

From this point of view the vexed question of the reality of sensations presents no difficulty. We have no conception or idea of reality before we have that experience—that is, those perceptions from which we, by a process of abstraction, form the idea of reality; and these perceptions are, according to our view, what we term external things and persons, including our own outer existence. There is therefore no meaning in the question whether the content or aggregate of these perceptions is real or not, for they are just what gives us the idea of reality. And this applies to the secondary as well as the primary qualities of Locke.

But it is just as meaningless to ask for something additional, some hidden kernel of reality, which holds these qualities together, and is, as it were, the bearer of them. For the same argument obtains here which we used in dealing with the whole of our inner experience, which is simply the totality of our conscious flow of thought or firmament of inner sight.

To sum up, neither in the shape of external matter, nor of a substantial mind, has the idea of substance any meaning or justification.

And yet the question returns, why are we always searching for these illegitimate objects as something peculiar, why are we unable to get rid of such things as matter and mind, the thing in itself, or the unknowable? To the answer to this question we must now direct our attention.