

# Representation

1866 | Lowell Lectures on The Logic of Science; or Induction and Hypothesis: Lecture VII | W 1:466

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...a representation is something which stands for something. I will not undertake to analyze [...] this conception of *standing for* something — but, it is sufficiently plain that it involves the standing *to* something *for* something.

1873 | On Representations | W 3:65-6

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A representation is an object which stands for another, so that an experience of the former affords us a knowledge of the latter. Three things are essential to its existence. In the first place, it must like any other object have qualities independent of its meaning. The printed word 'man', for example, consists of three letters, which have certain shapes. It is only through an acquaintance with such distinctive characters that we are able to penetrate to the meaning of a sign. I term such qualities the material qualities of the representation, to distinguish them from those imputed qualities which can only be seen by the mind's eye. The printed word *white* is white as to its imputed quality but is materially speaking black or red according to the color of the ink. In the second place, a true representation must have a real connection with its object. If a weathercock indicates the direction of the wind it is because the wind really turns it round. If the portrait of a man of a past generation shows me how he looked, it is because his appearance really determined the appearance of the picture by a train of causation acting through the mind of the artist. If a prediction is trustworthy, it is because those antecedents from which the predicted event follows as a consequence have had a real effect in giving rise to the prediction. In the third place, we cannot call anything a representation which does not appeal to some mind. The idea of the representing object excites in the mind an idea of the represented object, according to some principle of association already established as a habit of that mind.

1873 | On Representations | W 3:62

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A representation is an object which stands for another so that an experience of the former affords us a knowledge of the latter. There are three essential conditions to which every representation must conform. It must in the first place like any other object have qualities independent of its meaning. It is only through a knowledge of these that we acquire any information concerning the object it represents. Thus, the word 'man' as printed, has three letters; these letters have certain shapes, and are black. I term such characters, the material qualities of the representation. In the 2nd place a representation must have a real causal connection with its object. If a weathercock indicates the direction of the wind it is because the wind really turns it round. If the portrait of a man of a past generation tells me how he looked it is because his appearance really determined the appearance of the picture by a train of causation, acting through the mind of the painter. If a prediction is trustworthy it is because those antecedents of which the predicted event is the necessary consequence had a real effect in producing the prediction. In the third place, every representation addresses itself to a mind. It is only in so far as

it does this that it is a representation. The idea of the representation itself excites in the mind another idea and in order that it may do this it is necessary that some principle of association between the two ideas should already be established in that mind. These three conditions serve to define the nature of a representation.

Every idea is a representation.

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1873 | Logic. Chap. 5th | W 3:76; CP 7.355-6

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...a thing which stands for another thing is a representation or sign. So that it appears that every species of actual cognition is of the nature of a sign. [—]

Let us examine some of the characters of signs in general. A sign must in the first place have some qualities in itself which serve to distinguish it, a word must have a peculiar sound different from the sound of another word; but it makes no difference what the sound is, so long as it is something distinguishable. In the next place, a sign must have a real physical connection with the thing it signifies so as to be affected by that thing. A weather-cock, which is a sign of the direction of the wind, must really turn with the wind. This word in this connection is an indirect one; but unless there be some way or other which shall connect words with the things they signify, and shall ensure their correspondence with them, they have no value as signs of those things. Whatever has these two characters is fit to become a sign. It is at least a symptom, but it is not actually a sign unless it is used as such; that is unless it is interpreted to thought and addresses itself to some mind.

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1903 [c.] | Logical Tracts. No. 1. On Existential Graphs | MS [R] 491:1

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*Representation* is a relation of one thing, – the *representamen*, or sign – to another, – the *object*, – this relation consisting in the determination of a third, – the *interpretant* representamen, – to be in the same mode of relation to the second as the first is to that second.

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1904 [c.] | Draft of Nichols Review [C] | CP 8.191

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“Representation” and “sign” are synonyms.

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1905 | An Attempt to state systematically the Doctrine of the Census in Geometrical Topics or Topical Geometry, more commonly called "Topologie" in German books; Being A Mathematical-Logical Recreation of C. S. Peirce following the lead of J. B. Listing's paper in the "Göttinger Abhandlungen" | MS [R] 145(s)

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*Representation*, by which I mean the function of a sign in general, is a *combinant*, or *trifile*, relation; since it subsists between the *sign*, the *object* represented, and the interpretant or sign of the same object determined by the sign in the mind of the person addressed, or in other field of signification.