

have occasioned a variety of prejudices and false conclusions. All that can be reduced by these definitions are termed *simple*, and all that cannot be readily reduced are called *complex*; from hence a triangle, a square, a circle, a cube, &c. are simple subjects, as well as all curves, whose geometrical laws we are acquainted with; but all that we cannot reduce by these abstracted figures and laws are complex. We do not consider that these geometrical figures exist only in our imagination; that they are not to be found in nature, or, at least, if they are discoverable there, it is because she exhibits every possible form, and that it is more difficult and rare to find simple figures of an equilateral pyramid, or an exact cube in nature, than compounded forms of a plant or an animal. In every thing, therefore, we take the abstract for the simple, and the real for the complex. In Nature, on the contrary, the abstract has no existence, every thing is compounded; we shall never, of course, penetrate into the intimate structure of bodies: we cannot, therefore, pronounce on what is complex in a greater or lesser degree, excepting by the greater or lesser each subject has to ourselves and to the rest of the universe;
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