Term: Symbol

Quote: It seems certainly the truest statement for most languages to say that a *symbol* is a conventional sign which being attached to an object signifies that that object has certain characters. But a symbol, in itself, is a mere dream; it does not show what it is talking about. It needs to be connected with its object. For that purpose, an *index* is indispensable. No other kind of sign will answer the purpose. That a *word* cannot in strictness of speech be an index is evident from this, that a word is general - it occurs often, and every time it occurs, it is the same word, and if it has any meaning as a *word*, it has the same meaning every time it occurs; while an index is essentially an affair of here and now. A word is the same word every time it occurs and if it has any meaning has always the same meaning; but *this* and *that* have different applications every time they occur.


References: MS 409:95-96

Date of Quote: 1893-1895 [c.]

Editorial Annotations: Partially published at CP 4.56

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