

'Abduction' (pub. 03.01.13-16:58). 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-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-vii-deleted-passage>.

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**Term:** Abduction

**Quote:** The maxim of Pragmatism, if it is sound, or whatever ought to replace it, if it is not sound, is nothing else than the logic of abduction.

A mass of facts is before us. We go through them. We examine them. We find them a confused snarl, an impenetrable jungle. We are unable to hold them in our minds. We endeavor to set them down upon paper; but they seem so multiplex intricate that we can neither satisfy ourselves that what we have set down represents the facts, nor can we get any clear idea of what it is that we have set down. But suddenly, while we are poring over our digest of the facts and are endeavoring to set them into order, it occurs to us that if we were to assume something to be true that we do not know to be true, these facts would arrange themselves luminously. That is *abduction*. [—]

The anticipation that such might be the truth, not amounting to positive assertion yet by no means sinking to a recognition of a bare possibility, was the Abductive conclusion.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture VII, a deleted passage*. MS [R] 315.

**References:** PPM 282-283

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-harvard-lectures-pragmatism-lecture-vii-deleted-passage>