

'Universe of Discourse' (pub. 11.09.14-13:30). 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-multitude-and-number-1>.

---

**Term:** Universe of Discourse

**Quote:** In all discourse, or reasoning, there are *virtually* two parties. Either there are actually two parties, as when one speaker addresses an audience of one or more persons; or else one person reasons out something with himself, and even then, the difference between his conceptions and opinions before and after a given operation of thought results in his influencing himself much as one person influences another; so that we may say that even in this case there are *virtually* two parties.

The discourse of these two parties must relate to something which is *common to the experience of both*, or else they will be quite at cross-purposes. This common experience considered as a collective whole of units, the logicians for the last half century [have] commonly called the *universe of discourse*.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1897). *Multitude and Number*. MS [R] 25.

**References:** MS [R] 25:2

**Date of** 1897

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-multitude-and-number-1>