Term: Retrospective Science

Quote: We can now no longer postpone the recognition of a second Sub-branch of theoretical science. It is a department perfectly well recognized. It belongs by virtue of its purpose to the branch of Theory; yet varies enough in its purpose from the active science to be erected into a Sub-branch. It is the subject of Humboldt’s *Cosmos*, Comte’s *Philosophie Positive*, and Spencer’s *Synthetic Philosophy*. It is science *en retraite*, *Wissenschaft a.D*. Its design is to sum up the results of all the theoretical sciences and to study them as forming one system. It may be called *retrospective* in contradistinction to *active* science.


References: MS [R] 427:83-84

Date of Quote: 1902

Editorial Annotations: The editors of the *Collected Papers* added "or science of review" after Peirce's designation "retrospective" at CP 1.256. In a variant of the passage in question, Peirce did use the term "reviewing science", so the attribution of synonymity appears to be justified.

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-minute-logic-chapter-ii-prelogical-notions-section-i-classification-scienc-13