

**OUTLINES OF LOGIC
AND METAPHYSICS,
PP. 1-252**

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605-78

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*TRANSLATED FROM THE 4th (REVISED) EDITION, WITH
PREFATORY ESSAY*

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PREFATORY ESSAY.

IN all discourse, or verbal expression of thought, there regularly occur, besides terms representing mere objects or groups or classes of objects, terms which, instead, stand for general notions, originating within rather than from without, predicates and relations under which, for the mind, objects stand or by which they are determined—that is to say, the so-called categories of thought. Such terms are, for example, *being, quantity, essence, cause, actuality, end, truth*, with their primitives or derivatives. The general notions for which such terms stand are of very great significance and interest, not only as forming the ground of definite connection, in consciousness, among objects, but also as together constituting a world of realities of themselves.

That these notions have a necessary reality and meaning in experience, and so are a possible matter for a real science, is *practically* evident from the fact that they are indispensable to thinking and discourse as such, to objective or fixed coherence among ideas, to knowledge or science: the very forms of language necessarily imply them, and for this reason, if for no other, they are, since language is but the embodiment and instrument of thought in general, indispensable to thought itself; and the sciences, as the embodiment of ideas of definite and necessary connections

among objects, continually involve them, so that it may with entire truth be said that any science is really and truly a science in proportion to the (indirect) recognition which the categories receive in it. And for the matter of that—it is worthy of being observed in passing—the products of mere fancy could not exist without a certain basis in the categories.

The *theoretical* proof of the necessity, reality and great significance of the categories has to be given by a special science which takes precisely them for its subject-matter. The recognition which the sciences in general give to the categories, is, for the greater part, merely practical and indirect, not theoretical and direct. Even the sciences of discourse—grammar, philology, rhetoric, formal logic—though containing very distinct implications of the categories as something distinguishable from a given material in which, speaking roughly, they are, so to say, immersed, and bringing to clear consciousness the necessity of studying the categories in and for themselves, do not undertake so to study them, to investigate their (logical) origin, necessity, validity, organic relations, and groupings—in short, to “criticise” the categories as such. Still less is this study undertaken by the sciences whose subject-matter is the external world rather than discourse or thought itself. Such study, investigation, criticism, is, let it be repeated, the task of a distinct science, the science, in fact, of science as such, namely, Philosophy, and, in particular, the fundamental part of it, Logic.

Now a complete understanding of the nature of Logic is, of course, not possible at the threshold of the science, but must be gained by the study of it in its entirety. But a certain preliminary notion of it is necessary and may here be laid down. Let, then, Logic be provisionally defined as, *par excellence*, the

criticism of the categories. Criticism may be of two sorts: it may be merely or mostly analytical, restrictive, negative, formal; or it may be synthetical, developmental, positive, real. Criticism of the first-named sort is content to assume its object as given, isolate, scrutinize closely enough merely to detect its limitations without always positively and directly supplying the proper complement for the overcoming of the limitations; and instead of allowing its object to be determined for thought by its natural relations, is apt to judge it according to a standard lying too much outside itself, and hence to be formal rather than real. Of this nature is, to cite an example, in a measure the Kantian criticism of the categories, in spite of the search for synthetic truth by which that criticism was motivated. That criticism was in great part an effort to prevent the (mis)application of the categories beyond a restricted sphere, to keep "human" thought within certain secure bounds. It assumed the categories as logical facts, analysed them, treating as distinct and opposed certain of them which had real meaning and truth only in organic reference to one another, and in consequence reached the essentially negative result that "human thought" is fatally self-contradictory as regards ultimate reality, that there is or may be a realm beyond the reach of thought, an unknowable "thing-in-itself," and that the laws of thought are in relation to it merely regulative. But criticism, to be adequate to its object, must be more than the Kantian criticism or anything else of its kind. The categories must be viewed as in organic relation to one another and to all possible or conceivable matter of thought. The discovery of the limitations of the categories taken either individually or as groups must also be the discovery of what is complementary to them; each category, instead of being assumed as given, must be