

'Would-be' (pub. 06.09.15-18:33). 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-note-notes-art-iii-r-1>.

Term: Would-be

Quote: ...though I am not perfectly sure of my ground (and I am a cautious reasoner), yet I am more that what you would understand by "pretty confident," that supposing one to be in a condition to assert what *would surely* be the behavior, *in any single determinate respect*, of any subject throughout an endless series of occasions of a stated kind, he *ipso facto* knows a "would-be," or habit, of that subject. It is very true, mind you, that *no* collection whatever of single acts, though it were ever so many grades greater than a simple endless series, can constitute a would-be, nor can the knowledge of single acts, whatever their multitude, tell us for *sure* of a would-be. But there are two remarks to be made; first, that in the case under consideration a person is supposed to be in a condition to assert what surely *would be* the behavior of the subject throughout the endless series of occasions – a knowledge which cannot have been derived from reasoning from its behavior on the single occasions; and second, that that which in our case renders it true, as stated, that the person supposed "*ipso facto* knows a would-be of that subject," is not the occurrence of the single acts, but the fact that the person supposed "was in condition to assert what *would surely be* the behavior of the subject throughout an endless series of occasions."ⁿ

ⁿ Meantime it may be remarked that, though an endless series of acts is not a habit, nor a would-be, it does present the first of an endless series of steps toward the full nature of a would-be.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1910). *Note (Notes on Art. III) [R]*. MS [R] 703.

References: CP 2.667

Date of 1910

Quote:

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