

**Things of the External World
Not Facts of Consciousness.**

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different vibrations of the universe are concentrated, and the universe is accessible to our knowledge only through this vibration," (excepting, of course, that small part of the world with which we come into direct contact.) So vibration is continuous from the object to and into the subject, even to the seat of consciousness, which, perhaps, includes the whole organism of the subject. To use the former illustration, the bell is real—that is, a material substance—the medium is real and the vibrations are movements of a reality; the subject is real, and the sound is a feeling belonging to a real thing.

There may be "no fragrance in a rose," but there is something in a rose unlike anything else in the universe, of which fragrance is the evidence, for it can be seen and felt as well as smelled, and also weighed and measured. And we are not sure that the rose does not sense its own fragrance, or "Attar of Roses." M. Richet says, "The vibrations of natural forces are probably blind," and the trend of opinion among scientists is toward the probability of sensation being a general property of all matter. To support this, comes the recent statement of M. C. E. Guillaume before the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences, that "At bottom, the abyss which seems to separate brute matter from living matter does not exist." Then sensation may be the same at either end of the line.

But waiving this, and admitting that from the point of view of the subject we perceive an image instead of the thing itself, it must follow that the thing must be as real as the image, or effect which it causes in us, and we may predicate a substantial resemblance of the latter to the former. Neither scientists nor philosophers are skeptical on this point, except when philosophizing—that is, speculating, or imagining. And to be consistent, philosophers must claim—as some do—that what is imagined is more real and true than what is known.

In the ultimate analysis of the subject, this is the issue.

Philosophy originated in theistic thinking; and as every Theist or Polytheist has believed that the god or gods in which he believed was the most real thing or things in existence, and as these beings could be imagined, but could not be known, it was necessary that imagination should outrank knowledge in the human mind, and the philosophic scheme has been wrought out with this object in view. When knowledge the most certain is reduced to an inference, then the product of the imagina-

tion is at par; when every perception is a "pure hallucination", then what we imagine may be the reality; when a universal skepticism is induced, then we can imagine without limitation.

It is a curious fact that the philosopher who denies the validity of the perceptions must of necessity use them as a foundation for his fanciful scheme; and hence his conclusions can not be more real—and may be much less real—than the perceptions upon which they are based. For, to imagine, or fancy, we must use thought-conceptions, by combining them in various ways, because we have no other raw material; the conceptions are made of perceptions, and if, as M. Taine tells us, these perceptions are "pure hallucination", the most exalted product of the imagination has no warrant for its validity.

The imagined fact, whether it be a "god" or a "perpetual motion" machine, must be tested by a comparison with what is known; and, as a test must be superior to what is tested, so knowledge takes the highest place in the intellect, and what is known is the only certainty. The imagined MAY be true; but when the test is applied and the possibility becomes a certainty, it is no longer "the imagined", but the known. Illusions there are, and the senses may be deceived, but the person who doubts the reality of the external world, or his own accurate perceptions, is either a lunatic or a philosopher.

Finally, the philosophic "ego" is an intangible nonentity. The veritable Thomas Smith in law, and according to common sense and modern science, is a tangible reality, having a definite size, shape, weight and color, and possessing certain qualities, one of which is consciousness, which belongs to the whole Thomas Smith, extending to the outer surface at every point. Hence, when he falls upon the ground, or walks up against a stone wall, the consciousness of Thomas Smith comes into direct contact with the external world. What would be a more "direct datum of consciousness" than this?

There is no "materialistic philosophy", for "materialism" is science, and nothing more. I can assure the students of the L. U. O that there is nothing in philosophy [metaphysics] that is of real, practical value. It does not promote "clear thinking"; for of all writers, metaphysicians are the most difficult to follow and understand. Its basic assumptions are unproven, and seem likely to remain in that condition. Its advocates do not agree, for there is nothing to compel agreement, and any one with a brilliant imagination can make his own philosophy and be just as sure of its truth as were any of the ancient or modern writers.

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