

# Figment

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1878 | How to Make Our Ideas Clear | W 3:271; CP 5.405

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A figment is a product of somebody's imagination; it has such characters as his thought impresses upon it.

1903 | Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism: Lecture VI | PPM 221-2; CP 5.152

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It is true that when the Arabian romancer tells us that there was a lady named Scherherazade, he does not mean to be understood as speaking of the world of outward realities, and there is a great deal of fiction in what he is talking about. For the *fictive* is that whose characters depend upon what characters somebody attributes to it; and the story is, of course, the mere creation of the poet's thought. Nevertheless, once he has imagined Scherherazade and made her young, beautiful, and endowed with a gift of spinning stories, it becomes a real fact that so he has imagined her, which fact he cannot destroy by pretending or thinking that he imagined her to be otherwise.

1907 | The Fourth Curiosity | CP 6.328

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...the question of whether anything is *real* or is a *figment* is the question what a word or other symbol or concept *denotes*. If the attributes of or possible true assertions about an object could vary according to the way in which you or I or any man or actual body of single men, living at any time or times, might think *about that object*, then that object is what I call a *figment*.

1910 | The Rationale of Reason | MS [R] 659:36

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As the contrary of "real" I employ the word *fictile*, without any implication of intentional falsification, any more than its absence.