

'External' (pub. 26.10.15-10:54). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-draft-nichols-review-c-0>.

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**Term:** External

**Quote:** The method prescribed in the maxim [of pragmatism] is to trace out in the imagination the conceivable practical consequences, – that is, the consequences for deliberate, self-controlled conduct, – of the affirmation or denial of the concept; and the assertion of the maxim is that herein lies the *whole* of the purport of the word, the *entire* concept. [—] This maxim once accepted, – intelligently accepted, in the light of the evidence of its truth, – speedily sweeps all metaphysical rubbish out of one's house. Each abstraction is either pronounced to be gibberish or is provided with a plain, practical definition. The general leaning of the results is toward what the idealists call the naïve, toward common sense, toward anthropomorphism. Thus, for example, the *real* becomes that which is such as it is regardless of what you or I or any of our folks may think it to be. The *external* becomes that element which is such as it is regardless of what somebody thinks, feels, or does, whether about that external object or about anything else. Accordingly, the external is necessarily real, while the real may or may not be external; nor is anything absolutely external nor absolutely devoid of externality. Every assertory proposition refers to something external, and even a dream withstands us sufficiently for one description to be true of it and another not. The *existent* is that which reacts against other things. Consequently, the external world, (that is, the world that is comparatively external) does not consist of existent objects merely, nor merely of these and their reactions; but on the contrary, its most important reals have the mode of being of what the nominalist calls “mere” words, that is, general types and would-bes. The nominalist is right in saying that they are substantially of the nature of words; but his “mere” reveals a complete misunderstanding of what our everyday world consists of.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1904 [c.]). *Draft of Nichols Review [C]*. MS [R] 1476.

**References:** CP 8.191

**Date of** 1904 [c.]

**Quote:**

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