Term: Action
Quote: One of the most useful and at the same time one of the most arduous of the labors of cenoscopy consists in starting with a familiar but vague concept and searching out and defining the nearest definite concept of sufficient breadth for the purposes of metaphysics. Treating in this way the concept of \textit{action}, and at the same time generalizing it so as not to confine it to temporal conditions, we get a concept which may very well be named action in the philosophical sense. It will be defined as a surd dyadic relation by which one correlate, the \textit{patient}, receives a special determination, while the other correlate, the \textit{agent}, receives \textit{thereby}, or perhaps we should say \textit{therein}, no special determination. The determination is \textit{special} in the sense that in default of the relation the patient would not have been so determined. Thus, the completing of \textit{B} by \textit{A} is an action in the philosophical sense, in which \textit{A} [is] the agent and \textit{B} the patient. Duality consists in such action of \textit{A} upon \textit{B} together with a reciprocal action of the same completing nature of \textit{B} upon \textit{A}.

The double relation of equiparance which constitutes duality is surd. It may be described in words, but those words can only be understood by means of reference to certain experiences; just as a person may be told that a piece of textile fabric is a yard wide, yet can never know what is meant except through an experience immediate or mediate of a certain bar laid up in the Westminster palace. The experiences [that] acquaint us with action are of two varieties, experiences of active effort and experiences of passive surprise.

References: EP 2:383
Date of Quote: 1906
URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-basis-pragmaticism-33