

Whitehead says in one place, "The future is immanent in the present by reason of the fact that the present bears in its own essence the relationships which it will have to the future." A page later, however, he says, "The future belongs to the essence of the present fact, and has no actuality other than the actuality of present fact. But its particular relationships to present fact are already realized in the nature of present fact" (*AI*: 250 f.).

Clearly, there are problems with these statements that are not easy to sort out, especially without employing a clear and sharp distinction between internal and external relations. If the present may be said to bear in its own essence the relationships that it will have to the future, this is only because the relationships in question are tacitly understood to be the present's *external* relations to the future—these being the only relations it can possibly have to the future. But whether, or in what sense, a present occasion's external relations to the future may be said to be "*its*" is problematic, since it is at most the *term* of such external relations, not their *subject*, their only possible subject being future occasions that, as such, are not yet actual.

On the other hand, it is deeply confusing, if not confused, to say that the future's particular relationships to the past are already realized in the present. Precisely because the future has no actuality other than the actuality of present fact, it cannot have any particular relationships to present fact already realized in the present, because, *qua* future, it cannot possibly have any particular relationships *at all*. What is already realized in present fact, so far as the future is concerned, is not the future's particular relationships to it, but only something in principle general rather than particular—namely, that there *will be* actualities in the future having particular relationships to the present fact.

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