

Word Count: 6,892

# Feedback and Questions for David Kelley’s “Concepts and Propositions”

4/19/2026

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## Summary:

We are reading closely David Kelley’s paper “Concepts and Propositions” (DK paper) and wish to convey some feedback and to ask some questions about it. Frank reads from the final version 2/26/25, and Tom reads originally from the 8/18/2024 draft version as well as one from 2007. Our remarks will apply to the latest as found at The Atlas Society. <https://www.atlassociety.org/post/introduction-to-concepts-and-propositions>

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## F1. Typographical Errors and Stylistic Suggestions

### Typographical errors:

Page 3, 2nd line: Thegoal -- add space between words

Page 3, 5th line: concept formation -- add a hyphen between words

Page 6, Heading type 4: Unit economy -- add a hyphen between words (see also Stylistic suggestions)

Page 8, 4th line: consider changing the word "less" to "fewer" if it's to modify "number" and not "vocab"

Page 23, 8th line: elks -- remove s for consistency

Page 27, 9th line from bottom: elks -- again

Page 28, missing preposition: by virtue of an immense

Page 29, missing verb: I do not know which it is

Page 33, change volume from 42 to 43 after Informal Logic

Page 34, remove hyperlink to the handbook containing Raatikainen's paper.

Page 34, remove extra period at Mark Wheeler's name.

### Stylistic suggestions:

Page 1: Update table of contents field in Word to get page numbers to match the actual sections

Page 3, change all: what's -- to what is

Footnote 5, add after 19ff. OPAR hereafter. (since it is used later at fn 37 but not at fn 23)

Footnote 8, either drop 8, or list out the pages 37–43.

Page 6, Change Heading to "Unit-economy through concepts" to distinguish another one at page 29

Page 7, Heading type 3: change Section II from colon to period -- II. ...

Page 8, change all: That's -- to That is

Footnotes 4, 10, and 36: Add "Rand," before IOE...

Page 9, Heading type 3: change Section III from "Unity" to "Structure" -- III. The Structure of ...

Page 13, change once: Doesn't it need explanation? to Does it not need an explanation?

Page 13, change all: there's -- to there is

Page 14, switch from comma to colon in order to list designation and reference

Page 17, make "Assertion and truth" into Heading type 4

Page 17, change all: don't -- to do not (and at pp. 20, 29)

Page 18, change all: Section # from Arabic to Roman

Footnotes 23 and 37: Either switch to OPAR or keep Objectivism

Footnote 26: Consider adding the author

Page 22, replace "one-one" with "one-to-one" to make it consistent with other instances

Page 25, change "1<sup>st</sup>" to "first" law of thermodynamics

Page 26, add a comma after id est.

Footnote 31: Drop the word "Edition."

Page 27, remove quotation marks surrounding "plant eating" to make it consistent with other definitions

Page 28, change all: it's -- to it is

Page 29, change all: I'm -- to I am

Page 29, change all: can't -- to cannot

Page 29, Change Heading to "Unit-economy through propositions" to distinguish the other one at page 6

Page 30, change all: let's -- to let us

Page 30, add a comma after As Rand says, that relationship ...

### Missing in the references/bibliography section:

Miller, George A. "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information." In *Psychological Review* 63, no. 2 (1956): 81–97.

Kelley, David and Janet Krueger. "The Psychology of Abstraction." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 14, no. 1 (March 1984): 43–67.

## F2. Replacements of Terms for Clarity

Perhaps due to the gaps of time between writing and revising it, the DK paper suffers some inconsistencies in the few key terms that are used for distinguishing things between the subjective, the objective, and the intrinsic. We find four words "property," "feature," "attribute," and "characteristic" being used inconsistently. We suggest some replacements of terms on the basis of the following standards that we detect from the paper itself: Use Aristotle's classification of things that are for those things intrinsic; use but

two words to designate those things objective; and use words distinguishing between state and process for those things subjective.

## Words for the Intrinsic

We find two places where Aristotle has a list of ten things that exist: *Categories* § 4 1b25–2a4 and *Topics* I.9 103b20–27. From the grammatical distinction between nouns, adjectives, and other parts of speech, we can reduce the ten to just two.

From *Categories* § 4 1b25–2a4, as translated by Harold P. Cooke (1938)<sup>1</sup> and by John L. Ackrill (1963)<sup>2</sup>:

|    | Question                          | Greek   | Translit. | Cooke's          | Ackrill's           | Examples (Ackrill's)               |
|----|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1  | What is it                        | οὐσία   | ousia     | substance        | substance           | man, horse                         |
| 2  | How large                         | ποσόν   | poson     | quantity         | quantity            | 4-foot, 5-foot                     |
| 3  | Of what feature                   | ποιόν   | poion     | quality          | qualification       | white, grammatical                 |
| 4  | Relating to what                  | πρός τι | pros ti   | relation         | relative            | double, half, larger               |
| 5  | Where                             | ποῦ     | pou       | place            | where               | in the Lyceum, in the market-place |
| 6  | When                              | ποτέ    | poté      | time             | when                | yesterday, last-year               |
| 7  | In what circumstantial position   | κεῖσθαι | keisthai  | posture/position | being-in-a-position | is-lying, is-sitting               |
| 8  | In what state or having condition | ἔχειν   | échein    | state/condition  | having              | has-shoes-on, has-armor-on         |
| 9  | Doing what action                 | ποιεῖν  | poiein    | action           | doing               | cutting, burning                   |
| 10 | Being affected by what action     | πάσχειν | paschein  | affection        | being-affected      | being-cut, being-burned            |

From *Topics* I.9 103b20–27, as translated by Robin Smith (1997)<sup>3</sup>, Charles D. C. Reeve (2024)<sup>4</sup>, Edward S. Forster (1960)<sup>5</sup>, W. A. Pickard-Cambridge (1928)<sup>6</sup>, P-C again but revised by Jonathan Barnes (1984, 1991)<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Harold P. Cooke and Hugh Tredennick, *Aristotle 'Categories', 'On Interpretation', 'Prior Analytics'* (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press, 1938, 1962): 16–19.

<sup>2</sup> John Lloyd Ackrill, *Aristotle's 'Categories' and 'De Interpretatione'* (Oxford University Press, 1963): 5.

<sup>3</sup> Robin Smith, *Topics Book I and VIII with Excerpts from Related Texts* (Oxford University Press, 1997): 8.

<sup>4</sup> Charles David Chanel Reeve, *Aristotle's Dialectic: Topics, Sophistical Refutations, Related Texts* (Hackett Publishing, 2024): 9.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Tredennick and Edward S. Forster, *Aristotle's 'Posterior Analytics', 'Topica'* (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press, 1960): 292–293.

<sup>6</sup> William A. Pickard-Cambridge, *Topics and On Sophistical Refutations*, in *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*, edited by W. D. Ross, (Oxford University Press, 1928): in public domain, as [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> William A. Pickard-Cambridge, *Topics and On Sophistical Refutations*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, (Princeton University Press, 1984, 1991):

|    | <b>Greek</b> | <b>Translit.</b> | <b>Smith (1997)</b> | <b>Reeve (2024)</b> | <b>Forster (1960)</b> | <b>P-C (1928)</b> | <b>Barnes (1984)</b> |
|----|--------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1  | τί ἐστι      | ti esti          | what-it-is          | what-it-is          | essence               | essence           | what a thing is      |
| 2  | ποσόν        | poson            | quantity            | quantity            | quantity              | quantity          | quantity             |
| 3  | ποιόν        | poion            | quality             | quality             | quality               | quality           | quality              |
| 4  | πρός τι      | pros ti          | relation            | relative            | relation              | relation          | relation             |
| 5  | ποῦ          | pou              | location            | where               | place                 | place             | place                |
| 6  | ποτέ         | poté             | time                | when                | time                  | time              | time                 |
| 7  | κεῖσθαι      | keïsthai         | position            | position            | position              | position          | position             |
| 8  | ἔχειν        | échein           | possession          | having              | state                 | state             | state                |
| 9  | ποιεῖν       | poieîn           | doing               | doing               | activity              | activity          | activity             |
| 10 | πάσχειν      | paschein         | undergoing          | being affected      | passivity             | passivity         | passivity            |

Condensed together—with *ousia* and *poion* as translated by Joseph Owens (1987)<sup>8</sup>—:

| <b>Transliterated</b> | <b>Combined</b>      | <b>Grammar</b>                                    | <b>Condensed</b> | <b>Intrinsic</b>     |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---|------------------|----------------------|
| ousia                 | entity               | noun  | entity           | existent<br>or thing |
| poion                 | attribute            | adjective   | characteristic   |                      |
|                       | feature              |   |                  |                      |
|                       | dimension            |   |                  |                      |
| poieîn                | action <sub>12</sub> | verb (active voice)                               |                  |                      |
| paschein              | action <sub>21</sub> | verb (passive v.)                                 |                  |                      |
| pros ti               | relation             | prepositional phrase<br>as adjective<br>or adverb |                  |                      |
| poson                 | quantity             |   |                  |                      |
| pou                   | place                |   |                  |                      |
| poté                  | time                 |   |                  |                      |
| keïsthai              | position             |   |                  |                      |
| échein                | having trait         |   |                  |                      |

We also add “feature” and “dimension” under “attribute” on a different-purposed classification, as remarked by DK. “Features are qualitative properties (being red, having wings, being male, etc.) which allow for only two values: an object either has the feature or lacks it. Dimensions such as length, weight, and so on, on the other hand, come in degrees: they allow for more or less continuous variation along a single axis. ... The attributes in [an entity-instance] might be features, dimensions, or some mixture of each.”<sup>9</sup>

## Words for the Objective

So far, then, the condensed classification above accommodates placing “feature,” “attribute,” and “characteristic” to denote things in the intrinsic realm. What about the term “property”? For Aristotelians, it

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian ‘Metaphysics’: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Third Edition, revised, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987) pp. xxxii, 539.

<sup>9</sup> David Kelley and Janet Krueger, “The Psychology of Abstraction,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 14, no. 1 (March 1984), 49.

is part of a different set of characteristics having to do with the relationship between the predicate and subject in any assertion or proposition. Aristotle classifies this set in *Topics* at I.4 101b11–25 and at I.8 103b2–19:

*Topics* I.4:

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| (PREDICABLE)                                  |  | (in any predication with a universal subject)                |
| PROPERTY { <i>idion</i> <sup>1</sup> }        |  | (predicated indeterminately, being counterpredicated)        |
| DEFINITION { <i>horos</i> }                   |  | (to indicate the what-it-was-to-be for the subject)          |
| UNIQUE PROPERTY { <i>idion</i> <sup>2</sup> } |  | (to not (yet or any longer) indicate the what-it-was-to-be)  |
| SORT { <i>genos</i> <sup>1</sup> }            |  | (predicated universally wholly, not being counterpredicated) |
| KIND { <i>genos</i> <sup>2</sup> }            |  | (to indicate the what-it-is of any instance of the subject)  |
| DIFFERENCE { <i>diaphora</i> }                |  | (to indicate a quality of sort being varied or different)    |
| COINCIDENT { <i>sumbebēkos</i> }              |  | (predicated universally wholly or partially)                 |
| (INHERENT)                                    |  | { <i>kath' hautō sumbebēkos</i> }                            |
| (UNQUALIFIED)                                 |  | { <i>haplos sumbebēkos</i> }                                 |

*Topics* I.8:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| (PREDICABLE)                                  | [principle of classification (POC): Anything that is predicated of another must either, or not, counterpredicate with it.] |
| PROPERTY { <i>idion</i> <sup>1</sup> }        | [1. (counterpredicable) (predicated indeterminately or not-universally thereof) ]  |
| DEFINITION { <i>horos</i> }                   | (to indicate the what-it-was-to-be for the subject term)   |
| UNIQUE PROPERTY { <i>idion</i> <sup>2</sup> } | (to not (yet or any longer) indicate the what-it-was-to-be)  |
| (NOT PROPERTY)                                | [POC: Anything that is predicated of another either can or cannot participate in a definition.]                            |
| SORT { <i>genos</i> <sup>1</sup> }            | [2. (TAKING PART IN A DEFINITION) (both the name and the definition are predicated) ]                                      |
| KIND { <i>genos</i> <sup>2</sup> }            | (to indicate the what-it-is of those things underlying the subject )   |
| DIFFERENCE { <i>diaphora</i> }                | (to indicate the <small>range-of-variation-to-tolerate</small> among the things underlying ... )                           |
| (NOT SORT)                                    | [3. (NOT IN A DEFINITION) (only the name and not the definition is predicated thereof) ]                                   |
| COINCIDENT { <i>sumbebēkos</i> }              | (to indicate the what-it-has (in it) of the underlying subject)  |
| (COINCIDENT(i) )                              | (... (I.5 102b4–5) ... what-it-has (inherently) ...)   |
| (COINCIDENT(ii) )                             | (... (I.5 102b6–7) ... what-it-has _optionally_ ...)   |

Of side interest here is that Aristotle does not consider “species” or “form” {*eidos*} to be a predicable. It is mentioned by him only for the sake of defining “kind” (*Top.* I.5 102a31–32)—which shows that “species” is a correlative thereof. And if predicables are predicates in relation to subjects in assertions, then “species” is not one; it is relationally the subject (or the subjectible) when the predicate is deemed the kind.

|   | Greek              | Translit.          | Smith (1997)                 | Reeve (2024)      | Forster (1960) | P-C (1928)  | Barnes (1984)         |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | ἴδιον <sup>1</sup> | idion <sup>1</sup> | unique property <sup>1</sup> | special thing     | peculiarity    | peculiarity | property <sup>1</sup> |
| 2 | ὅρος               | horos              | definition                   | definition        | definition     | definition  | definition            |
| 3 | ἴδιον <sup>2</sup> | idion <sup>2</sup> | unique property <sup>2</sup> | special affection | property       | property    | property <sup>2</sup> |
| 4 | γένος <sup>1</sup> | genos <sup>1</sup> | sort                         | kind              | genus          | genus       | genus                 |
| 5 | γένος <sup>2</sup> | genos <sup>2</sup> | genus                        | kind              | genus          | genus       | genus                 |
| 6 | διαφορὰ            | diaphora           | differentia                  | difference        | differentia    | differentia | differentia           |
| 7 | συμβεβηκός         | sumbebēkos         | accident                     | coincident        | accident       | accident    | accident              |
| 8 | εἶδος              | eidos              | species                      | form              | species        | species     | species               |

“Property,” thus, is not used in the DK paper as a predicable. Its use instead is to signify an objective content that groups together every instance (past, present, and future) of a certain characteristic in the intrinsic realm. The other term to signify an objective content is “category.” Its use groups together every instance (past, present, and future) of a certain entity in the intrinsic realm. These two words jointly should exhaust the classification mapping and overlaying the objective over the intrinsic. Other terms may still be used, such as, “type,” “class,” “sort,” or even “grouping” to signify generally either a property or a category.

|  | Translit. | Combined classification | Grammar   | Condensed      | Intrinsic            | Objective | General object        |
|--|-----------|-------------------------|---|----------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
|  | ousia     | entity                  | noun  | entity         | existent<br>or thing | category  | grouping              |
|  | poion     | attribute               | adjective   | characteristic |                      | property  | type<br>class<br>sort |
|  |           | feature                 |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  |           | dimension               |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | poieîn    | action <sub>12</sub>    | verb (active voice)                               |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | paschein  | action <sub>21</sub>    | verb (passive v.)                                 |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | pros ti   | relation                | prepositional phrase<br>as adjective<br>or adverb |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | poson     | quantity                |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | pou       | place                   |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | poté      | time                    |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | keîsthai  | position                |   |                |                      |           |                       |
|  | échein    | having trait            |   |                |                      |           |                       |

Lastly we should call attention to certain opposing conceptual correlatives: things universal  $\{katholou\}$  to things singular  $\{kath' hekaston\}$ ; things abstract  $\{aphairēmenōn\}$  to things concrete  $\{eschaton\}$ . Such “things” universal and abstract for Aristotle (*On Int.* § 1 16a3–18, § 7 17a38–b1; *Cat.* § 2 1a20–b9) are cognitive products  $\{noēmata\}$  of happenings or affections  $\{pathēmata\}$  in the soul that have each a likeness or correspondence  $\{homoïoma\}$  to an object of (speech-involved) awareness  $\{pragma\}$ . As with Objectivists’, Aristotle’s *objects* pertain to but are not the things that are  $\{tōn ontōn\}$ . (We reject translations of *pragmata* as actual things, e.g., Ackrill’s,<sup>10</sup> preferring Greg Salmieri’s rendering, as objects. More on this later.)

## Words for the Subjective

We discern two groups of the subjective on two levels of cognition. Supposing a factory model of cognition, we can discern the input, the production-process, and the output processed product. The processed product can in turn become the input for further productions, further processes. The two groups of the subjective, then, are the activity and the yielding output.

At the physiological-automatic level of cognition, the subject perceives the object-perceptible. The activity is the perception, and the output is the percept. At the conscious-deliberate level of cognition, we

<sup>10</sup> Ackrill, *Aristotle's 'Categories' and 'De Interpretatione'*, 159.

have two layers. At the first layer, the subject conceptualizes the object-intelligible. The activity is concept-formation or understanding, and the output is the concept. At the second layer, the subject judges or believes truly the object-fact. The activity is judgment or thinking-believing, and the output is the proposition. The percept is not a product but more of a byproduct of the physiological activity; in contrast, the concept and the proposition are productive of deliberately chosen activities (whether or not methodologically logical).

On a side note, Aristotle has a similar distinction between the activity versus its by/product in the soul. The activity in the soul is called an affection *{pathos}*, which is a happening activity *{energeia}*, which arises either from a physiological reaction to the world on the basis of in-born capacities *{dunameis}* such as the perceptual capacity *{aisthēsis}* or from a deliberative activity on the basis of self-grown capacities *{hexeis}* such as the faculties of intellect *{nous}* and o-knowledge *{eidēsis}*. Such cognitive activities include perceiving *{aisthēsin}*, intellecting *{noein}*, and o-knowing *{eidenai}*. And while the byproduct is the phantasm *{phantasma}* or percept-appearance *{aisthēma}*, the products, as mentioned earlier, are called units of meaning or thought *{noēmata}* to designate our concepts and propositions.<sup>11</sup>

In the absence of an elaboration distinguishing brain and mind or body and soul, it suffices to mention merely that the subjective things are in the subject who is perceiving, understanding, thinking, or knowing. So the words for the subjective, to summarize, are as follows:

| In the subject            | Re/act (the process)             | By/product (the processed) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Physiological (automatic) | perception /                     | percept /                  |
| Conscious (deliberate)    | concept-formation, understanding | concept                    |
|                           | judgment, thinking-believing     | proposition                |

The processed things are ontologically subjective states even if some of them—the productive ones—may be expressed materially as vocal sounds or written marks. They are processed through combinations and separations of the input contents. As the DK paper concludes (p. 30): “a percept, a concept, and a proposition are all unified *states* of awareness. That is what makes them cognitive units.” (Our emphasis.)

## Clue Words for Expressing Examples

We suggest consistent editorial policy for expressing examples of the trichotomy:

- Speech and writings, whether word or phrase: in quotation marks
- (Subjective) concepts: in all upper-case
- (Subjective) propositions: in quotation marks or in symbolic notation:  $\pm(\pm(\pm S) \pm(\pm P))$  or  $\pm(P \otimes S)$

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, § 1 16a3–18. See also *De Anima*, III.3 427b–24.

- (Objective) grouping, whether category or property: in italics (unless imaginary, e.g., unicorn?)
- (Objective) fact: ... true that ...
- (Intrinsic) thing: ... the individual ..., ... the singular ..., the characteristic in the individual ...
- Definition: “definiendum” means no-quotation-marks definiens (e.g., “objective” means mind-...)

All these suggestions are listed next.

## Applying the replacements and accompanied punctuation marks

Page 2, proposition The proposition that “dogs are animals” is

Page 3, intrinsic ~~properties~~ attributes

Page 3, intrinsic integrate ~~input~~ content derived

Page 5, objective does not reveal abstract ~~kinds or features~~ categories or properties that exist

Page 6, intrinsic open-ended number of ~~objects~~ existents.

Page 7, objective for a category or ~~feature~~ property is a

Page 7, objective category or possessing the ~~feature~~ property.

Page 7, objective such as *tables* or *apples*, or of ~~an attribute~~ a property ... such as *length*.

Page 7, objective detaching the category or the ~~attribute~~ property, as a content

Page 7, subjective My concept ~~of apple~~ APPLE is not

Page 7, proposition the proposition that “whales are mammals”—along

Page 8, objective the category or ~~attribute~~ property that we aware of.

Page 12, subjective Thus the concept ~~“human”~~ HUMAN abstracts from

Page 12, subjective concept “animal” ANIMAL ... “organism” ORGANISM ...

Page 12, subjective in the concept ~~of “existent”~~ EXISTENT itself.

Page 12, subjective with the concept ~~of “identity.”~~ IDENTITY.

Page 16, subjective for the concept ~~“man”~~ MAN: he bears ... of the concept ~~“tall.”~~ TALL. “John ...”

Page 16, subjective for the concept ~~“marriage.”~~ MARRIAGE. These

Page 16, subjective of the concept ~~“copper”~~ COPPER within ... of the concept ~~“metal.”~~ METAL.<sup>20</sup>

Page 16, subjective concept ~~“tall,”~~ TALL, but ... concept ~~“married”~~ MARRIED: whom

Page 16, subjective units of ~~“copper”~~ COPPER the ... concept ~~“melt,”~~ MELT, a change of

Page 18, intrinsic thing, ~~property~~ attribute, or event

Page 19, intrinsic specific, concrete ~~objects, characteristics~~ entities, attributes, actions, and

Page 20, intrinsic x3 with all the ~~properties~~ characteristics they have ... to new ~~pr~~ as ... include the ~~pr~~ of

Page 22, proposition The proposition that “my car is white.” I can specify

Page 23, objective to propositions that universal categories and abstract ~~attributes~~ properties have

Page 23, objective includes universal, abstract categories and ~~attributes~~ properties, and so must

Page 23, subjective of the concept ~~“wooden.”~~ WOODEN. Having

Page 23, proposition then the propositions a) that “the table is wooden” and b) that “it is pine.” These

Page 24, proposition the judgment that “my car is white,” the color I

Page 25, proposition that “water runs uphill” is distinct from the proposition that “water cannot freeze.”

Page 26, objective imaginary objects (~~unicorns~~) (*unicorns*),

Page 26, proposition the claim that “water runs uphill” integrates

Page 26, proposition for the claim that “water ~~never freezes~~ cannot freeze.” Though

Page 27, proposition a true assertion, that “elk are herbivores.” When

Page 27, objective with the ~~attribute~~ property *herbivore*. If

Page 27, objective of concretes to a category or ~~abstract feature~~ property. We

Page 28, proposition all other propositions—i.e., false claims, speculations, etc.

Page 30, intrinsic in its nature as universal and abstract, ~~properties~~ features not found in its

Page 30, proposition the proposition that “elk are herbivores” refers to all elk

Page 31, proposition proposition that “George Washington was the first president of the United States.”

Page 32, proposition units, we know that “dogs are four-legged” without knowing

Page 32, intrinsic existents—entities, ~~properties~~ attributes, actions, and relationships

Page 32, proposition from the axiom of identity: the corollary that “existence is identity.”

### F3. Changes to Tables A and B

Before suggesting changes to the tables, we want to make sure we understand for ourselves the reasoning supporting the changes.

Taking CONSCIOUSNESS to be axiomatic, we characterize any instance of it to be an active process. By that we mean that the word “consciousness” (or synonymously “awareness”) signifies an active process. And by “active” we mean the ongoing relational activity of cognition in order to grasp or to be in contact with reality. There are two levels of cognition: perceptual and conceptual. The perceptual-level process is physiological (neurological), automatic, mechanistic-causal, effortless, veridical. The conceptual-level process is conscious (psycho-epistemological), deliberate (volitional), synchronic-causal, effortful, fallible. The process, if successful in its integration and differentiation, yields an awareness of some object  $\{pragma\}$ . The analogous distinction between a wedding and an ongoing marriage presumes the automatized workings of the subconscious level of consciousness to deliver contents ( $\{bupolemmata\}$ ) to the conscious level—the activity of which Aristotle calls super-positing  $\{bupolepsis\}$ .<sup>12</sup>

Here is a table showing our understanding of the Objectivist theory of concepts and propositions:

| CLASSIFICATION of   | Input-Content       | Unified <u>state</u> of awareness in the subject |                   |                     | Objective content of awareness |
|---|---------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
|   |                     | unretained                                       | retained          | by means of         |                                |
| COGNITION (active process of integration and differentiation)         |                     |  |                   |                     | $\{gnoston\}$                  |
| (perceptual level) (physiological (neurological), ...)                |                     |  |                   |                     |                                |
| PERCEPTION  | intrinsic existents | percept  |                   |                     | entity-in-a-form               |
| REMEMBRANCE   | (percept)           |  | perceptual memory |                     | something from the past        |
| (conceptual level) (conscious (psycho-epistemological), ...)          |                     |  |                   | (language-involved) |                                |
| (one-time “wedding”) (exercising of conceptual capacities)            |                     |  |                   |                     |                                |
| CONCEPT-FORMATION (Aristotelian induction )                           | percepts + memory   |  | concept           | word                | category or property           |
| ABSTRACTION FROM ABSTRACTIONS ( $\{epagoge\}$ )                       | concepts + memory   |  | concept           | word                | category or property           |
| PERCEPTUAL JUDGMENT   | percept + concept   |  | basic proposition | sentence            | irreducible fact               |
| JUDGMENT  | concepts            |  | proposition       | sentence            | fact                           |
| DEDUCTION   | propositions        |  | proposition       | sentence            | fact                           |
| INDUCTION (aux modes Mill’s methods)                                  | propositions        |  | proposition       | sentence            | fact                           |
| (ongoing “marriage”) ( $\{bupolepsis\}$ (NE VI.3 1139b17–18))         | (from subconscious) |  | $\{bupolemma\}$   |                     |                                |
| UNDERSTAND(ING) (employing a (retained) concept)                      | concept             |  |                   | word                | grouping                       |
| BELIEV·E (-ING) (thinking about) a fact via a (retained) proposition) | proposition         |  |                   | sentence            | fact                           |

### Changing Table A

Here is the current *Table A* in the DK paper, at page 21:

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<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.3 1139b17–18.

| Ontological status                   | Perception  | Concepts  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Cognitive state (in the mind)        | Perceptual experience   | Concept   |
| Objective content (relational)       | Existent as perceived in a form<br>= as it appears                                | Existents grasped as units—as instances of categories or properties               |
| Intrinsic content (mind-independent) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, characteristics, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, characteristics, actions, relationships |

Here now is a draft of *Table A* with our suggested changes:

|                           |  | Perceptual-level cognition   | Conceptual-level cognition   |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Act</b>                |  | Perception   | Concept-formation, understanding   |
| <b>Ontological status</b> | Cognitive state (in the <del>mind</del> subject)                       | Percept<br>= perceptual experience   | Concept  |
|                           | Objective content (relational)   | Existent as perceived in a form<br>= as it appears   | Existents grasped as units—as instances of a categoriesy or propertiesy                                  |
|                           | Intrinsic content ( <del>mind-independent of</del> conscious activity) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, <del>characteristics,</del> attributes, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, <del>characteristics,</del> attributes, actions, relationships |

This is the finished look: *Table A*

|              |                                  | Perceptual-level cognition         | Conceptual-level cognition       |
|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Act</b>   |                                  | Perception                         | Concept-formation, understanding |
| <b>Ontol</b> | Cognitive state (in the subject) | Percept<br>= perceptual experience | Concept                          |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  | Objective content<br>(relational)                        | Existent as perceived in a form<br>= as it appears                           | Existents grasped as units—as instances of a category or property            |
|  | Intrinsic content<br>(independent of conscious activity) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, attributes, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, attributes, actions, relationships |

### Changing Table B

Here is the current *Table B* in the DK paper, at page 25:

| <b>Ontological status</b>            | <b>Perception</b>   | <b>Concepts</b>   | <b>Propositions</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Cognitive state (in the mind)        | Perceptual experience   | Concept   | Judgment, belief   |
| Objective content (relational)       | Existent as perceived in a form = as it appears                                   | Existents grasped as units—as instances of categories or properties               | Facts: Identification of existents by predicating of them a feature(s) of their identities |
| Intrinsic content (mind-independent) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, characteristics, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, characteristics, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, characteristics, actions, relationships          |

Here now is a draft of *Table B* with our suggested changes (with indent-from-left set from 0.25" to 0"):

|            | <b>Perceptual-level cognition</b> | <b>Conceptual-level cognition</b> |                  |
|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Act</b> | Perception                        | Concept-formation, understanding  | Judgment, belief |

|                           |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Ontological status</b> | Cognitive state (in the <del>mind</del> subject)                                   | <b>Percept</b><br>= perceptual experience  | Concept  | Proposition<br><del>Judgment, belief</del>   |
|                           | Objective content (relational)   | Existent as perceived in a form = as it appears  | Existents grasped as units—as instances of a <del>category</del> or <del>property</del>                        | <del>Facts:</del> Identification of existents by predicating of them a <del>feature</del> <b>characteristic(s)</b> of their identities |
|                           | Intrinsic content ( <del>mind-</del> independent of <del>conscious</del> activity) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, <del>characteristic,</del> <b>attributes,</b> actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, <del>characteristic,</del> <b>attributes,</b> actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, <del>characteristic,</del> <b>attributes,</b> actions, relationships                         |

This is the finished look: *Table B*

|                           |   | <b>Perceptual-level cognition</b>  | <b>Conceptual-level cognition</b>  |  |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Act</b>                |   | Perception   | Concept-formation, understanding   | Judgment, belief   |
| <b>Ontological status</b> | Cognitive state (in the subject)                      | Percept<br>= perceptual experience   | Concept  | Proposition  |
|                           | Objective content (relational)                        | Existent as perceived in a form = as it appears                              | Existents grasped as units—as instances of a category or property            | Fact: identification of existents by predicating of them a characteristic(s) of their identities |
|                           | Intrinsic content (independent of conscious activity) | Existents: particular, concrete entities, attributes, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, attributes, actions, relationships | Existents: particular, concrete entities, attributes, actions, relationships                     |

## F4. Aristotelian Ontology As Objectivist Ontology

At page 5, DK writes, "... Objectivism does not subscribe to a realist theory of universals in either the Platonic or the Aristotelian sense." We suggest replacing the word "Aristotelian" with "immanent," for we think that the Aristotelian ontology *is* Objectivist ontology. We argue both that Aristotle's view about universals has been misconstrued and that his ontology is Objectivist ontology.

We take Aristotle to have distinguished the objective content from the intrinsic content in his own use of the word *pragma* to refer to the thing indicated *successfully* by a subjective unit of meaning {*noēma*} or a unit of thought or belief {*doxa*}. While realist translators, like J. L. Ackrill, translate *pragma* as "actual thing";<sup>13</sup> we follow Greg Salmieri to translate it "object."<sup>14</sup>

As early as *Categories* § 12 14b20–21 in talking about what thing is prior by nature than another, Aristotle says that "it is because the ~~actual thing~~ object exists or does not that the statement is called true or false." This comports with the DK paper, page 25, that true propositions are factual, and that false ones fail to integrate properly and do not correspond to anything objective. In other words, if the object exists, then the proposition is true; if it fails to exist, the proposition is false. The object's existence is prior by nature and explains or is the cause of why the proposition is true.

We see Aristotle to be distinguishing ontologically an existent existing from an object existing. We justify how we know that an existent exists by perceiving it; we justify an object existing by thinking with language. And how we use words or concepts should affect what we think to be existing. While most Aristotelian scholars are not yet ready to recognize the full distinction between the intrinsic and the objective, a few Aristotelian ontologists are beginning to notice something strange about the way Aristotle employs composite terms in thinking about changes. Citing *Physics* I.7 190a19–21, they recognize something called kooky objects.<sup>15</sup> For example, the universal object as indicated by the noun phrase "president of the United States" lassoes all the individual human beings who were, are, or will be presidents of the United States. The "47<sup>th</sup> president" identifies one unit in that grouping. The "45<sup>th</sup> president" identifies another unit in that grouping. These two units in the grouping PRESIDENT (of the United States), ontologically speaking, are not the same as the "45<sup>th</sup> man holding the office of President of the United States." That, too, is just another unit in the grouping MAN. Only Donald J. Trump is the concrete entity, the primary ousia. A singular assertion can unite them all as the same one in number. "Donald Trump is the same one in number as the 45<sup>th</sup> president

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<sup>13</sup> Ackrill, *Aristotle's 'Categories' and 'De Interpretatione'*, 159 and especially 122–123.

<sup>14</sup> Gregory Salmieri, "Aristotle's Conception of Universality," (Privately circulated, Sept. 2012): 14. A copy can be found here: <https://mega.nz/file/CqRUjAoA#AQO4FrULj0S1Q452r8aapPoganTQTxvr-qFehQIS9GE>

<sup>15</sup> S. Marc Cohen, "Kooky Objects Revisited: Aristotle's Ontology" (*Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 39, No. 1, January 2008): 3–19.

and the 47<sup>th</sup> president of the United States.” Thus, notwithstanding the hesitation of these Aristotelian ontologists, we interpret Aristotle to recognize fully the distinction between the intrinsic realm and the objective realm.

We may add that as early as *Categories* § 5 3a7–12, Aristotle rejects moderate (or “immanent”) realism. Here is Ackrill’s translation: “It is a characteristic common to every substance not to be in a subject. For a primary substance is neither said of a subject nor in a subject. And as for secondary substances, it is obvious at once that they are not in a subject. For man is said of the individual man as subject but is not in a subject: man is not in the individual man. Similarly, animal also is said of the individual man as subject but animal is not in the individual man.”

We interpret Aristotle to reject in this passage the notion that kinds—or the universal things we use for organizing existents—are somehow present in the very things that are individual and numerically one.

Salmieri, much more learned than we are, argues also that Aristotle is not a moderate (or “immanent”) realist, that the latter was aware of this position and explicitly rejected it, and that he had an alternative position.<sup>16</sup>

All forms of immanent realism accept what Salmieri calls the partial identity thesis. The thesis says that the singulars that belong to the universal do so because of their sharing some identical component, which (i) exists independently of any thought or speech about the universal and (ii) provides a real basis for thought and speech about the universal.

Salmieri differentiates Aristotelian scholars who interpret Aristotle to be an immanent realist according to how they answer two questions about the partial identity thesis:

1. What is the relation between the universal and the identical component?
  - a. Answer: The universal *is* the component itself.
  - b. Answer: Universals exist only in thought, but their basis is provided by the identical component in reality.
2. How is the component to be identical from one singular to the next?
  - a. Answer: The component is numerically-one identical in number.
  - b. Answer: The component is qualitative-trope identical but distinct in each singular.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 1–5.

<sup>17</sup> Although Salmieri does not use the word “trope,” what he is describing is characteristic of what analytic metaphysicians nowadays call trope. (For a modern take of the problem of universals, see Alik Pelman, “Ontology Generator” (*Metaphysica*, 2022): 1–20. <https://philpapers.org/archive/PELOGE>)

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Immanent Realism in Four Forms  |   | (1) What is the relation between the universal and the identical component? |  |
| None is Aristotle's.  |   | (a) The universal <i>is</i> the component itself.                           | (b) Universals exist only in thought, but their basis is provided by the identical component in reality. |
| (2) How is the component to be identical from one singular to the next? | (a) The component is numerically-one identical in number.                       | (21 <sup>st</sup> -century analytic metaphysicians, e.g., Michael Loux)     | (21 <sup>st</sup> -century Neo-Neo-Platonists, e.g., Lloyd P. Gerson)                                    |
|   | (b) The component is qualitative-trope identical but distinct in each singular. | (... e.g., W. D. Ross (1923))   | (early 20 <sup>th</sup> -century Neo-Scholastics, e.g., Michael Frede)                                   |

Salmieri goes on to show that Aristotle's definition of a universal turns out to be an ontological application of matter and form—with (intelligible) matter being the indeterminate genus and with form being the determinable differentia. And the genera or kinds correspond to ranges along dimensions at which their members can differ. All this can be gleaned, Salmieri suggests, from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and zoological works.<sup>18</sup>

But we also find this view from Aristotle's earlier works. If not for some identical thing being shared in common that is somehow present in singular things that gives rise to universals, how, then, are things to be grouped together? Aristotle says that it is by the relation of similarity that things are said to be the same one in form (or "species"). In *Topics* I.7 103a14–23, Aristotle asks whether water (instances) from the many springs turn out to be one and the same in form. Reeve translates<sup>19</sup>: "It might seem that water from the same spring is said to be the same in a way that has some difference {*diaphora*} from those mentioned. Nonetheless, this too, at any rate, must be placed in the same part as things said to be the same in some way or other with respect to form; for all such things seem to be akin and quite similar to each other. For all water is said to be the same in form as all other water because it possesses a certain similarity, and water from the same spring is

<sup>18</sup> Salmieri, "Aristotle's Conception of Universality," 40–54.

<sup>19</sup> Reeve, *Aristotle's Dialectic: Topics, Sophistical Refutations, and Related Texts*, 7–8.

different in no other way than that the similarity is much more pronounced. That is why we do not separate this case from those that are said to be the same in some way or other with respect to a single form.”

We interpret: All water instances ⟨from all different springs⟩ are said to be the same in form as all other instances because each possesses a certain similarity ⟨in comparison to each other⟩ (103a19–20), and water instances *a* and *b* from the same spring differ in no other way than their similarities being clustered together more tightly ⟨when measured relative to one’s starter what-it-was-for-water-to-be form than to other instances *c* or *d* from different sources—with these latter instances’ measurements also not scattering or deviating so far from each other and away from the single water form that they then might cross-border over to belong better to another form of the same kind, say, oil, ethanol, mercury, as forms of liquid⟩. (103a20–22;) That is why we do not separate water as an exceptional case from those that are called the same with reference in some ⟨commensurable⟩ way to a single form. (103a22–23) In other words, water wherever and whenever varies a lot but is still the same one in form. For Aristotle to say that, we take him to characterize water as a body, which is referenced in language by a mass noun as opposed to a count noun. A body is a kind of continuous quantity. Such quantities may be bounded with boundaries. (*Cat.* § 6 4b20–5a14) Once bounded there can be individual countable instances, for example, individual drops or oceans of water.

And for there to be sameness in form and sameness in kind, we have to bring up Aristotelian induction {*epagōgē*}. Aristotle’s definition of induction in *Topics* I.12 (105a13–14)—“a ⟨*logos*⟩ proceeding from the singulars to the universal”—leaves wide open the possibility that induction is to be construed as similar to deduction or even as a form of deduction. It has not helped that translators since the late medieval period have translated *tōn kath’ hekasta* as “the particulars” and not properly as “the singulars.”<sup>20</sup> This improper translation has led scholars nowadays to believe that induction proceeds from partial propositions toward a universal proposition. We follow John P. McCaskey and think their belief is incorrect. As McCaskey hints, the bulk of what Aristotle says about induction is in the *Topics*, *Sophistical Refutations*, and *Rhetoric*, and definitely not in *Prior Analytics* II.23. Induction for Aristotle is a cognitive activity whose output is not propositional but conceptual.<sup>21</sup> That is Rand’s concept-formation—the formation of a universal unit of meaning from the

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<sup>20</sup> C. W. A. Whitaker, *Aristotle’s De Interpretatione: Contradiction and Dialectic* (Clarendon Press, 1997): 83–91. Whitaker begins with footnote 2, then cites at page 89 the influential Aquinas for propagating the error, and ends at pages 90–91 with recommending translators to use “singular” to render *kath’ hekaston* and “partial” to render *en merēi* and to avoid the word “particular” altogether.

<sup>21</sup> See John P. McCaskey’s “Freeing Aristotelian *Epagōgē* from *Prior Analytics* II 23” (*Apeiron*, December 2007): 345–374. McCaskey says, p. 365, “Aristotelian induction is not a kind of [propositional] inference, though since the earliest Scholastic textbooks it has been standard to present it as such.” <https://www.johnmccaskey.com/wp-content/uploads/Freeing-Aristotelian-Epagoge-From-APr-II23.pdf>

awareness of singular objects; its completing activity is the articulation of a definition for the new unit to state its what-it-was-to-be *{to ti ēn einai}* in a phrasal expression that includes both the kind *{genos}* and the difference or ranging-variation *{diaphora}*.

And we take Aristotle's *diaphora* to translate “ranging-variation” from *Topics* I.1 100a22, at which all translators switch to “varieties” to translate *diaphorai*. It suggests that Aristotle's conception of the definition as a phrasal unity (*On Int.* § 5, 17a11–15) is similar to the unity of the assertion-making articulation *{logos apophantikos}*. Indeed *Topics* I.8 103b12–16 reveals that a definition pertains to the subject of predication *{hupokeimenon}*. A little bit of review of an earlier chapter I.5 102a31–35 shows that the genus or kind provides the what-it-is *{to ti esti}* to answer the question of what the underlying subject is—and it leaves the remainder, the ranging-variation or differentia to be the predicate-in-waiting so as to unify the definition akin to the assertion-making articulation, which is the identity of the target object being defined.

If we can apply the DK paper to reading this passage of Aristotle's, we can say the following: In the definition, then, the kind reveals the maximum numerical quantity of those things that can be candidates to be lassoed by the target object, and the difference reveals the widest spectrum of variation within which some of those candidates may be judged similar to each other so as to be regarded as identical member-units of the target object. In its template, the definitional phrase follows the same subject-predicate structure as the simple assertion: one part reveals a numerical quantity, and one part reveals a range in variety. The two parts make one integrated whole to reveal what the object is, its *ti ēn einai*.

## Questions to Understand Better the Text

1. For the sake of extending the present theory of proposition to logic, how would you regiment or transcribe symbolically the seven propositions at pages 14–15 that illustrate the range of subjects in propositions?
2. Likewise, how would anyone regiment or transcribe symbolically the axioms and the laws of logic?
3. Are perceptual judgments axioms?
4. On page, 29, why is the classification of meaningful propositions as genus for true and false ones be considered a representationalist view?

We elaborate on the questions below:

(1) About the seven propositions at pages 14–15, just so we are interpreting them in the same way, would you say that these are roughly the correct transcriptions?

In the following symbolized formulae, the first non-term symbol refers to the assertional form, as outlined by Aristotle in *On Interpretation* § 7, 17b16–17b37:

- $\times \equiv$  predicating singularly of a singular instance  $S$ —in Greek-normal form:  $P \times S$ ;
- $\circ \equiv$  predicating not-universally (or “indeterminately”) of a universal  $S$ —:  $P \circ S$ ;
- $- \equiv$  predicating universally and wholly of a universal  $S$ —:  $P - S$ ;
- $+ \equiv$  predicating universally but partially of a universal  $S$ —:  $P + S$ .

1.  $+ M_1 + (A_{12} \times D_2)_1$  “A man is at the door.”
2.  $\times \langle \times M_1 + (I_{12} \times C_2)_1 \rangle + D$  “The man in the corner is drunk.”
3.  $\times \langle + M_1 + (C_{12} \times K_2)_1 \rangle + F$  “The man who committed this crime is a fiend.”
4.  $\circ M + \langle + R + A \rangle$  “Humans are rational animals.”
5.  $+ P + M$  “Some people are married.”
6.  $+ H_1 + (W_{12} \times M_2)_1$  “Men have walked on the moon.”
7.  $- H_1 + (N_{12} + O_2)_1$  “Humans need oxygen to survive.”

(2) Would the following formulae accurately transcribe the axioms and the laws of logic?

1.  $\circ E + E$  “Existents exist.”
2.  $- A + A$  “A thing is what it is.”
3.  $\times S_1 + (C_{12} + O_2)_1$  “I am conscious (of something).”
4.  $-(+ E_1 - (A_{12} \times E_2)_1)$  “Not: an entity *{ousia}* fails to act from its what-it-is.”
5.  $-(+ E + \langle + A + (-A) \rangle)$  “Not: a thing is both A and non-A.”
6.  $-(+ E - \langle - (-A) - (-(-A)) \rangle)$  “Not: a thing is neither A nor non-A.”
7.  $\circ E_1 + (S_{12} \circ I_2)_1$  –i.e.,  $\circ E = \circ I$  “Existence is (the same one in number as) identity.” (DK paper, 32)

(3) From the 11/25/2025 video with Richard Salsman, you answered a question about axioms.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDs-GI37Ygo?t=2926> Here is a follow-up: Other than axioms from axiomatic concepts, would you consider what you call perceptual judgments to be basic propositions and thus to be axioms as well? Or would you insist that any proposition, to be an axiom, has to be both basic (or nearest and better known to us) and absolutely fundamental (or better “known” by nature)?

(4) The question seeks a clarification. Is the classification based on a superficial characteristic, and if so is this characteristic the reason for accusing to be an internalist representation? A few more sentences here might help clarify the conclusion.