

'Categories' (pub. 23.03.13-18:52). Quote in M. Bergman & S. Paavola (Eds.), *The Commens Dictionary: Peirce's Terms in His Own Words. New Edition*. Retrieved from <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-comments-new-list-categories>.

Term: Categories

Quote: As early as 1860, when I knew nothing of any German philosopher except Kant, who had been my revered master for three or four years, I was much struck with a certain indication that Kant's list of categories might be a part of a larger system of conceptions. For instance, the categories of relation – reaction, causality, and subsistence – are so many different modes of *necessity*, which is a category of modality; and in like manner, the categories of quality – negation, qualification, degree, and intrinsic attribution – are so many relations of inherence, which is a category of relation. Thus, as the categories of the third group are to those of the fourth, so are those of the second to those of the third; and I fancied, at least, that the categories of quantity, unity, plurality, totality, were, in like manner, different intrinsic attributions of quality. Moreover, if I asked myself what was the difference between the three categories of quality, the answer I gave was that negation was a merely *possible* inherence, quality in degree a *contingent* inherence, and intrinsic attribution a *necessary* inherence; so that the categories of the second group are distinguished by means of those of the fourth; and in like manner, it seemed to me that to the question how the categories of quantity – unity, plurality, totality – differ, the answer should be that *totality*, or system, is the intrinsic attribution which results from reactions, *plurality* that which results from causality, and *unity* that which results from inherence. This led me to ask, what are the conceptions which are distinguished by negative unity, qualitative unity, and intrinsic unity? I also asked, what are the different kinds of necessity by which reaction, causality, and inherence are distinguished? I will not trouble the reader with my answers to these and similar questions. Suffice it to say that I seemed to myself to be blindly groping among a deranged system of conceptions; and after trying to solve the puzzle in a direct speculative, a physical, a historical, and a psychological manner, I finally concluded the only way was to attack it as Kant had done from the side of formal logic.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1898 [c.]). *Comments on 'On a New List of Categories'*.

References: CP 1.563

Date of 1898 [c.]

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