

'Speculative Rhetoric' (pub. 27.01.13-11:37). 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-ideas-stray-or-stolen-about-scientific-writing-no-1-1>.

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**Term:** Speculative Rhetoric

**Quote:** ... a universal art of rhetoric, which shall be the general secret of rendering signs effective, including under the term "sign" every picture, diagram, natural cry, pointing finger, wink, knot in one's handkerchief, memory, dream, fancy, concept, indication, token, symptom, letter, numeral, word, sentence, chapter, book, library, and in short whatever, be it in the physical universe, be it in the world of thought, that, whether embodying an idea of any kind (and permit us throughout to use this term to cover purposes and feelings), or being connected with some existing object, or referring to future events through a general rule, causes something else, its interpreting sign, to be determined to a corresponding relation to the same idea, existing thing, or law. Whether there can be such a universal *art* or not, there ought, at any rate to be (and indeed there is, if students do not wonderfully deceive themselves) a science to which should be referable the fundamental principles of everything like rhetoric, – a *speculative rhetoric*, the science of the essential conditions under which a sign may determine an interpretant sign of itself and of whatever it signifies, or may, as a sign, bring about a physical result. [—]

In the Roman schools, grammar, logic, and rhetoric were felt to be akin and to make up a rounded whole called the *trivium*. This feeling was just; for the three disciplines named correspond to the three essential branches of semeiotics, of which the first, called *speculative grammar* by Duns Scotus, studies the ways in which an object can be a sign; the second, the leading part of logic, best termed *speculative critic*, studies the ways in which a sign can be related to the object independent of it that it represents; while the third is the speculative rhetoric ...

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1904). *Ideas, Stray or Stolen, about scientific writing. No. 1*. MS [R] 774.

**References:** EP 2:326-327

**Date of** 1904

**Quote:**

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