdem secundum diversos modos essendi, scilicet simpliciter vel secundum quid" — a conclusion which would best make sense in connection with an observation Aquinas made in another text entirely (c. 1254–1256: *In 1 sent.* dist. 19, q. 5, art. 1, ad 7): "etiam quidditatis esse est quoddam rationis" (i.e., the pattern of relations constituting what any given phenomena — natural or cultural — is, so far as the understanding grasps that structure, is constructed by the understanding on the pattern of relations. Cf. Deely 1994: ¶299.)

That the insight in Cajetan's formulation left us more with an awareness of an anomaly in being than with a guiding insight into the structure of being becomes clear from the reception that Cajetan's comment received among the later Latins, reported in detail by Poinsot (1632: *Tractatus de Signis*, Second Preamble, Article 2, 93/17–96/36), beginning with the concession that "Cajetan's response to this difficulty in his *Commentary* on the passage in question serves only to increase the difficulty." Thus Poinsot stands out from his Latin forebears (*ibid.* Book 1, Questions 1 and 3) by seeing in the positive uniqueness of relation as a mode of being — the *singularity* of relation among the categories, we might say — the reason for the possibility of the being of signs as triadic relations and of the peculiar action consequent upon that being, namely, semiosis.

manifestative simultaneously of the subjectivity of the physical environment as containing and impacting upon the subjectivity of the animal in giving rise to objective being.

For relation in the order of *ens reale* is only the root of the solution to the problem of objectivity, not the whole solution itself by any means. For objectivity is a branch on the tree of relations, a branch which grows out of but grows beyond the order of being as it is able to exist apart from awareness and also human thought, beyond *ens reale*; and for understanding this branch intersubjectivity is presupposed but not enough. For objects are only *sometimes* but not always subjective as well as objective and intersubjective, and objectivity as such does *not always* even admit of an intersubjective lining and infrastructure, so to speak, let alone a subjective one. To understand objectivity we need to understand well and rightly relation, but not only relation insofar as it is tied to the order of *ens reale* (which is the case with all being categorial in Aristotle's sense). And — mark this point well — all finite being besides or excepting relation is categorial in Aristotle's sense.

That is precisely why modernity in its scientific development was able to build, as Peirce so well noted, upon Aristotle's scheme, even though modernity in its philosophical development reduced objectivity to its subjective ground (even in Kant, who, though he restored relations to concepts, yet did so in such a manner as to preclude their termini from containing the very subjectivity of the other upon which Aristotle's idea of categorial relation — the reality, that is to say, of the intersubjective as such, as part of *ens reale* — depended as its terminus and anchor as well as its fundament and source). Objectivity, we will see, is not as much an aspect of subjectivity as it is as aspect of suprasubjectivity, and this is precisely why, in principle, objectivity is always open to intersubjective realization, and often achieves such realization in political life as well as within the "community of inquirers" required for the development of science, progress in the arts or philosophy, of even the study of literature.

Subjectivity and intersubjectivity together, then, constitute what we may call, for want of a better term, "hardcore reality", the kind of reality that obtains whether any human being knows it or not, likes it or not, believes it or not. Hardcore reality *can become* an object of human knowledge or belief, indeed; but that circumstance of becoming is not what

makes it *hardcore*. That circumstance is only what makes it *objective*. And there is no guarantee that what is “objective” in the sense of known or believed in is necessarily “real” in the hardcore sense at all. What difference did it make to the sun that all the wise and wisest men of ancient, medieval, and early modern times not only *believed* but “knew” — and had the word of God on it — that the sun revolved around the earth? None whatever.

The revolution of the sun about the earth, in physical fact, we now know was not only never the case, but the laws of mass and gravity have turned out to be such that it never could have been the case, was physically impossible to be the case all along — that is to say, over all those centuries of human wisdom, construed divine revelation, and confident belief to the contrary. The revolution in question, nonetheless, though not a hardcore reality, was nonetheless a reality influencing human existence. It got Galileo condemned and imprisoned, then placed under house arrest for life. No small thing! The revolution of the sun around the earth prevented Galileo in his last years from even going to town for medical care, such was its sufficient reality. It was a purely objective reality, while the revolution of the earth about the sun, a heretical belief now accepted everywhere, at least as widely as was accepted the opposite view in Galileo’s day, involves both subjective and intersubjective realities objectified, and so is not a purely objective reality, but rather an objective reality with substance, an objective reality within which subjectivity itself and something of intersubjectivity is elevated to the level of object, objective being (subjectivity and intersubjectivity as such objectified). The question is what does this mean, and how is it possible that what exists subjectively should *also* exist objectively, publicly, and in fact? The question is what is objective existence, and how is it possible for what exists objectively to be relatively indifferent to what is real in the sense of what pertains to Aristotle’s categories — namely, subjectivities and the intersubjectivities provenating from and dependent upon those subjectivities, hardcore realities, not socially constructed ones?

Objectivity and the Semiotic Animal

Fully actual objectivity arises only when and in the physical interaction of two or more physical substances one at least of the interactants

is an animal, in which case the interaction partially specifies and determines the awareness of the animal (*species impressa*) semiosically to form and construct a further awareness of its own (*species expressa*) transforming the bare physical into an objective world with which the animal can and must deal according to its biological type.

Purely objective reality is not enough. An Umwelt requires also partially to incorporate the objectification of what exists subjectively and intersubjectively in the surroundings as well. But without purely objective reality the subjective realities would neither be known nor able to serve the interests of animal lifeforms dependent upon awareness in order to make their way. Every animal is an idealist, in the sense that it transforms the bare given of physical sensations into an objective and public world shaped according to its needs and desires. But every animal is also a realist, in the sense that if it fails to shape that objective world in a manner that sufficiently incorporates and takes into account the bare physical surroundings it will neither find the food it needs nor escape becoming food. To survive, then, every animal has to be *both* realist *and* idealist — in other words, engage through its awareness in semiosis.

But this whole experience of objectivity as able to reveal the world of nature as well as worlds of fiction and the socio-cultural world (the *Lebenswelt* as a whole, we might say, as the species-specifically human Umwelt) wherein *ens reale* and *ens rationis* inextricably intertwine, is possible only in and through the ontological constitution of relation as positively indifferent to its provenance in being always suprasubjective, even when it is sustained by a single psychological subjectivity here and now. For it is in *adesse*, not *inesse*, that the two orders of being (*ens reale*) and nonbeing (*ens rationis*), of subjective and intersubjective realities objectified and purely objective reality, meet and penetrate one another.

The most important point in the social construction of reality, no doubt, occurs in the political order, when the semiotic animals sit down together to try to decide how to govern themselves, how to decide what is to be permitted and what not permitted in social behavior and arrangements. Thus the constitution of a state, for example, the document, I mean, which details what the arrangement shall be for a given human community, is a prime example of a purely objective reality which can

yet be realized in the subjective order of living and interacting individuals. Reality as we experience it is neither purely objective nor purely subjective nor purely intersubjective, but rather a constantly shifting mixture and proportion of all three — a mixture and proportion of which it is not at all easy (perhaps not even fully possible) to keep track.