

Fernando Pessoa

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It is by quantity (ideal) that we perceive a plurality of things. Therefore quantity in se produces that plurality. It is in us and numbers are in that way.

For if we say it is not in us, but that we (deduce) draw it from nature, we fall into error. First it is impossible to see number without the idea (innate, not philosophic) of Quantity; secondly, it is impossible to deduce quantity from numbers, unless it be that it is found in numbers and in that case it is posterior only philosophically, if we can deduce it is there. And if it be there [...] is it not natural that it should be the productor.

When we, looking upon the world, deduce our idea of Energy (Force) do we take that Energy (Force) to be in reality after forces or before them? Is Energy only ideal and forces real things? No. Materialism confounds itself. All philosophy is absolute, or contains an Absolute, be it absolute relativity. And empirism (materialism) making itself absolute at one point, denies idealism not to be so at others [...]. It is inconsequent. To be a force with itself material[ism] has to do away with the idea of matter and with the idea of Force. It must eliminate the infinite altogether.

Ideas then produce the *exterior* universe. Ideas are then forces?

Now, either ideas are things (i.e. existent oughts) or they are not and are only appearances.

There is more than one idea, there are many, therefore, since there is more than one, there is an infinite number. Number then is anterior to idea. That was a profound thought of the Pythagoreans to place number as the basis of all things.

s. d.

Textos Filosóficos . Vol. II. Fernando Pessoa. (Estabelecidos e prefaciados por António de Pina Coelho.) Lisboa: Ática, 1968: 49.