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http://www.commens.org/bibliography/journal_article/glazer-trip-2017-semiotics-emotional-expression, 02.01.2026.

Type: Article in Journal

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Title: The Semiotics of Emotional Expression

Year: 2017

Journal: Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society

Volume: 53

Issue: 2

Pages: 189-215

Keywords: Emotion

Abstract: Charles Sanders Peirce famously distinguishes between three types of sign, depending on how the sign refers to its object. An 'icon' refers by resemblance. An 'index' refers by a physical connection. And a 'symbol' refers by habit or convention. In this paper I argue that emotional expressions-e.g. cries of sadness, laughs of amusement, and scowls of anger-refer to emotions in none of these ways. Instead, they refer to their objects by manifesting them, or by enabling the perception of them. Thus, a cry signifies sadness because an observer who hears a cry can hear sadness, a laugh signifies joy because an observer who hears a laugh can hear joy, and a scowl signifies anger because an observer who sees a scowl can see anger. Although this analysis of emotional expression challenges a common understanding of Peirce's theory of signs, I demonstrate that it is ultimately consistent with Peirce's views on signification, emotion, and perception.

ISSN: 00091774

Language: English