

Excerpts from *Appearance and Reality**

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Chapter II: Substantive and Adjective

WE have seen that the distinction of primary from secondary qualities has not taken us far. Let us, without regard to it, and once more directly turning to what meets us, examine another way of making that intelligible. We find the world's contents grouped into things and their qualities. The substantive and adjective is a time-honoured distinction and arrangement of facts, with a view to understand them and to arrive at reality. I must briefly point out the failure of this method, if regarded as a serious attempt at theory.

We may take the familiar instance of a lump of sugar. This is a thing, and it has properties, adjectives which qualify it. It is, for example, white, and hard, and sweet. The sugar, we say, is all that; but what the *is* can really mean seems doubtful. A thing is not any one of its qualities, if you take that quality by itself; if 'sweet' were the same as 'simply sweet', the thing would clearly be not sweet. And, again, in so far as sugar is sweet it is not white or hard; for these properties are all distinct. Nor, again, can the thing be all its properties, if you take them each severally. Sugar is obviously not mere whiteness, mere hardness, and mere sweetness; for its reality lies somehow in its unity. But if, on the other hand, we inquire what there can be in the thing beside its several qualities, we are baffled once more. We can discover no real unity existing outside these qualities, or, again, existing within them.

[p. 20] But it is our emphasis, perhaps, on the aspect of unity which has caused this confusion. Sugar is, of course, not the mere plurality of its different adjectives; but why should it be more than its properties in relation? When 'white', 'hard', 'sweet', and the rest co-exist in a certain way, that is surely the secret of the thing. The qualities are, and are in relation. But here, as before, when we leave phrases we wander among puzzles. 'Sweet', 'white', and 'hard' seem now the subjects about which we are saying something. We certainly do not predicate one of the other; for, if we attempt to identify them, they at once resist. They are in this wholly incompatible, and, so far, quite contrary. Apparently, then, a relation is to be asserted of each. One quality, *A*, is in

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relation with another quality, *B*. But what are we to understand here by *is*? We do not mean that ‘in relation with *B*’ *is* *A*, and yet we assert that *A is* ‘in relation with *B*’. In the same way *C* is called ‘before *D*’, and *E* is spoken of *being* ‘to the right of *F*’. We say all this, but from the interpretation, then ‘before *D*’ *is* *C*, and ‘to the right of *F*’ *is* *E*, we recoil in horror. No, we should reply, the relation is not identical with the thing. It is only a sort of attribute which inheres or belongs. The word to use, when we are pressed, should not be *is*, but only *has*. But this reply comes to very little. The whole question is evidently as to the meaning of *has*; and, apart from metaphors not taken seriously, there appears really to be no answer. And we seem unable to clear ourselves from the old dilemma, If you predicate what is different, you ascribe to the subject what it is *not*; and if you predicate what is *not* different, you say nothing at all.

Driven forward, we must attempt to modify our statement. We must assert the relation now, not of one term, but of both. *A* and *B* are identical in such a point, and in such another point they differ; or, again, they are so situated in space or in time. And [p. 21] thus we avoid *is*, and keep to *are*. But, seriously, that does not look like the explanation of a difficulty; it looks more like trifling with phrases. For, if you mean that *A* and *B*, taken each severally, even ‘have’ this relation, you are asserting what is false. But if you mean that *A* and *B* in such a relation are so related, you appear to mean nothing. For here, as before, if the predicate makes no difference, it is idle; but, if it makes the subject other than it is, it is false.

But let us attempt another exit from this bewildering circle. Let us abstain from making the relation an attribute of the related, and let us make it more or less independent. ‘There is a relation *C*, in which *A* and *B* stand; and it appears with both of them’. But here again we have made no progress. The relation *C* has been admitted different from *A* and *B*, and no longer is predicated of them. Something, however, seems to be said of this relation *C*, and said, again, of *A* and *B*. And this something is not to be the ascription of one to the other. If so, it would appear to be another relation, *D*, in which *C*, on one side, and, on the other side, *A* and *B*, stand. But such a makeshift leads at once to the infinite process. The new relation *D* can be predicated in no way of *C*, or of *A* and *B*; and hence we must have recourse to a fresh relation, *E*, which comes between *D* and whatever we had before. But this must lead to another, *F*; and so on, indefinitely. Thus the problem is not solved by taking relations as independently real. For, if so, the qualities and their relation fall entirely apart, and then we have said nothing. Or we have to make a new relation between the old relation and the terms; which, when it is made, does not help us. It either itself demands a new relation, and so on without end, or it leaves us where we were, entangled in difficulties.

The attempt to resolve the thing into properties, each a real thing, taken somehow together with [p. 22] independent relations, has proved an obvious failure. And we are forced to see, when we reflect, that a relation standing alongside of its terms is a delusion. If it is to be real, it must be so somehow at the expense of the terms, or, at least, must be something which appears in

them or to which they belong. A relation between A and B implies really a substantial foundation within them. This foundation, if we say that A is like to B , is the identity X which holds these differences together. And so with space and time—everywhere there must be a whole embracing what is related, or there would be no differences and no relation. It seems as if a reality possessed differences, A and B , incompatible with one another and also with itself. And so in order, without contradiction, to retain its various properties, this whole consents to wear the form of relations between them. And this is why qualities are found to be some incompatible and some compatible. They are all different, and, on the other hand, because belonging to one whole, are all forced to come together. And it is only where they come together distantly by the help of a relation, that they cease to conflict. On the other hand, where a thing fails to set up a relation between its properties, they are contrary at once. Thus colours and smells live together at peace in the reality; for the thing divides itself, and so leaves them merely side by side within itself. But colour collides with colour, because their special identity drives them together. And here again, if the identity becomes relational by help of space, they are outside one another, and are peaceful once more. The ‘contrary’, in short, consists of differences possessed by that which cannot find the relation which serves to couple them apart. It is marriage attempted without a *modus vivendi*. But where the whole, relaxing its unity, takes the form of an arrangement, there is co-existence with concord.

I have set out the above mainly because of the [p. 23] light which it throws upon the nature of the ‘contrary’. It affords no solution of our problem of inference. It tells us how we are forced to arrange things in a certain manner, but it does not justify that arrangement. The thing avoids contradiction by its disappearance into relations, and by its admission of the adjectives to a standing of their own. But it avoids contradiction by a kind of suicide. It can give no rational account of the relations and the terms which it adopts, and it cannot recover the real unity, without which it is nothing. The whole device is a clear makeshift. It consists in saying to the outside world, ‘I am the owner of these my adjectives’, and to the properties, ‘I am but a relation, which leaves you your liberty’. And to itself and for itself it is the futile pretence to have both characters at once. Such an arrangement may work, but the theoretical problem is not solved.

The immediate unity, in which facts come to us, has been broken up by experience, and later by reflection. The thing with its adjectives is a device for enjoying at once both variety and concord. But the distinctions, once made, fall apart from the thing, and away from one another. And our attempt to understand their relations brought us round merely to a unity, which confesses itself a pretence, or else falls back upon the old undivided substance, which admits of no relations. We shall see the hopelessness of its dilemma more clearly when we have examined how relation stands to quality. But this demands another chapter.

I will, in conclusion, dispose very briefly of a possible suggestion. The distinctions taken in the thing are to be held only, it may be urged, as the ways

in which we regard it. The thing itself maintains its unity, and the aspects of adjective and substantive are only *our* points of view. Hence they do no injury to the real. But this defence is futile, since the question is how without [p. 24] error we may think of reality. If then your collection of points of view is a defensible way of so thinking, by all means apply it to the thing, and make an end of our puzzle. Otherwise the thing, without the points of view, appears to have no character at all, and they, without the thing, to possess no reality—even if they could be made compatible among themselves, the one with the other. In short, this distinction, drawn between the fact and our manner of regarding it, only serves to double the original confusion. There will now be an inconsistency in my mind as well as in the thing; and, far from helping, the one will but aggravate the other.

Chapter III: Relation and Quality

[Note added in the second edition: In this chapter I have allowed myself to speak of “relations” where relations do not actually exist. This and some other points are explained in Note B.]

IT must have become evident that the problem, discussed in the last chapter, really turns on the respective natures of quality and relation. And the reader may have anticipated the conclusion we are now to reach. The arrangement of given facts into relations and qualities may be necessary in practice, but it is theoretically unintelligible. The reality, so characterized, is not true reality, but is appearance. And it can hardly be maintained that this character calls for no understanding—that it is an unique way of being which the reality possesses, and which we have got merely to receive. For it most evidently has ceased to be something quite immediate. It contains aspects now distinguished and taken as differences, and which tend, so far as we see, to a further separation. And, if the reality really has a way of uniting these in harmony, that way assuredly is not manifest at first sight. On our own side those distinctions which even consciously we make may possibly in some way give the truth about reality. But, so long as we fail to justify them and to make them intelligible to ourselves, we are bound, so far, to set them down as mere appearance.

The object of this chapter is to show that the very essence of these ideas is infected and contradicts itself. Our conclusion briefly will be this. Relation presupposes quality, and quality relation. Each can be something neither together [p. 26] with, nor apart from, the other; and the vicious circle in which they turn is not the truth about reality.

1. Qualities are nothing without relations. In trying to exhibit the truth of this statement, I will lay no weight on a considerable mass of evidence. This, furnished by psychology, would attempt to show how qualities are variable by changes of relation. The differences we perceive in many cases seem to have been so created. But I will not appeal to such an argument, since I do not see that it could prove wholly the non-existence of original and independent qualities.

And the line of proof through the necessity of contrast for perception has, in my opinion, been carried beyond logical limits. Hence, though these considerations have without doubt an important bearing on our problem, I prefer here to disregard them. And I do not think that they are necessary.

We may proceed better to our conclusion in the following way. You can never, we may argue, find qualities without relations. Whenever you take them so, they are made so, and continue so, by an operation which itself implies relation. Their plurality gets for us all its meaning through relations; and to suppose it otherwise in reality is wholly indefensible. I will draw this out in greater detail.

To find qualities without relations is surely impossible. In the field of consciousness, even when we abstract from the relations of identity and difference, they are never independent. One is together with, and related to, one other, at the least,—in fact, always to more than one. Nor will an appeal to a lower and undistinguished state of mind, where in one feeling are many aspects, assist us in any way. I admit the existence of such states without any relation, but I wholly deny there the presence of qualities. For if these felt aspects, [p. 27] while merely felt, are to be called qualities proper, they are so only for the observation of an outside observer. And then for him they are given as aspects—that is, together with relations. In short, if you go back to mere unbroken feeling, you have no relations and no qualities. But if you come to what is distinct, you get relations at once.

I presume we shall be answered in this way. Even though, we shall be told, qualities proper can not be discovered apart from relations, that is no real disproof of their separate existence. For we are well able to distinguish them and to consider them by themselves. And for this perception certainly an operation of our minds is required. So far, therefore, as you say, what is different must be distinct, and, in consequence, related. But this relation does not really belong to the reality. The relation has existence only for us, and as a way of our getting to know. But the distinction, for all that, is based upon differences in the actual; and these remain when our relations have fallen away or have been removed.

But such an answer depends on the separation of product from process, and this separation seems indefensible. The qualities, as distinct, are always made so by an action which is admitted to imply relation. They are made so, and, what is more, they are emphatically kept so. And you cannot ever get your product standing apart from its process. Will you say, the process is not essential? But that is a conclusion to be proved, and it is monstrous to assume it. Will you try to prove it by analogy? It is possible for many purposes to accept and employ the existence of processes and relations which do not affect specially the inner nature of objects. But the very possibility of so distinguishing in the end between inner and outer, and of setting up the inner as absolutely independent of all relation, is here in question. Mental [p. 28] operations such as comparison, which presuppose in the compared qualities already existing, could in no case prove that these qualities depend on no relations at all. But I cannot believe that this is a matter to be decided by analogy, for the whole case is briefly this. There is an operation which, removing one part of what is given, presents the

other part in abstraction. This result is never to be found anywhere apart from a persisting abstraction. And, if we have no further information, I can find no excuse for setting up the result as being fact without the process. The burden lies wholly on the assertor, and he fails entirely to support it. The argument that in perception one quality must be given first and before others, and therefore cannot be relative, is hardly worth mentioning. What is more natural than for qualities always to have come to us in some conjunction, and never alone?

We may go further. Not only is the ignoring of the process a thing quite indefensible—even if it blundered into truth—but there is evidence that it gives falsehood. For the result bears internally the character of the process. The manyness of the qualities cannot, in short, be reconciled with their simplicity. Their plurality depends on relation, and, without that relation, they are not distinct. But, if not distinct, then not different, and therefore not qualities.

I am not urging that quality without difference is in every sense impossible. For all I know, creatures may exist whose life consists, for themselves, in one unbroken simple feeling; and the arguments urged against such a possibility in my judgment come short. And, if you want to call this feeling a quality, by all means gratify your desire. But then remember that the whole point is quite irrelevant. For no one is contending whether the universe is or is not a quality in this sense; but the question is entirely as to qualities. And a universe [p. 29] confined to one feeling would not only not be qualities, but it would fail even to be one quality, as different from others and as distinct from relations. Our question is really whether relation is essential to differences.

We have seen that in fact the two are never found apart. We have seen that the separation by abstraction is no proof of real separateness. And now we have to urge, in short, that any separateness implies separation, and so relation, and is therefore, when made absolute, a self-discrepancy. For consider, the qualities *A* and *B* are to be different from each other; and, if so, that difference must fall somewhere. If it falls, in any degree or to any extent, outside *A* or *B*, we have relation at once. But, on the other hand, how can difference and otherness fall inside? If we have in *A* any such otherness, then inside *A* we must distinguish its own quality and its otherness. And, if so, then the unsolved problem breaks out inside each quality, and separates each into two qualities in relation. In brief, diversity without relation seems a word without meaning. And it is no answer to urge that plurality proper is not in question here. I am convinced of the opposite, but by all means, if you will, let us confine ourselves to distinctness and difference. I rest my argument upon this, that if there are no differences, there are no qualities, since all must fall into one. But, if there is any difference, then that implies a relation. Without a relation it has no meaning; it is a mere word, and not a thought; and no one would take it for a thought if he did not, in spite of his protests, import relation into it. And this is the point on which all seems to turn, Is it possible to think of qualities without thinking of distinct characters? Is it possible to think of these without some relation between them, either explicit, or else unconsciously supplied by the mind that tries only to apprehend? Have qualities without [p. 30] relation any meaning for thought? For myself, I am sure that they have none.

And I find a confirmation in the issue of the most thorough attempt to build a system on this ground. There it is not too much to say that all the content of the universe becomes something very like an impossible illusion. The Reals are secluded and simple, simple beyond belief if they never suspect that they are not so. But our fruitful life, on the other hand, seems due to their persistence in imaginary recovery from unimaginable perversion. And they remain guiltless of all real share in these ambiguous connections, which seem to make the world. They are above it, and fixed like stars in the firmament—if there only were a firmament.

2. We have found that qualities, taken without relations, have no intelligible meaning. Unfortunately, taken together with them, they are equally unintelligible. They cannot, in the first place, be wholly resolved into the relations. You may urge, indeed, that without distinction no difference is left; but, for all that, the differences will not disappear into the distinction. They must come to it, more or less, and they cannot wholly be made by it. I still insist that for thought what is not relative is nothing. But I urge, on the other hand, that nothings cannot be related, and that to turn qualities in relation into mere relations is impossible. Since the fact seems constituted by both, you may urge, if you please, that either one of them constitutes it. But if you mean that the other is not wanted, and that relations can somehow make the terms upon which they seem to stand, then, for my mind, your meaning is quite unintelligible. So far as I can see, relations must depend upon terms, just as much as terms upon relations. And the partial failure, now manifest, of the Dialectic Method seems connected with some misapprehension on this point.

[p. 31] Hence the qualities must be, and must also be related. But there is hence a diversity which falls inside each quality. It has a double character, as both supporting and as being made by the relation. It may be taken as at once condition and result, and the question is as to how it can combine this variety. For it must combine the diversity, and yet it fails to do so. A is both made, and is not made, what it is by relation; and these different aspects are not each the other, nor again is either A . If we call its diverse aspects a and α , then A is partly each of these. As a it is the difference on which distinction is based, while as α it is the distinctness that results from connection. A is really both somehow together as A ($a-\alpha$). But (as we saw in Chapter ii.) *without* the use of a relation it is impossible to predicate this variety of A . And, on the other hand, with an internal relation A 's unity disappears, and its contents are dissipated in an endless process of distinction. A at first becomes a in relation with α , but these terms themselves fall hopelessly asunder. We have got, against our will, not a mere aspect, but a new quality a , which itself stands in a relation; and hence (as we saw before with A) its content must be manifold. As going into the relation it itself is a^2 , and as resulting from the relation it itself is α^2 . And it combines, and yet cannot combine, these adjectives. We, in brief, are led by a principle of fission which conducts us to no end. Every quality in relation has, in consequence, a diversity within its own nature, and this diversity cannot immediately be asserted of the quality. Hence the quality must exchange its unity for an internal relation. But, thus set free, the diverse aspects, because

each something in relation, must each be something also beyond. This diversity is fatal to the internal unity of each; and it demands a new relation, and so on without limit. In short, qualities in a relation have turned out as unintelligible as were qualities [p. 32] without one. The problem from both sides has baffled us.

3. We may briefly reach the same dilemma from the side of relations. They are nothing intelligible, either with or without their qualities. In the first place, a relation without terms seems mere verbiage; and terms appear, therefore, to be something beyond their relation. At least, for myself, a relation which somehow precipitates terms which were not there before, or a relation which can get on somehow without terms, and with no differences beyond the mere ends of a line of connection, is really a phrase without meaning. It is, to my mind, a false abstraction, and a thing which loudly contradicts itself; and I fear that I am obliged to leave the matter so. As I am left without information, and can discover with my own ears no trace of harmony, I am forced to conclude to a partial deafness in others. And hence a relation, we must say, without qualities is nothing.

But how the relation can stand to the qualities is, on the other side, unintelligible. If it is nothing to the qualities, then they are not related at all; and, if so, as we saw, they have ceased to be qualities, and their relation is a nonentity. But if it is to be something to them, then clearly we now shall require a *new* connecting relation. For the relation hardly can be the mere adjective of one or both of its terms; or, at least, as such it seems indefensible. [Note: The relation is not the adjective of one term, for, if so, it does not relate. Nor for the same reason is it the adjective of each term taken apart, for then again there is no relation between them. Nor is the relation their common property, for then what keeps them apart? They are now not two terms at all, because not separate. And within this new whole, in any case, the problem of inherence would break out in an aggravated form. But it seems unnecessary to work this all out in detail.] And, being something itself, if it does not itself bear a relation to the terms, in what intelligible way will it succeed in being anything to them? But here [p. 33] again we are hurried off into the eddy of a hopeless process, since we are forced to go on finding new relations without end. The links are united by a link, and this bond of union is a link which also has two ends; and these require each a fresh link to connect them with the old. The problem is to find how the relation can stand to its qualities; and this problem is insoluble. If you take the connection as a solid thing, you have got to show, and you cannot show, how the other solids are joined to it. And, if you take it as a kind of medium or unsubstantial atmosphere, it is a connection no longer. You find, in this case, that the whole question of the relation of the qualities (for they certainly in some way are related) arises now outside it, in precisely the same form as before. The original relation, in short, has become a nonentity, but, in becoming this, it has removed no element of the problem.

I will bring this chapter to an end. It would be easy, and yet profitless, to spin out its argument with ramifications and refinements. And for me to attempt to anticipate the reader's objections would probably be useless. I have

stated the case, and I must leave it. The conclusion to which I am brought is that a relational way of thought—any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations—must give appearance, and not truth. It is a makeshift, a device, a mere practical compromise, most necessary, but in the end most indefensible. We have to take reality as many, and to take it as one, and to avoid contradiction. We want to divide it, or to take it, when we please, as indivisible; to go as far as we desire in either of these directions, and to stop when that suits us. And we succeed, but succeed merely by shutting the eye, which if left open would condemn us; or by a perpetual oscillation and a shifting of the ground, so as to turn our back upon the aspect we desire to ignore. But [p. 34] when these inconsistencies are forced together, as in metaphysics they must be, the result is an open and staring discrepancy. And we cannot attribute this to reality; while, if we try to take it on ourselves, we have changed one evil for two. Our intellect, then, has been condemned to confusion and bankruptcy, and the reality has been left outside uncomprehended. Or rather, what is worse, it has been stripped bare of all distinction and quality. It is left naked and without a character, and we are covered with confusion.

The reader who has followed and has grasped the principle of this chapter, will have little need to spend his time upon those which succeed it. He will have seen that our experience, where relational, is not true; and he will have condemned, almost without a hearing, the great mass of phenomena. I feel, however, called on next to deal very briefly with Space and Time.

Note B: Relation and Quality

THERE are some aspects of the general problem of Relation and Quality on which I will offer some words of explanation. The subject is large and difficult, and deserves a far more thorough treatment than I am able at present to bestow on it. There is the question (i) whether qualities can exist independent of some whole, (ii) whether they can exist independent of relations, (iii) whether, where there are fresh relations, new qualities are made and old ones altered, or whether again one can have a merely external relation, and, lastly (iv), whether and in what sense, wherever there is an identity, we have a right to speak of a relation.

(i and ii) Within any felt whole—and that term includes here anything which contains an undistinguished diversity, any totality of aspects which is not broken up—the diversities qualify that whole, and are felt as making it what it is. Are these diversities to be called qualities (p. 27)? It is really perhaps a verbal question. Anything that is somewhat at all may be said to be or to have a quality. But on the other hand we may prefer to use quality specially of those diversities which are developed when wholes are analyzed into terms and relations. And, when we ask if there can be qualities without relations, this distinction becomes important. The question must be answered affirmatively if we call by the name of quality the diverse aspects of feeling. But on the other hand such diverse aspects cannot exist independently. They are not given except as contained in and as qualifying some whole, and their independence consists

merely in our vicious abstraction. Nor when we pass to the relational stage does diversity cease to be the inseparable adjective of unity. For the relations themselves cannot exist except within and as the adjectives of an underlying unity. The whole that is analyzed into relations and terms can fall into the background and be obscured, but it can never be dissipated. And, if it were dissipated, then with it both terms and relations would perish. For there is no absolute 'between' or 'together', nor can 'between' and 'together' be the mere adjectives of self-existent units. Qualities in the end can have no meaning except as contained in and as dependent on some whole, and whether that whole is relational or otherwise makes no difference in this respect.

And it is not hard, perhaps, at this point to dispose of a fallacy which seems somewhat common. You may take, it is said, some terms, *A*, *B*, and *C*, and may place them in various relations, *X*, *Y*, and *Z*, and through all they remain still *A*, *B*, and *C*. And this, it is urged, proves that *A*, *B*, and *C* exist, or may exist, free from all relations or at least independently. My character, for example, may be compared with that of another man, or, having first lived to the north of him, I may then change to the south; and to neither of us need it make a difference, and therefore we both are unaffected and so independent. But an answer to this fallacy seems even obvious. What is proved is that a certain character may, in such and in respect of that character, exist indifferently in various relations. But what is not proved at all is that this character could exist independent and naked. And since the argument starts by presupposing without any enquiry the independent existence of the character and indeed rests throughout on that presupposed existence, it could in no case arrive, it seems to me, at the desired conclusion. The most that it could show would be that *some* relations are external and may make no difference to their terms. But to argue from this that *all* the relations are or even may be external, and that some qualities either do or may exist independently, seems quite illogical. Such an argument obviously could at once be met by a distinction drawn between different kinds of relations.

(iii) For myself I neither make nor accept such a distinction except as relative and subordinate. I do not admit that any relation whatever can be merely external and make no difference to its terms, and I will now proceed to discuss this important point. I will begin by first dismissing a difficult question. Qualities exist, we have seen, improperly as diverse aspects of felt wholes, and then again properly as terms which are distinguished and related. But how far are we to say that such characters as those e.g. of different colours are *made* by distinction, and were not of the same quality at all when mere aspects of the un-analyzed? To this question I will not attempt a reply, because I am sure that I should not do it justice. I have great sympathy with the view that such characters are so developed as to be in a sense constituted by distinction, but I cannot defend this view or identify myself with it. And for myself, and for argument's sake at least, I shall admit that a quality in feeling may already have the character, *A* or *B*, which we find when afterwards quality proper is made by distinction. In no case (to repeat) will there be a quality existing independently, but while you keep to aspects of a felt whole it will not be true that every quality depends

on relation. And on the other hand between such aspects and qualities proper there may be an identity in some character *A* or *B*.

From this we are led to the question, Are qualities and in general are terms altered necessarily by the relations into which they enter? In other words are there any relations which are merely extrinsic? And by this I do not mean to ask if there can be relations outside of and independent of some whole, for that question I regard as answered in the negative. I am asking whether, within the whole and subject to that, terms can enter into further relations and not be affected by them. And this question again is not, Can *A*, *B*, and *C* become the terms of fresh relations, and still remain *A*, *B*, and *C*? For clearly a thing may be altered partly and yet retain a certain character, and one and the same character may persist unaltered though the terms that possess it are in some other ways changed. And this is a point on which in the present connection I shall have later to insist. Further our question does not ask if terms are in any sense whatever qualified by their relations. For every one, I presume, admits this in some sense, however hard that sense may be to fix. The question I am putting is whether relations can qualify terms, *A*, *B*, and *C*, from the outside merely and without in any way affecting and altering them internally. And this question I am compelled to answer negatively.

At first sight obviously such external relations seem possible and even existing. They seem given to us, we saw, in change of spatial position and again also in comparison. That you do not alter what you compare or re-arrange in space seems to Common Sense quite obvious, and that on the other side there are as obvious difficulties does not occur to Common Sense at all. And I will begin by pointing out these difficulties that stand in the way of our taking any relations as quite external. In a mental act, such for instance as comparison, there is a relation in the result, and this relation, we hear, is to make no difference to the terms. But, if so, to what does it make a difference, and what is the meaning and sense of qualifying the terms by it? If in short it is external to the terms, how can it possibly be true of them? To put the same thing otherwise, if we merely *make* the conclusion, is that conclusion a true one? But if the terms from their inner nature do not enter into the relation, then, so far as they are concerned, they seem related for no reason at all, and, so far as they are concerned, the relation seems arbitrarily made. But otherwise the terms themselves seem affected by a merely external relation. To find the truth of things by making relations about them seems indeed a very strange process, and confronted with this problem Common Sense, I presume, would take refuge in confused metaphors.

And alterations of position in space once more give rise to difficulty. Things are spatially related, first in one way, and then become related in another way, and yet in no way themselves are altered; for the relations, it is said, are but external. But I reply that, if so, I cannot understand the leaving by the terms of one set of relations and their adoption of another fresh set. The process and its result to the terms, if they contribute nothing to it, seems really irrational throughout. But, if they contribute anything, they must surely be affected internally. And by the introduction of an outer compelling agency the difficulty

is not lessened. The connection of the terms with this agency, and the difference it seems to make to them, where by the hypothesis no difference can be made, seem a hopeless puzzle. In short all we reach by it is the admission that the terms and their relation do not by themselves include all the facts, and beyond that admission it is useless. And this leads to a further doubt about the sufficiency of external relations. Every sort of whole, and certainly every arrangement in space, has a qualitative aspect. In various respects the whole has a character—even its figure may here be included—which cannot be shown to consist barely in mere terms and mere relations between them. You may say that this character belongs to them, but it still is more than what they are by themselves. And if things in space by a new arrangement produce a fresh aspect of quality, of what, I would ask, are you going to predicate this quality? If the terms contribute anything whatever, then the terms are affected by their arrangement. And to predicate the new result barely of the external relations seems, to me at least, impossible. This question—as to how far by external relations fresh quality can be produced—is one which would carry us very far. I notice it here as a further difficulty which besets the thesis of mere extrinsic relation. And if in conclusion I am told that, of course, there are upon any view difficulties, I am ready to assent. But the question is whether this doctrine, offered as obvious, does not turn mere difficulties into sheer self-contradictions, and whether once more except as a relative point of view it is not as uncalled for as it is in principle false.

But the facts, it will be said, of spatial arrangement and of comparison, to mention only these, force you, whether you like it or not, to accept the view that at least some relations are outward only. Now that for working purposes we treat, and do well to treat, some relations as external merely I do not deny, and that, of course, is not the question at issue here. That question is in short whether this distinction of internal and external is absolute or is but relative, and whether in the end and in principle a mere external relation is possible and forced on us by the facts. And except as a subordinate view I submit that the latter thesis is untenable. But the discussion of this matter involves unfortunately a wide and difficult range of questions, and my treatment of it must be brief and, I fear, otherwise imperfect.

If we begin by considering the form of spatial arrangement, we seem to find at first complete real externality. All the points there are terms which may be taken indifferently in every kind of arrangement, and the relations seem indifferent and merely outward. But this statement, as soon as we reflect, must partly be modified. The terms cannot be taken truly as being that which actually they are not. And the conclusion will follow that the terms actually and in fact are related amongst themselves in every possible manner. Every space, if so, would be a whole in which the parts throughout are interrelated already in every possible position, and reciprocally so determine one another. And this, if puzzling, seems at least to follow inevitably from the premises. And from this the conclusion cannot be drawn that the terms are inwardly indifferent to their relations; for the whole internal character of the terms, it seems, goes out, on the contrary, and consists in these. And how can a being, if absolutely relative,

be related *merely* externally? And if you object that the question is not about mere space, but rather about things in space, this is in fact the point to which I am desiring to direct your attention. Space by itself and its barely spatial relations and terms are all alike mere abstractions, useful no doubt but, if taken as independently real, inconsistent and false. And in a less degree the same holds, I would now urge, also of bodies in space and of their relations therein.

We have seen that a mere space of mere external relations is an inconsistent abstraction, and that, for space to exist at all, there must be an arrangement which is more than spatial. Without qualitative differences (pp. 17, 38) there are no distinctions in space at all, there is neither position nor change of position, neither shape nor bodies nor motion. And just as in this sense there are no mere spatial relations without concrete terms, so in another sense also there is nothing barely spatial. The terms and the relations between them are themselves mere abstractions from a more concrete qualitative unity. Neither the things in space nor their space, nor both together, can be taken as substantial. They are abstractions depending on a more concrete whole which they fail to express. And their apparent externality is itself a sign that we have in them appearance and not ultimate reality.

As to that apparent externality there can be no doubt. Why this thing is here and not there, what the connection is in the end between spatial position and the quality that holds it and is determined by it, remains unknown. In mechanical explanation generally the connection of the elements with the laws—even if the laws themselves were rational—remains unknown and external, and the reason why the results follow from the premises is admitted at a certain point to be left outside. Where this point is to be placed, whether at the beginning or merely when we arrive at secondary qualities, it is not necessary here to settle. But any such irrationality and externality cannot be the last truth about things. Somewhere there must be a reason why this and that appear together. And this reason and reality must reside in the whole from which terms and relations are abstractions, a whole in which their internal connection must lie, and out of which from the background appear those fresh results which never could have come from the premises. The merely external is, in short, our ignorance set up as reality, and to find it anywhere, except as an inconsistent aspect of fact, we have seen is impossible.

But it will be objected on the part of Common Sense that we must keep to the facts. The billiard-balls on a table may be in any position you please, and you and I and another may be changed respectively in place, and yet none of these things by these changes is altered in itself. And the apparent fact that by external change in space and time a thing may be affected, is, I presume, rejected on the ground this does not happen when you come down to the last elements of things. But an important if obvious distinction seems here overlooked. For a thing may remain unaltered if you identify it with a certain character, while taken otherwise the thing is suffering change. If, that is, you take a billiard-ball and a man in abstraction from place, they will of course—so far as this is maintained—be indifferent to changes of place. But on the other hand neither of them, if regarded so, is a thing which actually exists; each is a

more or less valid abstraction. But take them as existing things and take them without mutilation, and you must regard them as determined by their places and qualified by the whole material system into which they enter. And, if you demur to this, I ask you once more of what you are going to predicate the alterations and their results. The billiard-ball, to repeat, if taken apart from its place and its position in the whole, is not an existence but a character, and that character can remain unchanged, though the existing thing is altered with its changed existence. Everything other than this identical character may be called relatively external. It may, or it may not, be in comparison unimportant, but absolutely external it cannot be. And if you urge that in any case the relation of the thing's character to its spatial existence is unintelligible, and that *how* the nature of the thing which falls outside our abstraction contributes to the whole system, and how that nature is different as it contributes differently, is in the end unknown—I shall not gainsay you. But I prefer to be left with ignorance and with inconsistencies and with insoluble difficulties, difficulties essential to a lower and fragmentary point of view and soluble only by the transcendence of that appearance in a fuller whole, a transcendence which in detail seems for us impossible—I prefer, I say, to be left thus rather than to embrace a worse alternative. I cannot on any terms accept as absolute fact a mere abstraction and a fixed standing inconsistency. And the case surely is made worse when one is forced to admit that, starting from this principle, one sooner or later cannot in the very least explain those results which follow in fact.

I will next consider the argument for merely external relations which has been based on Comparison. Things may be the same, it is said, but not related until you compare them, and their relations then fall quite outside and do not qualify them. Two men with red hair for example, it may be urged, are either not related at all by their sameness, or when related by it are not altered, and the relation therefore is quite external. Now if I suggest that possibly all the red-haired men in a place might be ordered to be collected and destroyed, I shall be answered, I presume, that their red hair does not affect them *directly*, and though I think this answer unsatisfactory, I will pass on. But with regard to Comparison I will begin by asking a question. It is commonly supposed that by Comparison we learn the truth about things; but now, if the relation established by comparison falls outside of the terms, in what sense, if at all, can it be said to qualify them? And of what, if not of the terms, are the truths got by comparison true. And in the end, I ask, is there any sense, and, if so, what sense, in truth that is only outside and 'about' things? Or, from the other side, if truth is truth can it be made by us, and can what is only made by us possibly be true? These are questions which, I venture to repeat, should be met by the upholders of mere external relations.

For myself I am convinced that no such relations exist. There is no identity or likeness possible except in a whole, and every such whole must qualify and be qualified by its terms. And, where the whole is different, the terms that qualify it and contribute to it must so far be different, and so far therefore by becoming elements in a fresh unity the terms must be altered. They are altered so far only, but still they are altered. You may take by abstraction a quality *A*, *B*, or

C, and that abstract quality may throughout remain unchanged. But the terms related are more than this quality, and they will be altered. And if you reply that at any rate the term and its quality are external the one to the other, I reply, Yes, but not, as you say, external merely and absolutely. For nothing in the world is external so except for our ignorance.

We have two things felt to be the same but not identified. We compare them, and then they are related by a point of identity. And nothing, we hear, is changed but mere extrinsic relations. But against this meaningless thesis I must insist that in each case the terms are qualified by their whole, and that in the second case there is a whole which differs both logically and psychologically from the first whole; and I urge that in contributing to this change the terms are so far altered. They are altered though in respect of an abstract quality they remain the same.

Let us keep to our instance of two red-haired men, first seen with red hair but not identified in this point, and then these two men related in the judgment, 'They are the same in being red-haired'. In each case there is a whole which is qualified by and qualifies the terms, but in each case the whole is different. The men are taken first as contained in and as qualifying a perceived whole, and their redness is given in immediate unconditional unity with their other qualities and with the rest of the undivided sensible totality. But, in the second case, this sensible whole has been broken up, and the men themselves have been analyzed. They have each been split up into a connection of red-hairedness with other qualities, while the red-hairedness itself has become a subject and a point of unity connecting the diversities of each instance, diversities which are predicated of it and connected with one another under it. And the connection of the two men's diversities with this general quality, and with one another through it, I must insist is truth and is reality however imperfect and impure. But this logical synthesis is a unity different from the sensible whole, and in passing into this unity I cannot see how to deny that the terms have been altered. And to reply that, if you abstract and keep to the abstract point of red-hairedness, there is no change, is surely a complete *ignoratio elenchi*.

By being red-haired the two men are related really, and their relation is not merely external. If it were so wholly it would not be true or real at all, and, so far as it seems so, to that extent it is but the appearance of something higher. The correlation of the other circumstances of and characters in the two men with the quality of red-hairedness cannot in other words possibly be bare chance. And if you could have a perfect relational knowledge of the world, you could go from the nature of red-hairedness to these other characters which qualify it, and you could from the nature of red-hairedness reconstruct all the red-haired men. In such perfect knowledge you could start internally from any one character in the Universe, and you could from that pass to the rest. You would go in each case more or less directly or indirectly, and with unimportant characters the amount of indirectness would be enormous, but no passage would be external. Such knowledge is out of our reach, and it is perhaps out of the reach of any mind that has to think relationally. But if in the Absolute knowledge is perfected, as we conclude it is, then in a higher form the end of such knowledge

is actually realized, and with ignorance and chance the last show of externality has vanished. And if this seems to you monstrous, I ask you at least to examine for yourself, and to see whether a merely external truth is not more monstrous.

‘But I am a red-haired man’, I shall hear, ‘and I know what I am, and I am not altered in fact when I am compared with another man, and therefore the relation falls outside’. But no finite individual, I reply, can possibly know what he is, and the idea that all his reality falls within his knowledge is even ridiculous. His ignorance on the contrary of his own being, and of what that involves, may be called enormous. And if by ‘what he is’ he means certain qualities in abstraction from the rest, then let him say so and admit that his objection has become irrelevant. If the nature and being of a finite individual were complete in itself, then of course he might know himself perfectly and not know his connection with aught else. But, as he really is, to know perfectly his own nature would be, with that nature, to pass in knowledge endlessly beyond himself. For example, a red-haired man who knew himself utterly would and must, starting from within, go on to know everyone else who has red hair, and he would not know himself until he knew them. But, as things are, he does not know how or why he himself has red hair, nor how or why a different man is also the same in that point, and therefore, because he does not know the ground, the how and why, of his relation to the other man, it remains for him relatively external, contingent, and fortuitous. But there is really no mere externality except in his ignorance.

We have seen that, logically and really, all relations imply a whole to which the terms contribute and by which the terms are qualified. And I will now briefly point out that psychologically the same thing holds good. When, in the first place, I merely experience things the same in one point, or in other words merely experience the sameness of two things, and when, in the second place, I have come to perceive the point of sameness and the relation of the two things—there is in each case in my mind a psychological whole. But the whole in each case is different, and the character of the whole must depend on the elements which it contains, and must also affect them. And an element passing into a fresh whole will be altered, though it of course may remain the same from one abstract side. But I will not dwell on a point which seems fairly clear, and which, except as an illustration, is perhaps not quite relevant. Still it is well to note the fact that a merely external relation seems psychologically meaningless.

Nothing in the whole and in the end can be external, and everything less than the Universe is an abstraction from the whole, an abstraction more or less empty, and the more empty the less self-dependent. Relations and qualities are abstractions, and depend for their being always on a whole, a whole which they inadequately express, and which remains always less or more in the background. It is from this point of view that we should approach the question, How can new qualities be developed and emerge? It is a question, I would repeat, which, with regard to secondary qualities, has been made familiar to us. But the problem as to the ‘limits of explanation’ must for metaphysics arise long before that point is reached. Into this matter I shall not enter, but I desire to lay stress on the general. Where results emerge in fact, which do not follow from our premises,

there is nothing here to surprise us. For behind the abstractions we have used is the concrete qualitative whole on which they depend, and hence what has come out in the result has but issued from the conditions which (purposely or otherwise) we have endeavoured to ignore and to exclude. And this should prove to us that the premises with which we worked were not true or real, but were a mutilated fragment of reality.

(iv) I will deal now with a problem connected with the foregoing. I have in this book, wherever it was convenient, spoken of identity as being a relation. And I may be asked whether and how I am able to justify this. For terms are related, it will be said, for instance when I compare them, and, it seems, not before. And my past states when recalled by identity are related to my present, but apparently otherwise not so. And my state and another man's may be more or less identical, but they seem not always to connect us. On the other hand of course we meet with the old difficulty as to my merely making the relations which I find, and any such position appears to be untenable. Hence on the one side, it seems, we must, and on the other side, it seems, we cannot say that all identity is a relation. The solution of the problem is however, in a few words, this. Identity must be taken as having a development through several stages. At a certain stage no identity is relational, while at a higher stage all is so. And because in the Absolute the highest stage is actually realized, therefore we may, where convenient, treat identity as being already a relation, when actually for us it is not one. This statement I will now proceed to explain briefly.

We have seen that as a fact sameness exists at a stage below relations. It exists as an aspect both of a diversity felt in my mind and again of a diversity taken to exist beyond my feeling. Now this aspect is not the mere adjective of independent things, and any such view I consider to be refuted. The diversity itself depends on and exists only as the adjective of a whole; and within this whole the point of sameness is a unity and an universal realized in the differences which through it are the same. But so far this unity is, we may say, immediate and not relational. And the question is why and how we can call it a relation, when it is not a relation actually for us. It would never do for us simply and without any explanation to fall back on the 'potential', for that, if unexplained, is a mere attempt at compromise between 'is' and 'is not'. But if the 'potential' is used for that which actually is, and which under certain conditions is not manifest, the 'potential' may cease to be a phrase and may become the solution of the problem.

All relations, we have seen, are the inadequate expression of an underlying unity. The relational stage is an imperfect and incomplete development of the immediate totality. But, on the other hand, it really is a development. It is an advance and a necessary step towards that perfection which is above relations, supersedes and still includes them. Hence in the Absolute, where all is complete, we are bound to hold that every development reaches its end—whatever that end may be, and in whatever sense we are to say the thing comes to it. The goal of every progress therefore may be taken as already attained in Reality and as now present and actual. I do not mean that without exception all immediate sameness must pass through the relational consciousness. But without exception

no sameness reaches its truth and final reality except in the Whole which is beyond relations and which carries out what they attempt. And in the main the way of relations is the necessary mode of progress from that which is incomplete to its perfection. All sameness then not only may but must become relational, or at least must be realized in the same end and on the same principle as would have perfected it if it had passed through relational identity. And because in the Absolute what must be is, I think that, wherever there is identity, we may speak of a relation—so long of course as we are clear about the sense in which we speak of it.

And this is how and why, in thinking, I can find the relations that I make. For what I develop is in the Absolute already complete. But this, on the other hand, does not mean that my part in the affair is irrelevant, that it makes no difference to truth and is external. To be made and to be found is on the contrary essential to the development and being of the thing, and truth in its processes and results belongs to the essence of reality. Only, here as everywhere, we must distinguish between what is internally necessary and what is contingent. It belongs to the essence of sameness that it should go on to be thought and to be thought in a certain way. But that it should be thought by you and not by me, by a man with brown hair or with red, does not belong to its essence. These features in a sense qualify it, for they are conjoined to it, and no conjunction can in the end be a mere conjunction and be barely external. But the connection here is so indirect and so little individual, it involves so much of other conditions lying in the general background, so much the introduction of which would by addition tend to transform and swamp this particular truth and fact as such—that such features are rightly called external and contingent. But contingency is of course always a matter of degree.

This leads to the question whether and how far Resemblance qualifies the real. Resemblance is the perception or feeling of a more or less unspecified partial identity; and, so far as the identity is concerned, we have therefore already dealt with it. But taking resemblance not as partial identity but as a mode in which identity may appear, how are we to say that it belongs to reality? Certainly it belongs and must belong, and about that there is no question. The question is, in a word, about the amount and degree of its necessity and contingency. Have I a right, wherever I find partial sameness, to speak of resemblance, in the proper sense, as I had a right under the same conditions to speak of a relation? As a matter of fact not all identity appears under the form of resemblance, and can I conclude, Somehow in the Absolute it all must, and therefore does, possess this form, and may therefore everywhere be spoken of as possessing it? The answer to this question is to be found, I presume, in an enquiry into the conditions of resemblance. What is it that is added to the experience of partial sameness in order to make it into the experience of resemblance? Can this addition be looked on as a development of sameness from within, and as a necessary step to its completion, or does it on the other hand depend on conditions which are relatively external? How direct, in other words, is the connection between resemblance and identity, and, in order to get the former from the latter, what amount of other conditions would you have to bring in, and how far in the end

could you say that the resemblance came from the identity rather than from these other conditions? If you can conclude, as for myself I certainly cannot, that resemblance (proper) is an essential development of sameness, then if you will also affirm the principle that in Reality what must be is actual already—you will have a right for certain purposes to call the same ‘similar’, even where no similarity appears. But to do this otherwise, except of course by way of a working fiction, will surely be indefensible.

With this I must end these too imperfect remarks on relation and quality. I will take up some other points with regard to Identity and Resemblance in the following Note.