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final draft

## 1

Consider triangularity and trilaterality in a closed plane rectilinear figure. There’s obviously a *conceptual* distinction between them. Trilaterality isn’t the same thing as triangularity. It’s a matter of sides, not angles. But there is, to adapt and extend Descartes’s terms, no *real* distinction between them (Descartes 1644: 1.213–15). Neither, that is, can exist without the other also existing. They can’t possibly exist apart. They can’t exist apart ‘outside our thought’, as opposed to merely ‘in our thought’ (Descartes 1645–46: 3.280–1). They can be genuinely distinguished or held apart in thought, but can’t exist apart in concrete reality.<sup>1</sup>

A real distinction is not a matter of what things actually do exist separately, in reality, at any given time, but a matter of what things can exist separately, a matter of what is possible. If there’s no real distinction between A and B not even an omnipotent being can get them apart. That’s how it is for triangularity and trilaterality in a closed plane rectilinear figure.<sup>2</sup>

What is the ground of this impossibility, this inseparability in reality? The answer is surely simple: identity, identity in the concrete (there can be no better ground). By this I don’t mean to propose that the concepts of trilaterality and triangularity are identical. They’re obviously distinct, conceptually distinct, distinct as what they are—(abstract) concepts. What I mean to propose is that any actually existing case of triangularity (any actual ‘outside-our-thought’ case of triangularity) is literally identical to the case of trilaterality that it can’t exist without; for that in which the real existence of the one wholly consists is the very same thing as that in which the real existence of the other wholly consists. Neither real existence exceeds the other in any way. The (concrete) being of the one is—is identical to—the (concrete) being of the other (don’t object that the sides could be thicker or thinner).

Some may think that the ground of the impossibility could be something other than identity. But what else could it be? The burden of argument lies heavily on those who wish to claim that something other than identity can make it absolutely impossible for two things to come apart. Identity does the trick, because the two things are only one thing, and a thing can’t come apart from itself.

Inference to the best explanation looks smilingly upon this view, and I’m not going to argue for it now, although I can imagine objections. ‘Look, there can be a one-way

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<sup>1</sup> Here I take all ‘outside-our-thought’ reality to be concrete reality; others may take it to include ‘abstract objects’ (numbers, propositions, and so on).

<sup>2</sup> The restriction to rectilinear figures is not necessary if only angles generate sides – so that a closed ‘U’, for example, has two sides.

necessary metaphysical connection between two properties  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  that doesn't involve identity (if a brain state of type  $F$  exists it may be metaphysically necessary that an experiential state of type  $G$  exists, etc.). Why couldn't there be a two-way, no-real-distinction necessary connection between two properties  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  that was the sum of two such one-way connections without involving their identity in the concrete?"<sup>3</sup>

The best reply to this is to ask for an explanation, in a particular case, of how this is possible without identity—an explanation that is furthermore better than the explanation provided by identity. The explanation provided by identity is distinguished by the fact that it leaves nothing 'brute' or unexplained.

The concepts  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  of properties  $P_1$  and  $P_2$  will of course be conceptually distinct, if the names for them are not at bottom semantically synonymous, but the fact that any concrete instantiation  $CP_1$  of  $P_1$  will also be a concrete instantiation  $CP_2$  of  $P_2$  will consist in the fact that  $CP_1$  is—is identical to— $CP_2$ .

I propose, then, and quite generally, that there is no difference 'outside our thought' (no real distinction as currently defined) between the no-real-distinction inseparability of two things  $x$  and  $y$  and the identity of  $x$  and  $y$  (which are not really two things at all). Plainly

[i]  $x = y$

entails

[ii] there is no real distinction between  $x$  and  $y$ .

I'm claiming that the converse is also true, that [ii] entails [i], and indeed that

[iii] there is no real distinction between the fact or state of affairs that  $x = y$  and the fact or state of affairs that there is no real distinction between  $x$  and  $y$

and indeed that

[iv] the fact or state of affairs that  $x = y$  is identical to the fact or state of affairs that there is no real distinction between  $x$  and  $y$ .

I register this claim about the identity of identity and no-real-distinctionhood as an assumption (physics may be thought to provide counter-examples). There is, to be sure, a conceptual distinction between identity and no-real-distinctionhood, and metaphysicians can produce conceptual distinctions without end; but there is, I propose, no real distinction between them.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Philip Goff.

<sup>4</sup> I'm concerned with concrete particulars: supposed counter-examples that cite abstract objects (e.g. the case of David Lewis and the singleton set—considered as an abstract object—whose only member is

There is perhaps no more valuable tool in metaphysics than the distinction between a real and a conceptual distinction, although it's valuable (needed) only given the weakness—which is perhaps part of the necessary structure—of our thought.<sup>5</sup> Two important (if ultimately trivial) theses can be formulated in its terms, both of which make use of the term 'property', at least in their initial versions. In formulating them I'll make use of the proposed equivalence of [i] and [ii] and I'll restrict my attention to intrinsic, natural, non-conventional properties, although this isn't strictly necessary.<sup>6</sup>

Flag: the word 'property', harmless enough in some areas of philosophy, is extraordinarily dangerous in others, where it harbours almost irresistible incentives to metaphysical misunderstanding and is to be avoided as far as possible. In such cases one should make do instead, as far as possible, with a categorially neutral term like 'being'. Whitehead may exaggerate when he says that 'all modern philosophy hinges round the difficulty of describing the world in terms of subject and predicate, substance and quality, particular and universal' (1927–28: 49), or indeed object and property, but I don't think he's far wrong.

With this caveat, the first thesis is that

[1] there is no real distinction between an object considered at any given particular time  $t$  and its (concrete) propertyedness at  $t$ .

The (concrete) being of an object at any given time is the (concrete) being of its properties or propertyedness at that time, i.e. its whole actual concrete qualitative being. Neither exceeds the other in any way.

The second thesis is that

[2] there is no real distinction between an object's categorical properties and its dispositional properties or power properties.

There's a perfectly respectable conceptual distinction (it's respectable even if ultimately metaphysically superficial) between an actually existing object  $O$  at a time and its propertyedness. Using 'C' for 'conceptually', and 'P<sub>O</sub>' for  $O$ 's propertyedness, one may symbolize this as

[3] C[O ≠ P<sub>O</sub>].

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David Lewis) are not to the point. So too I'm concerned with concrete particulars considered independently of human intentions and conventions (this is designed to deflect cases of the kind found in Johnston 2003). 'What about a ball and its surface?' Well, either its surface isn't a concrete object and is irrelevant, or it is a concrete object, a collection of ultimate physical constituents that can possibly exist independently of the ball. And so on.

<sup>5</sup> I don't think the weakness is wholly inevitable.

<sup>6</sup> I assume the viability of the distinction between these properties and any others. For a helpful discussion see Lewis and Langton 1996 and the ensuing debate in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 2001: 347–403.

There's also a seemingly respectable conceptual (if ultimately metaphysically superficial) distinction between an object's categorical and dispositional properties. Using 'C' for 'categorical', 'D' for 'dispositional' one may symbolize this as

[4]  $C[C_0 \neq D_0]$ .

There is for all that no real distinction between O and P<sub>O</sub>: using '**R**' for 'in reality' or 'outside our thought', and invoking the assumed equivalence of [i] and [ii], one may symbolize [1] as

[1]  $R[O \text{ at } t = P_0 \text{ at } t]$

or, taking the time index as read (or inessential), simply as

[1]  $R[O = P_0]$ .

The whole being of the one, O, is the whole being of the other, P<sub>O</sub>. The whole being of O, whatever it actually is, cannot possibly exist apart from (is) the whole being of P<sub>O</sub>, whatever it actually is. There is no residue on either side. What—what exactly—is the referent of 'P<sub>O</sub>'? It is everything in which the existence of O's being propertied as it is consists.

Nor is there any real distinction between O's categorical and dispositional properties, on the present view, and [2] can be represented as

[2]  $R[C_0 = D_0]$ .

Again, the being of the one is the being of the other.

Suppose I want you to be here. All I have to do is to make it the case that you turn up with (necessarily) all your categorical properties. I don't have to do something else—something ontologically extra—to ensure that your dispositional properties are also in place, because that in which the existence of your dispositional properties consists is nothing other than that in which the existence of your categorical properties consists. One can give the fundamental metaphysical point full weight without disturbing the fact that there is a (natural, human) conceptual distinction between the categorical and the dispositional.

I think the truth of [1] and [2] becomes obvious after reflection, although grasping [1] disrupts the standard philosophical understanding of what a property is (the Whitehead point). At bottom they're trivial—and deeply related. [1] is endorsed outright by philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant and Nietzsche, and is certainly not undermined by the way in which we speculate counterfactually about objects. Locke, I take it, is a clear and well known proponent of [2]. It is I think the view of common

sense.<sup>7</sup>

I've argued for [1] elsewhere (Strawson 2003: §7), and will say a bit more in §3. Here I want to consider [2]—the claim that there is no real distinction between an object's categorical properties and its dispositional properties. I'll continue to speak in the traditional way of dispositional properties, rather than of power properties, although I think the second term is better.

Actually, 'potential' is the best term, in its old meaning—'potent', 'possessing potency or power'—but this, the first *OED* meaning, has been drowned out by the second meaning, 'possible as opposed to actual', and this is unhelpful, because potential properties in the first meaning are of course actual properties.

## 2

Most philosophers agree that

[5] there can no more be dispositional properties without categorical properties than there can be categorical properties without dispositional properties

or, in my preferred (and I think more stable) terms, that

[5] there can no more be dispositional being without categorical being than there can be categorical being without dispositional being.

Some reject the first half of [5], claiming that

[6] there are no categorical properties (there is no categorical being), only dispositional properties (dispositional being),

or more simply that

[6] there is only dispositional being

and I'll consider this odd-seeming claim later. First, though, consider the addition to [5] of

[7] nothing can possibly have the (total) categorical being that it has and not have the (total) dispositional being that it has, and nothing can possibly have the (total) dispositional being that it has and not have the (total) categorical being that it has.

I think, as remarked, that this is obvious on reflection, even if it needs argument in the

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<sup>7</sup> Other recent defenders of [2] or similar views include C. B. Martin (1997), Mumford (1998) and Heil (2005, 2010). See also Marmodoro (2010).

current climate of philosophical discussion.

Before I give an argument, note that it's a very short step, if it's a step at all, from [7] to the seemingly stronger claim that

[8] there is no real distinction between an object's categorical being (properties) and its dispositional being (properties)

and from there to the seemingly stronger claim that

[9] an object's categorical being (properties) and its dispositional being (properties) are really (in the Cartesian sense of 'real') identical.

I say 'seemingly stronger' because I don't think [9] is really stronger than [8], any more than [8] is really stronger than [7], for reasons already given. I've already identified [8] and [9], in fact, in ruling that [8] can be written as

[2]  $R[C_o = D_o]$ ,

for [2] is just a different representation of [9].

Routine thoughts about the 'multiple realizability' of certain functional properties may prompt the idea that

[10] two things can be dispositionally identical without being categorically identical

contrary to the second half of [7]; and this may lead to the idea that

[11] a thing can be changed in respect of its categorical properties without being changed in respect of its dispositional properties.

So too, thoughts about 'possible worlds' (say) may prompt the idea that

[12] a thing can be changed in respect of its dispositional properties without being changed in respect of its categorical properties

contrary to the first half of [7], and so also that

[13] two things can be categorically identical without being dispositionally identical.

In fact, though, none of these things can be so.

As regards [12], many recent philosophical thought-experiments are premised on the assumption that a material thing, say  $x$ , can be thought to retain its intrinsic nature or basic categorical being unchanged across different nomic environments while changing

its dispositional being on account of its different nomic environment. I doubt that the idea that  $x$  can retain its intrinsic nature or basic categorical being unchanged across different nomic environments is even coherent, if laws are understood not as human linguistic or conceptual creations, but as non-linguistic objective principles of working. For I doubt that laws so understood can be properly thought to be in any way independent of, rather than essentially constitutive of, or part of, the (categorical, intrinsic) nature of matter; only a bad ‘separatist’ habit of thought can make this seem initially plausible.<sup>8</sup> We can put this point aside, though, and allow for purposes of argument that the assumption is coherent. For even if it is coherent it gives us no reason (rather the contrary) to think that  $x$ ’s fundamental dispositions will change on change of nomic environment. For these fundamental dispositions include the disposition to behave in way  $F$  in nomic environment 1, the disposition to behave in way  $G$  in nomic environment 2, and so on. The same points apply *mutatis mutandis* to [13], where we would be considering two qualitatively (categorically) identical things  $x$  and  $y$  in different environments. Some students of dispositions will say that this isn’t what they have in mind; but the point stands.

Turning to [10] and [11]: the objection to [7] that is based on the fact that certain properties may be said to be ‘multiply realizable’ doesn’t deserve serious consideration. Obviously two differently constructed pocket calculators can be functionally identical (mathematically speaking). Equally obviously, their total dispositional being will be different if they’re differently constructed (they melt differently, float differently, smell different, etc.). It is in the end a trivial point that if they are in any way categorically different, they will necessarily be dispositionally different: one atom’s difference between them makes a difference between their total dispositions. So too, no less trivially, if you change the categorical being of one of them in any way, you *eo ipso* change its total dispositional being in so doing.<sup>9</sup>

To say more is almost certainly a mistake, but I undertook to consider those who reject the second half of [7] for a different reason, claiming that there are only dispositional properties or in other words that

[6] all being is dispositional being.

[6] is refreshingly incoherent on my terms, if ‘dispositional’ is supposed to exclude ‘categorical’, for all actual concretely existing being is *ipso facto* categorical being—

[14] all being is categorical being

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<sup>8</sup> On separatism, see pp. 000xxx. Note that matter and space-time are themselves only dubiously distinguished, according to many physicists. Weinberg suggests that all the objects we take ourselves to have to do with are best conceived of as being ultimately constituted of ‘rips in space-time’ (1997: 20), space-time being itself a physical object (the only one there is), an essentially substantial something.

<sup>9</sup> Many standard moves can be made in protest. Heil (2005, chapters 8–11) deals with them in a tolerant manner.

—whatever else it is or isn't; even if (for example) it's correctly said to be nothing but energy in various forms, energy whose nature can be positively characterized by us only in terms of what effects it has. All being is categorical being because that's what it is to be! That's what being is!

—'This begs the question against [6]—with numbing grossness!'

True, but I'm afraid that that is [6]'s own fault. Perhaps, though, we can achieve some reconciliation, moving in a very small space, through the cluster [7]/[8]/[9].

[6] raises the question 'What does the real concrete existence—call it "E"—of this dispositional being consist in, metaphysically speaking?' Any serious answer to this question will exhibit Russell's 'robust sense of reality' (1919: 170). It will not for a moment confuse metaphysics with epistemology, as so many have done, and the very least that it can be is 'E can't be nothing (for we are robust)'. But then whatever this non-nothing (something) E is said to be, it is already categorical being—even if it's been somehow forcefully theorized as ('merely') dispositional (or power) being—simply because it's real being: *being!*

—'Mere repetition, the same begging of the same question.'

The small, supposedly reconciling thought is that when the distinction between categorical and dispositional disappears as a real distinction, as it does if the cluster [7]/[8]/[9] (= [2]) is true, there's no bar to saying [6] that all being is dispositional being (that there is only dispositional being), although one is almost bound to be misunderstood, because to say this is not at all to deny that there is categorical being (identity is a very egalitarian relation) or indeed [14] that all actual being is categorical being.

The term 'dispositional' (in particular, 'dispositional property') resists the point. It's a term that has led to extraordinary muddle in recent philosophy, although it's perfectly clear in itself. Perhaps the best way to weaken its confusing associations is to rephrase [6] as the claim that all being is 'potential' being in the original sense, i.e. potent being, power-involving being. Power being is categorical being, like all being. Potency entails actuality, reality. And conversely (see p. 000xxx). It's important to see how undramatic (how boring, as it were) the point is. The debate about the distinction between categorical properties and dispositional properties can then end forever in a great festival of reconciliation.

**3** So much for

[2] **R**[C<sub>o</sub> = D<sub>o</sub>].

Now for



[1]  $R[O = P_o]$

—or, in its outwardly milder form, the claim that

[1] there is no real distinction between an object and its properties or propertiedness, although there is no doubt a useful and workable conceptual distinction between them.

—‘I accept [2], the thesis of the identity of the categorical and the dispositional, but [1] is off the map. Start from the simple fact that we find it extremely natural to engage in counterfactual thought. We’re constantly thinking or hoping or fearing that actual objects may be or could be other than they are, or that they might or could have been other than they were. This way of thinking is clearly legitimate—it’s essential to life—and it’s equally clear that it depends essentially on the idea that there is after all a real distinction between an object and its properties. Ordinary thought certainly does incorporate this idea, and—equally certainly—it isn’t wrong in doing so.’

I agree about the legitimacy of counterfactual speculation; I don’t agree that its legitimacy depends on there being a real distinction between an object and its propertiedness, or that ordinary thought is in its counterfactual thinking committed to belief in any such thing in any sense incompatible with [1].

The key to appreciating the truth of [1] is (again) not to say too much. Kant puts the point in an exemplary fashion when he writes

in their relation to substance, accidents (or properties) are not really subordinated to it, but are the mode of existing of the substance itself.<sup>10</sup>

Nothing more needs to be said (compare p. 000 where Kant is joined by Armstrong). Put aside philosophy (including Kant’s metaphysical framework) and consider an object in front of you in the fullness of its reality. There’s no ontological subordination of the object’s properties to the object itself, no existential inequality or priority of any sort, no ontological dependence of either on the other, no independence of either from the other. (The counterfactuals are coming.) There is, in other terms, no ontological subordination of the total *qualitative* being of the object to the object *an sich*, ‘in itself’, no ontological subordination of its nature to its existence.

The naturalness of counterfactual speculation about objects prompts a more specific objection:

—‘To hold that objects are identical with their properties is to hold that

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<sup>10</sup> 1781–87: A414/B441. Note that ‘mode of existing’ cannot just mean ‘the particular way a substance is’, where the substance is thought to be somehow independently existent relative to its mode of existing; for that would be to take accidents or properties to be somehow ‘subordinate’ after all. (I take it that here ‘accident’ means effectively the same as ‘property-instance’.) [xxx repeat]

[15] objects necessarily have all the properties they have

but we naturally say that O, for example, would still have been the object it is, at time *t*, even if its properties had been different, at *t*. We naturally say it would still be the object it is even if (some at least of) its properties were other than they are in fact.’

True. But [1] doesn’t forbid this way of talking about the non-actual, and the fact that there are contexts in which we find it natural to say that

[16] O’s properties might have been different from what they are while it remained the same object

doesn’t provide any support for the mistaken idea that

[17] an object has—must have—some form or mode of being independently of its having the properties it does have.

To think that it does is to build a whole metaphysics of object and property into counterfactual thought, a metaphysics that it doesn’t contain or license as it stands, and that is simply incorrect, on the present view.

Putting this aside, one might say that the word ‘necessarily’ makes [15] ambiguous. In one sense [15] follows directly from [1], because [1] states that an object is identical with its propertiedness and everything is necessarily identical with itself. But [1] is also compatible with a sense in which [15] is false. We can perfectly well say that

[18] O might not have had the properties it does now have

when supposing that determinism is false, say, for this doesn’t put [1] in question. It doesn’t challenge the view that whatever happens, everything in which the being of O consists at any time is identical to everything in which the being of O’s propertiedness consists at that time. It’s possible to read [1] in such a way that it’s challenged by [18], but if one does one simply misses the fundamental metaphysical truth expressed by [1].<sup>11</sup>

Some philosophers like to distinguish ‘compositional’ or ‘constitutive’ identity, on the one hand, from plain identity on the other (this is a well equipped philosophical playground) [xxx], but the truth and problem-dissolving power of [1] remain untouched by this. How can a trivial truth have problem-dissolving power? It can’t solve any ‘objective’ problem, so to speak, but it can solve problems philosophers make for

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<sup>11</sup> We can put aside the point that determinism may be true (current science gives indeterminism no advantage), and the respect in which the ‘four-dimensionalist block universe’ excludes the possibility that an object could have properties other than the ones it does have.

themselves.

‘Look, I’m bald, but my propertiedness is not bald, so I’m not identical to my propertiedness.’<sup>12</sup>

Language, not metaphysics (if you want to invoke Leibniz’s Law in this way you’ll have to square it with Nietzsche, Ramsey and Whitehead]. To understand the present claim, to accept the sense in which it is true that the being of O is identical with the being of the propertiedness of O (that there is such a sense is not in question), is to see that this style of objection has no force. It simply bounces off [1]. It depends on what has been discarded—the standard, language-enshrined object-property distinction that drives the interminable debate. (Discarded, not refuted: it can’t be refuted on its own ground, and if it’s taken off its own ground it can protest that the question has been begged.)

—‘On your view  $O = P_{O1}$  at time  $t_1$  and  $O = P_{O2}$  at a later time  $t_2$ , so  $P_{O1} = P_{O2}$  by the transitivity of identity; but O changes from  $t_1$  to  $t_2$ , so  $P_{O1} \neq P_{O2}$  ....’

This is really more of the same. One response invokes the ‘block-universe’ account of reality and finds a single object and a single propertiedness (no need to speak about ‘temporal parts’]. A second brackets the block universe and invokes the ancient idea that *strict* identity through time rules out any change at all (or at least any change of parts], so that O at  $t_1$  is not *strictly* identical to O at  $t_2$ . On this view, the assumption of the continuing identity of objects under change is a human convenience.

There are contexts in which this last idea is important, and finds support in physics, but I prefer a third response: to grow familiar with the idea behind [1] is to see that one can retain the ordinary, change-permitting conception of diachronic identity without wavering in one’s view that the being of an object is literally identical with the being of its propertiedness, at any given time, and so always. (The two things change together, for they’re one thing.) The objection depends on the discarded framework—on linguistic habits and games of discursive thought that can be put aside in order to register the truth in question.

It can take time to acclimatise. There are philosophically habitual ways of understanding the terms ‘object’ and ‘property’ that can’t survive a proper appreciation of [1]. To object that [1] is just the old ‘bundle theory’, and has the well known defects of that theory, is to show that one hasn’t understood it, or (equivalently] is still stuck in an inadequate understanding of ‘object’ and ‘property’. When one sees the sense in which [1] is plainly true, vast regions of the ancient debate about particulars and universals crumble away.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Thanks to Jonathan Dancy.

<sup>13</sup> I thank Jonathan Dancy, Philip Goff, Trenton Merricks, Charlie Pelling and Wlodek Rabinowicz for their objections.

—'Whatever the metaphysical facts, it's clear that ordinary thought does incorporate a commitment to [17], i.e. to the negation of [1], in accepting [16] or [18].'

If so, so be it. I disagree, but ordinary thought's claim to represent reality correctly is already in the dock in many philosophical courts and already stands condemned on many counts. Some think that conflict with ordinary ways of thinking is always an objection to a philosophical theory, but this is certainly untrue if it's anything more than a recommendation to keep in touch with common-sense conceptions. Philosophy, like science, aims to say how things are in reality, and conflict with ordinary thought and language is no more an objection to a philosophical theory than a scientific one. There are many areas in which we can see clearly that our ordinary concepts and ways of thinking can't be fully adequate to the reality they purport to represent (our ordinary concepts of space, time, and matter). When it comes to [17] in particular, I don't think that ordinary thought makes any error, but ordinary thought's commitment to the general object/process/property/state/event cluster of distinctions may indeed incorporate assumptions about the existence in reality of certain fundamental categorical differences that scientifically informed metaphysics can't underwrite. The object/process/property/state/event cluster, unexceptionable in everyday life, is utterly superficial from the point of view of science and metaphysics.

One of the most insidious problems we face is that assumptions of this kind can be active and indeed useful in many parts of philosophy without causing any particular problems (the same is true of the use of Newtonian mechanics in physics). There are, however, areas in metaphysics where their inadequacy to reality is part of the problem at issue, explicitly or not, and then reliance on them in any robust form can wreak havoc that is greatly aggravated precisely by their usefulness and unproblematic nature in other areas, which understandably misleads us into thinking that they must be quite generally viable. I don't think our ordinary understanding of counterfactuals incorporates the metaphysical error in [17], but there's a related claim that does seem to be true: that when human beings philosophize about the object/property relation, certain features of language naturally lead them to think that [17] is true.

Frank Ramsey famously said that 'the whole theory of universals is due to mistaking ... a characteristic of language ... for a fundamental characteristic of reality' (1925: 60). I don't think this was an exaggeration. He agreed in effect with Nietzsche: 'language is built in terms of the most naive prejudices ... we read disharmonies and problems into things because we *think only* in the form of language—thus believing in the "eternal truth" of "reason" (e.g. subject, predicate, etc.). ... That we have a right to *distinguish* between subject and predicate—... that is our strongest belief; in fact, at bottom, even the belief in cause and effect itself, in *conditio* and *conditionatum*, is merely an individual case of the first and general belief, our primeval belief in subject and predicate .... Might not this belief in the concept of subject and predicate be a great stupidity?' (1885–88: 110, 104–5, also quoted on p. 000).

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