

# TRACING THE ORIGINS OF CONTEXTUALISM: FROM PEIRCE TO RECANATI

Bernardo Marques  
(École Normale Supérieure)

## Résumé

Au cours des dernières décennies, un intérêt croissant s'est manifesté pour relier la philosophie de Charles S. Peirce aux thèmes contemporains de la philosophie du langage et de l'esprit. Dans cet article, nous souhaitons présenter François Recanati comme un successeur des vues de Peirce sur le langage au sein de la tradition analytique. En mettant l'accent sur cette lignée intellectuelle commune, nous souhaitons placer des tendances telles que l'indexicalisme, le contextualisme et l'anti-descriptivisme dans une perspective plus large. Nous poursuivons cet objectif en examinant les liens historiques entre les travaux de Peirce, Grice et Recanati. En particulier, nous soutenons que la position de Peirce s'aligne sur le contextualisme radical de Recanati, soutenant qu'aucune phrase n'exprime une proposition complète sans prendre en compte son contexte pragmatique.

## Abstract

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest in connecting Charles S. Peirce's philosophy with contemporary topics in the philosophy of language and mind. In this paper, we aim to present François Recanati as a successor to Peirce's views on language within the analytic tradition. By emphasising this shared intellectual lineage, we aim to place trends like indexicalism, contextualism, and anti-descriptivism in a broader perspective. We pursue this goal by examining the historical connections between the works of Peirce, Grice, and Recanati. In particular, we argue that Peirce's position aligns with Recanati's radical contextualism, maintaining that no sentence expresses a complete proposition without taking its pragmatic context into account.

## 1. Introduction

At first glance, the connection between Charles S. Peirce and François Recanati may appear elusive. Peirce, a nineteenth-century logician, is celebrated as the pioneer of pragmatism and semiotics, while Recanati is a leading figure in contemporary analytic philosophy, specialising in philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. However, upon closer examination, the association between these two thinkers becomes less surprising. While previous literature has hinted at this connection (Girel 2014), and Recanati himself occasionally acknowledges Peirce's influence, a study on the extent of this influence remains to be explored.

A brief survey of Recanati's work reveals several allusions to Peirce. For instance, Recanati recognises « [t]hat reference is fundamentally relational and (therefore) context-sensitive is an old view that traces back to Peirce, and which has regularly surfaced in contemporary philosophy, » (Recanati 2018, 194) he credits Peirce for having « introduced the type/token discussion into the philosophy of language » (Recanati 2012, 58) and his influence on the way « indexicals systematically exploit the contextual relations in which we stand to what we talk about. » (Recanati 2012, 21) Additionally, Recanati's long-standing engagement with Peirce is evidenced by his lesser-known interventions at Lacan's seminar at the Panthéon-Sorbonne. For instance, in a session dated June 14, 1972, Recanati offered a detailed exposition of Peirce's semiotic framework.

While Recanati's occasional references to Peirce and his recognition of Peirce's influence on his thought are intriguing, they alone are not sufficient to establish a causal relationship. Our aim is to defend a stronger claim and provide a first comprehensive exploration of the extent of Peirce's influence on Recanati. This unexplored dialogue promises to uncover intriguing insights into the similarity between both philosophers, and also into the historical development of some present-day ideas in contemporary philosophy of language. Ultimately, if successful, we hope to approximate Peirce's treatment of language with Recanati's radical contextualism. As understood by Recanati, radical contextualism states that « [t]he conditions of application for words must be contextually determined, like the reference of indexicals. What words, *qua* linguistic types, are associated with are not abstract conditions of application, but rather *particular applications*. » (Recanati 2004, 147-48)

Our investigation faces two main challenges. Firstly, we must navigate the temporal distance between Peirce and Recanati and the significant developments and transformations, both methodological and institutional, that philosophy has undergone in the intervening years. Secondly, we must confront the fragmentary nature of Peirce's work, which demands a process of reconstruction. Consequently, such a reconstruction must grapple with the fragmentary nature of Peirce's writings, as well as the alterations they underwent over time, and the potential biases of interpreters.

Therefore, this paper primarily undertakes a historical exploration to demonstrate that the connection between Peirce and Recanati's work transcends mere intellectual curiosity. By emphasising this shared lineage, we aim to place underlying trends such as indexicalism, contextualism, and anti-descriptivism within a broader perspective. While a comprehensive investigation of these topics exceeds the scope of this paper, our focus will be on portraying Recanati as a successor to Peircean philosophy within the analytic framework. We posit that this perspective might offer a pathway, as Recanati suggests, to reframe the history of philosophy of language in the twentieth century, particularly in terms of an opposition between Russell and Peirce.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section provides an overview of Peirce's semiotics, focussing on the main elements underpinning his understanding of language. The second section considers Peirce's views on proper names, drawing comparisons with the works of Mill, Russell, Kripke, and Recanati. While identifying similarities with Recanati's viewpoint on proper names, the third section proposes a deeper connection between Peirce and Recanati, emphasising the influence of Grice's work. Specifically, we highlight how Recanati's criticism of Grice aligns with Peirce's insights, particularly in rejecting the notion of an independent component of meaning detached from context. Finally, the concluding section synthesises the insights gathered from the preceding sections to elucidate their contributions to a shared radical contextualist framework embraced by both thinkers.

## 2. From Speculative Grammar to Philosophy of Language

In recent years, we have assisted to multiple studies that consider Peirce's work taking as viewpoint contemporary preoccupations in philosophy of language.<sup>1</sup> This is possible even if Peirce was not an analytic philosopher, and that his motivations, methodology, as well as the questionings of his work must be placed primarily with respect to the nineteenth century

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<sup>1</sup> Among these, we can point out the works of Agler (2010), Bellucci (2021), Boersema (2002), Brock (1997), DiLeo (1997), Pape (1982), Pietarinen (2010), Thibaud (1987), Tiercelin (2006) and Weber (2008) on Peirce's theory of names ; Rellstab (2008) on Peirce's views on natural language and communication (including its consequences for the semantics-pragmatics interface) ; Atkin (2008a, 2008b) on the comparison with John Perry's distinction between 'referential' and 'reflexive' content ; Boyd (2016) and Chauviré (2011) on Peirce's treatment of assertion and speech acts ; and Boersema (2008) on Peirce's treatment of reference.

algebra of logic tradition. To achieve this objective, it is imperative to adopt Peirce's perspective on language.<sup>2</sup> Peirce's analysis of language is grounded in semiotics, which views language as a system of signs. At its core lies the triadic relation that will be central to our analysis. For Peirce, semiosis is « an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of *three* subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs. » (Peirce, CP 5.584) In addition to being an indispensable component of Peirce's philosophy, «every genuine triadic relation involves meaning, as meaning is obviously a triadic relation » (Peirce, CP1.345).

To focus our inquiry on natural language, we must examine how this triad intersects with the treatment of language as a system of signs. This transition is facilitated by a later development in Peirce's philosophy, wherein he asserts that « Logic, in its general sense, is, as I believe I have shown, only another name for semiotic, the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs » (Peirce 1897, CP 2.227). As Fisch summarises, Peirce transitions from considering 'logic-within-semiotic' to 'logic-as-semeiotic' (Fisch 1986, 338). This enables us to move forward, as Peirce divides logic into three branches, each with distinct objectives. In the Syllabus for the Lowell Institute Lectures in 1903, Peirce outlines :

“All thought being performed by means of signs, logic may be regarded as the science of the general laws of signs. It has three branches: (1) *Speculative Grammar*, or the general theory of the nature and meanings of signs, whether they be icons, indices, or symbols; (2) *Critic*, which classifies arguments and determines the validity and degree of force of each kind; (3) *Methodetic*, which studies the methods that ought to be pursued in the investigation, in the exposition, and in the application of truth.” (Peirce 1903, EP 2.260, cf. Paavola 2004)

Thus, Peirce categorises logic into three branches : *critical logic*, *speculative grammar*, and *methodetic*.<sup>3</sup> Despite undergoing refinement over time, this classification proves valuable for our purposes. We realise that our concern lies solely with the branch of speculative grammar<sup>4</sup> through which, as Shapiro comments, « Peirce manifests in a fundamental way the pervasive and continuing influence of medieval logic, particularly ideas connected with the notion of Speculative Grammar in the Middle Ages » (Shapiro 1983, 26). In this way, speculative grammar « defines and classifies signs and studies the modes on signifying in general » (Pietarinen 2019, 243), resulting in Rellstab's observation that « the inventory of natural language can be interpreted as being part of speculative grammar. » (Rellstab 2008, 317)

This brings us closer to engaging in dialogue with Recanati's work, as Peirce considers « *Speculative Grammar*, or the general theory of the nature and meanings of signs, whether they be icons, indices, or symbols » (Peirce 1903, EP 2.260). Consequently, to study the modes of signifying in natural language, we must begin by examining how Peirce distinguishes three types of signs and briefly characterising each of them. This marks the initial state, bearing in mind that each member of the triad will unfold into several types.

Firstly, Peirce defines symbols as « a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the Symbol to be

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<sup>2</sup> We aim to minimise the impact of the numerous revisions of Peirce's work throughout his lifetime. However, when the question cannot be ignored, our focus will primarily be on the accounts provided by the late Peirce.

<sup>3</sup> While it may be tempting to equate Peirce's categories with the contemporary divisions of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, as introduced by Morris (1938), doing so would introduce bias and impede our understanding of the idiosyncrasy of Peirce's approach. This association is made, for instance, by Liszka, who suggests that « [t]hese divisions are probably more familiar to many readers under Charles Morris's nomenclature: syntax or syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics » (Liszka 1996, 10).

<sup>4</sup> Bellucci (2017) highlights the increasing importance of speculative grammar in Peirce's later work, identifying three main stages through which Peirce has refined this notion.

interpreted as referring to that Object. It is thus itself a general type or law, that is, is a Legisign. » (Peirce, CP 2.249) Secondly, an icon « refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not. It is true that unless there really is such an Object, the Icon does not act as a sign; but this has nothing to do with its character as a sign. » (Peirce, CP 2.247) Thirdly, an index « is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object. » (Peirce, CP 2.248)

Indexes play a crucial role in our discussion, as Peirce asserts that « Icons and indices assert nothing » (Peirce, CP 2.291). To grasp their importance, we can explore Peirce's distinction between 'pure' and 'degenerated' cases. Pure cases involves a sign which « is related to its object only in consequence of a mental association, and depends upon a habit », as those « signs are always abstract and general, because habits are general rules to which the organism has become subjected. They are, for the most part, conventional or arbitrary » (Peirce 1885, W5.162). On the other hand, degenerate cases involve pairs, where « two at least are in dual relations which constitute the triple relation. » (Peirce 1885, W5.163) This distinction leads Peirce to consider situations in which « the relation of the sign to its object does not lie in a mental association, » resulting in « a direct dual relation of the sign to its object independent of the mind using the sign » (Peirce 1885, W5.163), known as an 'index'<sup>5</sup> :

“The index asserts nothing; it only says ‘There!’ It takes hold of our eyes, as it were, and forcibly directs them to a particular object, and there it stops. Demonstrative and relative pronouns are nearly pure indices, because they denote things without describing them; so are the letters on a geometrical diagram, and the subscript numbers which in algebra distinguish one value from another without saying what those values are.” (Peirce 1885, W 5.163)

Peirce could not have made such considerations before his collaborative logical work with Mitchell in the 1880s, which has significant implications when examining proper names. Prior to this period, Peirce held that items that 'assert nothing' were not possible, as they would necessitate a semiotic status distinct from every other element in the chain. However, by this time, he acknowledges that « indices can immediately denote an object without the need of interpreting previous signs of the same object » (Gava 2014b, 346).

The emerging picture is captured by Recanati, who uses 'fire' as an example: « [a]s a sign of fire, smoke is an index; it signifies in virtue of its causal relation to fire. » Consequently, « [t]he word 'fire' is a symbol: it is a sign of fire in virtue of the conventions of the English language. » In the case of indexicals, Recanati writes that « [t]hey are symbols, according to Peirce: like the word 'fire,' they have meaning in virtue of the semantic conventions of English [...] [b]ut in context, indexicals mean what they do in virtue of contextual relations holding between tokens of the indexical and their referent. » This draws our attention to the fact that, through this distinction, « Peirce introduced the type/token discussion into the philosophy of language ». As Recanati explains, « the relation between a token of 'T' and its referent is like the relation between smoke and fire. Since the reference of an indexical depends upon a contextual relation to other things in the context of tokening, indexicals are indices. Thus they are both symbols and indices, and belong to the hybrid category of 'indexical symbols'. Their most interesting feature actually is the connection between the standing meaning of the type and the relational meaning of the token: what the meaning of the type encodes is the relation which holds between the token and the referent » (Recanati 2013, 1842).

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<sup>5</sup> Peirce identifies three types of indexes: the index proper, the sub-index, and the directional precept (Atkin 2005, 177)

We can add that, seeking to elucidate the dynamic relations between a sign and its object, Peirce introduced the concept of 'type'. So, « [t]here will ordinarily be about twenty *the*'s on a page, and of course they count as twenty words, » even though « there is but one word 'the' in the English language; and it is impossible that this word should lie visibly on a page or be heard in any voice, for the reason that it is not a Single thing or Single event. It does not exist; it only determines things that do exist. Such a definitely significant Form, I propose to term a *Type*. » (Peirce 1906, CP 4.537) By contrast, a token corresponds to « [a] Single event which happens once and whose identity is limited to that one happening or a Single object or thing which is in some single place at any one instant of time, such event or thing being significant only as occurring just when and where it does, such as this or that word on a single line of a single page of a single copy of a book » (Peirce 1906, CP 4.537).

### 3. Proper Names

The analysis in the previous section has equipped us with some of the basic machinery of Peirce's analysis. This next step is to delve into Peirce's views on proper names, a crucial step for bridging his views on language with Recanati's work. Proper names occupy today a central position in theoretical discussions, and Peircean scholarship is no exception to this trend. In this section, our objective is to provide a historical overview of how the ongoing debate has evolved around ideas inspired by Mill and Russell. We will argue that both Peirce and Recanati endeavour to develop alternatives to both positions.

From a historical perspective, the first piece we need to briefly consider is John Stuart Mill's *A System of Logic* (1843)<sup>6</sup>. In contemporary philosophy, it has become customary to refer to a referential theory of language as Millian. This designation stems from Mill's treatment of proper names in the *Logic*, despite the book's primary aim of providing a systematic formalisation of inductive logic, which is distant from contemporary concerns. Nonetheless, in Book One, Mill discusses proper names, starting by distinguishing between « [a] non-connotative term is one which signifies a subject only, or an attribute only » and « [a] connotative term is one which denotes a subject, and implies an attribute. » (Mill 1974 [1843], 31)

An illustrative example of this idea can be found in a well-known passage where Mill asserts that « John, or London, or England, are names which signify a subject only. Whiteness, length, virtue, signify an attribute only. None of these names, therefore, are connotative. But *white, long, virtuous*, are connotative » (Mill 1974 [1843], 31). This leads Mill to the conclusion that « [p]roper names are not connotative: they denote the individuals who are called by them; but they do not indicate or imply any attributes as belonging to those individuals. When we name a child by the name Paul, or a dog by the name Caesar, these names are simply marks used to enable those individuals to be made subjects of discourse. [...] Proper names are attached to the objects themselves, and are not dependent on the continuance of any attribute of the object. » (Mill 1974 [1843], 33) Despite others<sup>7</sup> having expressed a similar view before him, Mill is the first name associated in the contemporary debate with a theory of reference of proper names. For example, Kripke writes that, « [a]ccording to Mill, a proper name is, so to speak, simply a name. It simply refers to its bearer, and has no other linguistic function. In particular, unlike a definite description, a name does not describe its bearer as possessing any special identifying properties. » (Kripke 1979, p239-240).

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<sup>6</sup> I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out the need to distinguish some crucial aspects of both Mill and Russell's views on proper names.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Thomas Reid presents a similar view.

To the basic picture of Mill's treatment of proper names, we must add Russell's contributions. Contemporary discussions of Russell typically center on the period spanning from 1905 to 1918, during which he significantly diverges from Mill's views. Russell's originality stems from two key elements : the distinction between 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'knowledge by description'; and between 'logical' and 'ordinary' proper names. Starting with the former, which is the cornerstone of his theory of knowledge, Russell writes that « I am *acquainted* with an object when I have a direct cognitive relation to that object, *i.e.* when I am directly aware of the object itself. » (Russell 1911, 108) In this way, « knowledge by acquaintance does not consist of judgments, whereas knowledge by description does consist of judgments, and moreover of judgments of which the thing known by description is not a constituent. » (Russell 1913, 77) In contrast, knowledge by *description* encompasses « any phrase of the form 'a so-and-so' or 'the so-and-so' » (Russell 1911, 112). Knowledge by description thus serves as an *indirect* means of accessing the mind-independent reality through its judgemental nature.

This leads us to the second distinction, which challenges Mill's conception of proper names. Expanding upon the first distinction, Russell divides proper names into two types. On one hand, there are 'logical proper names,' which are known by acquaintance, and on the other hand, there are 'ordinary proper names,' which are known by description. As particulars, unlike ordinary proper names, logical proper names lack descriptive content and are limited to demonstratives and pronouns. The situation differs when considering ordinary proper names such as 'Peirce' or 'Recanati'. Russell contends that these are not genuine proper names but rather function as 'telescoped' descriptions. As he explains, « [c]ommon words, even proper names, are usually really descriptions. That is to say, the thought in the mind of a person using a proper name correctly can generally only be expressed explicitly if we replace the proper name by a description. » (Russell 1959, 54)<sup>8</sup>

This elucidates why accounts of 'how proper names name' are typically separated into two main positions. As Katz observes, the first position focusses on the « claim that proper names name on the basis of a sense which determines their conditions of denotation. » (Katz 1977, 2) Conversely, a trend emerged in the 1970s wherein « proper names lack a sense but nonetheless have well-defined conditions of denotation based on baptismal ceremonies and their causal effects. » (Katz 1977, 2) Peirce and Recanati, however, challenge that these are the two only options, rejecting that proper names must « have no meaning, and to be associated with no particular way of thinking of their reference. » (Recanati 1993, 135)

Let's examine Peirce and Recanati's views on proper names. Beginning with Peirce's analysis, we must revisit the context established in the preceding section, as Peirce's examination occurs while distinguishing 'icons' from 'indices'. Consider a scenario where one encounters the proper name 'Johann Kant' for the first time. According to Peirce, « [a] proper name, when one meets with it for the first time, is existentially connected with some percept or other equivalent individual knowledge of the individual it names [...] The next time one meets with it [...] an Icon of that Index [...] having been acquired, it becomes a Symbol. » (Peirce 1903, EP 2.286) Peirce further elaborates on this idea in the early years of the twentieth century, stating that « the ideally normal course of a person's acquaintance with a logically proper name, it passes successively from being an indefinite singular term to being a definite singular term, and after that to being a definite general term. » (Peirce, R 280)

So, initially, « the word is without signification », but with subsequent encounters, « as he subsequently meets with the term time and again, he gradually comes to learn enough about its object readily to distinguish it from all the other singulars that exist. The term then first

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<sup>8</sup> Pape remarks that Russell overlooks a crucial distinction in Peirce's (and Recanati's, we might add) work : « [t]he act of baptising a deictically identified object, *i.e.* the indexical function of a proper name, with (2) the cross-referential use of a proper name as a part of a descriptive sentence where we talk about an object in a situation in which it is not directly identified. » (Pape 1982, 347)

functions for him as a proper name. » (Peirce, R 280) Peirce concludes this passage with a crucial aspect for our argument, noting that « [f]inally, when everybody in the community is perfectly familiar with the chief characteristics of the singular object, if one of these should be very prominent, there will be a tendency to use the name predicatively to signify that character. » (R 280) Notice the reliance of this usage on the community's collective recognition of the proper name as the *normal* use.

But what about 'Johann Kant'? According to Peirce, in such an instance, the name *denotes* without *connoting* for an interpreter — someone who has never encountered such a name before — of this proper name. This aligns with Peirce's notion of 'indefinite singular term,' which, as Bellucci observes, points out to « a vague term equivalent to 'something' ». (Bellucci 2021, 501) If, following an initial meeting of indefiniteness, one continues to encounter such a proper name — perhaps through multiple instances in a discussion — despite not knowing of anyone or having never heard of anyone possessing such a name, Peirce explains that we are dealing with a 'singular individual'. At this stage, one should be able to assign a denotation to the proper name 'Johann Kant,' distinguishing it from other individuals such as 'Immanuel Kant,' without nonetheless considering any connotation.

The final stage involves overcoming this issue. Suppose one eventually decides to pause the conversation and seek clarification from the speaker, asking about 'Johann Kant'. At this point, one may be informed that 'Johann Kant' is the 'father of Immanuel Kant'. In this scenario, if both the interlocutor and the interpretant (or anyone else participating in the discussion) have reached the same level of development as interpreters, Peirce suggests that the proper name functions as a definite general term, which may even permit us to use the name predicatively. This progressive process, which Peirce revisits frequently throughout his career, illustrates that a proper name is linked through a *lawlike* connection with its denotation, providing an initial indication of its conventional nature.<sup>9</sup>

In face of this picture, we can attempt to position Peirce among the debate between a Russell-like theory of proper names and the various Millian-like alternatives. First, we must note that there is no significant consensus on this question among Peirce's scholars. The main reason for this lack of consensus concerns a hypothetical affinity between Peirce and the 'New Theory of Reference,' akin to Mill's ideas. For instance, DiLeo comments on the « the affinities between Peirce's and Kripke's views » (DiLeo 1997, 593), Rellstab suggests that « it is not surprising that Peirce became a founder of the philosophical branch of modern indexicality research, and was perceived as a precursor to the so called 'New Theory of Reference' » (Rellstab 2008, 319), while Hilpinen considers that « Peirce's theory of proper names is a 'direct reference theory of language' » (Hilpinen 1995, 290) Others take a more cautious approach, stating that « although there are similarities between Peirce's views on names and reference and those of the causal account, there are important and overriding differences that indicate Peirce's views are separable from the causal account. » (Boersema 2008, 65)

In light of this, we will advance two claims. The first, unanimously acknowledged in the literature, is Peirce's opposition to a 'descriptivist' theory of proper names. Secondly, we aim to approach Peirce's theory of reference, not through Kripke, but through Recanati. Let's begin by considering the following passage :

“In what may be called the ideally normal course of a person's acquaintance with a logically proper name, it passes successively from being an indefinite singular

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<sup>9</sup> Consider Peirce's analysis of the common name 'man' : « We speak of writing or pronouncing the word 'man'; but it is only a *replica*, or embodiment of the word, that is pronounced or written. The word itself has no existence, although it has a real being, *consisting in* the fact that existents *will* conform to it. It is a general mode of succession of three sounds or representamens of sounds, which becomes a sign only in the fact that a habit, or acquired law, will cause replicas of it to be interpreted as meaning a man or men. » (Peirce 1903, EP 2.274)

term to being a definite singular term, and after that to being a definite general term. For on the first hearing of it, one gathers that it is a singular; but since the word is without signification, the hearer to whom it is strange will be able to gather from any [statement] he may hear made of its object only that there exists something having the characters asserted. But as he subsequently meets with the term time and again, he gradually comes to learn enough about its object readily to distinguish it from all the other singulars that exist. The term then first functions for him as a proper name. Finally, when everybody in the community is perfectly familiar with the chief characteristics of the singular object, if one of these should be very prominent, there will be a tendency to use the name predicatively to signify that character.” (Peirce, R 280)

From this passage, it becomes apparent that the contentious aspect of our analysis will primarily concerns on what occurs with an interpreter during the second stage. Specifically, we need to explore what should be understood by the transition in which « the hearer to whom it is strange will be able to gather from any [statement] he may hear made of its object only that there exists something having the characters asserted ».

Three main options seem available. One would be to associate this passage with the views of Russell-like descriptivism about proper names, or even with more refined versions such as Searle’s cluster theory. However, this would be a mistake since, as much as Peirce considers the possibility of denotation through direct experience (and also cases of indirect experience by gathering information about the referent, and finding a way to experience it directly), *none* of these elements provides the meaning of the referent, nor it is descriptive about the object. As Peirce emphasises, « it does not follow and could only very rarely be true that the name *signifies* certain defining marks ». This being the case, even though « direct precepts use a range of descriptions and potential definitions for an object, however, these are only meant to assist or result in *showing* the object defining or describing it, » making clear that « the directional precept’s use of descriptions and so on in directing attention does not contribute to the meaning of its object. » (Atkin 2005, 174)

Recanati presents a similar viewpoint, defining a (directly) referential term as « a term that serves simply to refer. It is devoid of descriptive content, in the sense at least that what it contributes to the proposition expressed by the sentence where it occurs is not a concept, but an object. Such a sentence is used to assert of the object referred to that it falls under the concept expressed by the predicate expression of the sentence. Proper names and indexicals are supposed to be referential in this sense. » (Recanati 1993, 3) This opposition to descriptivism significantly shapes Recanati’s work, as he states that « [t]o a large extent, the history of the philosophy of language and mind in the twentieth century centres around the debate between Singularism and Descriptivism. » (Recanati 2009, 9) Consequently, we may want to ask whether Peirce aligns with ‘singularism’. Recanati defines ‘singularism’ as arguing that « our thought is about individual objects as much as it is about properties. Objects are given to us directly, in experience, and we do not necessarily think of them as the bearer of such and such properties. » (Recanati 2009, 9) While Peirce could endorse this position, Recanati’s formulation of singularism includes « thoughts that are directly about individual objects, and whose content is a singular proposition — a proposition involving individual objects as well as properties, » (Recanati 2009, 9) which is problematic from Peirce’s standpoint.

Returning to the passage above, a second option would be to make compatible Peirce’s approach with Kripke’s, which posits that proper names have no meaning *at all*. Kripke’s arguments, spanning semantic, modal, and epistemic dimensions, present a significant challenge to any form of descriptivism. However, on our view, this perspective does not align



with Peirce's standpoint neither. Firstly, Kripke introduces the concept of rigid designators across possible worlds, which seems incompatible with Peirce's framework. As Boersema points out, « names as signs cannot be rigid designators, if that involves a representamen and object, but no interpretant. And it is the interpretant that I take here to be reflective of the commonality of the experience of speaker and listener » (Boersema 2008, 68). Secondly, incorporating the social dependence of language's functioning poses another challenge. For Peirce « denotation is not 'merely' a semantic function. Not simply *our* ability to denote, but a sign's ability to denote, is possible because there are inseparable pragmatic and semiotic elements inherent in semantics. » (Boersema 2008, 69) <sup>10</sup>

This brings us to the second claim we wish to defend, which is more contentious yet crucial to our argument. After considering Kripke's theory, we propose a third option that we consider to better align with Peirce's position. This involves drawing a parallel between two distinctions: 'accidental' and 'essential' signification. For Peirce, « signification is essential when it determines the denotation; it is accidental when it does not. The term 'bachelor' connotes the characters 'adult,' 'unmarried,' and 'male,' and denotes any object that satisfied them. Such signification is 'essential'. [...] Suppose that having never heard of someone called "Léo Ferré," I am told that Léo Ferré was an anarchist French chansonnier. None of these characters taken singularly enables me to determine the denotation of the proper name, nor do they collectively. They constitute an accidental signification. » (Bellucci 2021, 503) Consequently, we argue that this distinction should be interpreted in light of Recanati's distinction between 'linguistic' and 'social' conventions. It is to this issue that we now turn.

Recanati builds upon the works of Kaplan and Perry as he endeavours to develop an alternative to Kripke's approach. Rejecting the idea that proper names have no meaning, Recanati defends that « indexicals are directly referential in the sense that what they contribute to the proposition expressed is their reference, not a mode of presentation of the latter. » (Recanati 1993, 135) In essence, while indexicals are *semantically relevant* for determining reference, but they do not impart any mode of presentation. In this sense, Recanati underscores the pivotal role of social conventions in fixating the role of proper names, as « a proper name provides a substantial piece of information concerning the individual the speaker is referring to. » (Recanati 1993, 138) Consider, for instance, the way 'François' finds many bearers in the world. In my case, I know that 'François' finds a bearer in my friend François. But, as Recanati insists, any competent hearer does *not* have to know my friend François to know that the proper name 'François' (or any other proper name) is supposed to have a bearer in the world. To know that, he *only* has to be linguistically competent. It results that :

“A proper name NN indicates not only that there is an entity  $x$  such that an utterance  $S(NN)$  is true iff  $\langle x \rangle$  satisfies  $S(\ )$ , it also indicates — simply by virtue of the fact that it is a proper name — *that  $x$  is the bearer of the name NN*, i.e. that there is a social convention associating  $x$  with the name NN.” (Recanati 1993, 139)

So, social conventions operate differently for *each* proper name, whereas linguistic conventions are a universal feature common to *all* proper names. Recanati articulates this point by starting, « [t]he only *linguistic* convention involved in the case of proper names is the (general) convention that a proper name refers to its bearer; *which* object happens to be the bearer of the name is an extra-linguistic fact, a fact which does not have to be known for the

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<sup>10</sup> Additionally, as Pietarinen notes, Peirce's framework suggests that, in contrast with Kripke, « fictional names do not signify through their use as 'pretended names,' but by virtue of denoting objects in hypothetical and logical universes of discourse in which they may exist as 'singular occurrences' » (Pietarinen 2010, 355)

language to be mastered [...] Thus the reference of a given name is really a matter of context. » (Recanati 1987, 58)

This brings us to our claim. Peirce's account, as developed in the passage above, underscores a similar transition and interaction between linguistic and social conventions. Initially, during the first occurrence where 'we know that it is a singular even though the term has no signification,' this understanding arises from a linguistic convention. However, as subsequent occurrences unfold and we gather more information about the object, this transition is facilitated by social occasions. Over time, these social conventions gradually furnish us with knowledge, allowing us to refine our understanding beyond mere linguistic convention. Ultimately, as Recanati asserts, « a proper name refers by linguistic convention to whoever (or whatever) happens to be the bearer of that name; but who (what) is the bearer of the name is a contextual, non-linguistic matter, a matter of social convention » (Recanati 1993, 140).

### 3. Bridging Peirce and Recanati through Grice

Our analysis thus far has uncovered several points of agreement between Peirce and Recanati. While it may not come as a surprise given Peirce's alignment with contemporary views on reference, represented by scholars like Recanati, we aim to refine our understanding of this influence. To achieve this, we propose to explore an overlooked yet inherently logical connection between the two thinkers, mediated by the work of H. P. Grice.<sup>11</sup> Although fully investigating this hypothesis is beyond our current scope, we can outline its broad strokes. In our genealogical framework, Grice holds significance for several reasons. Firstly, he was deeply influenced by Peirce, all while engaging in significant dialogue with Recanati. Secondly, Grice occupies a central position in twentieth-century philosophy of language. Lastly, we will make the hypothesis that Recanati's work may be read as offering corrective insights to Grice's ideas by turning back to Peirce.

Grice played a pivotal role in the significance of pragmatics during the second half of the twentieth century. Prior to Grice, and other scholars like Bar-Hillel, there was a prevailing belief that semantics alone could explain linguistic phenomena, independent of pragmatics. Within this paradigm, which emphasised a 'core meaning' divorced from contextual considerations, semantics focused on « what an ideal speaker would know about the meaning of a sentence when no information is available about its context » (Katz 1977, 14).

Throughout 'Meaning' (1957), Grice proposed a distinction between natural and non-natural senses ('means<sub>NN</sub>'). This distinction establishes that « the meaning (in general) of a sign needs to be explained in terms of what users of the sign do (or should) mean by it in particular occasions. » (Grice 1957, 381) Once the existence of a form of non-natural meaning is recognised, Grice argues "that 'A meant<sub>NN</sub> something by x' is roughly equivalent to 'A uttered x with the intention of inducing a belief by means of the recognition of this intention' » (Grice 1957, 384). As this definition makes clear, Grice imposes three conditions that the speaker must fill to establish a non-natural sense : the speaker must have the intention of inducing a belief in his audience; the speaker must have the intention that his audience recognises his intention; and the speaker must have the intention that finally the audience comes to believe x. This model underscores the communicative purposes behind uttering a sentence, as it is because the speaker has in view a certain communicative goal that his sentence can be assumed to have a particular meaning.

This shows the basic motivation of Grice's approach. At its core, there are intentions with a certain mental content, that impel the speaker to produce utterances with particular *contents*.

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<sup>11</sup> I am particularly indebted to an anonymous reviewer for calling my attention to the need to strengthen the connection between Peirce and Recanati through Grice.

At the farthest end of this spectrum are sentences. Therefore, the meaning of a sentence can only be fully understood by taking into account the pragmatic context where its content is expressed as a meaningful utterance. Grice's theory, while subject to numerous refinements over time, fundamentally challenged the idea that semantics, as traditionally conceived, could fully account for linguistic meaning. By rejecting the traditional definition of a 'core meaning' divorced from considerations of use, he compelled a reevaluation of the boundary between semantics and pragmatics. Grice's contribution prompted a division among two main groups. On one side, there are those who reject the idea of an isolated semantic core that operates independently of pragmatics. On the other side, some have attempted to redefine the 'core meaning,' seeking to preserve, to some extent, the traditional semantic project. This indicates that Grice's work does not necessarily entail the invalidity of the classical semantic project. However, we aim to argue that this is precisely the perspective shared by Peirce and Recanati. To elucidate this point, let's start by considering the relationship between Peirce and Grice. The pairing of these two names might initially appear surprising, given that Grice never mentioned Peirce in his published work. Consequently, their hypothetical connection has received scant attention in the literature, leading to a relative indifference towards exploring any potential relationship between them (Pietarinen, 2004; Pietarinen and Bellucci, 2016). As of today, there are compelling reasons to believe that, despite Grice's lack of explicit mention, his work was significantly influenced by Peirce. Notably, an important piece of scholarship by Pietarinen and Bellucci, 'Grice's Lecture Notes on Charles S. Peirce's Theory of Signs,' sheds light on this influence. Although undated, the manuscript is presumed to have been written between 1952 and 1957 and appears to have had a profound impact on Grice's thinking. Let's focus into what Grice gleaned from Peirce. In a section titled 'A Rhapsody on a Theme by Peirce,' Grice writes that « The other two points which I think Peirce is getting at (with varying degrees of clearness) are both connected with the distinction between (a) what a sentence means (in general; timeless 'means'; if you like, the meaning of (type) sentence) and (b) e.g. what I commit myself to by the use of a sentence (if you like, connect this with, or state it in terms of, token sentences). » (Grice undated, 17)

Grice's commentary becomes clearer when we examine some passages from Peirce on propositions and assertions. Peirce defines a proposition « as something which can be repeated over and over again, translated into another language, embodied in a logical graph or algebraical formula, and still be one and the same proposition, we do not mean any existing individual object but a type, a general, which does not exist but governs existents, to which individuals conform. » (Peirce 1905, CP 8.313) An assertion, on the other hand, « belongs to the class of phenomena like going before a notary and making an affidavit, executing a deed, signing a note, of which the essence is that one voluntarily puts oneself into a situation in which penalties will be incurred unless some proposition is true. » (Peirce 1905, CP 8.313)

This highlights a fundamental distinction, as « [b]etween the proposition and the act of assertion, there's the whole difference between a 'representational' and a 'volitional' element » (Chauviré 2011, 130; my translation), as noted by Chauviré. Beyond this distinction, which has become commonplace in contemporary discussions, Peirce's treatment of the act of assertion appears to anticipate several aspects of Grice's approach:

“For clearly, every assertion involves an effort to make the intended interpreter believe what is asserted, to which end a reason for believing it must be furnished. But if a lie would not endanger the esteem in which the utterer was held, nor otherwise be apt to entail such real effects as he would avoid, the interpreter would have no reason to believe the assertion. Nobody takes any positive stock in those conventional utterances, such as 'I am perfectly delighted to see you,' upon whose falsehood no punishment at all is visited. At this point, the reader should

call to mind, or, if he does not know it, should make the observations requisite to convince himself, that even in solitary meditation every judgment is an effort to press home, upon the self of the immediate future and of the general future, some truth. It is a genuine assertion, just as the vernacular phrase represents it; and solitary dialectic is still of the nature of dialogue. Consequently it must be equally true that here too there is contained an element of assuming responsibility, of 'taking the consequences'." (Peirce, CP 5.546)

Peirce's perspective on assertion underscores its inherently contextual nature and its dependence on an individual's intentions, aligning with the requirements for successful communication. In line with Peirce's semiotics, even in a monologue, interpretation by an interlocutor is necessary to grasp the conveyed meaning, reflecting a continual 'effort to press home'. This points out to the distinction between 'speaker' and 'literal' meaning. Additionally, Peirce's observations imply that « the meaning of utterances in conversational settings as delivering both intended and non-intended content » (Pietarinen 2004, 302)

With the similarities between Grice and Peirce in mind, we must assess the extent of their overlap<sup>12</sup>. This evaluation is crucial, particularly when considering Recanati's perspective. Grice maintains the viability of the classical semantic project, a position that Recanati has consistently challenged. This prompts us to interrogate which viewpoint aligns more closely with Peirce's. Before delving into this inquiry, let's outline Recanati's critique of Grice.

Recanati's approach over the past decades has positioned him as a central figure among what Stanley has designated the 'pessimists'. This group of philosophers shares a skepticism regarding the idea that an explanation of how utterances are influenced by context can be fully captured through the triad of approaches proposed by Chomsky, Montague, and Grice. For Recanati, rejecting the Gricean picture entails rejecting the notion that there is an independent component of meaning separate from pragmatics. This means dismissing Grice's hypothesis that « disambiguation and saturation suffice to give us the literal interpretation of the utterance—what is literally said » (Recanati 2004, 27).

To illustrate the difference in approaches, consider Recanati's analysis of Nunberg's example where a waiter utters, 'The ham sandwich has left without paying'. According to Recanati, on the Gricean view, « the interpreter computes the proposition literally expressed by the sentence — namely the absurd proposition that the sandwich itself has left without paying — and from its absurdity infers that the speaker means something different from what she says ». In contrast, on Recanati's approach « the description 'the ham sandwich' first receives its literal interpretation, in such a way that a representation of a ham sandwich is activated; activation then spreads to related representations, including a representation of the man who ordered a ham sandwich. » (Recanati 2004, 29) Recanati explains that these 'representations' that are activated by the description « contribute potential candidates for the status of semantic value of the expression; all of which are equally susceptible of going into the interpretation of the global utterance. » (Recanati 2004, 29)

Recanati's critique highlights a fundamental disagreement with the prevailing view in which pragmatics merely complements semantics (in certain situations). This is a picture in which « communication succeeds when the M-intentions of the speaker are recognised by the hearer. Pragmatic competence is needed to determine *what the speaker means* on the basis of *what she says*; but what the speaker says is supposed to be autonomously determined by the semantics (with respect to context), irrespective of the speaker's beliefs and intentions. »

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<sup>12</sup> Pietarinen (2004) further explores this parallel by examining the notions of common ground, the three-way characterisation of modes of correlation for the utterer's meaning and intentions, and the analysis of 'mystery' interpretants.

(Recanati 2010, 1) While his work served to raise awareness for the role played by pragmatics, to stop where Grice asks us to, is to fall short of grasping the full significance of his insights. This brings us to the critical point of understanding Recanati's correction to Grice. Recanati challenges that what is said by an utterance must be primarily determined by semantics, asserting instead the paramount importance of pragmatics. This criticism closes the conceptual lineage between Peirce, Grice, and Recanati. However, a pivotal question remains unanswered, one that will determine whether Peirce aligns more closely with Recanati's advocacy for a radicalisation of pragmatics or if he maintains a position akin to Grice's, suggesting that there are aspects of meaning that transcend pragmatics and are anchored only in semantics.

#### 4. The Case for Radical Contextualism

Answering the question raised in the previous section will ultimately determine the possibility of a 'radical contextualist' interpretation of Peirce. To address this question, it's essential to recall that earlier, when elucidating the foundational framework of Peirce's semiotics, we delineated three categories of signs outlined by Peirce. However, we tacitly overlooked whether a similar plurality exists for objects and interpretants. Indeed, this is precisely the case, and we must delve into the various types of objects and interpretants within Peirce's semiotic framework to formulate a response to the aforementioned question.

To clarify our objective, we must establish a clear definition of the doctrines we are investigating. Building on our discussion above, we can distinguish between literalism and contextualism. In broad terms, literalism aligns with Grice's perspective, asserting that it is possible to « ascribe truth-conditional content to sentences, independently of the speech act which the sentence is used to perform » (Recanati 2003, 172). The remaining task of literalists is to define a mapping function from this independent meaning to each context, specifying the variable aspects of meaning. Literalists are also called *minimalists*, since they advocate for a minimal semantic component that remains insensitive to pragmatic factors. Alternatively, contextualism adopts a symmetrical approach, accentuating the role of speech acts as the source of content. Accordingly, « only in the context of a speech act does a sentence express a determinate content, » (Recanati 2003, 172) denying the possibility of considering meaning without not taking into account its pragmatic context.

Back to Peirce, we realise that Peirce's insights can only be properly understood if we ask: *according to whom* ? As signification depends on the interpretant, we must consider the different kinds of interpretant which, as Hilpinen writes, « gives the 'meaning' of the sign » (Hilpinen 1992, 471) Peirce distinguishes three types of interpretants : 'immediate,' 'dynamic,' and 'final'. Besides having changed the definition of the different interpretants throughout his life, Peirce also provided additional taxonomies including emotional, energetic, logical and intentional, effectual, communicational (Schmidt 2022). Primarily for reasons of length, but also because each taxonomy has a different scope (Short 1996), we will focus on the first division. Moreover, Peirce distinguishes between an immediate object, which corresponds to the object « that could be given when the sign was used, » and a dynamic object, to be considered « when our scientific knowledge is complete » (Hookway 1985, 139) For similar reasons, our focus will be primarily on the division among interpretants, and not on the division between dynamic and immediate objects.

Let's consider each variety of interpretant separately. The immediate interpretant « is what the Question expresses, *all* that it immediately expresses, » (Peirce 1909, CP 8.314) which roughly corresponds to an idea on which Recanati heavily draws—the notion of literal meaning. The immediate interpretant assigns « the output of various pragmatic processes results from a blind, mechanical process, involving no reflection on the interpreter's part »

(Recanati 2003, 32). Consequently, the crux of our analysis lies in the distinction between the dynamic and final interpretants, leading to two possible options. Either the 'final' interpretant is considered as a 'fixed' meaning, independent of pragmatic factors (Atkin 2008), thereby separating Peirce from contextualist positions such as Recanati's, or the final interpretant arises from these contextual effects (Short 1999), thereby moving Peirce away from Grice instead.

To address this dichotomy, we must closely examine its definition. Peirce explains that « [t]he *Dynamical Interpretant* is the actual effect that it has upon me, its interpreter. But the Significance of it, the *Ultimate*, or *Final*, *Interpretant* is her *purpose* in asking it, what effect its answer will have as to her plans for the ensuing day. » (Peirce 1909, CP 8.314) Alternatively, as Peirce clarifies in a letter to Lady Welby, the final interpretant emerges as « the effect the Sign *would* produce upon any mind upon which circumstances should permit it to work out its full effect » (Hardwick 1977, 109) As Short summarises, « semeiosis being purposive is that there must be an ideal, or final, interpretant, not usually achieved in fact, in which the interpreter's purpose would be most fully realised. » (Short 1996, 496)

Short's remark aligns with our perspective. First, the 'final' interpretant should be considered as an idealisation, never (or rarely) achieved. Nonetheless, this may still suggest to some that such an ideal regulatory notion serves as the 'fixed' component of meaning. Yet, we argue against this interpretation. It would necessitate a scenario where the 'interpreter's purpose would be most fully realised,' which we find untenable. Instead, we assert that interpreters inevitably face and must contend with the inherent constraints of any given context.

But we can add more to this picture, by considering Recanati's analysis of the 'underdeterminacy' of linguistic meaning. As he explains, contextualism « generalises context-sensitivity so as to rule out eternal sentences not merely *de facto* but *de jure*. » In essence, this implies that « it is *linguistic meaning in general* which suffers from a form of indeterminacy which makes it unfit to carry content save against a rich contextual background. Owing to that underdeterminacy, some form of enrichment or contextual elaboration becomes mandatory for the sentence to express a definite proposition » (Recanati, 2004, 96). Rellstab (2008, 321-22) remarks that Peirce pursues a similar direction. For Peirce, « [n]o assertion has any meaning unless there is some designation to show whether the universe of reality or of fiction is referred to » (Peirce 1900, CP 8.368). Besides fiction, this means that Peirce takes into account an element of underdeterminacy that can only be resolved through contextual factors:

“The object of a proposition, unless it is either an Index (like the environment of the interlocutors, or something attracting attention in that environment, as the pointing finger of the speaker) or a Subindex (like a proper name, personal pronoun, or demonstrative) must be a *Precept*, or Symbol, not only describing to the Interpreter what is to be done, by him or others or both, in order to obtain an Index of an individual (whether a unit or a single set of units) of which the proposition is represented as meant to be true, but also assigning a designation to that individual, or, if it is a set, to each single unit of the set.” (Peirce, EP 2.286)

This illustrates the central role that Peirce assigns to pragmatic effects in designating the object, as « [t]he meaning of the sign is not conveyed until not merely the interpretant but also this object is recognised ». (Peirce 1907, EP 2.429) According to Peirce, this recognition occurs through 'designations,' which « act to force the attention to the thing intended, » as they « are absolutely indispensable both to communication and to thought. No assertion has any meaning unless there is some designation to show whether the universe of reality or what universe of fiction is referred to. » (Peirce, 8.368) This stance clearly diverges from Grice's

perspective, and aligns Peirce with a Recanati-like contextualism, where « a symbol becomes meaningful thanks to the experiences of its users » (Rellstab 2008, 322).

This alignment becomes even more apparent when we examine how the interpretant must pragmatically *find* the object through a number of informations that function as « procedural lists » (Atkin 2005, 175) towards the object. Recanati's radical contextualism emphasises this aspect as a fundamental piece. Specifically, we can draw parallels between Peirce's 'procedural lists' and Recanati's REF. In Recanati's framework, « [r]eferential terms have the following property: their meaning includes a special feature, which I dubbed 'REF,' by virtue of which they indicate that there is an object, the referent of the term, such that the utterance in which they occur in subject-position is true if and only if this object satisfies the predicate. » (Recanati 1989, 241) Recanati's introduction of REF can be interpreted as analogous to Peirce's ideas. This interpretation places Peirce along Recanati's assertion that we must separate both moments, i.e., the extra-linguistic element that serves to fixate the object, and its (mental or linguistic) content. This is precisely the function of the semantic feature REF that separates « referential from non-referential terms. » (Recanati 1989, 241)<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Throughout the present article, we have attempted to bring together, for the first time, the views of Peirce and Recanati. Clearly, the argument here developed can only be taken as a first step in a broader effort to show the affinity between both authors to be completed in the future. A complete elucidation of this comparison would need to go beyond the short exploration we have produced, mostly focused on an account of meaning. This should include an exploration of topics such as indexical contextualism or the framework of mental files, to name a few. Moreover, this should equally include the divergences among the two authors, and the criticisms that we may possibly address to their work. In the case of radical contextualism, this would require a more extensive analysis of the way Peirce and Recanati diverge, for instance, from Kripke or the way they answer to those that claim that the requirement of compositionally excludes any contextualist position (Fodor and Lepore, 2004). We may end with some brief commentary on the general views we have brought to the debate. On Peirce's side, the approximation with radical contextualism confirms the idea that, despite the efforts in recent years, there is still considerable work to be done to fully account for Peirce's influence in multiple subjects of contemporary philosophy of language. From Recanati's perspective, this may serve to confirm his contention that « the history of twentieth-century philosophy of language ought to be rewritten ». (Recanati 2004, 83) By tracing such a genealogy, we can expect to pave a fruitful dialogue to rewrite a history of philosophy of language that places Peirce at a similar plan with Mill, Frege, and Russell. In sum, if the present view is sound, Peirce is to be placed along Recanati as a radical contextualist. This implies that « [n]o combination of words (excluding proper nouns, and in the absence of gestures or other indicative concomitants of speech) can ever convey the slightest information » (Peirce 1893, EP 2.7), as « every symbol is a living thing, in a very strict sense that is no mere figure of speech » as « its meaning inevitably grows, incorporates new elements and throws off old ones. » (Peirce 1903, CP 2.264) This confirms Recanati's insistence on « the unending potential for variation in order to point out that the (modulated) meaning

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<sup>13</sup> These ideas result in Recanati's indexical model developed in *Mental Files* (2012), which is « inspired from the work of Peirce, Reichenbach, and Kaplan ». It contains the following three main features: « (i) There are *two semantic dimensions*, corresponding to character and content, or to standing meaning and reference, and they map onto the type/token distinction. (ii) Reference is determined through *contextual relations* to the token (hence indexicals are context-sensitive). (iii) The standing meaning is 'token-reflexive' — it reflects the relation between token and referent. » (Recanati 2012, 59)

of an expression always depends upon the context and cannot be fixed simply by complexifying the expression and 'making everything explicit'» (Recanati 2010, 47).

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