

'Prescission' (pub. 18.07.15-14:27). 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-new-list-categories-16>.

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**Term:** Prescission

**Quote:** The terms "prescission" and "abstraction," which were formerly applied to every kind of separation, are now limited, not merely to mental separation, but to that which arises from *attention* to one element and *neglect* of the other. Exclusive attention consists in a definite conception or *supposition* of one part of an object, without any supposition of the other. Abstraction or prescission ought to be carefully distinguished from two other modes of mental separation, which may be termed *discrimination* and *dissociation*. [—]

Prescission is not a reciprocal process. It is frequently the case, that, while *A* cannot be prescinded from *B*, *B* can be prescinded from *A*. This circumstance is accounted for as follows. Elementary conceptions only arise upon the occasion of experience; that is, they are produced for the first time according to a general law, the condition of which is the existence of certain impressions. Now if a conception does not reduce the impressions upon which it follows to unity, it is a mere arbitrary addition to these latter; and elementary conceptions do not arise thus arbitrarily. But if the impressions could be definitely comprehended without the conception, this latter would not reduce them to unity. Hence, the impressions (or more immediate conceptions) cannot be definitely conceived or attended to, to the neglect of an elementary conception which reduces them to unity. On the other hand, when such a conception has once been obtained, there is, in general, no reason why the premisses which have occasioned it should not be neglected, and therefore the explaining conception may frequently be prescinded from the more immediate ones and from the impressions.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1867). On a New List of Categories. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 7, 287-298.

**References:** W 2:50-1; CP 1.549

**Date of** 1867

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-new-list-categories-16>