

'Sign' (pub. 14.10.15-13:47). 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-pragmatism-48>.

Term: Sign

Quote: A *sign* is whatever there may be whose intent is to *mediate between an utterer of it and an interpreter of it*, both being *repositories of thought*, or *quasi-minds*, by *conveying a meaning* from the former to the latter. We may say that the *sign* is *moulded* to the *meaning* in the *quasi-mind* that *utters* it, where it was, *virtually* at least, (i.e. if not in fact, yet the *moulding* of the *sign* took place as if it had been there,) already an ingredient of *thought*. But *thought* being itself a *sign* the *meaning* must have been *conveyed* to that *quasi-mind*, from some anterior *utterer* of the *thought*, of which the *utterer* of the *moulded sign* had been the interpreter. The *meaning* of the *moulded sign* being conveyed to its interpreter, became the *meaning* of a *thought* in that *quasi-mind*; and as there *conveyed* in a *thought-sign* required an interpreter, the *interpreter* of the *moulded sign* becoming the *utterer* of this new *thought-sign*.

Enough of the italics! The next step toward our definition is the consideration that a chain of signs that conveys a given meaning can, in many ways, at any rate, be neither beginningless nor endless. Still, it must be of a mental nature. There must then be some other mental element than a sign that can endow a sign with a meaning: and some one upon which the meaning can be ultimately expended.

Source: Peirce, C. S. (1907). *Pragmatism*. MS [R] 318.

References: MS [R] 318:18-9

Date of 1907

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