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# Essays on MEANING

Ms. 640

## PREFACE

These essays will be found to relate to one department of the research after truth, <sup>that is</sup> ~~namely~~, to Logic. The intention has not, however, been to treat that subject systematically, but rather to give <sup>such</sup> examples of its discussions as shall persuade the intelligent reader of the serious, - nay, frankly, the tremendous, importance of the   
● subject as it is here conceived, and shall gain a hearing for such an exposition of it in a future publication that would <sup>as</sup> not be <sup>only</sup> taken up by a reader ~~not~~ already convinced that it <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ worth reflective study. In that work that idea of the subject that has little by little and very slowly <sup>(by reason of the extreme caution and laborious self-criticism that was requisite)</sup> come to crystallize in the writers

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mind during a half century in which he has thought of nothing else except for its bearing on this sole purpose of his life, and sole field in which he found himself not to be a fool, shall be set forth.

The <sup>present</sup> reader is likely to be pretty sceptical of the "tremendous importance" of Logic: the author, at any rate, would be so, were he in the reader's shoes, and judged of it by ~~the contents~~ of such treatises of it as should have come his way. For truly there is but

● one other branch of the whole tree of heurctic science that is not laden with luscious spiritual peaches compared with the poor little crude persimmon on the branch of modern logic. That other is metaphysics; and <sup>even</sup> that might not have been in quite so lamentable a condition if it had been grafted on a sound

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logical stocks, and had not been infested with every species of theology. God be thanked that these pests seem now to be dying out, and without having killed either science or religion. The logic which ~~it~~<sup>the reader</sup> will find specimens of in this volume is so widely different from any other that has ever been published, ~~that~~ especially during the writer's time, that there is no arguing from the qualities of the others to those of this.

The reader ought, too, to be made acquainted with the nature of the importance claimed for this system. He must not suppose that there is any pretension to improve those modes of reasoning which he is employing in his daily business, whose conclusions have hundreds of times been checked and corrected by comparison with facts; <sup>not</sup> ~~or~~ that the superiority of practice over theory in <sup>producing</sup> ~~producing~~ <sup>leading to</sup> ~~production~~.

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good habits of thinking <sup>or any other sort of skill</sup> ~~is to be confused with~~ that <sup>whatever</sup> any other maxims of common sense are here to be flatly contradicted, since logic itself must be based upon them. But many of the <sup>beliefs that</sup> ~~reasonings~~ affect a man's cheerfulness and consequent <sup>such as his</sup> ~~upon which a man's happiness and efficiency, largely~~ <sup>faith in</sup> Divine Providence, and his idea of dying,

depend ~~lack, such as~~ and must lack, the comparison of their <sup>any positive</sup> conclusions with <sup>(not always entirely yet often)</sup> experience of the facts, in any sufficient number of cases; so that a man is naturally led to some doubt as to whether <sup>the reasons for such beliefs</sup> ~~they~~ are sound arguments or not, and <sup>so</sup> to criticise them within himself. <sup>and to approve of such criticism, if it be well conducted.</sup> Now logic helps him to render that criticism broad, sound, impartial, secure, by tracing the reasonings <sup>back</sup> down to their fundamental principles. Every young man has to decide between arguments <sup>an individual</sup> pro and con his adopting a given profession, wooing <sup>an individual</sup> a woman, settling in a certain locality, investing his patrimony in a proposed way,

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and many other things, without having <sup>more than</sup> the slightest <sup>previous</sup> personal  
experience to guide him; and throughout his life, perplexing  
questions of evidence are always liable to arise. None of these  
questions can safely be left to the impulses of the moment.

The reasons on both sides had to be weighed and criticized; and a  
sound to be well-grounded in a sound method of discussing them  
will be an important advantage.

Until long after the writer began his studies, down-right fallacies were  
accepted as sound reasonings in all the sciences. <sup>Faulty arguments</sup> They are still occasionally  
met with in works of natural science; while <sup>about as much as ever  
it was,</sup> historical criticism is, still  
a field where errors of logic, both in claiming as "demonstrations"  
what are at best but no better than probabilities, and in ~~over~~ not admitting  
conclusions which ought to be accepted, are much too common. If <sup>them,</sup> any

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scientific truth is important, ~~then~~ logic certainly is so.

The writer regards the science of Logic as made up of three studies. Its centre and its heart is the study of logical Critique, whose business is to ascertain what descriptions of arguments are sound, and in what the soundness of each consists.

Upon this <sup>Critique</sup> ~~and another~~ ~~the~~ chiefly, should be founded the study of Methodic, whose purpose is to ascertain the proper order of procedure in any inquiry; while <sup>the third component study is required as,</sup> ~~as~~ a preliminary to Critique, its purpose being to learn the <sup>different</sup> ~~natures~~ of the ~~elements~~ parts of arguments. One is at a loss <sup>by</sup> what name to call this analytic division of Logic. 'Analytic' would not do, because this name was pre-empted by Aristotle for ~~the~~ his four books on Critique. An argument is a complex fact, or the expression of such a fact, which is a sign of the reality of another fact expressed in <sup>the argument's</sup> ~~its~~ conclusion. Almost

Every judgment from a Sign is a reasoning, and every reasoning is an interpretation of a Sign, as every interpretation of a Sign is at least, allied to reasoning.

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any kind of sign may enter into an argument as an important part of it, leading to the conclusion, and <sup>enacting a rôle</sup> playing a part in it similar to that of Aristotle's "middle." It <sup>is, accordingly,</sup> ~~is necessary, therefore,~~ that the introductory part of Logic should examine the different sorts

● of Meanings of signs. Aristotle's book de Interpretatione, or Περὶ ἑρμηνείας, which treats of the parts of arguments, suggests that this part of Logic might be called hermeneutic, <sup>the science of interpretations or Meanings</sup> Or it might be called Universal Grammar.  
<sup>The grammar of signs in general.</sup>

A sign, in the sense in which the word will be used throughout this volume, is any thing which represents something <sup>generally something</sup> else, its Object, to any mind that can interpret it so. More explicitly, the sign is something that appears, in place of its Object, which does not appear for itself, (at least, not in the <sup>respect</sup> way in which the sign appears,) so that the sign, is, as it were, the species, or appearance,

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virtually, or figuratively speaking, emanating from the  
Object, and <sup>capable of</sup> producing upon ~~it~~ an intelligent being an  
effect that will ~~be~~ throughout this book be called  
the Interpretant of the Sign, an effect which is recog-  
nized as due, in some sense to the Object; and it is in pro-  
ducing the Interpretant so that it is referred to <sup>the</sup> ~~its~~ Object,  
that the Sign fulfills the function <sup>its fitness for which</sup> that constitutes it a "Sign."  
This statement is merely a preliminary exposition of ~~a sign~~ in  
the sense of the word Sign, in its fulness; and it will hereafter  
appear that some of the conditions here specified can, in <sup>is a part of another Sign,</sup> ~~exceptional~~ <sup>a sign that</sup>  
cases, miss fulfillment in <sup>some</sup> ~~a~~ measure without the <sup>fragment's</sup> ~~Sign's~~  
entirely <sup>losing</sup> ~~missing~~ its character of being a Sign. In another  
place, the possibility of a more accurate definition shall be

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considered.\*

The facts, 1<sup>st</sup>, that an argument is a Sign; 2<sup>nd</sup>, that it is worse than needless, in logical Critic, to consider ~~the~~ argument from any other point of view, or to consider anything but this Sign itself, and the Signs of which it is composed, together with the relations of ~~th~~ all these to their Objects and Interpretants; 3<sup>rd</sup>, the fact that the majority of the leading species of Signs may enter into an Argument in such a way that their essential characters have to be considered in Logic; 4<sup>th</sup>, that the interpretation of any Sign, without which it ~~does~~<sup>would</sup> not function as a Sign, is somewhat closely analogous to reasoning, even when it is not strictly so; and 5<sup>th</sup>, the circumstance that, at present, no other social group than the logicians occupy themselves with the nature of Signs in general,

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~~Further referred to on p. 10~~ \* For the benefit of readers who have some acquaintance with Logic, it may be pointed out that the relation of a Sign to its Object, and its relation to its Interpretant are substantially Mill's denotation and connotation, which latter term is an offence against the ethics of terminology, especially since Mill no more than the present writer regards the two as having the same standing in relation to the term to which they belong. Mill's view is precisely that which in Abelard's time was noticed by John of Salisbury (MetaLogicus, II, xx.) as "quod fere in omnium ore celebre est, aliud scilicet esse quod appellativa [i.e. adjectives and common nouns,] significant, et aliud esse quod nominant. Nominantur singularia, sed universalia significantur." It was to express the relation between the Object and the Interpretant that Aristotle in sundry places, as in ~~the~~ Book Δ of the Metaphysics (1023b 22)

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said, διὰ τὸ γένος τοῦ εἴδους μέγος λέγεται, ἄλλως δὲ  
τὸ εἶδος τοῦ γένους μέγος, which doctrine was duly  
set forth ~~by~~ and embodied in appropriate nomencla-  
ture by every medieval logician from Scotus Erigena, (who treated  
of "ars illa quae dividit genera in species et species in genera  
resolvit," <sup>seldom failing to</sup> ~~with~~ notice ~~of~~ the reciprocal <sup>quantitative</sup> relation of ~~quant.~~ Yet  
so ill-read were the modern logicians from <sup>A.D.</sup> 1453 down, that  
when the authors of the Port Royal treatise "La Logique ou l'art de penser"  
(1<sup>re</sup> Partie, chap. vi) introduced the two words, "la compréhension" and "l'étendue"  
to express the relation, it was generally regarded, even through the XIX<sup>th</sup>  
century, as an original discovery of theirs.

~~At~~ There is nothing new in the present writer's view, except that he extends  
the doctrine to all complete signs, with vestiges of it in incomplete signs; <sup>and</sup> that

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he notices some facts which are forced upon the attention of a person who sufficiently considers relative terms, (and <sup>thereby</sup> that in so fruitful a way, that he <sup>may</sup> ~~will~~, for example, be led to important new theorems of mathematics,) but which are masked as long as one does not take such terms into consideration and, <sup>indeed,</sup> which <sup>may</sup> not appear, <sup>even</sup> if he does so, <sup>unless</sup> ~~but does not~~ his study be <sup>tolerably</sup> sufficiently intelligent. Once stated, however, they cannot be denied without gross stupidity; and the objections that have been raised against them are precisely on a level with those of the Pisan professors to Galileo's assertion that light bodies fall as fast as heavy one's, which they were enabled to do by crediting Aristotle and refusing to look at Galileo's experiment. For the writer's saying this does not imply any comparison between himself and Galileo, but

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~~said διὰ τὸ γέρας τοῦ αἰδοῦς ἡγετῆρος, ἀλλὰ δὲ τὸ εἶδος~~

only between the objectors and some of the leading doctors  
of one of the most illustrious of universities; and if it be not  
microscopically accurate, the comparison at least does not, <sup>it is hoped,</sup> trans-  
cend the bounds of allowable compliment. By the Interpre-  
tant of a Sign is meant all that the Sign can ~~or~~ signify,  
mean, ~~or~~ <sup>itself convey of new,</sup> ~~communicate~~, in contradistinction to what it may stimu-  
late the observer to find out otherwise, as, for example, by new experiences  
or by recollecting former experiences. By the Object of a Sign, is ~~in this~~  
as the term is used by the present writer, is meant that to which the Sign  
applies but which it does not express otherwise than through some other  
Sign, or through collateral experience, or through an indication of ~~what~~  
how the interpreter of it may proceed <sup>in order</sup> to identify it. Some teachers of Logic

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have pronounced these two definitions unintelligible; and therefore several examples shall <sup>presently</sup> be given to aid ~~in~~ the understanding of them. But the writer <sup>fully</sup> admits that both 'Interpretant' and 'Object' both are left by the definitions somewhat indefinite, and were intended <sup>and only confusing</sup> to be so; since for most purposes it would be idle to introduce the fine distinctions requisite to making them more definite; and when greater definiteness is useful, adjectives can and shall be provided to secure that greater definiteness.

Now for the ~~Illustrative~~ illustrative examples. ~~There is~~ Surmounting the Capitol <sup>in</sup> at Washington, above the dome, and above its cupola, there is a gigantic bronze. It is a Sign; for it is a statue, and every statue represents something other than itself. It is a statue representing an Indian woman. How do we know that? Because, it has eagle's feathers, etc. about its head

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- all these facts, <sup>considered</sup> ~~taken~~ together, have led the writer to think that ~~the~~ logicians should, for the present, consider it as a part of their duties to study the essential characters of all the principal <sup>classes</sup> ~~kinds~~ of signs, so far as their relations to their <sup>objects</sup> ~~objects~~ and Interpretants are radically different; <sup>in those different classes</sup> and therefore he will <sup>name the</sup> ~~give~~ to his ~~book~~ treatise to which these essays are introductory, "A System of Logic, considered as Semiotic."

Views of Logic more or less similar to this have been held in the past by the authors of some of the most esteemed treatises, although none of them have quite reached the author's whole conception. But the views of all the leading schools of Logic of the present day, ~~one~~ <sup>is</sup> of which there are three or four, are all decidedly opposed to those of the present writer. That common tendency of them which he

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most of all opposes is that toward regarding human consciousness as the author of rationality, instead of as more or less conforming to rationality. Even if we can find no better definition of rationality than that it is that character of arguments to which ~~an indefinitely great~~ experience and reflexion would tend indefinitely to make ~~the character to which~~ human approval conform, <sup>there still remains</sup> ~~there would be~~ a world-wide difference between that idea and the opinion just mentioned. But the thinkers of our day seem to regard the distinction between being ~~as~~ the product of the human mind and being that to which the human mind would approximate to thinking if sufficiently influenced by experience and reflection, as a <sup>distinction of</sup> altogether of secondary importance, and hardly worth notice; while to the writer, no distinction appears more momentous than that between

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"is" and "would be"