Term: Retroduction

Quote: ... Another question to be noted for later consideration is whether this first step
in inquiry can conclude, if it can be called “concluding,” otherwise than in the
interrogative mood, if grammarians will acknowledge such a mood. Certain it is
that if a series of experience does no more than suggest an idea
interrogatively, the mere occurrence of the suggestion, warrants us in
regarding the movement of thought as having the essential character of this
first stage of inquiry. I call this mode of inference, or, if you please, this step
toward inference, in which an explanatory hypothesis is first suggested, by the
name of retroduction, since it regresses from a consequent to a hypothetical
antecedent. But while this explains why I have selected the vocable
‘retroduction’ to express my meaning, I claim the right, as inventor of the term,
to make its definition to be, the passage of thought from experiencing
something, E, to predicating a concept of the mind’s creating; the subject of the
predication being a specified class to which E belongs, or an indefinite part of
such class.

The second stage of inquiry consists in deducing the consequences of the
retroductive hypothesis. The word “retroductive,” however, is surplusage; for
every hypothesis, however arbitrary, is suggested by something observed,
whether externally or internally and such suggestion is, from a purely logical
point of view, retroduction.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1908 [c.]). *A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God (G)*. MS
[R] 842.

References: MS [R] 842: 29-30

Date of Quote: 1908 [c.]

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-neglected-argument-reality-god-g-2