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.


References: CP 5.108

Date of Quote: 1903

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-iv-seven-systems-metaphysics