Term: Icon

Quote: An icon is a pure image, not necessarily visual. Being a pure image it involves no profession of being a sign; because such profession would be a sign not of the nature of an image. There is no known cause making it an image of its object; for if there were it would in part have a significant character of the Indexical type. [—] All icons, from mirror-images to algebraic formulae, are much alike, committing themselves to nothing at all, yet the source of all our information. They play in knowledge a part iconized by that played in evolution, according to the Darwinian theory, by fortuitous variations in reproduction.

It will be observed that an icon represents whatever object it may represent by virtue of its own quality, and determines whatever interpretant it may determine by virtue of its own quality.


References: MS [R] 599:41-43

Date of Quote: 1902 [c.]

URL: http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-reasons-rules-6