

'Sign' (pub. 26.11.14-14:05). 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-meaning-preface-0>.

Term: Sign

Quote: ...the word Sign will be used throughout the volume to denote an Object perceptible, or only imaginable, or even unimaginable in one sense, – for the word 'fast', which is a Sign, is not imaginable, since it is not *this word itself* that can be set down on paper or pronounced, but only *an instance* of it and since it is the very same word when it is written as it is when it is pronounced, but is one word when it means 'rapidly' and quite another when it means 'immovable,' and a third when it refers to abstinence. But in order that anything should be a Sign, it must "represent," as we say, something else, called its *Object*, although the condition that a Sign must be other than its Object is perhaps arbitrary, since, if we insist upon it we must make an exception in the case of a Sign that is a part of a Sign. [—]

It is not only essential to a Sign that it shall represent an Object, but it is at least as much so that it should be capable of Interpretation by a mind; and until it be so interpreted it does not function as a Sign. That is to say, *the Sign must act upon the mind of the Interpreter in such a way that the latter shall be affected substantially as if by the Object* (for so far as the Sign is deceptive it is not a Sign of its Object;) though the Interpreter will pe[r]ceive that it is the Sign and not the Object itself that directly affects him.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1909). *Meaning Preface*. MS [R] 637.

References: MS [R] 637:31-32

Date of 1909

Quote:

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