

# Quality of Feeling

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: The Logic of Continuity | RLT 259; CP 6.198

---

The sense-quality is a feeling. Even if you say it is a *slumbering* feeling, that does not make it less intense; perhaps the reverse. For it is the absence of *reaction*, – of feeling *another*, – that constitutes slumber, not the absence of the immediate feeling that is all that it is in its immediacy. Imagine a magenta color. Now imagine that all the rest of your consciousness – memory, thought, everything except this feeling of magenta – is utterly wiped out, and with that is erased all possibility of comparing the magenta with anything else or of estimating it as more or less bright. That is what you must think the pure sense-quality to be. Such a definite potentiality can emerge from the indefinite potentiality only by its own vital Firstness and spontaneity. Here is this magenta color. What originally made such a quality of feeling possible? Evidently nothing but itself. It is a First.

1899 | On Topical Geometry, in General (T) | CP 7.530

---

Qualities [...] constitute the first category. A quality of feeling is perfectly simple, in itself; though a quality thought over and thus mixed with other elements, may be compared with others and analyzed. A quality of feeling, in itself, is no object and is attached to no object. It is a mere tone of consciousness. But qualities of feeling may be attached to objects. A quality of feeling, in itself, has no generality; but it is susceptible of generalization without losing its character; and indeed all the qualities of feeling we are able to recognize are more or less generalized. In a mathematical hypothesis the qualities of feeling are so subordinate as to be scarcely noticeable.

1903 | Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture II | EP 2:150; CP 5.44

---

In short, any simple and positive quality of feeling would be something which our description fits, – that it is such as it is quite regardless of anything else. The quality of feeling is the true psychical representative of the first category of the immediate as it is in its immediacy, of the present in its direct positive presentness. Qualities of feeling show myriad-fold variety, far beyond what the psychologists admit. This variety however is in them only insofar as they are compared and gathered into collections. But as they are in their presentness, each is sole and unique; and all the others are absolute nothingness to it, – or rather much less than nothingness, for not even a recognition as absent things or as fictions is accorded to them. The first category, then, is Quality of Feeling, or whatever is such as it is positively and regardless of aught else.

1903 | Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture III | EP 2:160; CP 5.66

---

Category the First is the Idea of that which is such as it is regardless of anything else. That is to say, it is a *Quality* of Feeling.

---

1903-06-03 | Letters to William James | CP 8.267

---

If we imagine that feeling retains its positive character but absolutely loses all relation, (and thereby all *vividness*, which is only the sense of shock), it no longer is exactly what we call feeling. It is a mere sense of quality. It is the sort of element that makes *red* to be such as it is, whatever anything else may be. I do not see how that can be described except as being such as it is, positively, of itself, while secondness is such as it is relatively to something else. Anything familiar gains a peculiar positive quality of feeling of its own; and that I think is the connection between Firstness and Hegel's first stage of thought.

---

1904 | Logic viewed as Semeiotics. Introduction Number 2. Phaneroscopy | CP 1.304

---

Among phanerons there are certain qualities of feeling, such as the color of magenta, the odor of attar, the sound of a railway whistle, the taste of quinine, the quality of the emotion upon contemplating a fine mathematical demonstration, the quality of feeling of love, etc. I do not mean the sense of actually experiencing these feelings, whether primarily or in any memory or imagination. That is something that involves these qualities as an element of it. But I mean the qualities themselves which, in themselves, are mere may-bes, not necessarily realized. The reader may be inclined to deny that. If so, he has not fully grasped the point that we are not considering what is true, not even what truly appears. I ask him to note that the word red means something when I say that the precession of the equinoxes is no more red than it is blue, and that it means just what it means when I say that aniline red is red. That mere *quality*, or suchness, is not in itself an occurrence, as seeing a red object is; it is a mere may-be. Its only being consists in the fact that there *might be* such a peculiar, positive, suchness in a phaneron.

---

1907 | Pragmatism | MS [R] 318:21

---

A quality of feeling is a mode of consciousness that is, first, positive, so that it might be a whole life; second, is within itself all that it is; and third, can only be experienced as the limit of relative grades.

---

1907 [c.] | (Prag) [R] | CP 5.7

---

...every simple idea is composed of one of three classes; and a compound idea is in most cases predominantly of one of those classes. Namely, it may, in the first place, be a quality of feeling, which is positively such as it is, and is indescribable; which attaches to one object regardless of every other; and which is *sui generis* and incapable, in its own being, of comparison with any other feeling, because in comparisons it is representations of feelings and not the very feelings themselves that are compared.