
Term: Hypothesis [as a form of reasoning]

Quote: But the manner in which they have attained to certainty indicates a very different general strength of the three kinds of inference. [—] Thus we have in order of strength Deduction, Induction, Hypothesis. Deduction, in fact, is the only demonstration; yet no one thinks of questioning a good induction, while hypothesis is proverbially dangerous. Hypotheses non fingo, said Newton, striving to place his theory on a basis of strict induction. Yet it is hypotheses with which we must start; the baby when he lies turning his fingers before his eyes is making a hypothesis as to the connection of what he sees and what he feels. Hypotheses give us our facts. Induction extends our knowledge. Deduction makes it distinct.


References: W 1:283

Date of Quote: 1865

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-logic-science-lecture-x-grounds-induction-2