

Would-be

1907 | Pragmatism | EP 2:402; CP 5.467

...no agglomeration of actual happenings can ever completely fill up the meaning of a "would-be."

1910 | Note (Notes on Art. III) [R] | CP 2.667

...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.

1913 | A Study of How to Reason Safely and Efficiently | MS [R] 681:22

...by a *Habit* I shall mean a character of anything, say of B, this character consisting in the fact that under circumstances of a certain kind, say A, B *would* tend to be such as is signified by a determinate predicate, say C. The same thing might be more briefly expressed by saying that I call any *real* "Would-be" a *habit* of the subject of such predication, but by stating the matter more fully I bring into prominence the fact that a "Would-be" is a relation between three objects, A, B, and C.

...a "would-be" refers to a whole range, or general description, of possibilities which it asserts to be alike in a certain respect; so that two directly opposite assertions of would-be's might both be false, just as two directly opposite states of things *might-be* true.