Term: Maxim of Pragmatism

Quote: ...the principle he called *pragmatism*, that is, that every concept (in contrast to qualities of feeling, images, experiences, etc.) is definable in terms of a possible purpose of conduct under hypothetical general conditions, and that from this can be deduced the best rule for rendering ideas clear, namely, “Consider what effects that *might conceivably* have practical bearings we conceive the object of our conception to have: then, our concept of those effects is the whole concept in question.” But since P not only admits the difference between a commensurable and an incommensurable length, but has specially insisted upon abnumerable (abzählbar) multitudes […] it is evident that he understands “conceivably practical bearings” in a peculiarly wide sense.


Date of Quote: 1904

Editorial Annotations: This quote has been taken from Kenneth Laine Ketner's 1983 reconstruction of Peirce's 'Autobiography'.