

This method of proceeding had already been resorted to by Fichte. As I have stated it, it appears to be simply a process of applied logic, a merely formal procedure of thought. But this merely formal character is, as it were, relieved and made more significant by bringing in that idea which, as I stated above, is at the root of all idealistic philosophy, forming as it were its deep-seated belief or dogma. This is the conception that everything, the world of nature as well as the world of mind, things as they are and things as they have developed in time, are the manifestations of some underlying reality, of the truly real, which is the ground and root of everything.

If this conviction be added to the foregoing scheme the latter at once becomes fraught with some deeper meaning. Anything that is now the subject of thought is only a point, as it were, in the great universe, in the totality of things; it is that upon which, for the moment, the light of thought is thrown, the limited, local, and maybe casual manifestation of the underlying reality.

In the second process, in the antithesis, light is thrown on that which surrounds the point on which our attention has been concentrated; our view and comprehension is as it were enlarged and enriched by looking round at other subjects. The process of differentiation is one of enlargement and enrichment of thought. And lastly, the bringing together of the scattered elements and fragments by a synthesis signifies that we reassert that essential unity of everything which had, for the moment, escaped our attention in