

**THE COHERENCE THEORY OF TRUTH:
A CRITICAL EVALUATION**

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A Critical Evaluation

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To my wife, Arpine

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**Abbreviations Used For Titles Of Books Frequently
Utilized**

- A. R. *Appearance And Reality*, F. H. Bradley.
- C. E. *Collected Essays*, F. H. Bradley.
- E. T. R. *Essays On Truth And Reality*, F. H. Bradley.
- I. C. S. *Idealism: A Critical Survey*, A. C. Ewing.
- L. S. *Logical Studies*, H. H. Joachim.
- N. T. *The Nature Of Thought*, B. Blanshard.
- P. L. *The Principles Of Logic*, F. H. Bradley.

PREFACE

The present work, in a somewhat different form, was originally submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, U. S. A. Thanks and grateful acknowledgments go to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Duke University, and to the Department of Philosophy as a whole. Special thanks go to the members of the Committee which supervised the writing of, and examined, the thesis: in particular, to my advisor, Dr. Glenn Negley, and to Dr. Charles A. Baylis, Director of Graduate Studies in Philosophy.

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*American University
Beirut, Lebanon*

29 March, 1961

Haig Khatchadourian

INTRODUCTION

The coherence theory of truth is historically associated, primarily, with the so-called Absolute Idealists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—with such names as Hegel in Germany, Bradley, Bosanquet and Joachim in England, and Blanshard in the United States. But, on the one hand, there are some Absolute Idealists who do not hold the theory, such as T. H. Green and McTaggart; and, on the other hand, there are non-idealists who hold it, for instance Samuel Alexander. Also, there are some Logical Positivists, like Neurath and Hempel, who hold what might be called a form of the coherence theory, though the theory they hold differs in important respects from the traditional coherence theory, that is, from the theory as held by the Absolute Idealists. Finally, there are thinkers who hold the theory as an account of the test of truth, but reject it as an account of the nature of truth. A. C. Ewing is a good example.

This being the case, we shall arbitrarily limit ourselves in this work mainly to the theory as expounded and defended in the writings of Bradley, Bosanquet and Blanshard.

In giving an exposition of it, and especially in criticizing it, we shall further limit ourselves to the theory as an account of the nature and the test of empirical or synthetic statements. We shall not concern ourselves with the theory as an account of truth and a test of mathematical, logical, and other types of analytic statements. It is true that the idealist advocates of coherence do not regard such statements as analytic. But this is contrary to what is generally held at present and to what the present author himself holds. At any rate, even with this exclusion, there is no danger of making the coherence theory too circumscribed and restricted, or of robbing it of its significance and essential tenets. It affords wealth enough and to spare to anyone who wants to explore and evaluate it.

For the exposition and especially for the criticism of the theory, we shall use as foundational the formulation and defence of the theory set forth in Blanshard's *The Nature Of Thought*.

There are several reasons for doing so. First, Blanshard gives a detailed, systematic and clear account of the theory (something which cannot be said of some of its other advocates) showing clearly its place in the idealist's general scheme: its logical relations to the Idealist's conception of thought in its various forms and stages, and to his conception of the nature of the universe—in short, its metaphysical presuppositions. Second,—and this is the main reason for our choice—Blanshard gives the most important arguments which have been raised against the theory, both as a conception of the nature of truth and as a conception of the test of truth (as well as against the conception of reality as an internally-related whole) from the time it was first formulated, and marshalls many if not all of the counter-arguments which the Absolute Idealists have been rallying to their side, beginning with Bradley and Bosanquet. Thus he offers the critical student of the theory a clear vista of the battlefield, so to speak, a vantage point from which it becomes possible to distinguish between the invalid and the valid criticism, the valid and the invalid defence. Finally, both in the exposition and in the defence of the theory, Blanshard, as a contemporary philosopher, has had the advantage of profiting from the arguments and from the errors of his predecessors, and therefore of presenting the theory in a more refined, sophisticated and better-fortified way, making use of developments in philosophy which have appeared since Bradley and Bosanquet lived and thought.

However, it should be stated that our aim in this essay is analytic and critical, not historical or expository. We are not ultimately concerned with disproving the views of any particular thinker as much as with attempting to show that the coherence theory, in its traditional form, is untenable both as an account of the nature of truth and as the test of truth. What truth there seems to us to be in the theory, we shall also, of course, attempt to bring out.

The present work consists of six chapters. The first chapter is a general but summary outline of the coherence theory of truth developed and presented in the context of the idealistic philosophy as a whole. No attempt is here made to be exhaustive, since the chapter as a whole is only designed as a general introduction to the theory; hence only those aspects and tenets of the idealistic

epistemology and metaphysics (especially the latter) are outlined, which have a direct bearing upon the theory. Further, even in the case of the former, including the coherence theory itself, the discussion does not go beyond a mere sketch. The analysis of the view in its ramifications and implications, the important arguments of its advocates in support of it, and their defence against criticism, has been left to the succeeding chapters. Chapters four, five and six deal with three important aspects of the theory (coherence as the test of truth, coherence as the nature of truth, and the doctrine of degrees of truth, respectively). The second and third chapters deal with one of the basic metaphysical presuppositions of the coherence theory, namely, the doctrine of internal relations. In each of these chapters the particular aspect of the theory in hand (and in chapters two and three one of its main metaphysical presuppositions) is criticized. In the course of this the theory is analyzed as exhaustively as the limitations of time and space permit, and its general pattern and intricate details are brought out as sharply as possible into relief.

**THE COHERENCE THEORY OF TRUTH :
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CHAPTER I

THE COHERENCE THEORY OF TRUTH : AN EXPOSITION

In order to understand clearly the Coherence Theory of Truth as held by Bradley, Bosanquet and Blanshard, we have to understand the nature of the mental activity which aims at truth, and to discover how this activity operates in the process of arriving at it. This mental activity is thought, and it is to thought that we have to turn first.

Thought, according to the Absolute Idealist, is one in essence in all its forms—whether in reasoning or inference, explicit judgment, or perception. But though one, it varies in complexity and degree of explicitness.¹ The simplest form of thought is judgment, and the simplest form of judgment is judgment involved in perception, or judgments of perception.² Since also it is in perception that the mind first comes into contact with the external world, and truth involves a relation between thought or mind and reality, it is doubly important to turn to perception as the starting point in our analysis of thought and through that of truth itself.

We said that thought manifests itself in perception, explicit judgment, and reasoning or inference. But it is judgment or belief which is present in all these. As a matter of fact, it is present in all mental activities. "It [judgment or belief] is present, and indispensably present, in perception and reflection, in desire and will, in memory and expectation, even in imagination and doubt."³ In other words, it is "... present wherever we have an object at all before the mind..."⁴ Nay, judgment or belief "... is virtually

1 B. Blanshard, *The Nature of Thought*, New York, 1940. vol. I, p. 117. Hereafter cited as N. T.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

4 F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, [N. P.], 1928, second edition, revised, vol. I, p. 39. Hereafter cited as P. L.

identical with mind on its intellectual side.”⁵ Or “The whole of consciousness, in as far as it is the consciousness of a single world that shares the reality of our waking self, may be regarded as a continuous judgment. . . .”⁶

All perception is a complex of two elements: an element which is given to the mind from the outside in sensation, and another element which is added by the mind, i. e., judgment or belief or interpretation of that which is given. But perception should not be thought of as a mechanical sum of sensation and interpretation or judgment. We do not first have the given in its nakedness, and then belief or judgment is added to it: “... the two present themselves together; the ground [the given] comes clothed or invested with the belief.”⁷ This means, first, that we cannot draw a sharp and fast line in actual perception (though we can still distinguish the two logically) between what is given and the judgment which rests on it, and second, that we cannot have a pure sensation, or a sensible datum stripped of all mental accretions. It is true that perception is a matter of degree, and varies from almost pure sensation⁸ to almost pure conception. But even when I merely perceive a certain patch of blue, say (if that is possible), some judgment is already present. Thus the pole of pure sensation can be approached as a limit, but can never be actually arrived at.⁹ Put in other words, what this means is that there is no such thing as perception which is wholly immediate, in the sense of being “... the direct awareness of an independent fact... a solid constituent of reality, presenting itself, entire and complete, to the passively accepting observer.”¹⁰ To hold that sense perception is immediate is to hold that what we perceive is “... in no sense

5 N. T., vol. I, p. 115.

6 B. Bosanquet, *Logic*, 2 I. 84. Quoted from N. T., vol. I, p. 115.

7 N.T., vol. I, p. 118.

8 But pure sensation is not perception proper for the Idealist: “... If sensation is present alone, we are below the perceptual level...” (*ibid.*, p. 53) Cf. also H. Joachim, *Logical Studies*, Oxford, 1948, p. 83. Hereafter cited as L. S.

9 N. T., vol. I, p. 118; Bradley, *Essays On Truth And Reality*, Oxford, 1914, pp. 119-120. Hereafter cited as E. T. R. On the other hand, there is always, in perception, some element which is given, which is not thought. We should not go to the extreme—the advocate of coherence warns us—of resolving the given into thought.

10 L. S., p. 80.

bit-beside-bit or bit-after-bit; in no sense affected in their existence or character by what precedes, succeeds, or environs them; in no sense linked to one another by any third or middle, so that 'perceived' and 'perceiving' unite only through an intermediary to constitute the sense-perception."¹¹

That sense-perception is not immediate in the foregoing sense is shown, according to Joachim, by the fact that what a percipient perceives is private to him, and differs from one person to another, due to differences in their sense-organs and their powers of attention.¹² Similar considerations, which are the stock-in-trade of the epistemological dualists, all show that what is perceived is not the public object or quality it is supposed to be. The "real" object or quality, such as the "real" flash of lightning which different observers are supposed to be perceiving—

Is that which all the observers postulate on the ground of the 'appearing flashes' or presentments.... It is the product of an inexplicit and confused thinking, a thinking immersed in and inseparable from sensation. It is the hybrid offspring of that blend of sense and thought which goes by the name of 'sense-perception'.¹³

Blanshard takes another line of approach in showing the non-immediacy of sense-perception. An analysis of the genesis of perception in the infant (so far as we know its nature) shows that the perception of any particular sensible quality, as a particular quality, e. g. of a colour blue as blue, requires its perception as an instance of a universal, i. e., as a quality which can be exemplified in other objects. And this can occur only if and when we perceive the quality in relation to, or as set off against, something else; in other words, only when we apprehend a quality as the embodiment of a universal.¹⁴

Similarly, for Bradley, the so-called "given" in perception, or "facts", are never merely given facts. "The merely given facts are... the imaginary creatures of false theory. They are manufactured by a mind which abstracts one aspect of the concrete known whole, and sets this abstracted aspect out by itself as a real thing."¹⁵

11 L. S., p. 80.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

13 *Ibid.*

14 N. T., vol. I, pp. 53, 61, 62.

15 E. T. R., p. 108.

We have been reiterating what seems to the Idealist to be the fact that perception involves judgment. The next question is : What is the nature of such perceptual judgment; or, in other words, what exactly is added by thought to the given in perception? According to Blanshard, this addition can be divided into three types of ideas: (1) The sense-qualities which are perceived are grasped as belonging to a whole, to a thing, although what is given in perception at any moment is only a part of this whole. Thus we only see one side of an orange, one side of a tea-kettle; and yet we attribute this side or part to a whole, the orange or the tea kettle, to something which is more than what is sensed at any one moment. (2) The categories, "... in both the Aristotelian¹⁶ and the Kantian senses, are there in perception from the beginning..."¹⁷ These include the thought of space and time, and also "... all manner of qualities and relations present in perception, but grasped only implicitly."¹⁸ (3) What is sensed is not only grasped implicitly as part of sensible wholes and as related spatially, temporally and in other ways to other things or wholes, but is also grasped as within a setting or background provided by past experience. "... Focal experience is what it is because of a great fringe of retained experience, but the retained experience, when we come to look for it, is conspicuously not there."¹⁹ In other words, this kind of perceptual idea "... is present only in the form of a disposition."²⁰

To put the matter in general terms, judgment in perception involves the perception of what is given as a part of a greater whole, as related to other things; i. e., it involves synthesis. But it also involves selection.²¹ And the nature of the particular selection and synthesis is partly determined by the percipient's interest

16 The universal forms of thinking, which "... determine the structure of any world we can think about...". (N. T., vol. I, p. 154)

17 *Ibid.*, p. 523.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 525.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 526.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Cf. Bosanquet, *Logic*, Oxford, 1888, vol. I, pp. 82-83.

and purposes. Thus perception is teleological. I say "partly determined" because our construction is always partly determined by the nature of the categories of thought.²²

The view that all perception is teleological brings us to a point of central importance for the Absolute Idealist; it also points the way to the manner in which ideas or judgments of perception (or 'tied ideas', to use Blanshard's expression) pass into free ideas or explicit conception.

It is the essential mark of thought that it is teleological, that it is governed by an end, an ideal, which it strives to realize.²³ Thought is a striving, seeking thing, seeking to realize a peculiar end. This end or ideal, immanent in the very nature and process of thought (hence called the immanent end by Blanshard) is understanding, intelligibility; and the moving force of the process of thought is the desire for a peculiar satisfaction, the desire to understand, the desire to see things in relation, as parts of a coherent, systematic, intelligible whole.²⁴ In other words, thought is a process of self-development or self-realisation, and in that sense, therefore, every act of thought is an act of will.²⁵ Hence the refusal of the Idealist to draw a sharp distinction between intellect and will.

But the end of thinking is also knowledge of the nature of reality, i. e., of things as they are. This constitutes the transcendent end of thought or the activity of knowing. And thought achieves satisfaction and realizes itself as thought only in such knowledge. Thus in ideal or perfect knowledge the immanent and transcendent ends of thought coincide. However, such perfect coincidence is only an ideal and forever eludes our grasp; at any given moment, both in the case of the individual and of the human race, the coincidence of the two ends of thought is only partial, and hence the urge to

22 Which are also ontological categories according to the Absolute Idealist.

23 N. T., vol. I, pp. 458, 459, 464, 472, 473. E. g. "Everywhere and always... thought does have an end of its own... The Pragmatists are clearly right that thought is an end-seeking activity..." (*Ibid.*, p. 472)

24 Cf. Joachim, "... To 'conceive' means for us to think out clearly and logically, to hold many elements together in a connexion necessitated by their several contents. And to be 'conceivable' means to be a 'significant whole', or a whole possessed of meaning for thought". (*The Nature Of Truth*. Oxford, 1906, p. 66)

25 N. T., vol. I, p. 526.

understand, and the satisfaction of knowledge, are incompletely realized. The mind apprehends reality in the degree in which it realizes its immanent end, the ideal set up by its own nature; and conversely, the immanent end of thought is realized in the degree in which it apprehends reality.

We have seen that in perception the mind is already at work in ordering and relating, and therefore systematizing, the given, that perception involves going beyond what is momentarily presented.²⁶ But this process is only realized very imperfectly at the level of perception, and only implicitly.²⁷ This process is further continued in explicit thought or conception, where thought is no longer tied down to the sensuously given. Thus judgment becomes explicit and reflective and fully conscious when it transcends the tied ideas of perception in free ideas and images (all three types of ideas being simpler types of ideas), and still more completely, in general ideas or concepts.²⁸

For Bradley, given experience (which he sometimes calls "feeling") is non-relational. "... It is an unbroken fluid totality containing in one 'now' an undivided lapse, and is in itself foreign to any terms or relations as such."²⁹ But this immediate, felt content, which "... is all one blur with differences, that work and that are felt, but are not discriminated"³⁰ "... is developed in such a way that it goes beyond and conflicts with the form of feeling or mere immediacy."³¹ And this going beyond is the explicit activity of thought: explicit judgment and inference which, like all judgment and inference, are relational in nature. The felt

26 Cf. Joachim's view that sense-perception involves the "consciousness of a world", "... a relatively enduring system of fact, within a reality spatially and temporally 'beyond' the particular perception". (L. S., p. 89)

27 Cf. Joachim's view that the object of perception is "... not distinctly conceived elements intelligibly related". (*Ibid.*, p. 84)

28 Although Blanshard uses the expression 'types of idea', he warns us that strictly speaking there are no types of ideas at all, "... but only stages in the development of a single function". (N. T., vol. I, p. 567)

29 E. T. R., p. 152.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 157, footnote 1.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 157.

content is not an explicitly unified, integrated whole, "... not distinctly conceived elements intelligibly related."³²

Although thought is by its nature necessarily relational, its end is to transcend relations, to achieve a supra-relational unity, and therefore to cease to be thought. As Bradley puts it, its end is to commit suicide as thought.³³ But this ideal is never completely realized, although Bradley intimates that in aesthetic contemplation or intuition and in moral insight we come closest to achieving it. In terms of inference, this means that inference is defective. Inference is the ideal (in the sense of logical) self-development of an object;³⁴ but though in that sense it is necessary, it is also universal, going beyond its "this", "here", and "now."³⁵ But inference involves a puzzle. Inference means the advance of the object beyond its beginning. "But, on the other hand, if the object passes beyond what is itself, the inference is destroyed³⁶". The solution lies in the fact that—

The object not only is itself, but is also contained as an element in a whole; and it is itself, we must add, only as being so contained. And the difference of the object from, and its essential identity with a whole beyond itself... is the key... to this puzzle of self-development. On the one side the special object advances to a result beyond the beginning, and yet its progress throughout is nothing beyond the intrinsic development of its proper being. For that which mediates and necessitates its advance is implied within its own self.³⁷

Let us look at the matter from another angle. An idea has an objective reference, is the idea of an object. As the idea of an object it must in some sense be like or even identical with its object. And yet it must be different from it.³⁸ How can this be? The answer is that:

32 L. S., p. 84.

33 *Appearance And Reality*, London, 1925, second edition, eighth impression, pp. 181 ff. Hereafter cited as A. R.

34 P. L., vol. II, Terminal Essay I, p. 597, and *passim*.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 598.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 599.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 600. Italics in original.

38 N. T., vol. I, p. 473.

The idea is... both identical with its object and different from it. It is identical in the sense in which anything that truly develops is identical with what it becomes. It is different in the sense in which any purpose partially realized is different from the same purpose realized wholly.³⁹

In other words, an idea is its object partially realized, a potential object:

*If thought can be seen as a stage on the way to its transcendent end or object, as that end itself in the course of becoming actual, the paradox of knowledge is in principle solved. The idea can then be both the same as its object and different; the same because it is the object in posse; different because that object, which is its end, is as yet incompletely realized.*⁴⁰

This is in line with the nature of thought, which we saw is teleological, the progressive self-development and self-realization of an idea.

But how can an idea itself be a partially realized object? The idea is universal, while the object, on the face of it, is an individual thing. The chasm between the two seems insuperable.

Reflection, however, shows this not to be the case. To begin with, sensible qualities are not particulars, as they are ordinarily regarded, but universals, being capable, in principle or logically, of existing identically at different times and in different places, i. e., of repeating themselves.⁴¹ Further, reflection also reveals that so-called individual things—tables, chairs, trees, mountains—are nothing but a complex of sensible qualities in certain spatial, temporal, causal and other relations. There is no such thing as a Cartesian or Lockean material substance underlying sensible qualities. This being so, it follows that “individuals” are really nothing but congeries of universals. Hence the apparent difference in kind between objects and ideas is seen to be illusory.

Now we have said that thought realizes itself in a system of judgments or universals, i. e., in a logically-coherent whole. Hence, if in realizing itself fully it becomes identical with its objects (if

39 *Ibid.*, p. 473.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 494. Italics in original. Also pp. 496, 550, and *passim*.

41 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 631 ff.

the immanent and transcendent ends of thought coincide),⁴² it follows (a) that the object of thought in the fullest sense must itself be a systematical and coherent whole, a system of universals and not an aggregate of particulars, a network in which every part is related essentially and necessarily (i. e., internally) to every other part and to the whole; and (b) thought, in its full actualization, merges and passes over into Reality and thereby ceases to be thought. This means that thought as thought—

Cannot get the content into a harmonious system. And in the next place, even if it did so, that system would not *be* the subject. It would either be a maze of relations, a maze with a plan, of which forever we made the circuit; or otherwise it would wholly lose the relational form. Our impossible process, in the first place, would assuredly have truth distinguished from its reality. For it could avoid this only by coming to us bodily and all at once, and, further, by suppressing entirely any distinction between subject and predicate. But, if in this way thought became immediate, it would lose its own character. It would be a system of relations no longer, but would have become an individual experience. And the Other would certainly have been absorbed, but thought itself no less would have been swallowed up and resolved into an Other.⁴³

Still, "There is nothing foreign that thought wants in desiring to be a whole...."⁴⁴

Judgment and therefore inference implies a dichotomy between subject and predicate, fact and idea, the "that" and the "what", existence and content. But the grammatical, or even the logical, subject of a judgment is not the true subject. The logical subject is as universal as the logical predicate. The logical subject is not a self-contained whole, but involves relations to other things going beyond it. The true or metaphysical subject is "... not this or that finite person or thing, but the ultimate reality."⁴⁵ Thus in

42 And it is the firm conviction of the Absolute Idealist that knowledge is possible and that we do have some knowledge, i. e., the immanent and transcendent ends of thought do coincide to some extent in actual knowledge (Cf. E.T.R., p. 16). However, the perfect coincidence of the two ends of thought is only an ideal never actually realized or realizable.

43 A. R., p. 179. Italics in original.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

45 P. L., vol. I, p. 181, and *passim*. Quoted from N. T., vol. I, p. 647.

inference, although the particular premise is some particular content, what is implied by it is the entire Reality. "The inference here may be called arbitrary, so far as the point where you happen to begin, and so far again as the result—where, short of the whole, you are pleased to stop—are taken to depend on your choice."⁴⁶ And Bosanquet—

It follows from the nature of implication that every inference involves a judgment based on the whole of reality, though referring only to a partial system which need not even be actual. You cannot draw a conclusion *from* a mere and pure supposition, though you may draw one which explicitly refers to such a supposition and nothing more. Every assertion, when its explicit condition is discounted, asserts absolutely of reality as a whole.⁴⁷

Hence every judgment and every inference is conditional and presupposes the whole system of reality.⁴⁸ Only the whole of reality can be the unconditioned subject of judgment and inference. But if the whole of reality is taken in this way, there will be nothing left outside it; the distinction between the "that" and the "what", fact and idea, is overcome. But if this happens, judgment and inference themselves cease to be and thought itself ceases to exist.

For Bradley, any particular "that" which is the object of perception or of thought is a fragment torn from the whole of reality, a particular which is seen apart from and shorn of its relations to the rest of reality. And in that sense it is only appearance. Hence any judgment about it, which does not take its relations to the whole within its content, is bound to be partial and fragmentary. To see it, on the other hand, as real and not as appearance, means to see it in relation to the whole, which really means to take the whole of Reality as the subject of judgment.

46 P. L., vol. II, *Terminal Essay I*, pp. 601-602.

47 B. Bosanquet, *Implication And Linear Inference*, London, 1920, pp. 4-5. Italics in original.

48 Cf. C. R. Morris, *Idealistic Logic*, London, 1933, p. 148. Idealistic logic "... insists that the characteristic mark of judgment is ... that it is essentially bound to other judgments—that when you make one judgment you are asserting a whole system of judgments"...

But what is the coincidence of thought with reality but truth, and therefore what is the system of thought, which is thus true, but the system of knowledge? Since the coincidence of thought and reality is realized in system, system constitutes the nature of truth. But the coincidence of thought and reality, or of the immanent and transcendent ends of thought, is a matter of degree, and its complete realization is only an ideal which always eludes us. Hence truth (and knowledge) is a matter of degree, depending on the extent to which system is achieved. But in perfect system thought would become merged into and one with reality and would cease to exist as thought. Hence perfect truth can never be realized so long as thought is thought.

The coincidence of thought and reality in truth is not a case of "correspondence" or "copying", which could only be the case if thought and reality were externally and accidentally related. It is far from that. For since thought is its object partially realized, the two are essentially related. The essence of a thing is what it actually becomes; and to say that the two are related essentially is to say that the two are related internally, necessarily. But internality of relations and necessity are again matters of degree. The degree of internality corresponds to the degree of system achieved, and that in turn means the degree of necessity realized. (On the side of the system of thought or judgments, degrees of necessity, essentiality and internality involve degrees of entailment or implication. But more of this later).

It is important to keep in mind that coherence as the nature of truth logically presupposes that reality is an internally-related system. Without this, coherence would become nothing more than logical consistency and logical entailment, and the truth of any such "coherent" system becomes something which its coherence can in no way guarantee or determine. Further, if the relation between the ideal system of thought and the system of reality (here the totality of real things) were external and not internal, the relation between the system and reality which we call truth would no longer be coherence but rather a form of correspondence—the correspondence of the entire system of thought (and not of isolated, individual propositions) to the entire system of "fact."

We said that for the Absolute Idealist coherence is not mere