Logica Utens

1898 | Cambridge Lectures on Reasoning and the Logic of Things: Philosophy and the Conduct of Life | RTL 108-109

I shall have a good deal to say about right reasoning; and in default of better I had reckoned *that* as a Topic of Vital Importance. But I do not know that the theory of reasoning is quite vitally important. That it is absolutely essential in metaphysics, I am as sure as I am of any truth of philosophy. But in the conduct of life, we have to distinguish everyday affairs and great crises. In the great decisions, I do not believe it is safe to trust to individual reason. In everyday business, reasoning is tolerably successful; but I am inclined to think that it is done as well without the aid of theory as with it. A *Logica Utens*, like the analytical mechanics resident in the billiard player's nerves, best fulfills familiar uses.

1901 | The Proper Treatment of Hypotheses: a Preliminary Chapter, toward an Examination of Hume's Argument against Miracles, in its Logic and in its History | HP 2:891-892

Every time a man really reasons, in that sense, he is clearly or obscurely conscious that his present inference belongs to a general class of cases in which an analogous conclusion might be drawn; and his approval of this reasoning consists in a belief that by acting on the same principle in all cases he will on the whole be advancing his knowledge more than by not drawing such conclusions. If this be true, as the reader's self-observation may satisfy him that it is, a man cannot truly reason without having some notions about the classification of arguments. But the classification of arguments is the chief business of the science of logic; so that every man who reasons (in the above sense) has necessarily a rudimentary science of logic, good or bad. The slang of the medieval universities called this his *logica utens*, - his "logic in possession", - in contradistinction to *logica docens*, or the legitimate doctrine that is to be learned by study.

1902 | Reasoning | CP 2.773

Reasoning is a process in which the reasoner is conscious that a judgment, the conclusion, is determined by other judgment or judgments, the premisses, according to a general habit of thought, which he may not be able precisely to formulate, but which he approves as conducive to true knowledge. By true knowledge he means, though he is not usually able to analyse his meaning, the ultimate knowledge in which he hopes that belief may ultimately rest, undisturbed by doubt, in regard to the particular subject to which his conclusion relates. Without this logical approval, the process, although it may be closely analogous to reasoning in other respects, lacks the essence of reasoning. Every reasoner, therefore, since he approves certain habits, and consequently methods, of reasoning, accepts a logical doctrine, called his *logica utens*. Reasoning does not begin until a judgment has been formed; for the antecedent cognitive operations are not subject to logical approval or disapproval, being subconscious, or not sufficiently near the surface of consciousness, and therefore uncontrollable. Reasoning, therefore, begins with premisses which are adopted as representing percepts, or

generalizations of such percepts.

1902 | Logic | CP 2.204

... it is only the deliberate adoption of a belief in consequence of the admitted truth of some other proposition which is, properly speaking, reasoning. In that case the belief is adopted because the reasoner conceives that the method by which it has been determined would either in no analogous case lead to a false conclusion from true premisses, or, if steadily adhered to, would at length lead to an indefinite approximation to the truth, or, at least, would assure the reasoner of ultimately attaining as close an approach to the truth as he can, in any way, be assured of attaining. In all reasoning, therefore, there is a more or less conscious reference to a general method, implying some commencement of such a classification of arguments as the logician attempts. Such a classification of arguments, antecedent to any systematic study of the subject, is called the reasoner's *logica utens*, in contradistinction to the result of the scientific study, which is called *logica docens*.

1902 | Minute Logic: Chapter II. Section II. Why Study Logic? | CP 2.186

Now a person cannot perform the least reasoning without some general ideal of good reasoning; for reasoning involves deliberate approval of one's reasoning; and approval cannot be deliberate unless it is based upon the comparison of the thing approved with some idea of how such a thing ought to appear. Every reasoner, then, has some general idea of what good reasoning is. This constitutes a theory of logic: the scholastics called it the reasoner's *logica utens*. Every reasoner whose attention has been considerably drawn to his inner life must soon become aware of this.

1902-03 [c.] | Reason's Rules | MS [R] 596:17-18

No matter how completely free the Reader may be of the influence of logical systems and traditions, he nevertheless does hold certain logical tenets. There are certain general forms of reasoning which he approves as calculated to lead to the truth. There are certain others which he condemns as dangerous. This doctrine is his *logica utens*; and he actually applies it in every case in which he can properly be said to reason.

1903 | Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture IV. The Seven Systems of Metaphysics | CP 5.108

Logic proper is the *critic* of arguments, the pronouncing them to be good or bad. There are, as I am prepared to maintain, operations of the mind which are logically exactly analogous to inferences excepting only that they are unconscious and therefore uncontrollable and therefore not subject to criticism. But that makes all the difference in the world; for *inference* is essentially deliberate, and self-controlled. Any operation which cannot be controlled, any conclusion which is not abandoned, not merely as soon as *criticism* has pronounced against it, but in the very act of pronouncing that decree, is not of the nature of rational inference – is not reasoning. Reasoning as deliberate is essentially

critical, and it is idle to criticize as good or bad that which cannot be controlled. Reasoning essentially involves *self-control*; so that the *logica utens* is a particular species of morality. Logical goodness and badness, which we shall find is simply the distinction of *Truth* and *Falsity* in general, amounts, in the last analysis, to nothing but a particular application of the more general distinction of Moral Goodness and Badness, or Righteousness and Wickedness.

1903 | Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture V | CP 5.130

Whatever opinion be entertained in regard to the scope of logic, it will be generally agreed that the heart of it lies in the classification and critic of arguments. Now it is peculiar to the nature of argument that no argument can exist without being referred to some special class of arguments. The act of inference consists in the thought that the inferred conclusion is true because *in any analogous case* an analogous conclusion *would be* true. Thus, logic is coeval with reasoning. Whoever reasons *ipso facto* virtually holds a logical doctrine, his *logica utens*. This classification is not a mere qualification of the argument. It essentially involves *an approval* of it – a *qualitative approval*. Now such self-approval supposes *self-control*.

1903 [c.] | Logical Tracts. No. 2. On Existential Graphs, Euler's Diagrams, and Logical Algebra | CP 4.476

The purpose of reasoning is to proceed from the recognition of the truth we already know to the knowledge of novel truth. This we may do by instinct or by a habit of which we are hardly conscious. But the operation is not worthy to be called reasoning unless it be deliberate, critical, self-controlled. In such genuine reasoning we are always conscious of proceeding according to a general rule which we approve. It may not be precisely formulated, but still we do think that all reasoning of that perhaps rather vaguely characterized kind will be safe. This is a doctrine of logic. We never can really reason without entertaining a logical theory. That is called our *logica utens*.