

THE CATEGORIES

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649205974

The categories by James Hutchison Stirling

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Cover @ 2017

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BY

JAMES HUTCHISON STIRLING

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SECOND EDITION—WITH APPENDIX.



EDINBURGH

OLIVER AND BOYD

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LTD.

1907

BC172
S8
1907

GENERAL

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To the Memory of

MY WIFE

WHOSE IRREPARABLE LOSS IS ASSOCIATED INSEPARABLY

WITH ITS PUBLICATION

I Dedicate this Little Book

TO ME SHE WAS

THE SWEETEST WOMAN AND THE MOST INGENUOUS

THE TRUEST WIFE AND THE FAITHFULEST

THAT IN THE WILL OF GOD

EVER BLESSED MAN

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* A general reader may not be interested in the discussion as to positions Logical and Phænomenological; but much occurs to be said in Hegel's regard which is somewhat new, perhaps, and otherwise possibly such that the philosophical student might regret to miss it.



PREFACE

ASSUMING it to be seen from elsewhere that to reason is to proceed from something before us, to some other something not then before us, through what in some way is a thread of identity—assuming further that to found and ground reasoning as reasoning there is required *a* principle, a single principle, that, of itself self-certain, is in want of not another beyond it:—Such principle, evidently, must, as conditioning progress from identity to difference, be in itself at once both—*such* that it is at once identity and difference—*such* that its difference is at the same time its identity, and its identity at the same time its difference—*such* that from its identity it is that you pass to its difference, and not less back again from its difference to its identity. There is only one existence—one actually known and recognised existence—in all this world, that comes up to, or can realise, in every point of view, the principles, the discrimina, the contra-distinguishing significatives indicated.

It is the *Ego*.

Readers may have been shocked, I fear, by the

assumption in my last volume * that the antithesis and reciprocity, the dialectic, the ratio, of subject and object in the Ego is—*Thought!* Still this of the Ego has been at least named or, to say so, even acted upon by the unexceptively accredited, the universally received and accepted, highest masters in the realms of pure thought—say, for the nonce, Kant and Hegel.

The latter has such expressions as these:—Ego and Thought are the same—Ego is Thought—every man is an entire world of ideas which are buried in the night of the Ego—Ego is the universal into which every particular is negated and absorbed—I or Me, sounds trivial, but it is not so to reflection. The brute cannot say *I*, but only the man, for man is Thought. Then Kant, I have already quoted him elsewhere to say: That man can have Ego in his apprehension exalts him infinitely above all other living beings on earth—this capability is the understanding (Thought) itself.

And what does it amount to, this—to say that the immanent or innate ratio within the Ego is Thought? To say that—if the Ego itself is Thought—is only a little more particular, is only to approach a little nearer to the individual, precisely functioning principle or reason. But it is not to say that the Ego so regarded, is tantamount to the actual personality of a living man. Concrete Ego, as existent, is more than the merely notional Ego. Concrete Ego has its constitutive content within it or under it: the

* “What is Thought? or, The Problem of Philosophy.”