

'Verisimilitude' (pub. 19.09.14-16:14). 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-letters-paul-carus-5>.

Term: Verisimilitude

Quote: The names which I would propose for general adoption for the three different kinds of *acceptability* of propositions are

plausibility

verisimilitude

probability

The last alone seems to be capable of a certain degree of exactitude or measurement

[—]

By *verisimilitude* I mean that kind of recommendation of a proposition which consists in evidence which is insufficient because there is not enough of it, but which will amount to proof if that evidence which is not yet examined continues to be of the same virtue as that already examined, or if the evidence not at hand and that never will be complete, should be like that which is at hand. All determinations of probability ultimately rest on such verisimilitudes. I mean that if we throw a die 216 times in order to ascertain whether the probability of its turning up a six at any one throw differs decidedly from 1/6 or not, our conclusion is an affair not of *probability* as Laplace would have it, by assuming that the antecedent probabilities of the different values of the probability are equal, but is a verisimilitude or as we say a "*likelihood*."

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1890-1913). *Letters to Paul Carus*. MS [L] 77.

References: ILS 274-5; CP 8.222-224

Date of 1910 [c.]

Quote:

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