

## No. 230.1 (I, p. 208f)

1. It is straightforward to specify and distinguish the sciences, just like all habits and powers, by their formal objects.
2. But the difficult thing is the way in which this object should be determined as formal.<sup>1</sup>
3. There is a distinction between the formal and the material object of a science. The material object is whatever a science is concerned with.
4. The formal object is that which it is concerned with formally, i.e. *per se* in the first instance,<sup>2</sup> and by whose mediation the material object is grasped.
5. Within a formal object itself are to be distinguished the ground of its formality “which” [*ratio formalis “quae”*] or the formal object as a thing [*res*] (the formal object “that”), which is that thing that is grasped in itself in the first instance, and the ground of its formality “under which” [*ratio formalis “sub qua”*] or the formal object as a knowable [*scibile*] (the formal object “by which”), which is that by whose mediation the formal object “which” is grasped.
6. The formal object “by which” is for knowing intellection, just as light is for vision: Just as light makes manifest a thing to vision, in the same way the formal object “by which” is a kind of objective spiritual light, manifesting to the knowing intellect the formal object “that”.
7. Now it is clear that what most differentiates sciences is the formal object “by which”.
8. On the other hand, different pieces of knowledge are constituted by different formal objects, therefore so are different sciences: Moreover, with a different formal object “by which” having been given, so a different formal object “that” is given, for a different light manifests a different object.
9. These things being so, our thesis states that: (*i*) the formal ground “under which” or the generic distinction of the speculative sciences are picked out by their different ways of abstracting from its material or corporality, such that (*ii*) different ways of abstracting from material constitute different formal grounds “under which”, and (*iii*) that specific distinctions according

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<sup>1</sup>Reading this as a relative clause of characteristic.

<sup>2</sup>“*per se* in the first instance [*per se primo*]” could be a reference to Aristotle’s first definition of *per se* predication in An. Post. 1.4, 73a.35–37: “Something holds of an item in itself [...] if it holds of it in what it is — e.g. line of triangle and point of lines (their essence comes from these items, which inhere in the account which says what they are).” However, more work would need to be done to understand how this notion of *per se* predication is being applied to the grasping of an object. It also seems possible that *primo* is being used as an intensifier here, so that “*per se primo*” just means something like “first and foremost”.

to atomic species come from different grounds of formality “which”, these [the atomic species] having the same mode of abstraction.

## No. 921 (II, p. 377)

**Thesis 8:** Primarily and specifically the morality of a human act is from a moral object, secondarily from circumstances and from the end.<sup>3</sup>

The object can be picked out:<sup>4</sup>

1. broadly, on account of everything which the act concerns.
2. strictly, on account of that which is *per se* first and foremost concerns.

In this thesis the object is considered in the second sense, by which it is distinguished from circumstances, which nevertheless themselves are effected by the act, but secondarily, being the secondary objects of the act.

Circumstances are normally grouped as follows: Who, what, where, with what instrument, why, in what way, how much.

1. The particular circumstance is the end.
2. What nevertheless is rightly to be noted in connection with this is that the end, just like the circumstances, does not signify the end of the work [*operis*], which coincides with the object of the human act, but the end of the working [*operantis*], whose operation depends on being mediated by a grasp of the voluntary imperative.
3. This is shown with an example:
4. When someone intends to carry out work on the Day of the Lord with a slave, that which she intends first and foremost – the object of the human act and the end of her work – is the work of slaves, but knowing that this is on the Lord’s Day, she nevertheless also intends this temporal circumstance (when).
5. When she carries out the work for vainglory, this will be the end of her work, which, working by means of her act from a voluntary imperative, is attained by depending on the works of slaves.
6. A moral object is an object in so far as it subsumes moral rules, or in so far as it is measured moral rules, i.e. in so far as it subsumes the grounds of commands (proximate rules), which it also considers as conformity and nonconformity to the eternal law (supreme rules).

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<sup>3</sup>“Of” [*ex*] here referring to constitution?

<sup>4</sup>“Picked out” [*desumi*] perhaps in the sense of “individuated”?

**Primarily and specifically the morality of a human act is from a moral object.**

From which that human act, as it is moral, is specified by a moral object: The primary and specific morality of the human act is from that from which the human act is specified as moral. Nevertheless the human act, as moral, is specified by a moral object. Therefore the primary and specific morality of it is by a moral object.

The act is specified by an object or by that which it first and foremost concerns, the moral act by the moral object, for it is produced in the object, just as a cognition for the intellect, as conformity and nonconformity to moral rules. It is unlike a cognition in that it is not affected by the human act as a moral, nor does the human act specify the moral species.

**Secondarily morality is from circumstances and from ends.**

From that which a human act is produced for circumstances and for an end just as for an object secondarily moral: Secondary morality is from this, by which act, as moral, it is secondarily determined.

