

'Percept' (pub. 20.07.15-18:52). 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-telepathy-10>.

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**Term:** Percept

**Quote:** ...two utterly different kinds of elements go to compose any percept. In the first place, there are the qualities of feeling or sensation, each of which is something positive and *sui generis*, being such as it is quite regardless of how or what anything else is. On account of this self-sufficiency, it is convenient to call these the elements of "Firstness." In the percept, these elements of Firstness are perceived to be connected in definite ways. A visual percept of a chair has a definite shape. If it is yellow with a green cushion, that is quite different from being green with a yellow cushion. These connectives are directly perceived, and the perception of each of them is a perception at once of two opposed objects, - a double awareness. In respect to each of these connections, one part of the percept appears as it does *relatively to a second part*. Hence, it is convenient to call them elements of "Secondness." The vividness with which a percept stands out is an element of secondness; because the percept is vivid in proportion to the intensity of its effect upon the perceiver. These elements of secondness bring with them the peculiar singleness of the percept. This singleness consists in a double definiteness. For on the one hand, the percept contains no blank gaps which, in representing it, we are free to fill as we like. What I mean will be seen if we consider any knowledge we can have of the future. I heard somebody say that the Brooklyn bridge would fall some day. The only way in which he could even think he knew that would be by knowing that any bridge I might select that should be constructed in a certain way would fall. There is no such universality about the percept. It is quite individual. On the other hand, the definiteness of the percept is of a perfectly explicit kind. In any knowledge of the past something is, as it were, held in reserve. There is an indicated gap which we are not free to fill but which further information may fill. We know that the Sphinx was made by *some* king of Egypt. But what one? The percept, however, exhibits itself in full. These two kinds of definiteness, first, that the percept offers no range of freedom to anybody who may undertake to represent it, and secondly, that it reserves no freedom to itself to be one way or another way, taken together, constitute that utter absence of "range" which is called the singularity, or singleness, of the percept, the one making it individual and the other positive. The percept is, besides, whole and undivided. It has parts, in the sense that in thought it can be separated; but it does not represent itself to have parts. In its mode of being as a percept it is one single and undivided whole.

**Source:** Peirce, C. S. (1903). *Telepathy*. MS [R] 881.

**References:** CP 7.625

**Date of** 1903

**Quote:**

**URL:** <http://www.commens.org/dictionary/entry/quote-telepathy-10>