

THE
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CONSCIOUSNESS AND OBJECT.

FROM Professor Thilly's article in a former number of this REVIEW¹ I take the following extract: "Starting out with a naturalistic metaphysics, these philosophers naturally end with a naturalistic metaphysics: consciousness is an epiphenomenon, inhering in the objects. The object figuring in a conscious perceptual situation differs from the object out of it in the possession of consciousness. The nervous system, in Woodbridge's view, connects the sensations in a relation of implication; consciousness as a relation of implication appears as a kind of unnecessary adjunct; why it appears no one knows; the connections are not conditioned by its existence; its existence is conditioned by them. Consciousness looks on; there is nothing else left for it to do" (p. 429). There are two propositions in this extract on which I wish to comment in the hope of making clear the sense in which they appear to me to be sound. They are (1) "The object figuring in a conscious perceptual situation differs from the object out of it in the possession of consciousness;" and (2) "Consciousness looks on; there is nothing else left for it to do."

I.

The first proposition appears to me to be self-evident if it means anything. I suppose that the only assignable difference between an object and consciousness of it is consciousness. The proposition means nothing, if there is no difference to assign. But if the proposition is intelligible, if we do distinguish between an object and consciousness of it, it would seem that this distinction is what it purports to be. If so, it does not appear to

¹ Vol. XXI, page 415. "The Relation of Consciousness and Object in Sense-Perception."