
**Term:** Virtual

**Quote:**

(1) A virtual $X$ (where $X$ is a common noun) is something, not an $X$, which has the efficiency (*virtus*) of an $X$.

This is the proper meaning of the word; but (2) it has been seriously confounded with 'potential,' which is almost its contrary. For the potential $X$ is of the nature of $X$, but is without actual efficiency. A virtual velocity is something *not* a velocity, but a displacement; but equivalent to a velocity in the formula, ‘what is gained in velocity is lost in power.’

So *virtual representation* was the non-representation of the American colonies in the British Parliament, which was supposed to be replaced by something. So Milton asks whether the angels have *virtual* or immediate touch. So, too, the sun was said to be *virtualiter* on earth, that is, in its efficiency.

(3) *Virtual* is sometimes used to mean pertaining to virtue in the sense of an ethical habit.


**References:** CP 6.372

**Date of Quote:** 1902

**Manuscript Image:**
Virtual [Lat. virtus, strength, from vir, a man]; Ger. virtuell; Fr. (1) virtual; Ital. (1) virtuale. (1) A virtual X (where X is a common noun) is something, not an X, which has the efficiency (virtus) of an X.

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Virtual knowledge: a term of Sectus de Deo.