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Type: Manuscript
Author: Peirce, Charles Sanders
Title: Lecture I [R]
Manuscript Id: MS [R] 448
Year: 1903

Abstract / Robin Catalogue:

Description: A. MS., notebook, G-1903-2a, pp. 1-48.

Published as 1.591-610, with omissions. Unpublished: Present day science suffers from a malady whose source is an argument based on the notion of a “logisches Gefühl” as the means of determining whether reasoning is sound and whose conclusion is that there is no distinction between good and bad reasoning. This argument parallels another whose conclusion is that there is no distinction between good and bad conduct (pp. 1-12). Criticism of the defendant arguments and their premises that it is unthinkable that a conclusion be found acceptable for any other reason than a feeling of logicity and that a line of conduct be adopted for any other motive than a feeling of pleasure (pp. 33-48).

Essential Peirce, vol. 2:

Composed at the end of the summer 1903 and delivered on 23 November 1903, this is the first of eight lectures Peirce gave at the Lowell Institute in Boston under the general title “Some Topics of Logic bearing on Questions now Vexed. ‘1 In this lecture, Peirce refutes “a malady” that “has broken out in science,” namely the idea then in vogue that rationality rests on a feeling of logicity, and that it is futile to try to find an objective distinction between good and bad reasoning. On the contrary, Peirce claims, that distinction is not at all a matter of what we approve of, but is a question of fact. Good reasoning is based on a method that “tends to carry us toward the truth more speedily than we could otherwise progress.” Peirce discusses the significance of even a slight tendency to guess correctly, arguing that, given the right method, that is all that is required to assure progress toward the truth. He continues the argument, just made in the Harvard Lectures, that reasoning is a form of controlled conduct, and thus has an ethical dimension. Peirce concludes with a discussion of the scope of logic, which he now equates with semiotics as a whole.

Keywords: Science, Reasoning, Feeling of Logicality, Logical Criticism, Conduct, Feeling of Pleasure, Morals, Self-control, Ideal, Pleasure, Self-criticism, Liberty, Necessitarianism, Moral Conduct, Norm, Standard, Logic, Ethics, Guessing, Criticism of Reasoning, Certainty, Body, Soul, General Formula, Sensation, Law, Wilhelm Wundt, Logica Utens, Tycho Brahe, Isaac Newton

Language: English