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
**Virtual** [Lat. *virtus*, strength, from *vir*, a man]; Ger. *virtuell*; Fr. (1) *virtuel*; 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 Sextus Empedoclean...