

SD5906

Globalization

How People Connect Through Symbols

School of Design
The Polytechnic University of Hong Kong

Format of Today's Presentation

1. Psychology of Symbols
2. Symbols - Origin & definitions
3. Symbols - Language
4. Symbols - Transformative opportunity?

Psychology of Symbols

- Embodied Action (least abstract)
- Tool Making & Using (abstract)
- Symbolic Manipulation (most abstract)

Psychology of Symbols

“Things that stand for actual things” - Signs

“Things that stand for metaphysical concepts” - Symbols

- Carl Jung

Language: Symbolism v/s Metaphor

'I am throwing a towel'

'Add oil'

Symbols - origins

Greek σύμβολον *symbolon*

"token, watchword"

"Something which stands for something else"

Definitions

*A symbol is an energy evoking,
and directing, agent.*

- Joseph Campbell (The Symbol without meaning)

Definitions

"Concepts and words are symbols, just as visions, rituals, and images are; so too are the manners and customs of daily life. Through all of these a transcendent reality is mirrored. There are so many metaphors reflecting and implying something which, though thus variously expressed, is ineffable, though thus rendered multiform, remains inscrutable. Symbols hold the mind to truth but are not themselves the truth, hence it is delusory to borrow them. Each civilization, every age, must bring forth its own.

- Heinrich Zimmer

Definitions

A symbol ... is a visual image or sign representing an idea -- a deeper indicator of a universal truth

- book '*Signs and Symbols*'

Pictographic Symbol as Language (From early languages to Emojis)


Chinese language - Symbolic?





Egyptian Language

HYMN TO OSIRIS¹

XVIIITH DYNASTY, ABOUT B.C. 1500

























1. 
anetch hra-k Asar neb heh suten neteru
 Homage to thee, Osiris, lord of eternity, king of the gods,


ash rennu tcheser kheperu sheta aru em
 many of names, holy of creations, hidden of forms in


erperu shepses ka pu khent Tattu ur
 the temples, whose *ka* is venerated, chief of Tattu, great one

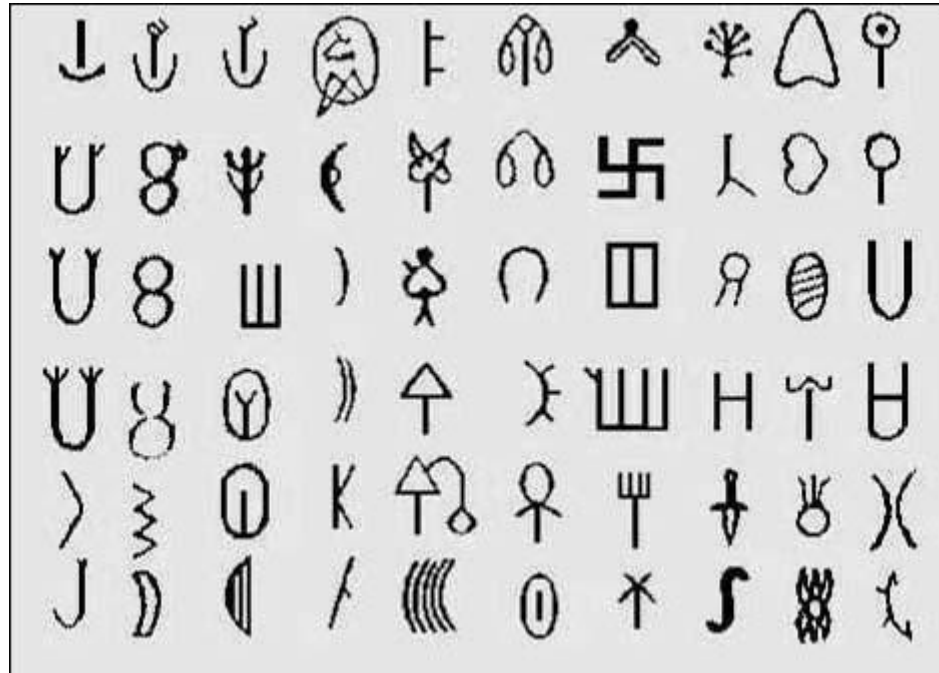
<http://anylanguageatall411.blogspot.com/2015/04/first-lessons-in-egyptian-hieroglyphic.html>

Mesopotamia Language

MEANING		OUTLINE CHARACTER, B. C. 3500	ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM, B. C. 2500	ASSYRIAN, B. C. 700	LATE BABYLONIAN, B. C. 500
1.	The sun				
2.	God, heaven				
3.	Mountain				
4.	Man				
5.	Ox				
6.	Fish				

<https://sites.google.com/site/mesopotamiantravelagency/what-to-expect/language>

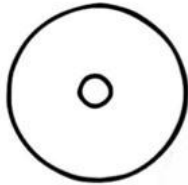
Indus Valley language



<http://www.crystalinks.com/indus.html>

Different symbols - challenges?

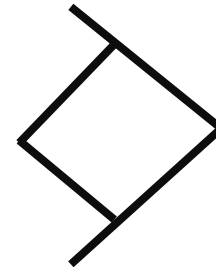
Egypt



China



Mesopotamia



Current & Future use



- <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/a-brief-history-of-the-origin-of-the-computer-icon>

Signs v/s Symbols

A sign points to something we already know.

A symbol, however, points to something unknown and mysterious, and is often the precursor to a **transformation**.

- C.G. Jung (*Analytical psychology*,)

Signs



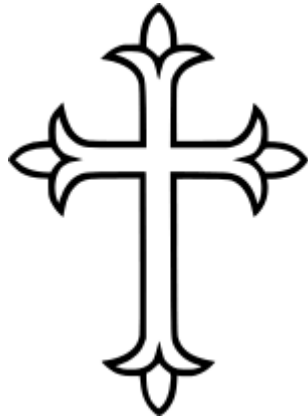
<https://legallogik.com/brands-vs-trademarks/>

Symbols



www.madeladay.com

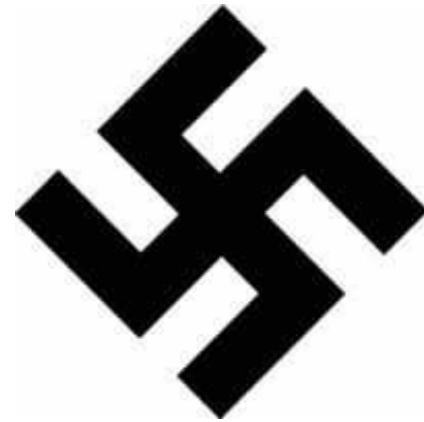
Sign or symbol?



Atheist - a sign for church

Christians - symbolic, pointing to God

Sign or symbol?



Hindus - symbolic (divine, spirituality)
Non Hindus - Nazi emblem

Practical Implications

Image -> confirmation (no development)

Image -> Meaning? Mystery?

Then the **symbol** may lead to a significant and valuable **transformation** spiritual awareness, personal growth and relationships

Questions?

Thank You