Symbol

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

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