

# External

1904 [c.] | Draft of Nichols Review [C] | CP 8.191

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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.

1905 | Materials for Monist Article: The Consequences of Pragmatism. Vols. I and II [R] | MS [R]  
288:117

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An external object is anything that is not affected by any of man’s cognitions (whether about it or about anything else) to whom it is external.

1905 [c.] | Pragmatism, Prag [R] | CP 5.525

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An external object is anything that is not affected by any cognitions, whether about it or not, of the man to whom it is external. Exaggerate this, in the usual philosopher fashion, and you have the conception of what is not affected by any cognitions at all. Take the converse of this definition and you have the notion of what does not affect cognition, and in this indirect manner you get a hypostatically abstract notion of what the *Ding an sich* would be.

1906 [c.] | On Existential Graphs as an Instrument of Logical Research | MS [R] 498

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There must not be any confusion between reality and exteriority[.] [T]hat is real which is as it is no matter what one may think *about it*. The external is that which is as it is whatever one may think about *anything*.

1907 | The Fourth Curiosity | CP 8.327-8

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Any object whose attributes, *i.e.* all that may truly be predicated, or asserted, of it, will, and always would, remain exactly what they are, unchanged, though you or I or any man or men should think or should have thought as variously as you please, I term *external*, in contradistinction to *mental*. [—]

The main difference between the *external*, as I use the term, and the *real*, as I employ *that* term, seems to be that the question whether anything is *external* or not is the question of what a word or other symbol or concept (for thinking proper is always conducted in general signs of some sort) is, I say, a question of what a symbol *signifies*; while the question of whether anything is *real* or is a *figment* is the question what a word or other symbol or concept *denotes*.

1909 | Meaning Preface | MS [R] 637:27-28

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A Real object may be External or Internal, *i.e.* mental, as a dream is. For only that is external whose possession of some character is [not merely] independent of individuals' opinions, but whose possession of any such Real character is independent of any individuals' thought about *any* subject and ideation of every kind.

From variant pages. The inserted words ('not merely') are from a rejected version of the sentence in question.