

'Abduction' (pub. 02.01.13-18:24). 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-minute-logic-chapter-i-intended-characters-treatise>.

Term: Abduction

Quote: ... the study of Abduction. Upon this subject, my doctrine has been immensely improved since my essay "A Theory of Probable Inference" was published in 1883. In what I there said about "Hypothetic Inference" I was an explorer upon untrodden ground. I committed, though I half corrected, a slight positive error, which is easily set right without essentially altering my position. But my capital error was a negative one, in not perceiving that, according to my own principles, the reasoning with which I was there dealing could not be the reasoning by which we are led to adopt a hypothesis, although I all but stated as much. But I was too much taken up in considering syllogistic forms and the doctrine of logical extension and comprehension, both of which I made more fundamental than they really are. As long as I held that opinion, my conceptions of Abduction necessarily confused two different kinds of reasoning. When, after repeated attempts, I finally succeeded in clearing the matter up, the fact shone out that probability proper had nothing to do with the validity of Abduction, unless in a doubly indirect manner. But now a number of considerations offered themselves as possibly connected with the solution of the problem, and owing to the extreme weakness of this form of inference, it was difficult to make sure that they were irrelevant. I seemed to be lost in a pathless forest, until by minute application of the first principles, I found that the categories, which I had been led to neglect from not seeing how they were to be applied, must and in fact did furnish the clue that guided me through the maze.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1902). *Minute Logic: Chapter I. Intended Characters of this Treatise*. MS [R] 425.

References: CP 2.102

Date of 1902 [c.]

Quote:

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