

Charles S. Peirce MS 339.664,663 360r,360v Nov. 1, 1909
Transcribed by Joseph Ransdell

A "Sign" is an ens (something, of any kind), which in addition to possessing characters such as an other ens of the same kind might possess without being a "Sign"[,] is capable of [~~causing an effect called here an Interpretant, upon a conscious being, which is as if it were in some way due, or in some mode corresponded to such as might be regarded as mentally affecting some conscious~~] affecting some conscious Being so as to tend to produce in him a disposition, action, or imagination as if some state of things called the substance, signification, predicate, or (here particularly) the Interpretant of the Sign were more definitely realized in reference to an object (other than the sign itself) or in [. . .]

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Well, on the whole, -- or rather not on the whole by any means, but as another phase of reflexion, -- I think this won't do. This is made plain to me by the impossibility along this line to do justice to the Object in all its generality. I think I must say

A "Sign" is an Ens (i.e. is something) which in addition to being either imagined, perceived, or conceived, as anything of which we are to have any experience or dealings must be, must also be taken as a revelation of something else, -- i.e. it conveys to its interpreter[,] the man who practically understands the particular system of substitution it employs, the interpreter, as we call him, not experience of that other thing, but in some measure the same effect, with such modification as the interpreter if sufficiently qualified (though it is not possible that he should be so in all cases, among examples that of its being skillfully designed to deceive) may expect or at least suspect. It not only produces this effect, which is variously called its Substance, Signification, and in particular here through its Interpretant, but it also enables the interpreter [. . .]

On The Opposite Page Better Put [This apparently refers to the paragraph on MS 339.663 which begins just below:]

A "Sign" is an Ens (i.e. something of some and it may be of any category of being) which not only has a capacity of being either imagined, perceived, or conceived, or anything of the same category of Being of which one happens to have enough of the right kind of dealing maybe but also has the property of producing upon a person in whom certain conditions are fulfilled effects that another thing or a collection of other things would produce, those conditions being the possession by that person of a practical understanding of the system of correspondence.

But this distinction ought to be prefaced with the remark that no event of learning anything brings per se any other knowledge than that which is learned; and in particular does not include any knowledge about that event of learning itself. Thus seeing does [not] include a sight of the eye or any knowledge about the learning itself. True, Hamilton and others insist that to know includes the knower's knowing that he knows; and in the limited sense in which he has used the word know, one must admit that something is true which these words seem to express. Nevertheless, merely knowing a fact does not include this knowledge that that very act per se includes any knowledge about itself, any more than seeing includes any vision of the event of sight itself. When one comes to [*several illegible words*] the edges in any solid that has no holes through it nor any hole enclosed in it, the number of edges is less by 2 than the sum of the numbers of its distinct surfaces and summits (supposing even one of the former is bounded by three or more edges and that every one of the latter simply extends from one summit to another), his thought is exclusively occupied with the [*illegible word*] and its parts, and he is not thinking at all of himself or his knowledge. And if Hamilton does not call an assent, however unqualified and confident, by the name of "knowledge" unless it be accompanied by a recognition of its acceptance by its knower, then it is undoubtedly true that to know is to know that one knows that which one knows, but it still remains false that to know is to know that one knows that one knows one's knowledge of the knowing that one knows it, in the sense of actually thinking it, though one undoubtedly has what the scholastics call an habitual knowledge of it, that is to say a disposition to accept it as soon as the question occurs to the person supposed.