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**REFLEXIVE CONTENT AND THE PRESUPPOSITIONAL
ACCOUNT OF REFERENTIAL FAILURE IN SITUATIONS OF
SCARCITY OF INFORMATION AND FICTION**

Belo Horizonte
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Tese apresentada ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Filosofia da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais com o propósito de obtenção de título de Doutor em Filosofia.
Orientador: Ernesto Perini Frizzera da Mota Santos

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RESUMO

Este trabalho apresenta uma solução em termos de pressuposições para o problema da vacuidade da referência de demonstrativos e nomes. As denominações 'vacuidade da referência', 'problema da não-referência', referem-se ao problema filosófico de explicar o conteúdo de termos singulares que sistematicamente ou ocasionalmente falham em referir. Para defensores do referencialismo, a falha referencial traz duas consequências indesejáveis: 1) os referencialistas são forçados a aceitar que termos singulares que falham em referir não contribuem para o conteúdo das frases das quais são constituintes; 2) como resultado, enunciações dessas frases não são nem verdadeiras nem falsas. O presente trabalho é uma tentativa de evitar a consequência 1) e explicar a consequência 2), ao argumentar que enunciações com demonstrativos e nomes com falha referencial expressam conteúdo reflexivo. Tal conteúdo é sobre a própria enunciação e as convenções linguísticas que ela carrega. No que concerne ao problema da atribuição de valor de verdade, a solução aqui proposta é pressuposicional. Nos casos analisados, a falta de valor de verdade é explicada pela falsidade de uma condição de sucesso referencial: a pressuposição existencial, para nomes, e a pressuposição de saliência, para demonstrativos. No que diz respeito a nomes ficcionais, eu ofereço uma solução em termos do conceito de *faz-de-conta* (*pretense*) para explicar as variadas intuições de valor de verdade na ficção e no discurso sobre a ficção.

Palavras-chave: referência; reflexividade; conteúdo; pressuposição, informação; ficção.

ABSTRACT

This work presents a presuppositional solution to the problem of vacuity of reference for demonstratives and names. The denominations 'vacuity of reference' and 'no-reference problem' refer to the same philosophical concern: explaining the content of utterances with singular terms that systematically or occasionally fail to refer. For referentialists, such problem entails two unwanted consequences: 1) they are forced to accept that singular terms that fail to refer have no content; and 2) as a result, there is a gap in the truth-evaluation of utterances that contain them. The present work is an attempt to avoid consequence 1) and explain consequence 2), on the one hand, by arguing that utterances with demonstratives and proper names that fail to refer express reflexive content. Such content is about the utterance itself and the linguistic conventions it carries. In what concerns the problem of truth-value gaps, on the other hand, the proposed solution is presuppositional. Truth-value gaps occur for a pragmatic reason: if presupposed conditions on referential success – namely, the truth of the existential presupposition, for names, and the truth of the presupposition of salience, for demonstratives – are not satisfied. In what concern fictional names, specifically, I offer a pretense account that explains mixed intuitions of truth-value for statements about fiction and in fiction.

Keywords: reference; reflexivity; content; presupposition; information; fiction.

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INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of this work is to discuss linguistic referential failure and some philosophical problems pertaining to it. Accordingly, it relies on a characterization of the linguistic expressions that are used to refer and how reference relates to human cognition and agency. The problem I will be dealing with arises in the context of Referentialism or The New Theory of Reference¹, the presently dominant philosophical position in the semantic studies of singular terms – names, demonstratives, indexicals, and definite descriptions. Perry (2001) calls it the *no-reference problem*, which he defines as follows:

The no-reference problem comes from the fact that there are empty names, names that don't designate anyone or anything. For example, there is no Santa Claus, there is no Sherlock Holmes, there is no Capitan Queeg. And yet children believe in Santa Claus and use the name in statements that express their beliefs, and so have cognitive significance (*ibidem*, p.6).

The no-reference problem, then, consists in explaining the content expressed by uses of names and other singular terms that fail to refer. The approach offered in this dissertation is meant as a contribution to one of the branches of Referentialism, the Reflexive-Referential Theory (RRT²), in addressing the no-reference problem.

This theoretical framework is built on three assumptions. First, that content classifies mental states and states of affair in terms of conditions of success, for example, truth, for assertions. Secondly, that talking about *the* content expressed by an utterance is an oversimplification, since semantic content is determined

¹ See section 1.1.

² A version of the token-reflexive theory. See section 1.1.2.

relatively to the informational content of situations. Therefore, content is relative and varied³. Lastly, content is in the service of the rational reconstruction of other's mental states and agency for explanatory purposes. Take these extracts from Perry (2001):

Suppose you are talking to David Israel without knowing his name. If David says (A) [I am a computer scientist] to you, you will learn that you are talking to a computer scientist. If he says (B) [David Israel is a computer scientist] you will not learn that you are talking to a computer scientist, but you will know that there is at least one computer scientist in the world named 'David Israel' (*ibidem*, p. 7)

Perhaps an urgent call has gone out from a meeting for a computer scientist to resolve some particularly algorithmic problem, and David, as he rushed up the hall responding to the emergency, shouts (A) [I am a computer scientist] to reassure the waiting crowd. [...] Suppose now that David does not arrive, and a group sits forlornly waiting for a computer scientist to rescue them. A noise is heard, which one member of the crowd takes to be a knock at the door. She utters (C) [You are a computer scientist] hopefully. But, in this case, there is no addressee; no one is there; it was only ice falling on the stoop. (*ibidem*, pp. 10-11)

This narrative shows just how the mode of designating an individual can impact knowledge, mental organization and actions. The individual David Israel is designated in three different ways in the extracts, namely by 'I', 'you' and the proper name 'David Israel', all picking the same individual. Nevertheless, what explains the mental and epistemic states of the agents that interact with the computer scientist, David Israel, is not the proposition expressed: (A), (B) and (C) cited above express the exact same proposition – which, in the referentialist framework, is the singular proposition containing David Israel as a constituent, i.e., <David Israel, is a computer scientist>. So, what explains how the utterances of (A), (B) and (C) affect the mental organization and actions of Perry's characters (above) must be another kind of content – one that is not propositional.

³ The RRT framework is an affiliate of multipropositionalism, whose central claim is that one utterance expresses a system of truth-conditional contents. Such systems include reflexive, referential and intentional contents, as I show in the course of chapter 1.

Now, RRT has the advantage, over other approaches on the semantics of singular terms, of finding a place for content in situations that fail to provide semantic values to singular terms. In RRT, truth-conditional content has the same role throughout situations that differ in informational content: it will continue to play its classificatory role in explaining mental states and actions, even in situations of scarcity of information. For example, in Perry's RRT, utterances express many contents that incorporate truth-conditions, which, on their turn, are loaded with information from the speech situation –i.e., with given facts about the perceptual environment, the speaker's intentions etc. In situations of scarcity of information, the determination of reference is defective – or at least these are the cases I will be interested in – and the interpreter must reconstruct truth-conditions on the basis of given facts *about the utterance itself*. These are called the *reflexive truth-conditions of the utterance*. In many non-paradigmatic situations, reflexive content will be the only tool at the agent's disposal for the reconstruction of the mental states of others, to understand behavior in general and to navigate the world. Reflexivity is then a key concept in dealing with the cognitive significance of terms that fail to refer due to scarcity of information. This dissertation focuses precisely on this theoretical advantage of RRT and purports to develop it.

In Chapter 1, I outline the advantages of adopting RRT, in approaching two kinds of referential failure: a) occasional referential failure for lack of information, focusing on the case of demonstratives that fail to contribute *demonstrata* to content; and b) referential failure in fiction, focusing on proper names. However, the goal of Chapter 1 is not merely to offer a rendition of the RRT framework, it also advances a proposal to use the idea of relative content to explain the interpretation of names and demonstratives in cases of *presuppositional failure*, elicited by scarcity of information.

I introduce the concept of presupposition, claiming that, at least the presuppositions associated to singular reference, such as the existential presupposition and the presupposition of salience, should be defined as conditions of felicity for the performance of assertions, partially evidenced by

truth-value gap intuitions⁴. The chapter also purports to show that the presuppositions associated to singular reference might have a semantic origin, evidenced in projection patterns, but pragmatic mechanisms prevail in determining interpretation. The idea of Chapter 1, then, is to propose that the RRT Framework – Perry’s in particular – can be applied to a presuppositional account of referential failure. The theoretical task of RRT will be to serve as an explanation of what content is expressed when one of the presuppositions associated to uses of referential expressions is false.

Chapter 2 applies the preliminary concepts presented in Chapter 1 to demonstratives – in particular, to the word ‘that’. The first preliminary distinction to be retrieved from the previous chapter concerns mechanisms of designation. Demonstrating is characterized as a conventional mode of designating individuals satisfactorily. Accordingly, the chapter discusses three points: 1) if the conventional meaning of a demonstrative can play the role of content in situations of scarcity of information; 2) what social-cognitive skills are required to use demonstratives; and 3) if salience is somehow presupposed by uses of demonstratives. To sustain 1), I apply the concept of increment to reflexive truth-conditions, arguing that linguistic conventions can be recruited, in occasion, to play the role of content. Point 2) explores ontogenetic and cross-linguistic evidence that demonstratives are expressions of joint attention, ancestrally connected to manipulation of attentional behavior. Finally, in developing 3), I propose that the salience of the referent is presupposed in uses of demonstratives, in compliance with the evidence presented in 2).

Chapter 3 follows the same basic scheme of applying RRT to account for the expressivity of singular terms – now, proper names – in situations of scarcity of information. It begins with the presentation of an argumentative plan that combines the idea of *plans of referring*, from Korta & Perry (2011), Bach (2008)’s concept of *speaker’s reference* and the general lines of theories of *joint action*

⁴ Intuitions that an utterance is neither true nor false. The claim of presuppositional accounts is that, intuitively, if a presupposition is false, the utterance of a sentence with a singular term lacks truth-value. I anticipate that Chapters 1 and 3 contain some critics to the scientific merits of these intuitions for identifying the presence of presuppositions. However, I will still take them to indicate problems with the accommodation of new information in the common ground.

(from Clark (1992) and Dingemanse (2015)). This chapter is, thus, threefold too. First, a grammatical and philosophical categorization of proper names is ensembled and put forward, based on ideas borrowed from Taylor (2003; 2014) and Anderson (2006). Secondly, the phenomenon of presuppositional failure in situations of scarcity of information is revisited and the concept of reflexivity is recruited once again to explain what kind of content is expressed when interpreters are incapable of determining the putative referent of proper names.

I conclude Chapter 3 with the currently fashionable topic of reference in fiction. My proposal resorts to a *pretense theory* strategy. Thoroughly, my point is that referential failure in fiction is not, strictly speaking, referential failure for lack of information. So, a comprehensive account of how we interpret fictional names should be built on the assumption that fictional discourse is a special kind of linguistic interaction, with special conditions of success and intuitive truth-values. Notwithstanding, I will argue that the reflexive truth-conditions of an utterance with a fictional name include the information that the names are fictional, whenever the context includes such a given fact. To that extent, the content expressed by demonstratives in situation of scarcity of information and proper names in fiction are similar.

At the beginning of this research, we had stipulated that our investigation would be concentrated on the problem of implicit content, namely on how presuppositions and implicatures affect interpretation. As we deepened our studies, however, the problem of presupposition failure came into sharper focus and the RRT emerged as the best candidate to explain content. This dissertation, hence, attempts to present RRT as a recommendable framework for those interested in referential failure – and presupposition accommodation – in the philosophical community and in the linguistic community as well. Our work is markedly based on empirical studies, taking lexical categorization, cross-linguistic and ontogenetic evidence in support of what is essentially a philosophical approach. The interest of empirical literature for philosophical inquiries of this sort is self-evident; withal, intuitions and introspection are still widely explored here.

The structure of the dissertation reflects this synergy between philosophical interests and linguistics – above all, in what concerns word categorization and Dynamic Semantics⁵. Chapter 1 is devoted to motivating the combination of RRT to the presuppositional account. This combination is, then, applied to demonstratives, in Chapter 2, and to proper names, in Chapter 3. Chapters 2 and 3 bring characterizations of these two linguistic expressions, attempting to show how each fit into the RRT explication of content and the predictions of the presuppositional account. The philosophical problems covered here go from the role of content to issues concerning truth, truth-evaluation and truth in fiction. It is worth-mentioning that the approaches presented are modest, given how complex these philosophical problems are, but, hopefully, all the important questions were asked (and in the right way).

⁵ The semantic theory devoted to modelling growth of information in natural language semantics. It focuses on segments of discourse and contextual update. Presupposition is one of the main sources of data for Dynamic Semantics. That being said, it is important to say that I do not adopt any particular version of this theory.

CHAPTER 1

Applying Perry's reflexive/referential distinction to a presuppositional account of referential failure

In this chapter, I will briefly present some definitions and concepts concerning RRT and the presuppositional account. In sub-sections 1.1 and 1.2., respectively, I will define *the no-reference problem* and distinguish between *modes of designation*. Next, I will introduce the notions of *presupposition* and *context*, which reappear in Chapters 2 and 3. My aim in Chapter 1 is to contextualize the frameworks I will adopt and combine.

1. Presenting the no-reference problem

The no-reference problem can be defined as the problem of explaining the content of utterances of well-formed sentences with singular terms – names, demonstratives, definite descriptions – that systematically or occasionally fail to refer. It has been considered a particularly challenging problem for defenders of referentialism – for example, Kaplan (1989), Recanati (1993), and Perry (1997; 2001) –, the philosophical position according to which the content of the utterance of a sentence with a singular term must have an individual, which the expression picks uniquely and directly, as a propositional constituent. In cases in which the singular term fails to pick a referent, the referentialist would be forced to concede that the sentence, though well-formed, has no *subject matter*: the singular term makes no contribution to content and, therefore, the sentence fails to express a propositional content.

Also, referentialism supposedly contradicts some of our intuitions regarding utterances of sentences such as (1), since interpreters would agree

that, at least intuitively, not only (1) expresses a proposition, it expresses a true proposition.

(1) Anna Karenina is Russian.

Defenders of satisfactional semantics about proper names, including Fregean and Russellian descriptivists⁶, are the traditional opponents of referentialists and they seem to agree that the referentialist concept of content is conclusively impaired by the no-reference objection. They argue that only descriptivism can properly explain the above-mentioned intuitions of truth-value for sentences like (1). So, finding a suitable notion of content is a pivotal step for any theory of reference that either commits to referentialism, as the one I will present here, or purports to defend it.

It is fair to remark, though, that the no-reference problem is not the only and maybe not even the dominant objection to referentialist theories. In contemporary philosophy of language, the so-called *co-reference problem* (or the *problem of same-saying*) is at least as discussed as the no-reference objection, if not more. It has been used in attempts to show that two sentences with coreferential singular terms, like (2) and (3):

(2) Dilma Rousseff was impeached by the Senate.

(3) The first female president of Brazil was impeached by the Senate.

potentially affect the interpreter's informational status and intuitions of truth-evaluation differently, though they express the same singular proposition. The co-

⁶ Also, metalinguistic descriptivists, such as Bach (1981), Katz (2001), Burgess (2013). Nowadays, the most common non-referentialist view about proper names is called predicativism. Previcativists, like Matushansky (2006), Gail (2013) and Fara (2015a; 2015b), argue that names are not referential expressions, as there is substantive linguistic evidence that names can function as predicates. Proponents of referentialism are currently concerned with dealing with the data they explore. Though this is a programatic interest, in the sense that I intend to approach the referentialist/predicativist debate in the future, I will not focus on that now. Previcativists argue that names are not referential expressions, as there is substantive linguistic evidence that names can function as predicates. Matushansky (2006), Gail (2013) and Fara (2015a; 2015b).

reference objection basically predicts that the same interpreter may accept one sentence as true but not the other. For example, one who ignores the fact that Dilma Rousseff was the first female president of Brazil, may consider (2) as true, but not (3). To properly solve this problem, the referentialist needs to explain the intuition that (2) and (3) convey different information without denying the central tenet of her theory, namely, that (2) and (3) (used referentially)⁷ express the same singular proposition.

Such concerns, however, predate the current dispute between descriptivism and referentialism. Frege (1892) first used it as a motivation to advance the claim that there is more to semantics than accounting for reference⁸. In his theory, content is what ultimately individuates beliefs. Furthermore, Frege did not separate cognition from semantic interpretation: he considered that explaining the cognitive significance of language – that is, how speakers are cognitively affected by propositions – is one of the main tasks of the semanticist (Taylor, 1995).

Contemporary referentialist accounts, on the other hand, are built on quite different assumptions about cognitive significance, and that is precisely why the no-reference problem seems, at first sight, more challenging to referentialism than to descriptivism. Referentialists share two basic common tenets. The first one has already been mentioned: *uses of sentences with singular terms express singular propositions*. For example, (1) supposedly expresses a structured proposition with an individual and a property, represented in (P1) below,

(P1) That **Anna Karenina** is Russian.⁹

They are also committed to the expansion of the Millian theory of names – presented in Stuart-Mill (1843) – to other singular terms. Mill basically sustained that proper names function as tags relatively to their *designata*, i.e., they do not connote their referents in any way. An important motivating intuition for the Millian

⁷ As opposed to attributively (Donnellan (1966)).

⁸ See sub-section 1.3.

⁹ This content may also be represented as a structured proposition, <Anna Karenina; is Russian>. I use Perry's notation for representing propositional content: (PN), where N is the number corresponding to the sentence, and P represents truth-conditions incorporated by propositions. The boldface represents contribution to content.

is that one cannot reasonably ask for the meaning of a name – i.e., the answer to the question “what is the meaning of ‘Anna Karenina’?” is not one or more descriptions, nor any form of connotation, but the referent of the name itself. Referentialists then sustain, inspired by Mill, that singular terms, and not only names, contribute to the proposition expressed with individuals. So, *referentialists endorse one or another version of non-satisfactional semantics*¹⁰, *inspired by Millian intuitions*.

As I understand it, *The New Theory of Reference*, a variant of referentialism that has been developed since Saul Kripke¹¹, by philosophers like David Kaplan, John Perry and others presents promising solutions to the co-reference and no-reference problem. Though Kaplan and Perry presently diverge as to how content and propositions are related, both agree that linguistic conventions have the role of individuating beliefs and accounting for sentences containing singular terms that fail to refer¹². Perry’s is the version of referentialism I subscribed to.

Notwithstanding, it bears to emphasize that referentialism is only half the solution to the no-reference problem. It goes just as far as semantics goes, being insufficient to explain the pragmatics of reference, that is, the dynamics of acceptance and rejection of assertions in coordinated activities that involve language, and the multiplicity of things agents can do by using singular terms. To explain such aspects, we will need an additional pragmatic theory, namely, the presuppositional theory. But I will return to that later.

¹⁰ In a non-satisfactional semantics, the contribution of a singular term is determined by a casual connection with the referent, as opposed to a descriptive condition that the referent happens to satisfy. See Orlando (2017) for account of how conventions and historical chains of reference connect uses of words and their referents.

¹¹ Kripke’s criticism to descriptivism in Kripke (1980) is not mentioned here simply because the overall argument of this dissertation is focused on descriptivist objections to referentialism rather than the opposite. Of course, Kripke’s work has a gigantic importance in settling referentialism as a currently dominant philosophical position.

¹² For Kaplan and early Perry, *meaning* is what adequately individuates content. Later, Perry will depart from Kaplan’s determinant influence and adopt a version of the token-reflexive semantic theory, which I will present in section 1.1.2.

1.1. Modes of designation

According to Perry (2001), referring is the mechanism through which a singular term holds a direct relation with the individual it stands for. He argues that there are two mechanisms of designation: *referring* and *denoting*. While referring is essentially direct, denoting is mediated. An individual is denoted by a singular term if it either satisfies the identifying conditions contained in the meaning of the expression (in the case of demonstratives, for example) or if it satisfies a descriptive condition of identification (in the case of definite descriptions used attributively). For example, an individual will be the *denotatum* of the definite description 'the present queen of England' if she is the only individual that instantiates the property of being the queen of England.

Following Martí (1995), Perry differentiates between the semantic *contribution* of referential singular terms – namely, individuals – and the mechanisms of designation involved in using and interpreting them: *conventions* or *descriptive conditions of satisfaction*. Mechanisms of designation determine *modes of designation*, such as naming, demonstrating and describing. Take demonstrating, for example.

It is well-known that the semantic values provided by uses of demonstratives, such as 'that' and 'this', are given in context and depend on mutual coordination, spatial orientation and perception. In the successful cases of demonstration, a salient individual becomes a *demonstratum* when it satisfies certain conditions that are built in the demonstrative's conventional meaning. For instance, the semantic value of a demonstrative will be given by a condition such as: the individual made salient by *d*, where *d* is the act of demonstration, that is in position *x* relative to the agent and position *x* {*x'*, *x''*} relative to other conversational participants (if the spatial relation to other participants is encoded in the meaning of the expression). Because the designational relation between the demonstrative and the *demonstratum* is mediated by the demonstrative's conventional meaning, we say that demonstrating involves a mode of designation in which the expression picks its *designatum* by means of metalinguistic attributes. Thus, demonstrating is both conventional – and, of course, context-

sensitive. Demonstratives will differ from definite descriptions in that the type of attributes through which descriptions pick individuals is not conventional meaning, but properties that describe the *designatum*.

Naming too is a conventional mode of designation, although it is not context-sensitive in the same way as the demonstrative designation is¹³. Individuals are named according to naming conventions that link the name and its *designatum*, or referent, the name-bearer. I will later – in Chapter 3 – define names as anaphoric devices of explicit coreference – borrowing Taylor (2003)'s terminology. But, for now, it suffices to say that names allow us to refer to the same individual in distinct circumstances, according to a permitting convention, in a syntactic-lexically ordered way. This is in consonance with the most fundamental Millian intuition that a name stands for whatever it names and semantically “does nothing else” (Bach (2015)). They are just linguistic devices we use to pick up individuals. Hence, demonstrating and naming involve different mechanisms of designation. Naming is the paradigm of referring, while demonstrating involves a metalinguistic satisfactor mechanism. Still, naming and demonstrating have a fundamental semantic feature in common: they are conventional modes of designation that do not depend on non-linguistic, contingent attributes of their *designata*.

I will assume Marti's and Perry's account of the difference between mechanisms and modes of designation, but my concern here will be only with two kinds of singular terms: demonstratives and names. Definite descriptions, when used attributively, are not *really* referential expressions. Though, when used attributively, they contribute to the propositional content of a sentence with the individuals they stand for, the mechanism through which they accomplish such a

¹³ Names do manifest a kind of context-sensitivity, but establishing which specific kind is not exactly an uncontroversial point. Philosophers and linguists diverge as to how names should be classified: if they are ambiguous or homonymous expressions. Kaplan (1990) seems to accept that names are homonymous, while Perry (2001) indicates that they are *nambiguous* (where nambiguity is the ambiguity that affects proper names). For Perry, context is necessary to narrow down what specific naming convention is being used by an interpreter, but she does not need to have all conventions that are associated to the generic name she is interpreting in her cognitive repertoire. Compare a proper name with a prototypical ambiguous word, like ‘bank’. Competent speakers of English know the possible meanings of ‘bank’ and they identify the occasional meaning of the term by choosing one of them. To know the meaning of a token of ‘John’, however, an interpreter does not need to know all the many conventions associated to the generic name ‘John’. I discuss both positions in Chapter 3.

task is, evidently, not direct. On the other hand, when used referentially, in Donnellan's sense, a definite description may pick a *designatum* that does not satisfy the descriptive condition carried by the expression. Take Donnellan's example of the use of the description 'Smith's murderer' to pick Jones, in a context in which Jones has been charged with the murder and put on trial (from Donnellan (1966)). The user of the description 'Smith's murderer' may purport to pick Jones, even if Jones is not Smith's murderer and, thus, does not satisfy the descriptive condition of identification carried by the definite description. So, it seems that, when used referentially, definite descriptions are not genuine instances of descriptions, and when used referentially, they are not rigorous descriptions (Korta & Perry (2010)). That is the reason why I shall only discuss definite descriptions in contrast with names and demonstratives and focus on referential and conventional modes of designations, avoiding the two-fold characterization of descriptions.

1.2. Conventional meaning and token-reflexivity

Peirce (1935), who elaborated the famous triangle of words, i.e., the signifiers, the designated objects and the interpretant, saw indexicals and demonstratives as a peculiar class of signifiers, since their sign/object relation was determined by *physical or causal connections* between words and their respective referents. This assumption motivated Peirce to call demonstratives and indexicals *indices* – as opposed to icons and symbolic expressions (cf. Peirce (1935)).

Peirce's theory was a milestone in the study of semiotics. Its posterior use by linguistics and philosophy, above all in the study of the pragmatics of natural languages, can be attested by his influence on philosophers of the likes of Arthur Burks (1949) and Reichenbach (1947), considered to be the fathers of *token-reflexive theories*. For defenders of this framework, indexicals are special expressions, whose conventional meanings contain conditions of identification that work as individuating properties (carried by type-expressions) and have the form of a linguistic rule. I give examples in page 13, but, first I find it important to motivate this position historically.

The token-reflexive theory was heavily criticized by Kaplan – and, posteriorly, by Kaplanian orthodoxy –, whose theory of indexical languages is

considerably influential among exponents of the New Theory of Reference, as Perry himself, Crimmins (1995). The quarrel between these two rival positions can be summarized as pertaining to what the object of semantic inquiry really is, if ‘sentences-in-context’ or rather tokens of sentence-types. For contenders of token-reflexivity, a semantic theory aimed at particular occurrences inevitably misses important semantic regularities of words. For Kaplan, these semantic regularities, captured by conventional meaning or *character*, are what ultimately individuate the fundamental semantic properties of indexicals.

Defenders of the token-reflexive theory, on the other hand, hold that such individuation is made at the level of a reflexive component of the conventional meaning¹⁴. Other controversies of the debate involve the metaphysical commitments implied by postulating types as abstract entities and the questions of whether and how tokens depend on type-properties (cf. Garcia-Carpintero (2000)).

Nevertheless, as Predelli (2006) puts it, in rephrasing Kaplan (1989, pp. 584-5), this token-type dispute can be narrowed down to discrepancies in the space reserved to the impact of the “vagaries of action” in each theory. On the one side, Kaplanians prioritize the question of logical truth and “verities of meaning” and, on the other, defenders of token-reflexivity see no point in construing a semantic theory that ignores how the words we use relate to the actions we perform.

As it turns out, I have no positive argument in favor of token-reflexivity other than my endorsement of the idea that the role of semantics is, aside from describing regularities in language use, *ideally* also to account for how the words we use relate to the actions we perform. Yet, perhaps, to really understand what reflexivity is, we need a more detailed presentation. A particularly elucidating one can be found in Corazza (2012). The paper is essentially about the co-reference problem: it presents a referentialist solution to the classic puzzles concerning cognitive significance, with the purpose of explaining, on the one hand, how two speakers who make use of the same expressions can convey different contents; but also, how two speakers can convey the same content by using different

¹⁴ Garcia-Carpintero has some interesting counterarguments to specific attacks made by Kaplan (1989) to the token-reflexive theory (cf. Garcia-Carpintero (2013; 2015)).

expressions. As mentioned earlier, this formulation of the co-reference objection is often denominated the problem of same-saying and it is well exemplified by the description of (2) and (3) in page 6. It can also be used to explain the cognitive difference between (2) and (4), said by Dilma Rousseff:

(4) I was impeached by the Senate.

Corazza favors a pluri-propositional solution to such problem, claiming that more than one proposition is said by an utterer of (4), one of them being the proposition expressed, (P4):

(P4) That **Dilma Rousseff** was impeached by the Senate.

In his view, what is said by an utterance of (4) corresponds to a complex of contents, which includes not only what is syntactically constrained, but also what is implied by the speech act. One among such contents contains the contribution of the singular term, in this case, Dilma Rousseff, and corresponds to the proposition expressed. Other contents, on their turn, include reflexive truth-conditions that will be loaded with whatever information is available in the situations of use. The reflexive truth-conditions will give the interpreter linguistic information regarding the mechanism of designation through which the speaker wants her to access the referent. Following Perry (2001), I will represent the reflexive contents of (2) and (4) as follows, where, as previously established, the bold face words correspond to the contribution to content, and the italic (from now on) represent the fact that the reflexive rules are *conditions of identification*:

(P^r2) That *The individual the permitting convention associated to 'Dilma Rousseff' designates* was impeached by the Senate¹⁵.

(P^r4) That *The speaker of (4)* was impeached by the Senate.

¹⁵ The superscript ^r signals reflexive content.

Notice that the utterances are the real subject matter of (P^r2) and (P^r4). We say then that (P^r2) is about the individual designated by ‘Dilma Rousseff’ and (P^r4) is about the producer of the utterance.

Following Bach (1999), Corazza suggests that we find evidence of the explanatory role of reflexive content by applying the Indirect Quotation test (IQ). This test purports to establish that the semantic content expressed by an utterance of a sentence with a singular term is the invariant counterpart of the sentence meaning, which is preserved in inter-contextual exchanges. Suppose you have no idea of who the speaker of (4) is, but you are required to report what was said by the utterance of (4) to a third person. (P^r4) is a good description of what you might say, namely, something like: “The speaker of (4) said that she/he was impeached by the Senate”.

Certainly, the speaker conveys more information than (P^r4); for example, the presupposition that the speaker of (4) used to be a president. It also entails that the speaker of (4) was removed from her/his position. The use of (P^r4) to report what was said by (4) might even be compatible with the knowledge that Dilma Rousseff is the referent of ‘I’. In reporting (4), which is a coordinated task that involves a plan of action and the recognition of the interpreter’s previous informational status at the time of utterance, the speaker might choose (P^r4) for many reasons, including as a consequence of not knowing how much the receiver of the message knows about Dilma Rousseff or the speaker of (4).

But, more importantly, reflexive content explains the cognitive impact on the hearer. After all, the mode of designation of the first person does not convey the same content as the mode of designation of a naming convention¹⁶. In section 1.2, I present the nuances of John Perry’s notion of reflexivity, the one which I subscribe to. Now, I will make a brief detour to say a bit more about demonstratives and names and how their interpretation is affected by contexts.

1.2.1. The role of context in interpretation

¹⁶ Perry’s famous *The problem of the essential indexical* (1979) accounts for these issues. As well as the example of David Israel from the introduction.

The term 'context' is often understood in a loose way, as the setting in which communicative acts take place; in this sense, it basically means the same as 'situation' and has no additional technical connotation. Context as a representation of concrete speech situations for theoretical purposes was first systematized by a referentialist in the philosophical works of David Kaplan (1989). Kaplan thought that contexts were necessary for his project of developing a logic of demonstratives, but in the end, his theory was mostly focused on the special semantic nature of other context-dependent expressions¹⁷, pure indexicals, i.e., 'I', 'here', 'now'. Contexts are then considered necessary, for Kaplan, to explain what he calls indexical nature of context-dependent expressions.

Kaplan's choice of introducing contexts is, firstly, based on the idea that the semantics of indexicals should be accounted for by a bi-dimensional semantics: contexts determine content (or the proposition expressed/what is said), while truth-values are determined by the circumstances in which contents are evaluated (actual and contrafactual). Secondly, it is motivated by his acknowledgment that contents can be represented as intensions. So, content can be shifted by intensional operators for time and possible world, as, for example, 'in ten years', 'possibly' and 'necessarily'. In the Kaplanian picture, contexts differ from circumstances in that they are combined with meaning to generate propositions, but their constitutive parameters are not independently shiftable. In this bi-dimensional semantic approach, temporal and modal operators actuate on content to determine extensions. The operator orients the interpreter to evaluate the content expressed relatively to the appropriate time and state of the world. What varies with the operators, then, is the truth-value of the sentence-in-context, not the content expressed.

Operators of the familiar kind treated in intensional logic (modal, temporal, etc.) operate on contents. (Since we represent contents by intensions, it is not surprising that intensional operators operate on contents.) Thus, an appropriate extension for an intensional operator is a function from intensions to extensions. A modal operator when applied to an intension will look at the behavior of the intension with respect to the possible state of the world feature of the circumstances of evaluation. A temporal operator will, similarly, be concerned with the time of the circumstance. If we built the time of evaluation into the contents (thus removing time from the circumstances leaving only, say,

¹⁷ I take context-sensitivity and context-dependence as synonyms.

a possible world history, and making contents specific as to time), it would make no sense to have temporal operators. To put the point another way, if what is said is thought of as incorporating reference to a specific time, or state of the world, or whatever, it is otiose to ask whether what is said would have been true at another time, in another state of the world, or whatever. Temporal operators applied to eternal sentences (those whose contents incorporate a specific time of evaluation) are redundant. Any intensional operators applied to perfect sentences (those whose contents incorporate specific values for all features of circumstances) are redundant. (KAPLAN, 1989, p. 502)

Kaplan is otherwise explicitly open about the addition of other parameters that determine truth-evaluation: “The amount of information we require from a circumstance is linked to the degree of specificity of contents, and thus to the kinds of operators in the language” (*ibidem*, p. 502).

What I will identify here as the Kaplanian context, is also defined as *narrow context*, and it corresponds to the set of semantically relevant parameters for the determination of content, which include the agent, the time-space location and, when needed, a possible world. According to Kaplan (1989), it can be used to describe the semantics of all singular terms that are used to refer. Narrow context is defined in contrast with *broad context* and broad context includes all information that is communicatively relevant to the successful completion of a speech act, including *what the speaker means* (*Gricean speaker's meaning*¹⁸), that is, what is conveyed beyond what is said by the sentence in context. Hence, broad context differs from narrow context in that it is recruited only once the proposition expressed is determined. So, in this standard picture, while narrow context is used semantically, broad context is used either post-semantically or pre-semantically¹⁹, as Kaplan affirms in section XXII of *Demonstratives*:

But given an utterance, semantics cannot tell us what expression was uttered or what language it was uttered in. This is a presemantic task. When I utter a particular vocable, for example, the one characteristic of the first person pronoun of English, you must decide what word I have spoken or indeed, if I have spoken any word at all (it may have been a cry of anguish). In associating a word with my utterance you take account of a variety of features of the context of utterance that help to determine what I have said but that need not be any part of what I have said. My egotism, my intonation, my demeanor, may all support the hypothesis that it was the first person

¹⁸ Cf. Grice (1969).

¹⁹ Perry (2001) follows Kaplan's definition of pre-semantic aspects.

pronoun of English. But these aspects of personality, fluency, and mood are no part of any semantic theory of the first person pronoun (KAPLAN, 1989, p. 559).

Philosophical literature about contextual dependence is populated with different approaches to the problem of how to represent broad context and how to determine its function in semantic interpretation: would its role really be limited to the pre-propositional fixing of linguistic features as well as to the post-propositional stage of interpretation? If the answer is 'yes', we are left with the problem of explaining the interpretation of statements with demonstratives, for example, since the determination of a *demonstratum*, accompanied by its prototypical demonstration (or some other mechanism that makes the *designatum* salient), demands the inclusion of the speaker's communicational intention in the representation of the speech situation. Consider the example below:

(5) That ball is colorful.

To determine what proposition was expressed by the utterance of (5), the speaker must make the putative referent manifest to other participants. The problem with including agential aspects in the representation of narrow context is, more fundamentally, that it breaks with the traditional framework's assumptions that pure indexicality and other forms of context sensitivity are different phenomena, as Recanati remarks:

We pretend to be able to manage the situation with a narrow notion of context, the kind we choose to deal with indexicals, when, in fact, we can only determine the referent intended by the speaker (i.e. the narrow context relevant to the Interpretation of enunciation) when we turn to pragmatic interpretation, relying on the broad context. (RECANATI, 2003, p.5)

Here, Recanati reinforces the idea that the requirement of automatism in the attribution of occasional value to sensitive expressions, that is, of "purity" of the

context/meaning relation is satisfied only by a very limited number of expressions. Even the egocentric categories 'here' and 'now' – also 'today' – are amenable to interpretation in terms of broad context. However, the preference for indexicalist strategies²⁰ can be explained, as Recanati suggests, by an "excessive preoccupation with the subclass of 'pure indexicals'". In any case, what Recanati identifies as the indexicalist strategy purports to extend what counts as indexicality, thus trespassing the Kaplanian concept of context. To summarize, the dispute here is between those in favor of expanding the phenomenon of context-sensitivity – moderately or radically – and those more firmly committed to minimal semantics²¹.

Among these contemporary philosophers who favor the alternative of representing context in terms of broad context, abdicating this exclusive concern with sensitive expressions, is Stalnaker, with his conception of *discursive context*. In his view, context is not simply a theoretical construct that explains the strict phenomenon of pure indexicality; it is rather the implicit or presupposed "body of information that is deemed, at a certain point, as common to the participants in the discourse" (STALNAKER, 1999, p. 98). It can be formally modeled as a non-empty set of possible worlds. Performance of new assertions, for Stalnaker, correspond to requests to *update* what is being taken for granted at a moment *t*. Each new assertion must satisfy certain conditions: a) its content cannot be contrary or contradictory with respect to the propositions taken as true at that moment; and b) such propositions should be taken for granted by all participants.

²⁰ Theories that commit to the assumption that the phenomenon of semantic context-sensitivity is limited to deictic and perspectival expressions and that the best way to explain their semantics is by representing contexts as n-tuples of parameters – which do not vary independently (cf. Lewis (1991)). The indexicalist strategy is a form of what Cappelen and Lepore (2002) call moderate contextualism. In their view, moderate contextualists try to motivate the addition of parameters to the Kaplanian context based on syntactic-semantic evidence, most commonly imported from dominant linguistic theories. Moderate and radical contextualisms are the main targets of defenders of minimalist approaches to semantics (see footnote 21 below), but there are other alternatives that neither break with model-theoretical semantics (favored by the indexicalists) nor defend the expansion of context, thus avoiding much of the disagreement present in the debate between minimalists and contextualists. Predelli (2012) and Stojanovic (2007) illustrate this alternative position that favors a treatment of the problem in terms of circumstances.

²¹ I understand by minimal semantics the thesis that context is necessary for the determination of the proposition expressed by an utterance if selected by morphemes of the sentence. According to minimalist semantics, the role of semantics is to determine the truth-conditions of well-formed sentences of a natural language in accordance with the principle of compositionality. Furthermore, in this view, pragmatics is kept out of truth-conditional interpretation. Unlike semantic interpretation, pragmatic interpretation is inferential and non-conventional.

Moreover, context is *presupposed common ground*, the dynamic set of propositions that are manifestly *taken* to be true at a time *t* of any conversational exchange.

Because this view has been revised and criticized in the philosophical tradition for different reasons (since Lewis (1981)), and specially by linguists (at least since the works of Atlas (1977; 1979) and Heim (1983)²²), Stalnaker (2002) presented a revision of his past position. Currently, he subscribes to the idea that speakers are not required to take propositions as relevant to common ground at the time of the utterance. The attachment of a new presupposition happens only *after* the speech act that introduces it takes place, with the purpose of preserving conversational reasoning. Another reformed concept in Stalnaker's theory is the notion of *acceptance*, but I will discuss it only in section 1.3..

Returning to Stalnaker's representation of context, it should not come as a surprise that he does not suppose that contexts should be represented in the form of indexes, but his proposal is not exactly antagonistic to indexicalism:

As long as we make the minimal assumption that information can only be relevant to content determination only if it is presupposed by the speaker as information that will be available to his interlocutor then we can be sure that the set of possible worlds that defines what it is assumed to be sufficient to represent a context (STALNAKER, 1999, p. 106).

According to him, since an enunciation is a conspicuous fact in a conversational exchange, any relevant truth-conditional aspect, will be duly represented by the context, insofar as every participant recognizes its role in interpretation. Such a flexible formulation of contexts is appealing at first hand: compatible with predictions of indexicalist theories, but respectful of the dynamics of discourse²³ and its cognitive characteristics. Perhaps the attractiveness of this position resides in the fact that Stalnaker's concerns are foundational, that is, he is

²² Representants of the Discourse Representation semantics.

²³ Stalnaker's framework is that of Speech Acts theory. This is something his own theory and *Discourse Representation Theories* (DRTs) have in common.

concerned, ultimately, with what contexts are and with its manifest nature. Garcia-Carpintero (2017) has recently advanced an interesting view on how context should be represented by expanding Stalnaker's position. Firstly, he partakes in the common idea that presuppositions are conditions for the completion of speech acts, a kind of licensing condition. Contexts are, then, not a set of presupposed propositions that are believed by speakers, as the old Stalnaker supposes. They are, rather, implicit commitments speakers undertake to illocutionary norms – general normative conventions that govern assertions. I will return to the issue of the representation of context in section 1.3., when I present the concept of presupposition. For now, I would like to elaborate the notion of content.

1.3. Perry's reflexive/referential distinction

In this part of Chapter 1, I present a study of Perry's concept of content. This is necessary for my general argument because my own treatment of the no-reference problem, which will be presented in Chapters 2 and 3, is an attempt to combine Perry's theory of content and the presuppositional account of the no-reference problem. I will begin this part of the chapter by presenting Perry's classificatory concept of content, focusing on reflexive content on subsection 1.2.2.

1.3.1. Perry's classificatory concept of content

For Perry, the content of an utterance allows agents/interpreters to classify states of affair and events according to requirements of success; truth, in the case of utterances of declarative sentences. Content, then, explains the attribution of propositional attitudes to subjects. Consider the example, by Perry (2001), of a man who sees the daily newspaper on his balcony one morning and acquires the belief that the newspaper is on the balcony. The content of the belief classifies the state of affairs, given some facts about the world and the information that is perceptually accessible to the agent. A neighbor who observes the situation and sees the man pick the newspaper from the floor is justified in assigning to him the

belief that the newspaper is on the floor and, furthermore, to suppose that his action can be explained by the possession of such a belief.

In Perry, content is also goal-oriented. Take a variant of his original example. Suppose that the man picking the newspaper from his balcony floor that morning is named John, and he is an old acquaintance of Louie, the newspaper delivery man. John just found out that his and Louie's old friend, Joe, passed away, and he wishes to tell Louie the sad news. John has expectations about such conversation, but when he goes out to the balcony with the purpose of waiting for Louie, he sees that the newspaper was already delivered. What beliefs can we attribute to John? We can reliably say that John believes that the newspaper is on the floor. Nonetheless, given our narrative and John's goals, expectations and what is perceived by him, it is also reasonable to suppose that John has the belief that Louie has already delivered his newspaper that morning. Notice that the content of John's belief depends on what John's classificatory targets are. That is why Perry argues that the classificatory concept of content strongly depends on the *informational content available* in the situation that the agent classifies. Thus, in accordance with Perry, the content of cognitive states depends on *what is taken for granted*.

Perry holds that his concept of content is particularly advantageous for an adequate theory of language because it accounts for how human language is used to communicate cognitive states, given that such states ultimately influence the way we act. As a matter of fact, the central claim in Perry (2001) is that there is a system of truth-conditional contents at the theorist's disposal, not just propositional content, to explain how linguistic and informational content are adjusted to one another. He points out that:

[...] the concept of 'truth-conditions of an utterance' is a *relative concept*, although it is often treated as if it were absolute. Instead of thinking in terms of the truth-conditions of an utterance, we should think of *the* truth-conditions of an utterance *given* various facts about it. And when we do this we are led to see that talking about *the* content of an utterance is an oversimplification. (PERRY, 2001, p.80)

Consequently, he heavily criticizes what he calls *the principle of the unique content*. Perry claims that more than one semantic content is generated by utterances of declarative sentences (with referential expressions). One of them is the *proposition expressed*²⁴: one that involves a n-ary relation between a property and n individuals, $\langle Ix; e \rangle$, which must, in some way, relate to the conditions that make the utterance true. But, still, why should the proposition be considered a kind of content or, better still, why has it been equated with the concept of content by an important tradition in the philosophy of language?²⁵.

According to Perry (1997, 2001) the main reason why the proposition is equated with the notion of content is its situational specificity and the fact that it is what typical agents say in typical communicative interactions. Propositions represent a high level of semantic specificity, because an interpreter only apprehends it once she loads all the spatial-temporal and intentional aspects that are relevant to semantic interpretation into truth-conditions, leaving no room for ambiguity or unfilled semantic slots. It is supposed to be the result of semantic interpretation, the content that the speaker wished to convey by performing her speech act in the first place. But, as Perry insists, the proposition is not the only content that is conveyed.

Together with Barwise (1983), he denounces the incorrectness of the thesis that the proposition expressed is the one and only source of information in an utterance. They call such mistake *the fallacy of misplaced information*: “the idea that all information in an utterance must come from [the proposition it expresses]” (p. 166). Moreover, they affirm that “construing the meaning of an expression as a multiplaced relation is what lets us account for information, since information is available about any or all the coordinates, not just about the coordinate that gives us the [proposition expressed]” (*ibidem*, p. 164). The above-mentioned coordinates also appear in Perry (1988), when he talks about the

²⁴ Though he is not exactly concerned with the ontology of propositions, he takes the classic characterization of propositions as *sharable objects of belief*, the semantic content to which we attribute truth-values.

²⁵ Of which Kaplan (1989) and Recanati (2001) are examples.

*relational theory of meaning*²⁶, according to which the propositional content of an utterance is given, partially, by the conventionally meaningful parts of the sentence, but more fundamentally, by the relation that the language associates with sentences, contextual factors and circumstances. For instance, the propositional content of an utterance of, say (2), will be given by the relation between situational features of the token production – time, place, agent etc. –, fixed facts about the language that is used to convey information and the individual. “The truth-conditions of an utterance derive directly from the meaning assigned to the sentence involved, whereas which proposition is expressed depends also on the agent, time and circumstances of utterance”. (PERRY, 1997, 197).

Consequently, for Perry, truth-conditions and propositions are not to be taken as the same thing. Propositions incorporate fully loaded – or incremented, to use Perry’s later vocabulary – truth-conditions. They are the intuitive contents to which we associate truth or falsity, what interpreters identify as *what is said*. Now, the notion of what is said has been widely explored in contemporary philosophy of language, mainly with the purpose of explaining the concept of content in an intuitive and straightforward way that captures how normal users of a natural language interact in regular, every day communication.

What is said by an utterance is commonly defined as what the speaker expresses, the information she conveys, by means of her use of a well-formed sentence. Kaplan, for instance, elaborates his conception of *what is said* as what a sentence expresses *in context*. For Kaplan, *what is said* is both: a) a kind of context-variant content (in the case of indexicals and other semantically sensitive expressions) and; b) what is evaluated as true or false. He explicitly indicates these two different senses (for the case of indexicals) here:

What is said in using a given indexical in different contexts may be different. Thus if I say, today,
 I was insulted yesterday
 And you utter the same words tomorrow, what is said is different. If what we say differs in truth-value, that is enough to show that we say different thing [...] The second kind of meaning, most

²⁶ See Perry (1988).

prominent in the case of indexicals in that which determines the content in varying contexts. The rule, 'I' refers to the speaker or writer is a meaning rule of the second kind. The phrase 'the speaker or writer' is not supposed to be a complete description, nor it is supposed to refer to the speaker or writer of the word 'I'. (there are many such). It refers to the speaker or writer of the relevant occurrence of the word 'I', that is, the agent of the context." (KAPLAN, 1989, pp. 500-505).

So, in Kaplan's sense, *what is said* corresponds to *the proposition expressed*, which is given as a function from meaning to contextual factors and evaluated relatively to circumstances. The notion of *what is said* also appears in Grice's theory of conversational implicatures (Grice (1989))²⁷, marking the contrast between what is syntactically constrained and what is implied by the speaker.

In some cases, however, which Perry denominated *non-paradigmatic communicative situations*, interpreters cannot apprehend *what is said*. One of the reasons why this may happen is that the singular term fails to refer, either occasionally (when the interpreter fails to determine the referent) or systematically (when the term is empty). Here is an example. Suppose you buy a random second-hand book and find a note inside that says:

(6) John wants his books back.

You have no idea who John is or what specific books he wants back. How do you interpret (6)? The most natural answer for defenders of truth-conditional semantics is that any competent speaker of English does comprehend "something" quite straightforwardly when reading (6), simply by identifying the conditions under which (6) is true. But given the limited amount of information available in the occasion, the interpreter will fail to apprehend the full-fledged proposition that the speaker intended to express. Here, referential failure causes a disruption in the process of interpretation.

Notice, though, that (6) differs from (1), for example. While (6) illustrate cases of referential failure *in specific situations*, (1) is a classic example of

²⁷ Recanati talks about *what is literally said* and differentiates *sentence meaning* and *contextual ingredients of what is said*, contesting Grice's conception of *what is said* as merely syntactically constrained. For more about his critique, see Recanati (2003) and Stajnovic (2006). For Stojanovic, what is said is to be determined in terms of three considerations: how linguistic meaning constrains interpretation; what is talked about, and how content is reported.

fictional use of a name. So, I will distinguish between a) and b) below, remarking that they are instances of different phenomena.

- a) referential failure for **lack of information**: cases with demonstratives and names that fail to pick up individuals as referents, given specific situational configurations – most commonly the speaker's inaptitude in making the referent identifiable by the interpreter;
- b) referential failure in **fiction**: the classic cases of fictional names, like 'Sherlock Holmes' or 'Anna Karenina'. The failure here is explained by the fact that these names designate by means of fictional naming conventions.

I will reaffirm this difference in Chapter 3, in dealing with empty proper names. My expectation there will be that the concept of content that I borrow from Perry will help guarantee a unified treatment of the meaningfulness of sentences like (1) and (6).

1.3.2. Characterizing Perry's reflexive content

In Perry's system of contents, truth-conditions and propositions are not equated. Among the contents expressed by sentences like (1) and (6), are what he calls *reflexive truth-conditions* or *reflexive content*. These truth-conditions are thus called because they are about *occurrences of sentences*, and *not about the individuals designated by the singular terms in use*. To better understand such characterization, I will appeal once again to an argument by exemplification. Take (7).

(7) I passed the final exams.

Suppose you are at an adjacent room and hear me utter (7) in talking to my mother. You do not know me or my mother and our voices do not sound familiar, so you are unable to identify the speakers in any conclusive way. As a competent speaker of English, you will surely be able to recognize the conventional meanings of 'I', 'passed', 'the', 'final exams'. As an interpreter, you have all the fixed given facts about the conventional meanings of the sentential constituents. Such linguistic conventions are not ultimately what I intended to discuss in talking to my mother, but they are conveyed by the mere fact that I uttered (7). In hearing my utterance, you will access truth-conditional content that is something like: *the speaker passed her final exams*. Since you lack access to some semantically relevant spatial-temporal features (contextual coordinates), that is all you will have access to in terms of information. So, you fail to apprehend a proposition. The content you, as an interpreter of (7), will apprehend then is something like (P^r7), the reflexive truth-conditions of (7):

(P^r7): That *The speaker of (7)* passed the final exams.

(P^r7) is not to be understood as limited to incorporating the conventional meanings or Kaplanian character of the sentential parts, though. According to the Perryan concept of reflexivity, (P^r7) also accommodates incremental information relative to the occurrence of (7). In those cases, I will represent content as (PⁱN), where the superscript ⁱ indicates increment and *N* indicates the sentence. For example:

(PⁱN) That *the girl who uttered (7) at 01:00 p.m., on February 11th, 2004* passed the final exams.

The more we know about the utterance, the more information can be loaded in the reflexive truth-conditions, resulting in enriched content. (P^r7) also differs from the proposition expressed by (7), namely, (P7).

(P7): That **Eduarda** passed the final exams.

Notice that, unlike (P'7), (P7) establishes an informational connection to the world, which goes beyond mere linguistic conventions. (P7) is about Eduarda, not about the speaker of (7). Now, (P'7) supposedly explains three things: a) how informational content is to be adjusted to linguistic content in a situation such as the one described above – where the interpreter has less information than necessary; b) our intuitions that, though the interlocutor does not grasp what is said by the utterance, she/he is perfectly capable of making *some* sense of it; and c) how, even when speakers are not successful in referring, sentences like (7) are still meaningful.

As a referentialist, Perry has three main motivations to introduce reflexive content in his theory. The first one is the problem of co-reference. Reflexive content is what explains potentially informative identities. In his view, two coreferential terms contribute to content with the same individual, so they express the same proposition, but they may differ in what concerns mechanisms of designation and their consequent impact on the agent's mental organization. Reflexive content is the level of semantics in which mechanisms of designation "make a difference" for rational reconstruction, and function as a criterion of individuation for truth-conditional content. For example, (P7) and (P'7) are different contents.

The other reason is Perry's flexible conception of truth-conditional interpretation. He considers competence as sufficient to explain the apprehension of truth-conditions, in the sense that, once interpreters determine the reflexive counterpart of truth-conditional interpretation, they have a workable knowledge of the conditions under which the sentence is true, even when she/he does not have enough information to grasp the proposition, as in the example above.

Lastly, Perry considers that appropriate theories of reference must have an account of interpretation for situations in which information is scarce. And that is precisely what reflexive content offers. The two last motivations are especially appealing for the view I am attempting to advance here, considering that its

purpose is to explain referential failure in a way that preserves meaningfulness, without abdicating the general claims of referentialism.

To summarize, in Perry's proposal, content has a twofold definition. Firstly, it is the object of propositional attitudes and, secondly, it explains the meaningfulness of sentences. He conciliates both these aspects with the idea that interpretation depends on classificatory practices that allow agents to rationally reconstruct cognitive states. These insights would be unfruitful however if not combined to a special interest for the relation between semantics and information. Perry insists that content categorizes information. It is ultimately, what makes states of affairs and other people's minds and behavior intelligible to us.

Token-reflexive rules, on the one hand, do the job of explaining meaningfulness. Sentential parts are, after all, informative in virtue of their conventional nature and they can be recruited for rational reconstruction in occasion, even if, psychologically, speakers are typically not conscious of them.

We want to understand complicated actions and activities as cases of rational, purposeful action, that is, as things that are done in pursuit of goals, and are sensitive to one's beliefs. The reasons we attribute are not always, or even most often, ones that the agent explicitly formulates in consciousness. Nevertheless, they are often accessible after the fact, through query or introspection, when we take apart our actions and ask ourselves, or others, why we do things the way we do (KORTA & PERRY, 2011, p.35).

This facet of Korta & Perry's theory is particularly advantageous for those attempting to account for referential failure in the interpretation of names and demonstratives. Token-reflexive rules help explain how interpreters make sense of utterances in situations that provide less information than necessary. Furthermore and, most importantly, I take Perry's criticism of the fallacy of unique content as a keen understanding of what propositions are as theoretical constructs. Of course, the issue of explaining propositions from a metaphysical standpoint, is at the very least challenging and, considering my purposes here,

unattainable. I consider, withal, that taking propositions as classificatory tools for interpretation (with token-reflexive rules) allows us to analyze semantic content in terms of how it impacts agents, in consonance with cognitive constraints that go back to Frege and can be kept by Referentialism.

I end this study, then, with one of Perry's traditional resources for making his theory clearer to readers: a table. In it, I detail the structure of a non-propositional theory of content for demonstratives and names, that incorporates Perry's token-reflexive theory of content. The table illustrate the relation between content and information and will serve us in the following chapters.

Kinds of classificatory content	What they are about	When are they used to interpret utterances of sentences with singular terms?
Truth-conditions about the utterance = reflexive content (PⁱN)	About the utterances themselves and the linguistic conventions they incorporate.	When we have no information regarding the referent.
Incremental truth-conditions (PⁱN)	About the utterance plus items from the situation (loaded into the appropriate positions in the reflexive content).	When facts other than just the linguistic conventions are available, but the referent is not determined. Incremental truth-conditions are particularly diverse, since it depends on the informational content of each situation. ²⁸
Propositional truth-conditions (PN)	About individuals of the world and, as such, are truth-evaluable ²⁹ .	the referent is identified.

²⁸ I offer a more detailed example in Chapter 2.

²⁹ I will offer a more robust account of what is special about this cases in Chapter 3.

Table 1.

1.4. Presupposition

The presuppositional account is an explanatory strategy for solving the no-reference problem. According to Laurence Horn (2007), the first contemporary thinker to use this specific notion of implicit content was Sigwart (1873), a few years earlier than Frege (1892) himself. However, Frege is commonly taken to be the founder of what is now referred to as the Fregean-Strawsonian presuppositional account. In his theory, the presupposition appears under the name '*Voraussetzung*' and it is a *truth-value condition* on utterances of sentences with singular terms (Wilson (1975)). In the Fregean framework, the *Voraussetzung* is an external existential proposition: though it is indicated, or better still, implied by the utterance, it is not a part of the sentence's truth-conditions. So, the Fregean *Voraussetzung* functions as a kind of requirement on truth-value attribution. The uses of sentences with empty naming expressions, for Frege's double-layered semantics, have *Sinne*, that is, they express content and have cognitive significance; their semantic peculiarity comes from the fact that, because of presuppositional failure, they lack a truth-value. So, they have sense, but no reference.

Here is an example. According to Frege, the utterance of a sentence like (1) expresses a proposition that presupposes another proposition of the form, 'x exists', where 'x' is the referent of the term – i.e., Anna Karenina herself. If such a presupposed proposition is false, then (1) is neither true nor false, even if (1) is taken to still express truth-conditions. Frege holds that the content of an utterance of (1), in the end, does not really raise the question of *truth* (or reference), since its purpose is not to state something true or false about the world, but to narrate fictional events. In those cases, although, strictly speaking we can say that there is a presuppositional failure – in the sense that, the presupposition is false – we are not entirely comfortable with saying that the utterance is neither true nor false.

Recall the two kinds of referential failure I presented earlier: referential failure for lack of information and fiction. Intuitively, within fiction, there are no intuitions of truth-value gaps, because the agents are not committed to truth-telling. I will return to this last claim in Chapter 3, in which I discuss truth in fiction.

Naturally, the view defended in Strawson (1950, 1952, 1954), that utterances of sentences like (1) are neither true nor false, is similar to Frege's. Both argue that presuppositional failure affects semantic interpretation at the level of truth-value attribution, which generates truth-value gaps. Also, in Strawson's theory, as in Frege's, any use of singular terms that does not raise "the question of truth" – fiction, poetry and other examples of non-veridical discursive practices – should be taken to be somehow special. Frege holds such position by appealing to the concept of *assertion* (a speech act), and Strawson, by appealing to the notion of *use of a sentence*.

Now, it is a ubiquitous fact that linguistic communication involves both saying and implying. Implications can be logical, logical-semantic and semantic-pragmatic. In general, one pragmatically implies a certain piece of information, in making a statement, when one authorizes an inference and commits oneself to the truth of its conclusions. They are defined as "semantic", in virtue of their conventionality, but, at the bottom, as Strawson affirms, presupposing is something that *agents do*, not sentences³⁰. When we speak of sentences or singular expressions as triggering presuppositions, we are using a shortcut to talk about agency. In Strawson's view, the effects of presuppositional failure on the truth-evaluation of sentences with singular terms are consequences of spurious *uses*. Though, in *On referring*, he merely indicates what kind of implication he has in mind, using a proto-vocabulary with terms like 'hint', 'indicate' and 'suggest', in his 1960's papers he finally identifies the phenomenon as presupposing³¹.

With Strawson, J. L. Austin was among the first philosophers in the 20th century to discuss implications with a distinctively pragmatic orientation. His

³⁰ In section 2.5.1. I present more details about Strawson's threefold distinction between expression (word or sentence), use of the expression and the utterance.

³¹ These are ways to talk about different kinds of non-logical inferences, such as presuppositions and implicatures, before the introduction of such terms.

essays from the late 1950s – reedited in 1979 – were marked by the same lack of precise vocabulary to differentiate between forms of implication that we observe in Strawson's works. Austin is also inclined to treat implications pragmatically, particularly those related to *assertions* and the factive verb 'to know'. To be more precise, he is interested in what is pragmatically conveyed but not logically implied by a speech act³². Taking Moore's paradox as an example, his strategy arguing that the speech act of *asserting* implicates specific epistemic states. Here is a particularly clarifying formulation of Moore's paradox that will help us understand Austin's point:

One can readily imagine a situation in which Moore went to the pictures last Tuesday but does not believe that he did so. On the other hand, it does seem absurd to *assert* a proposition while, with no apparent change of mind, or aside to a different audience, going on to deny that one believes it. It seems no less absurd to *judge true* the following proposition: *p and I do not believe that p*. (GREEN & WILLIAMS, 2007, p. 3)

According to this description, then, Moore's paradox would be generated by the impossibility of asserting that P and explicitly denying the state of believing P to be true, without committing oneself to self-contradiction. In Austin's version, as well as in his solution, the problem of identifying what kind of implication is involved in Moore's case is crucial. He is concerned with what exactly makes affirming P, and stating that one believes in P, trivial and, at the same time, makes affirming P, and stating that one does not believe in P, absurd.

Take the well-known sentence 'The cat is on the mat and I do not believe it'. That seems absurd. On the other hand 'The cat is on the mat and I believe it' seems trivial [...] we should at once in our present case be tempted to say that 'The cat is on the mat' *implies* 'I believe it' and the absurdity of adding 'and I do not believe it'. But, of course, 'The cat is on the mat' does not imply 'Austin believes the cat is on the mat': nor even 'the speaker believes the cat is on the mat' – for the speaker may be lying. The doctrine which is produced in this case is, that no *p*

³² The quotations from Austin (1979) here, in pages 31 to 32 and page 33, show some textual evidence of this lack of proper vocabulary. It seems that the author is uncomfortable with the expression 'logical implication', but is still in search of a more precise denomination for the phenomenon he has in mind. The first extract is from *The meaning of a word*, first read to The Moral Sciences Club in Cambridge and to the Jowett Society in Oxford, in 1940 – ten years before Strawson published *On Referring*. The second extract is from *Other Minds*, reprinted from 1946.

indeed, but *asserting* 'I (who assert p) believe p'. And here 'implies' must be given a special sense [...] By asserting p I give it to be understood that I believe p. (AUSTIN, 1979, pp.63-64)

For Austin, the felt contradiction in asserting 'P and I do not believe that P' is caused by a violation of the condition of assertibility which establishes that *believing that P*, when declaring P, is a condition on the success of any statement of P. Austin explains these cases of implication using the concept of *exercise of practical rationality*. He also remarks that, though, in the case of statements, it may seem like speakers/agents indicate that they *know* or *are certain of* a specific fact, the only epistemic state that is adequately derived from (or implied by) the act of stating itself is that of belief³³. As matter of fact, according to his position, knowledge and certainty are more demanding epistemic states and they typically require explicit articulation³⁴.

³³ As Austin, Strawson (1950, p. 330) also makes a few interesting remarks about implying and believing.

³⁴ Levinson (2000)'s theory about Inferences-Q may be used to elaborate some of Austin's observations about assertions, in terms of inferential heuristics.

The idea behind Levinson's notion of inferential heuristics is that, in recognizing and determining speaker's meaning, an interpreter recuperates inferential reasoning, from conclusion to possible premises, and such rational effort is circumscribed and guided by Gricean maxims. According to Levinson, the relation between the factive verbs, *to believe* and *to know*, for example, is an instance of Inference-Q, a type of inference that is guided by Grice's principle Q which affirms that one must pick the informationally strongest paradigmatic alternate that is consistent with facts. Here is how the author defines it:

... it induces inferences from the use of one expression to the assumption that the speaker did not intend a contrasting, usually informationally stronger, one. Consequently, implicatures from this principle have two essential characteristics: they are metalinguistic (and paradigmatic) in the sense that what is implicated makes essential reference to what might have been said but wasn't (i.e. to a set of linguistic alternates in paradigmatic opposition), and they are negative propositions, what is implicated being a presumption that such and such is not the case. (LEVINSON, 2000, p. 75).

The inferences-Q that are of interest to us are called Horn scales or entailment scales. They are formalized in the following way: take an n-tuple of ordered expressions <Xi, Xj, X...>. If S is a sentential scheme and Xi > Xj, then S(i) entails S(j). Now, in the n-tuple that contains <know, believe>, to know > to believe. So, a speaker who affirms "I know that P" is authorized to also state that she believes that P, but the opposite is not a valid inference. From 'I believe that P' one cannot derive "I know that P". Using 'to believe' rather than 'to know' is a strong indication that one is not authorized to explore a stronger epistemic paradigm. This explanation seems to be in accordance with that Austin had in mind when talking about implications and assertion.

When we make an assertion such as 'There is a goldfinch in the garden' or 'He is angry', there is a sense in which we imply that we are sure of it or know it ('But I took you knew' said reproachfully), though what we imply, in a similar sense and more strictly, is only that we *believe* it. (AUSTIN, 1979, p. 77)

I will not discuss the presuppositions associated to factive verbs, as this work focuses on presuppositions that are triggered by singular terms. Nevertheless, I believe that regardless of how we define and demarcate the kinds of implication that Strawson and Austin had in mind, the two authors seem to share a valid insight: assertions and their presuppositions differ as communicative contributions.

Presupposition is, of course, a well-entrenched theoretical term now. Some contemporary linguists enlist singular terms as *presupposition triggers*, lexical items and syntactic constructions, like factive, aspectual and implicative verbs, cleft sentences, etc., that *conventionally* carry associated implicit propositions which, on their own turn, function as truth-value conditions. For linguists, the most relevant questions regarding presupposition are: a) how they differ from other forms of implication; b) if it is possible to make predictions about their semantic behavior in embedment; and c) if presupposing is triggered by conventional or non-conventional aspects.

Evidence that speakers do, in fact, presuppose come mostly from *projection* and *cancellation* tests. Projection is perhaps the most characteristic feature of presuppositions. Such property was first systematized by Savin and Langendoen (1971)'s *Cumulative Hypothesis*, according to which compound sentences inherit the presuppositions of their constituent parts, consistently projecting through embedment. The cumulative hypothesis predicts, for example, that sentences (8), (9) and (10) presuppose (11):

(8) Did Johanna buy the house?

(9) I believe that Johanna bought the house.

(10) If Johanna buys the house, my dad will be very happy.

(11) Johanna exists

More, the cumulative hypothesis suggests, firstly, that presuppositions are valid inferences that are sanctioned by our semantic competence and, secondly, that, in compound sentences, they are globally present – i.e. that the compound sentence accumulates the presuppositions of their constituent simple sentences. Projection works, thus, as an indication that, as a linguistic phenomenon, presuppositions have a conventional dimension which can be evidenced and tested by embedding triggering sentences.

Furthermore, the way presuppositions are cancelled also reveals their conventionality, since cancellation of presuppositions is simply cancellation of projection. Cancelled presuppositions are, then, presuppositions that do not project through embedment and therefore are not inherited by compound sentences.

The cumulative hypothesis has been objected by various theorists, since Wilson (1975) and Soames (1989) in the 1980s. They show cases of operators that consistently cancel the existential presupposition, as certain disjunctions and conditionals, exemplified below:

(12) Either the queen of Tonga rules despotically or there is no Queen of Tonga.

(13) If Ellery Queen has crossed America on a monocycle, Ellery Queen must exist.³⁵

In both (12) and (13), what is implied, namely the existential presupposition, contradicts what is asserted by the subordinate clauses, generating a cancellation effect. Examples (12) and (13) are, then, classic instances of what has been called the *Projection Problem*: the problem of distinguishing between

³⁵ These examples are taken from Wilson (1975).

the cases in which the cumulative hypothesis in fact predicts projection and those in which it fails to. Karttunen & Peters (1979) deal with the projection problem by adopting an eliminativist strategy. They argue that the notion of presuppositions should be abandoned in favor of other notions of implication, like Gricean conventional implicatures³⁶ – propositions that are inferred from speech acts in virtue of the presence of a lexical item, like ‘even’ or ‘too’ or preparatory conditions *à la* Austin. K&P work with a rather large spectrum of cases, which includes mostly verbs. Karttunen (1971a, 1971b, 1973, 1974) himself famously identified distinct types of operators, predicates and linguistic constructions in terms of different patterns of presuppositional projection. He observed that the cumulative hypothesis holds for what he calls *hole* operators, that allow the presuppositions to project through embedding without “side effects” – like “passing through a hole”. In those cases, the local presuppositions – those triggered by the simple sentences – project to the whole sentential complex. The best exemplar of a hole operator, according to Karttunen, is negation – both (1) and the negation of (1) trigger the existential proposition. The other classificatory concepts are *plugs* and *filters*. The former has a complex semantic behavior: they are predicates and operators that only occasionally block presuppositions, allowing them to project some but not all times, like the material implication in (13), conjunctions and disjunctions. The latter are blocking predicates which, in general, do not allow for presuppositional projection. That is the case of non-factive propositional attitude verbs, like ‘believe’.

Karttunen (1973; 1974)’s and Karttunen & Peters (1977; 1979) propose algorithmic models with compositional functions for presupposition inheritance, but oppose Savin & Langedeon, they intended to unveil the contextual and/or phrasal elements that either blocked or removed presuppositions, instead of focusing on models of accumulation. One feature of such models was to offer a compositional treatment of presuppositions that could be unified with a truth-conditional account of semantics, thus combining non-truth-conditional relations between sentences, like presuppositions, and truth-conditional interpretation of

³⁶ See Grice (1969; 1986).

sentences in one only theory. Though Karttunen is one of the most influential theorists in this literature and his motivations to preserve compositionality are certainly meritorious and adequate, other positions that have been on the market, since the late 1980s, deal with projection and cancellation with more flexible criteria that still allow for prediction but cannot be grasped by algorithms. For example, Soames (1989).

The kind of mechanisms of projection he has in mind are sensitive to how rational cooperation operates, altering the relation between local and global presuppositions, in a way not predicted by the cumulative hypothesis or any other compositional model for embedment. He calls it the *cumulative-cancellation approach*. His proposal is that the cumulative hypothesis works, except when:

- i. The speaker explicitly indicates (by a subsequent speech act or logic embedment) that she withdraws her commitment to it;
- ii. The speaker conversationally implicates that she is not assuming the presupposition;
- iii. Or there is a manifest alternative explanation of why she chose to use a sentence with the triggering expression rather than a logically equivalent one without that constituent.

The idea in Soames' approach is, in the first place, that, during a conversation, presuppositions are accommodated in context cumulatively, but locally – that is, the commitment to the presupposition arises in the local context of the trigger, not for the whole sentential complex. Unless a presupposition causes a discrepancy in what participants expect in terms of self-knowledge, sincerity and etc., it will come to integrate the set of mutually manifest assumptions as accommodated new information³⁷. If otherwise the introduction of the presupposition affects collaboration, speakers will apply a pragmatic mechanism with the purpose of either cancelling the presupposition, which results in the continuation of the collaborative process, or appeal to a fallback strategy of suspending the conversational contribution by means of requests for corrections or

³⁷ I will offer an account of accommodation in chapter 3.

clarifications³⁸. I will talk about these mechanisms, briefly in Chapter 2, and more extensively in Chapter 3, but I can anticipate, for clarification purposes, a few words regarding the phenomenon of accommodation.

The best presentation of the concept is given by Stalnaker (2014). He affirms that the accommodation of a presupposition in the common ground is the less costly and most common response to discrepancies in what participants take as true. “Suppose, for example, that it becomes manifest that you are presupposing something that I don’t, or didn’t, believe. What do I do? [...] I may accommodate by changing my belief so that what you are taking to be common ground is in fact common ground” (STALNAKER, 2014, p. 37). But accommodation appears in the philosophical literature much earlier than in Stalnaker (2014). It was developed by Lewis (1979) and by proponents of Dynamic Semantics, like Atlas (1977), Heim (1983), van der Sandt (1992) and Beaver (1992), who offer models and principles that regulate it. Lewis famously defines conversational interactions with an analogy to scores of baseball matches.

Like the components of a baseball score, the components of a conversational score at a given stage are abstract entities. They may not be numbers, but they are other set-theoretic constructs: sets of presupposed propositions, boundaries between permissible and impermissible courses of action, or the like. (LEWIS, 1979, p. 237)

So, for Lewis, each move or contribution in a conversation has an abstract normative dimension. Talking to other people is not simply a matter of informational exchange but it requires constant attention to rules, placing the participant in an evaluative function. Accommodation is one such rule. It determines that if a presupposition is necessary for the success of conversational move, participants, as “score-keepers, will charitably add it to the set of propositions of the context, basically to avoid an infringement or the ultimate collapse of the conversation. Accommodation is also an aspect of the dynamic

³⁸ This is compatible with the claim of Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) (Heim (1983) Kamp & Reyle (1993)) that there are two ways in which the presupposed information can be interpreted: it can be bound or accommodated. If the previous discourse context contains a suitable antecedent the presupposed information can be bound.

character of contexts, for Lewis. The score is guided by rules, but it is also constantly changing, with the addition of new presuppositions and the elimination of others. This idea is also captured by Stalnaker (2014), when he affirms that:

[...] context constrains content, since what is said may be context-dependent, and content (expressed with a certain force) affects subsequent context. It is important for explaining this interaction that the information in a context includes both information about the subject matter of the discourse, and information about the discourse itself (about who knows what about the subject matter, and about what is going on in the conversation). (*ibidem*, p. 36).

The fact that conversations involve both exchanging information about things, but also being attentive to how that is achieved is behind the possibility of offering cooperative responses to problematic conversational moves, like accommodation

Notice that Stalnaker describes mutually manifest assumptions, or the common ground, as *commitments*. In accordance with his suggestion, more recently, García-Carpintero (2013) defines presupposing by remarking that projection and cancellation are not the only worth-mentioning distinctive characteristics of presuppositions. They are indications of conventionality, but a more adequate criterion of demarcation can be determined by contrasting *asserting and presupposing* in terms of the commitments they involve. In agreement with him – Stalnaker (2002) –, I take it that cancellation of projection and accommodation should be explained together with the *attitudes of acceptance towards assertions*. They serve to maintain collaboration as new contributions to context are made.

In this pragmatic account, context is a quite adjustable and dynamic representation of the concrete situations. If we consider the contrast between assertions and presuppositions, we can define assertions as explicit requests to change the bodies of shared information by introducing new information, and presuppositions, on the other hand, as conditions on the success of new assertions³⁹.

³⁹ I follow Kempson (2000) and Heim (1983) in believing that presuppositions can be sometimes equivalent to the conveyed content and, in this sense, correspond to new information. I take them to be implicit simply because they are not explicitly articulated in the speech act. Presuppositions will be made explicit if, for example, accommodation malfunctions.

Those that are triggered by lexical items, like singular terms, seem to elicit attitudes of acceptance that reflect their conventional nature. For example, if A accepts (13) as an addition to the common ground, A presupposes that Ellery Queen exists, even if she has not the slightest inclination herself to assent to the statement that there is such a person, in virtue of using the name. In chapter 2 and 3 I will basically develop this claim.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented preliminary concepts and distinctions that will be applied throughout the work. The study of Perry's notion of content and the presentation of a brief history and conceptualization of presupposition were meant to pave the ground for the solutions that will be presented in Chapter 2 and 3. The first important distinction was between modes and mechanisms of designation of names, demonstratives and definite descriptions and the contributions these singular terms make to content. This was a particularly relevant step, since our aim to offer a concept of content that survives the no-reference and co-reference objections, used by critics of Referentialism. Perry's Reflexive-Referential Theory was presented as the best framework in the market to safeguard Referentialism and explain content in situations affected by referential failure, for scarcity of information and fiction, for example. We made a detour to discuss the concept of context and arrived at the one that best fits a presuppositional account of singular terms that fail to refer, context as common ground of propositional commitments. We also concluded that presuppositions are implicit propositional commitments that can be triggered by conventional properties of expressions, though conversational norms of cooperation can affect them when it comes to how they project in sentential complexes. One of these norms of cooperation is accommodation of new presuppositions. The mechanisms by which accommodation operates determines the success of new assertions and reflect basic means of coordination between participants of common activities.

CHAPTER 2

Demonstratives, content and the presupposition of salience

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the Perryan concept of content can be used in accounting for the no-reference problem, i.e., the problem of singular terms that occasionally or systematically fail to contribute individuals to semantic interpretation. Perry's concept of content, as situationally-bound and goal-oriented, together with his endorsement of the token-reflexive framework, were presented as advantageous for the strategy of explaining how interpreters make sense of utterances in situations of scarcity of information. Reflexive content was the main concept there, since, as I argued, it enables the theorist to explain semantic interpretation in terms of utterance production, but also in terms of linguistic conventions. This theoretical apparatus – from what I called the RRT in the Introduction – will help us in dealing with uses of words that designate conventionally, like demonstratives (which denote) and names (which refer), but fail to in certain occasions. In this chapter, I discuss demonstrating and how interpretation is carried out when a demonstrative is used, but its *demonstratum* cannot be determined. My claim will be that, because of the kind of expressions demonstratives are and, more importantly, because of the uses we make them, reflexive rules can play the role of content, enabling interpretation; hence, demonstratives that fail to denote, that is, that are affected by the no-reference problem, can be accounted for according to a referentialist framework.

Paralely, I analyze situations in which the speaker fails to indicate a *demonstratum* not because the situation itself is informationally scarce, but because the speaker fails to use the demonstrative properly in her plan of referring. These are cases in which the speaker fails to satisfy a condition of satisfaction of assertive speech acts, because she violates constraints on the use of the demonstrative. Namely, constraints associated to attentional behavior. Here, then, I will discuss demonstratives from two perspectives: how their linguistic meanings relate to content and what are the cognitive abilities employed in using them. Wherefore, this chapter will be separated in two different parts, one corresponding to each perspective. Part 1 is about the problem of content in situations of scarcity of information and Part 2 is devoted to an analysis of cases

of scarcity of information caused by momentary inability to manipulate attentional behavior.

Part 1

Token-reflexive rules as content

It is commonly assumed by linguists as well as philosophers that demonstratives are context-sensitive expressions, generally used to refer to perceptual objects. In demonstrating, as opposed to describing or naming an individual, the speaker of a natural language basically uses linguistic and extra-linguistic resources with the purpose of making the individual perceptually salient to her audience⁴⁰. According to Karl Buhler (1934), for example, who prolixly discusses *deixis* in his theory of language, demonstratives function as orientation signs and indicators of reference. Demonstratives, thus, have the special property of *exaphora* (Diessel (1999; 2006)): their lexical meanings stipulate that their contents are to be defined relatively to facts about the utterance. In other terms, exaphoric uses orient the hearer outside the discourse towards the surrounding situation.

Diessel (1999) remarks that demonstratives are deictic expressions serving specific syntactic functions (as, for example, of pronouns or noun modifiers) as well as pragmatic ones (being used to focus the hearer's attention on objects and locations, on the one side, and on the informational flow of the ongoing discourse, on the other). The semantic function of a demonstrative, according to him, is finally to indicate distance relatively to the deictic center, typically the speaker.

⁴⁰ Strawson (1963) defines demonstrative identification of individuals in terms of abilities to sensibly locate and discriminate them:

[...] that the hearer can pick out by sight or hearing or touch, or can otherwise sensibly discriminate, the particular being referred to, knowing that it is that particular... I shall say, when this first condition for identification is satisfied, that the hearer is able *directly to locate* the particular referred to. We may also speak of these cases as cases of the *demonstrative identification* of particulars. (*ibidem*, p. 6)

All languages analyzed in Diessel's sample (of eight-five different languages) have at least two demonstratives marking points on a distance scale. Other less frequent deictic features include information about visibility, height etc., but qualitative features, as for example, animacy and humanness, sex and number are almost universal. These are semantic aspects that encode qualities that orient the identification of the referent. They "tell" the interpreter what the referent is like.

In his chapter about the pragmatic features encoded in demonstratives, he concentrates on the difference between endophoric and exaphoric uses – a distinction he borrows from Halliday and Hasan (1976). He points out that exaphoric uses appear earlier in language acquisition, as I will discuss in Part 2. These uses always involve a deictic center and contrast in distance – prototypically accompanied by pointing. What is most interesting in exaphoric uses is that they require monitoring the speech situation and depend greatly on extra-linguistic resources. They may however not involve concrete objects. For example, we can talk about habits, institutions and feelings with demonstratives and, also, project this mode of designation to objects that are not at the situation, as things that are imagined.

One of Diessel (1999)'s central argument, grounded on diachronic evidence from cross-linguistic research, specifically from studies on relative pronouns, sentence connectives and possessive markers, is that endophoric uses, which explore the informational flow of the speech situation, recuperating previously mentioned referents or propositions, in anaphora, and internally to discourse, are the result of a process of grammaticalization that exaphoric uses undergo. Hence, he holds that exaphoric uses are the paradigm of demonstration. However, regardless of an endorsement of the priority of exaphoric uses and the derivative nature of endophoric ones, I will focus here *exclusively on exaphoric uses of demonstratives*. My motivation is simply that endophoric uses do not directly involve manipulation of attentional behavior and my argument is aimed at the relation between attentional behavior and demonstrating. My examples involve two syntactic functions: demonstratives as pronouns in copula – like example (14) in the next page – and demonstratives as determiners, modifying a noun – as in (16).

The demonstrative in English, ‘that’, ‘this’ – basically, the whole extent of demonstratives I will mention here –, and deictic uses of ‘he’ and ‘she’, are context-variant, given that their semantic sensitivity to situations of use determine that their contents consistently vary from one occasion to another. Recanati succinctly summarizes the properties of context-sensitivity and context-variance of demonstratives in the fragment below:

A (disambiguated) expression is *context-sensitive* or *context-dependent* if and only if its semantic content depends upon, and varies with, contextual factors such as the speaker’s intention [...]. The *semantic content* of an expression is that property of it which (i) must be grasped by whoever fully understands the expression, and (ii) determines the expression’s extension. It can be presented as a (possibly partial, and possibly constant) function from circumstances of evaluation to extensions. The *extension* of a *prima facie* singular term (name, pronoun, definite description, etc.) is an individual object — the reference of the term. (RECANATI, 2003, p. 14)

We may thus conclude, with Recanati, that indicating the referent of a demonstrative used exaphorically, namely its extension, in a successful way, requires, at least partially, some ability of adjusting attentional behavior. The deictic component, which is typically the position occupied by the putative referent in relation to the deictic center⁴¹, will be represented as a parameter of the index.

Such an assumption is also present in Nunberg’s now well-known classification of demonstratives as *indicative expressions* (Nunberg (1993)). For him, their linguistic meanings take us, speakers, to elements of the context and then “drop out of the picture”:

Indexicals can have roughly the same range of interpretations that descriptions have [...] what makes indexicals exceptional is the manner in which their interpretation arises. A description characterizes its interpretations; an indexical provides an object that corresponds to it [...]. They enable us to turn the context into an auxiliary means of expression, so that contextual features are made to serve as pointers to the content of the utterance. (NUNBERG, 1993, p. 19).

⁴¹ A deictic center is a reference point in relation to which a deictic expression is to be interpreted, consisting, most typically of the present time, location, participant role. It is important to remark that the identification of the referent also depends on other classificatory components, as grammatical and natural gender, number and so on, and not only on the position of the putative referent. I will ignore these nuances, because they are of little consequence for my argument.

Nunberg explicitly states that the linguistic rules which govern the use of ‘that’, ‘this’ etc. do not enter the content of utterances, but rather serve the purpose of picking out the right information to serve as a pointer to the interpretation.

In the next section, I will discuss communicative situations in which conventional meaning *is recruited to play the role of content in interpretation*. I will argue that, because, in these situations, interpreters fail to determine referents, conventional meaning “gets back into the picture” in the form of its reflexive counterpart. Nonetheless, I believe Nunberg is right about paradigmatic situations, those in which the addressee has enough information to grasp the singular proposition expressed. That does not mean, however, that nothing is available to the addressee when there is no referent. To support such a claim, I will borrow the concept of reflexive content from Perry (2001) and argue that when situations are less informative than necessary, and the aboutness of an utterance cannot be determined, the interpreter is left with information about the utterance itself.

This part of the chapter has two subsections. The first one discusses the roles of context and content in the interpretation of demonstratives. The second shows how Perry’s notion of content gives linguistic conventions a special explanatory status, in contrast with Nunberg’s theory. I will analyze three examples of referential failure. All of them caused by ineffectuality in using a demonstrative.

2.1. Demonstrative content in non-paradigmatic communication: two examples

Take example (14) below.

(14) Daddy, that is Julie!

Suppose that Jane, a dentist assistant, overhears this utterance, which is part of the conversation between a man and his daughter in the waiting room. Jane is inside the equipment room and has no perceptual information regarding the

speaker of (14), her interlocutor or the putative referent of ‘that’⁴². Call this situation S1. How does Jane interpret the utterance she overhears?

Remember we already established, in Chapter 1, that the meaning of the word ‘that’, used exaphorically, contains an orientation, in the form of a condition of identification, which directs the interpreter to the perceptual object that serves as referent. Kaplanians would call this the *character* of ‘that’ but, given our endorsement of the token-reflexive theory, we can call it the *reflexive rule of the conventional meaning* of ‘that’, which determined that the interpreter ought to direct her attention to some sensory presentation indicated by the speaker. But, in S1, however, there is no coordination of attentional behavior, among other reasons, because the interpreter is not at the same perceptual environment as the speaker. What Jane accesses then seems to be reflexive truth-conditions of (14), (P’14).

(P’14) That *the object made salient by the utterer of (14)* is **Julie**.

A few clarifications about S1 are in order, though. First, we need a better understanding of *overhearing* as a linguistic interaction and, also, to say a word or two about what the context looks like for S1.

In accordance with Goffman’s categorization of conversational interactions (1975; 1981), *overhearers* are not conversational participants, though they are *listeners* and typically *bystanders*. When overhearers are not acknowledged by participants, Clark and Shaefer (1992), whose own categorization is inspired by Goffman, call them *eavesdroppers*: “[...] speakers believe that they and the bystanders mutually believe that they, the bystanders, have access to what is going on. But speakers believe that they and the eavesdroppers, if there are any, don’t have this mutual belief” (*ibidem*, p. 2). Jane, in S1, seems to be an eavesdropper. From the perspective of the common ground definition of context, Jane and our other characters are not in the same context: not only there is no *common* perceptual environment; there is no *mutual* recognition of intentions and

⁴² We shall ignore, for argument’s sake, that the voice of the girl is a source of information about the speaker, that ‘Julie’ is a girl’s name – so, the referent must be a female – and that the vocative inticates familiarity between conversational participants.

assumptions, in Clark & Shaefer's abovementioned sense. Father and daughter have an *indifferent attitude towards Jane* as well as towards what she can grasp (cf. *ibidem*, pp.7-8). Because Jane is not a part of the collaborative activity in course, her informational status is not taken into consideration in designing the conversational interaction. Notwithstanding, as a competent listener, she apprehends information in the form of truth-conditional content.

The relevant distinction here is between being in position to interpret language – that is, being a competent speaker/listener of English – and being in position to take part in very specific plans of referring. Though Jane has the necessary skills for the first, the second depends on her participating directly or indirectly in a communicative plan.

Now that we have established that Jane is an eavesdropper, I would like to add some words about S1 and the multiplicity of contents that are conveyed by the utterance of (14). In our discussion of Chapter 1, I mentioned that it seems quite right to assume that when talking about individuals, speakers intend their interlocutors to apprehend information that is not merely about such individuals *qua designata*, but generally about them as worldly entities. For example, father and daughter in S1 are exchanging information about the individual Julie, paradigmatically interpreted in terms of full-blown propositions. But the proposition expressed will be apprehended by the father only if the daughter succeeds in her plan of referring. For an eavesdropper like Jane, in S1, and similar situations that provide scarce information, the proposition expressed will simply not be grasped by the interpreter.

We saw that Perry's view has the appeal of giving content a role in rationality, namely in explaining how rational agency relates to the way information is accessed. He defines content as a resource used by rational agents to classify cognitive states and states of affairs in terms of conditions of success. Truth-conditional content is then what explains the adequacy of belief-states to actions and of beliefs to evidence. But, for Perry, content is not an absolute concept. For Perry, the content expressed by (14) will depend on the informational content of the situation in which the interpreter is. For Jane in S1, for example, the content will be (P'14). This instrumentalist approach on content has as its consequence the multiplication of possibilities of interpretation, since

talking about *the* content expressed by an utterance is considered by Perry as an over-simplification.

As seen in Chapter 1, I endorse Perry's conclusion that referential failure is a problem for those who assume that the only content expressed by a sentence is the proposition expressed, but not for those that endorse reflexivity. The theoretical positions that favor a concept of absolute content are successful in accounting for paradigmatic situations, such as S2 below, but they fail to account for what kind of interpretation takes place in non-paradigmatic ones, such as S1.

Here is S2: imagine that now Jane sees the speaker, the interlocutor and the other girl, who is the referent of 'that'. In this communicative situation, Jane accesses the singular proposition (P14):

(P14) **Julie** is named 'Julie'.

She identifies the individual which the utterance of (14) is about and the conditions in which this utterance is true. In contrasting S2 and S1, we see that S2, unlike S1, allows for indexing. In this new situation, Jane, though still a bystander, whose informational status is not a part of the common ground, can successfully identify the aboutness of the token. Though absent from the speaker's communicative plan, Jane is now in the same perceptual environment as the speaker, and she can adjust her attention according to the speaker's indications. Remember that the reflexive content expressed by an utterance is not about the referent of the singular term in the sentence, but about the utterance itself. So, in S1, given that Jane is neither at the appropriate perceptual environment nor participates in the conversation, she cannot identify the referent of 'that'.

As I stated earlier in explaining Perry's theory, the mechanism of designation by which a referent is accessed may be precisely what explains the difference between the content of (14) and the content of (15), for example, though both utterances express the same proposition.

(15) Daddy, Julie is Julie.

Unlike what happens with (14), the informativeness of (15) depends greatly on context. Typically, (15) would not be considered a felicitous utterance, since it violates the cooperative principles of quantity and relevance that guide informational exchange. In RRT, the informativeness of (15) would probably be explained with an appeal to reflexive truth-conditions, as (P'15) below.

(P'15) That **Julie** is *the person the naming convention associated to 'Julie' in (15) permits to refer to*.

(P'15) would explain why, in some situations, (15) is a valid conversational move. For example, if the interpreter does not know that the individual Julie is named 'Julie' and the utterance is accompanied by gesturing. But the nouveau concept here is that of *increment*. Take S3 this time. The daughter is talking to her father about her friend, Julie, inside a moving car (a classic example). During the conversation, they pass by Julie, who is walking to school and has just stopped under a tree to take something out of her backpack. The daughter again utters (14), but her father is focused on driving and fails to see Julie, he sees only the tree.

Here, unlike in S1, the father can determine a precise location where Julie stands. He turns his head with the purpose of trying to see the girl at the specific location his daughter made salient. He knows that the individual that his daughter is talking about is at a certain position relative to his own, but he fails to go all the way down to the referent⁴³. He can load some information into the reflexive truth-conditions given by (P'14), since he has the spatial-temporal coordinates and they can function as increment.

Suppose that, in S3, the father needed to deliver a message from Julie's father, but he does not know Julie. He asked his daughter to introduce him to the girl once they arrived at school, but his young daughter equivocally thought that pointing at Julie from the moving car was a good enough opportunity. The information he gathered from his daughter's assertion could be used in his plan of delivering the message to Julie – as a means to identify her. For example, he

⁴³ I am convinced by Nunberg (1993)'s critiques to the *index-referent identity* hypothesis endorsed by theories of direct reference. My example of S3 also supports his position, for it shows that the no-reference problem gives us good reason to believe that there can be indexing and referential failure at the same time.

could decide to deliver the message right away and turn the car back. An incremented version of (P^r14), at first sight at least, is enough to elicit such an action. Imagine that he recognizes the tree as the one in front of, say, house number 44. He can load reflexive content with that, plus other facts about the utterance, as the time, for example.

(Pⁱ14) That *the person who was standing under the tree in front of house 44 at 08:25 a.m., in July 23rd, 2016* is the referent of 'Julie' in (14).

In this last case, the father has hybrid information from linguistic and extra-linguistic sources: he has information about Julie as a *demonstratum*. He does not access the proposition, but he has a way of identifying the referent in the situation of use.

The comparison between S1 and S3 seems to show that reflexive content is loaded incrementally with information from the situation. The contents represented by (P^r14), (P14) and (Pⁱ14) all can be used to attribute belief-states to agents and to explain specific courses of action, as our story for S3 shows. Also, in comparing S1 and S2, we see that positions that subscribe to a concept of absolute content fail to account for situations in which the interpreters have scarce information. In the next section, I will recapitulate Nunberg's idea about the role of convention and show how a token-reflexivity theory better serves theorists concerned with the no-reference problem.

2.2. Convention and information in the interpretation of demonstratives

Nunberg makes the following statement in the beginning of his 1993 paper:

The meaning of *you* can be paraphrased by a description like "the addressee of the utterance", but an utterance of (1) does not say the same as an utterance of (2).

(1) Oh, its you.

(2) Oh! It is the addressee of the utterance. (NUNBERG, 1993, p. 1)

Posteriorly, in the same text, he continues:

Indexicals are indicative: their meanings don't enter into the content of the utterances that contain them, but rather pick out an element that serves as a pointer to the interpretation, in virtue of its correspondence to a particular, possibly different individual or property. (*ibidem*, p. 33)

The fragments above show that Nunberg assumes that the role of meaning (for indexicals and demonstratives) is an *indicative* one. In his view, meaning does not determine what you can say with demonstratives, but how you say it. Apparently, then, he agrees with the objection to token-reflexive theories which states that, because it is not what typical utterances are about, conventional meaning cannot play the role of content (a view which is in accordance with Kaplan's notion of what is said, for example). For Nunberg, meaning is a way to identify topics of discourse, but they are not what affects speaker's mental organization.

His analysis is based on the specific example of the pronoun 'we' – whose meaning, he claims, supposedly corresponds to a description, like: *a group of agents which include the speaker*. In a nutshell, Nunberg's point is to show that the meanings of indicative expressions, like 'we', underspecify truth-conditions, because they do not provide a property that uniquely identifies the reference, as content is supposed to. The reference of 'we', for example, can be chosen from any group in a universe of discourse and its interpretation depends greatly on intentional elements. He expands this conclusion to the case of 'that'.

In my reading, Nunberg separates the functions played by conventional meaning and content in an incorrect way. He claims that conventional meaning cannot play the role of content, because its function is merely indicative.

The general idea is that, on any occasion of use, the linguistic meaning of an indexical expression takes us to a certain element of the context and then drops out of the picture [...] the definition of *I* admits of an indication like 'has as its reference a (the) speaker of ...'. (*ibidem*, p. 4)

Once meaning plays its part, all the other cognitively and communicatively relevant roles are played by content. I take it that Nunberg is correct in assuming that the meanings of demonstratives underspecify reference, but I disagree that

the reason why they cannot be held to play the role of content in interpretation is because they “drop out of the picture”.

I believe that the examples above show us that, if communication is somehow defective, as in S1 and S3, meaning (in the form of reflexive rules) comes to the rescue of informativeness in communication. Remember that, in S1, Jane had little more than meaning at her disposal. She could only access information that was about linguistic conventions and the little she knew about the utterance. Also, the incremented token-reflexive properties of (14), in the informationally scarce situation S3, are the only source of information that the father has in adjusting his belief-states to rational requirements.

The reorganization of an agent’s cognitive status is a complex process by which information is extracted, stored and applied in reasoning and action. It seems more advantageous to take this complexity into account and approach the notion of content, considering that it is incremented. In so doing, we can accommodate examples like S1 and S3 to a theory of content, explaining interpretation in contexts of informational scarcity.

Therefore, the conventional meaning of a demonstrative cannot be understood as merely indicative, as suggested by Nunberg. It can be used to explain informational exchange. To be fair, my disagreement with Nunberg is not fundamental. I agree that meaning underspecifies the interpretation of a demonstrative; and I am convinced by the evidence drawn from grammatical typology to motivate his position⁴⁴:

There are few or no indexical expressions that provide nothing more than an indication of the relation that the index bears to the utterance. Indexicals contain additional information about the referent of the expression – animacy, number, gender and so forth – and it is not clear how this information is supposed to be integrated in the process of interpretation. (*ibidem*, p. 6)

His theory is very successful in remarking that content is not given exclusively by the relation between meaning and context, but also by the relational components that associate index and interpretation; yet, Nunberg’s theory cannot account for

⁴⁴ He takes evidence from the interpretation of indexicals in the cases that referent and index of the expression are different and additional information about the referent (as animacy, number etc) is incorporated to the interpretation. His conclusion is that indexicals are not limited to the kinds of interpretation they express simply in virtue of the relation between index and referent.

what happens in occasional referential failure, perhaps because of his commitment to the fallacy of misplaced information⁴⁵. His theory clearly blocks a comprehensive approach to content that explores its variety. After all, in determining how one says something about an individual, conventional meaning leaves an informational trace that is used by competent interpreters to explain mental organization and action. Remember the example of David Israel from the Introduction. Even if no one knocked the door, the utterance of 'You are a computer scientist' expresses something and relates to the utterer's disappointment. To recap, let us take another look at the example.

Suppose you are talking to David Israel without knowing his name. If David says (A) [I am a computer scientist] to you, you will learn that you are talking to a computer scientist. If he says (B) [David Israel is a computer scientist] you will not learn that you are talking to a computer scientist, but you will know that there is at least one computer scientist in the world named 'David Israel' (*ibidem*, p. 7)

Perhaps an urgent call has gone out from a meeting for a computer scientist to resolve some particularly algorithmic problem, and David, as he rushed up the hall responding to the emergency, shouts (A) [I am a computer scientist] to reassure the waiting crowd. [...] Suppose now that David does not arrive, and a group sits forlornly waiting for a computer scientist to rescue them. A noise is heard, which one member of the crowd takes to be a knock at the door. She utters (C) [You are a computer scientist] hopefully. But, in this case, there is no addressee; no one is there; it was only ice falling on the stoop. (PERRY, 2001, pp. 10-11)

The case of David Israel illustrates how content affects the mental organization of interpreters in a way that clearly depends on classificatory goals. Notice that the modes of designation will help individuate mental states and explicate action: what is cognized by interpreters, in hearing (A), is different from what is cognized in hearing (B). The semantic aspects that are cognized by the interpreter – meaning reference ("significance") – determine the conditions in which such information will be recovered in future interactions and how it will be stored and retrieved. In the case of (C), it is because the utterance is about a putative interlocutor (the second person relatively to the deictic center) that the speaker of (C) feels disappointed in opening the door. Her psychological state is a result

⁴⁵ See page 24.

of her classificatory goals and the aspects of meaning that are cognized in understanding the utterance of (C).

Compare this to an example given by Bühler (1934). If someone knocks at your door and shouts “It’s me”, but her voice does not sound familiar, the content you apprehend will not work as a motivation for opening the door. In this case, the proposition and referential content of ‘me’ are indispensable for the perlocutionary act involved in enunciating “It’s me” – an act that has a practical purpose – to be effective. Incrementing content with a referent is what allows for the realization of the speaker’s plan of referring.

Now, the example S3 attempts to show that demonstratives, unlike names and definite descriptions, have a special relation with increment, in virtue of being exaphoric. The result of loading the meaning of ‘that’ is not necessarily getting to a referent. Nunberg also makes some keen observations regarding this matter, by pointing out that, since the meaning of a demonstrative relates to its interpretation by gestures or other extra-linguistic behavior, the index and the referent are not one and the same thing: as an interpreter, you may identify salience (i.e. successfully apprehend a deictic component) but fail to identify the referent. My examples are in consonance with such observations too.

My point is finally that, to account for the no-reference problem, it is necessary to attribute a cognitive role to reflexive rules, pure or incremented, even when, as in the case of demonstratives, we have all the more reason to assume that meaning underspecifies interpretation. In accepting this claim, we should keep in mind that, whenever the informational game of language is ineffectual, defective, abnormal, whatever allows speakers to play the game, will do the trick of playing the role of content.

Now, I will proceed to Part 2 of this chapter, in which I discuss a kind of presuppositional failure typical of the demonstrative mode of designation (again, when used exaphorically), caused by problems in manipulating attentional behavior. I will take the idea that demonstratives are expressions of joint attention, defended by leading theorists, like Diessel (1999, 2006) and Levinson (2004), and propose an argument in the following lines: the evidence they explore give us reason to believe that prototypical uses of demonstratives, exaphoric ones, presuppose salience of the *demonstratum* for the interlocutor; as does the

study of examples of repairment in conversation. What I call the presupposition of salience is a condition on felicitous assertions with demonstratives and it affects intuitions of truth-value attribution. If we turn to semantics, on the other hand, reflexivity will give us content for our rational reconstruction of agency, when such presupposition fails and information about the *demonstratum* is scarce.

Part 2

Demonstratives, joint attention and presupposition

I discuss here the notion of joint attention and its relation to demonstratives used exaphorically. We can start by adopting what is perhaps the most wide-ranging definition of attention, which states that it is a process by which an agent concentrates on some feature(s) or individual(s) of the environment to the exclusion of others. According to Campbell (2011), the purpose of attending to a perceptual body of information, what he calls *selective attention*, is informational processing. Selective attention is especially relevant for singular reference since it permits interpreters to determine the aboutness of utterances. A speaker can use perceptual information to help the interpreter identify the referent of a definite description or a name, for example, by accompanying a definite description, like ‘the Met’, of a hand gesture to help her interlocutor recognize the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC.

Moreover, selective attention puts agents in position to cognitively engage with particulars, having beliefs and making judgments about them, as well as acting on the basis of such mental states. De Carvalho (2016) builds his overall characterization of demonstrative thoughts highlighting the *perceptual-relational reference-fixing mechanisms* implicated in the demonstrative mode of designation. “[...] this is what distinguishes demonstrative from descriptive thoughts, for even if both refer to the same particular object, only demonstrative thoughts pick out their objects in a relational manner, putting the thinker in a perceptual relation to the object the thought concerns” (*ibidem*, p. 2). Selective attention is one of the elements that permit agents to engage with objects in this manner, what he calls the *demonstrative mode*:

What makes content demonstrative, in other words, is the perceptual mode. This explains how a belief that is directly (i.e., non-inferentially) based on perception will also concern the objects and properties perceived around the subject at the time of the perception: these have already been (implicitly) secured as the intentional objects of perception *via* the perceptual mode (*ibidem*, p.9).

This last extract is particularly important for my argument because I intend to define the demonstrative mode of designation precisely in contrast with descriptions and names, as the only mode that is prototypically associated to perception and, as such, is particularly dependent on context for interpretation. As a result, I shall not discuss the nature of perception, merely assuming de Carvalho's definition of the demonstrative mode.

In the case of spatial demonstratives, as in our example of the Met, visual attention establishes the perceptual relation between the agent and the referent as a physical (spatial-temporal) object, via the identification of a location⁴⁶. So, in conversational exchanges, a speaker who chooses a determinate plan of referring by demonstrating will typically need the ability to manipulate the interpreter's visual attention towards the locations of the *demonstrata*. As I will argue in what follows, plans of referring by demonstrating exaphorically require the ability to manipulate selective attention. I will talk only about intentional attentional manipulation, but there is a vast literature about automatic stimulus-driven attention which explores the same general concept of attentional manipulation without the concept of intention⁴⁷. Not to mention empirical researches based on well-established psychological paradigms (Itti and Koch (2000)) that relate eye-movement and attention and do not depend on concepts such as plan or intention.

I will borrow evidence from developmental studies in favor of the idea that demonstratives emerge in early human language to serve the purpose of manipulation of attentional behavior and advance the claim that this

⁴⁶ I will focus on spatial demonstratives, but I do not assume that spatial and visual attention are *a priori* fundamental to the demonstrative mode of designation. I agree with Campbell and Martin (1997) that determining the fundamental sensory modality and physical structure of perceptual reference is an empirical question and, therefore, I will not explore attempts of answering it philosophically.

⁴⁷ Bacon & Egeth (1994), Treisman & Gelade, (1980), Yantis & Hillstrom (1994), Yantis & Jonides (1984).

characterization of demonstratives motivates the assumption that they trigger what I call a presupposition of the salience of the referent. This assumption, on its own turn, is motivated by my endorsement of a cooperative understanding of demonstrative reference, as proposed by Perini-Santos (2006): “[...] the hearer considers what is salient to her and to the speaker, and this information is part of what is used to interpret an utterance. Conversely, the speaker can expect to be understood only if [...] what he wants to talk about is salient both to him and to his audience [...]”. (*ibidem*, p. 27).

I will proceed, first, by defining joint attention; then, I will refer to some evidence, mainly from human ontogeny (in first language acquisition), that show that demonstratives appear at the same time as certain skills of attentional manipulation. I take this to indicate that exaphoric uses of demonstratives are essentially resources for attentional manipulation, like gesturing, eye-gazing etc. Their singularity resides in their linguistic, conventional nature. Finally, I will suggest that salience is presupposed in successful exaphoric uses of demonstratives. Section 2.3. will introduce the concept of joint attention and present its developmental timeline. In section 2.4., I will discuss a few conditions on exaphoric uses of demonstratives, fixating on a condition on the salience of the putative *designatum*. In its first sub-section, 2.4.1., I make a brief digression about how to separate asserting from presupposing accordingly and return to the proposal that demonstratives presuppose salience and manipulation of attentional behavior, in sub-section 2.4.2.

2.3. Joint attention

When two agents are engaged in joint attention, they take part in a triadic relation constituted by both conversational participants and a perceptual object that is the common focus of attention⁴⁸. In typical instances of visual perception, the speaker manipulates the interpreter’s attentional behavior by intentionally making the object visually salient. This capacity of engaging in joint attention, as evidence in

⁴⁸ From an experimental point of view, attention is assessed by the measurement of gaze, object touching and pointing, which signal engagement between the agent and the object (Liebal et al. (2009)).

psychological development show, appears early in human ontogeny, before the second year of life, following the chronology below:

- a. eye contact detection begins during the first 3 months of life (Bertenthal & Boyer (2015))⁴⁹;
- b. gaze angle detection with fixation on first salient object encountered and imperative pointing (that is, drawing attention by requesting a salient object) appear at around 9 months of age (Butterworth and Jarrett (1991));
- c. between 12 and 13 months, children start to draw attention themselves to objects, by using declarative pointing (pointing at objects with the purpose of fixing reference to declare something about them) (Mundy (2006); Tomasello (2003));
- d. At 18 months approximately, they begin to use words to draw attention to individuals in their surroundings.

Tomasello (2004) points out that these early skills of joint attention manifested by children reflect the beginning of their understanding of human agency and goal-oriented behavior.

[...] infants undergo a revolution in their understanding of persons at around their first birthday that is just as coherent and dramatic as the one they undergo at around their fourth birthday. [just as 4-year-olds come to understand others as mental agents in terms of their thoughts and beliefs about reality, 1-year-olds come to understand others as intentional agents in terms of their concrete goals and the sensorimotor and attentional activities designed to achieve them. (TOMASELLO, 2004, p. 104)

In Tomasello's view, joint attention is crucial for understanding pre-linguistic social-cognitive development. When he talks about the revolution infants undergo, especially from the age of 18 to 24 months, he is referring to children's realization, at this moment, that agents have control over the process of attentional switching. Infants at that age begin to understand "that other persons

⁴⁹ Shifts in joint-attention can be seen in an infant's gaze cueing, head orientation, body posture, and pointing.

can intentionally modulate their attention in response to linguistic and nonlinguistic means of communication” (*ibidem*, p. 118).

Some criticism of Tomasello's cognitive-functional approach to language questions his strong emphasis on intentionality and realization of intentionality as key-concepts in understanding the socio-pragmatic aspects of linguistic development. For instance, new empirical findings – in Allan (2009) – challenge some of the data he uses, but, supposedly, the main problem with Tomasello's concept of intentionality, resides in the threat of mentalism that undermines his theory of cognition.

Also, although many studies have indicated a positive relationship between joint attention and language development, since Tomasello and Faar (1986)'s early work, there are still many questions regarding its relevance to first language acquisition (as pointed by Morales et al. (2000)). We know that word learning does not *require* joint attention because children with autism, for example, are able to learn words despite decreased levels of joint attention (Akhtar & Gernsbacher, (2007)), but independently of an unrestricted endorsement of Tomasello's view, we can accept the positive evidence that children go through a developmental timeline in which the prerequisites for singular reference are typically satisfied at around the same age as skills of attentional manipulation. This would suffice to associate the development of cognitive and symbolic capabilities that involve cooperation and the appearance of words involved in attentional manipulation, even if we do not have all the answers about how joint attention ultimately affects first language acquisition. Also, because my argument does not require that I endorse any theory of the mind – mentalist or not – I will not discuss critics to Tomasello's theory, just accept his indication that at a very young age, children acquire the ability to manipulate attentional behavior with purpose of achieving certain goals.

We do know, for instance, that demonstratives are among the earliest words learned by children, and that their use appears towards the end of the first year of life, *concomitantly* with extra-linguistic behaviors related to activities of joint attention, like eye-gazing and pointing. Additionally, it is widely accepted that until approximately the age of 6 months, children only interact either with objects or with adults, as they are incapable of coordinating their focus of attention

towards objects with other agents. Abilities involved in intersubjective awareness, like showing by pointing and giving objects to adults improve expressively between the ages of 6 to 14 months. For example, findings in Butterworth & Cochran (1980) and Butterworth & Jarrett (1991) show that children at the age of 9 months can identify objects of attention (inside their vision field) by following the adult's eye gaze. At about 1 year old, infants have evolved from attending to objects in their immediate visual field to attending to objects outside their immediate surroundings, by following the caretaker's spatial indications. Significantly, it is by the age of 18 months (in average) that children start engaging in triadic interactions that also involve language. At this point, they start to use demonstratives, typically in association with pointing (Clark (1978)), using gestures to improve their interlocutor's accuracy in identifying manifest referents (Goldin-Meadow (2005)), thus having more efficient results for their own goal-oriented behavior.

All the above-mentioned data indicate that the use of demonstratives first emerges as a form of referring by means of extra-linguistic resources that permit singular reference prior to the development of an elaborate vocabulary of linguistic conventions, reliable encyclopedic knowledge or mastery of mature social-cognitive skills. Evidence from cross-linguistic inquiry and grammatical typology also reinforce this conclusion. They lead to believe that exaphoric uses are ontogenetically prior, given the initial proximity between gesturing and referring. Another reason, according to experts, like Clark & Sengul (1978), is that some perspectival aspects of the semantics of demonstratives are not mastered until the age of 4, when children begin to incorporate changes in perspective, distance etc. to their expressive skills.

Anaphoric and discourse uses of demonstratives, which serve to organize informational flow, to keep track of discourse participants and to activate specific shared knowledge, require sophisticated cooperative social-cognitive skills that appear only later in psychological development. These data are used by influential theorists dedicated to the issue of demonstratives, like Diessel (1999; 2006) and Levinson (2004), in holding that demonstratives, though closely related to spatial orientation, function primarily as linguistic expressions that integrate two or more agents in common plans of referring through attentional behavior. They

comment particularly on the primal relevance of context and affordance for singular reference.

... indexicality crucially involves some kind of existential link between utterance and context so that the context can be used as an affordance to find the intended reference – and as we noted there, the crucial way in which deictic expressions and gestures do this, is by drawing the addressee's attention to some feature of the spatio-temporal environment (or some portion of the just spoken or about to be spoken utterance). (LEVINSON, 2004, p. 29)

Reflecting these findings and Levinson and Diessel's conclusions, I believe it is reasonable to suppose that, cognitively-speaking, demonstratives used exaphorically are just one resource for attracting and manipulating attentional behavior among others. The evidence above suggest that, in using demonstratives, children add linguistic expressions to other communicative resources they already possess. Other semantic aspects of demonstratives are mastered only later. What seems to be distinctive and primary of demonstratives is their function in joint attention activities and the part they play in allowing speakers to learn to talk about individuals.

2.4. What do we presuppose when we demonstrate?

The evidence mentioned in the previous section suggests that demonstratives are among the first words humans use for singular reference in communicative interactions that are coordinated with other agents. At this early stage in cognitive and linguistic development, reference is considerably collaborative and context-dependent. These features of demonstrative reference, however, do not simply disappear when speakers reach higher levels of linguistic competence. In posterior stages, the range of situations in which demonstratives can be used becomes wider, encompassing uses that do not require perceptual relation to referents, but can recruit faculties like spatial-temporal memory, and, as mentioned previously, discourse anaphora.

Nevertheless, it seems plausible to assume that each mode of designation, namely demonstrating, naming and describing, has particularities

which make them appropriate for specific plans of referring. For instance, naming will be adequate for plans that involve cross-contextual reference, while describing will be appropriate whenever it is manifest that the naming convention associated to the referent is unknown to the interpreter.

We saw that we have good reasons to suppose that the demonstrative mode of designation paradigmatically involves attentional manipulation. If we accept that demonstratives used exaphorically are, as opposed to names and descriptions, (uses of) *expressions of joint attention*, as the evidence from human ontogeny suggests, it follows that certain social-cognitive skills should be taken as conditions on using demonstrative expressions. I will sustain here, to conclude this chapter, that these conditions are external, non-truth-conditional and pertain to the pragmatics of demonstrative reference.

I mentioned earlier that names trigger an existential presupposition to the effect that the expression has a referent. That is itself a condition for an utterance in which such expressions occur to be truth-evaluable. Looking back at the evidence I just presented about the relation between demonstratives and attention, it seems that, for demonstratives used exaphorically, another condition on truth-evaluation is triggered: one that reflects the original relation between demonstrative reference and attention through salience. I will call this condition the presupposition of salience.

As we saw earlier, demonstratives are context-dependent expressions, because they require the provision of some feature of context to have their referential content determined. To recap, let us take the example of (16):

(16) That table is nice.

Remember that, for an utterance of (16) to express a proposition that comes to integrate the common ground, speaker and interpreter must take part in the speaker's plan of referring, according to their respective perspectives in the conversational situation: the speaker needs to make the referent salient. The interpreter, on her own turn, will coordinate her attentional behavior with the speaker's, by adjusting her focus of attention. These are some of the conditions that need to be satisfied before one can refer by using a demonstrative

expression exaphorically. As we saw in the previous section, demonstrative reference is particularly dependent on extra-linguistic social-cognitive skills. In using a demonstrative exaphorically, then, the speaker seems to commit herself to respecting preliminary conditions A and B, as well as C and D below:

Condition A: both speaker and interpreter must be able to recognize goal-oriented behavior;

Condition B: the interpreter needs to have the ability to recognize indicative gesturing and eye-gazing as clues to coordinate her attentional behavior with the speaker;

Condition C: the speaker and the interpreter must share the same perceptual environment⁵⁰;

Condition D: the speaker must successfully make the referent salient.

Indexing is made difficult if speaker and interpreter are in different perceptual environments, as required by condition C, or if the speaker fails in manipulating the interpreter's attentional behavior, as required by condition D. But conditions A, B, C and D are not truth-conditional constituents of utterances with demonstratives, that is, they are not linguistically encoded in the meaning of 'that'. They seem rather to be conditions that are presupposed in the use of sentences like (16).

I shall not discuss conditions A and B at any length here, given that it seems quite uncontroversial that A and B are generally satisfied, except in interactions with people in the autistic spectrum, or cognitively and physically disabled people. In these cases, special adjustments might be required for the completion of the speaker's communicative plan⁵¹, but, here, I shall focus on conditions C and D.

⁵⁰ That is, the mutually manifest environment for the speaker and her co-present interlocutor at the time of the utterance.

⁵¹ See Dunham & Moore (1995) for an account of such adjustments.

In a token-reflexive theory of demonstratives, as the one I defend here, it is assumed that the token-reflexive rules related to the conventional meaning of the demonstrative is incremented by semantically relevant situational information. Now, if Condition C, for example, is violated, the subsequent effect on semantic interpretation is that the token-reflexive rules cannot be incremented. If the speaker and the interpreter are not in the same perceptual environment, the interpreter's attentional behavior is not available for detection or manipulation. Thus, if condition C is not satisfied, there can be no proposition expressed, because there is no causal connection between the interpreter and the putative *demonstratum*.

On its turn, the violation of Condition D alone – that is, not in conjunction with the violation of Condition C – affects the interpretation of sentences like (16) in a slightly different way. If C is satisfied and, for some reason, the speaker fails in making the referent salient, some information regarding spatial-temporal location is provided and can be loaded in the demonstrative's token-reflexive rules. If the provided information is not enough to allow the interpreter to identify the *demonstratum*, however, again, the truth-conditional content does not correspond to a singular proposition. Therefore, it cannot be evaluated as true or false – except relatively to the utterance itself.

I will discuss the relation between Condition D and uses of demonstratives in more detail in the next and final parts of this chapter. My initial assumption is that, given the reasons that were offered here in favor of the view that attentional manipulation through salience is so relevant in what concerns demonstratives – and considering the kinds of effects of the violation of D (that will be analyzed in sub-section 2.4.2.) –, condition D can be classified as a presupposition. Inspired by Soames (1989)'s terminology I will call this presupposition *the presupposition of salience*⁵².

⁵² Soames (1989) calls the presupposition associated to indexicals and demonstratives the *expressive presupposition* and claims that it is a condition that affects content. I agree with him that there is an additional presupposition associated to demonstratives, other than the existential presupposition, but, as I will discuss in the following subsection, I believe it is a pragmatic condition, therefore, it affects truth-evaluation, not semantic content – which I define in terms of reflexivity.

2.4.1. Asserting and presupposing

Before arguing for that, let us make a little digression. Asserting and presupposing are two things that *speakers do*. This assumption was at the heart of prominent theories of assertion in the philosophy of ordinary language from the 1950s until at least the 1980s. These inquiries concentrated on a variety of aspects of asserting, but one line of investigation is particularly important for our purposes here: one that concerns the relation between assertions and implied content.

Grice (1968; 1969), Strawson (1950, 1952, 1964) and Austin (1979), in their attempts to account for such relation, developed influential theoretical notions of which perhaps the most famous are presuppositions and implicatures. It is fair to say that though they did not treat or even designate presupposition as linguists and philosophers of language do today, their early investigations paved the ground for future inquiries about implicit content.

Since Frege, assertions have been taken to differ from presuppositions basically because they are explicit acts through which content is communicated, while presuppositions are always indirectly and implicitly conveyed. While assertions are speech acts, presuppositions are conditions of truth-evaluability. Take the existential presupposition as an example. The singular term's "referentiality", so to speak, is not articulated in predicative sentences, but asserting a predicative sentence implies that the singular term refers. One classic problem generated by the relation between assertions and implied content is, no doubt, Moore's paradox, that Williams (2014) formulates as follows:

G. E. Moore observed that to make an 'omissive' assertion like
(1) Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, but I do not believe that Bangkok is the capital of Thailand

- $p \ \& \ \text{I do not believe that } p$
- $p \ \& \ \sim Bp$

or a 'commissive' assertion like
(2) Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, but I believe that Bangkok is not the capital of Thailand

- $p \ \& \ \text{I believe that not-}p$
- $p \ \& \ B\sim p$

would be 'absurd'. (WILLIAMS, 2014, p.1)

The paradox reveals itself in the apparent performatic contradiction between asserting p and denying the belief that p . That would suggest, according to authors like Austin (1979), that performing the speech act of asserting p implies that the speaker/performer believes that p . Austin, in particular, seems to understand Moore's paradox as a kind of test of implication: if asserting p and denying believing that p is self-contradictory, it must be because, asserting p implies that one has a belief whose content is p . In *Other Minds*, he claims that the self-contradiction of denying the belief in the content of one's assertion is an instance of practical irrationality (*ibidem*, pp. 98-103). Moreover, according to him, it is so, because it violates conversational expectations about self-knowledge and sincerity that speakers often take for granted in conversational interactions. This implication relation between asserting and believing seems to be a property of all kinds of assertion, that is, a property of the performance of such speech act.

Here, in Chapter 2, I am interested in what is implied by assertions of sentences with demonstratives, so I will attempt to apply Austin's insight about the effects of violating implication relations to the cases of referential failure of the presupposition of salience. The overall claim at this point is that such presuppositions cannot be cancelled without breaking conversational expectations and that disrespecting implied commitments affects the rational practice of discourse. Also, in this part, I want to offer a more detailed bibliographical analysis of Strawson's distinction between sentence and use⁵³ and the Austinian notion that implicit content can be treated as a condition of satisfaction within the framework of the theory of speech acts. Both ideas are important for my position regarding the semantics-pragmatics distinction for demonstrative reference.

Philosophers dealing with presuppositions, even nowadays, seem to experience uneasiness about how to approach presupposition triggers, such as demonstratives used exaphorically and proper names. The fundamental problem, which has to do with determining how the pragmatics of reference relates to conventional meaning, is reflected, for instance, in the theoretical tendency to treat presuppositions either as a purely semantic phenomenon or as a purely

⁵³ Even though his distinction is threefold – between expression, use and utterance –, for my purposes here, I will be interested only in what he has to say about sentence and use.

pragmatic one. In the purely semantic approach, presuppositions are related to sentences, not to speech acts, and are often reduced to logical relations.

Van Fraassen (1968), for example, construes his logical approach to presuppositions by comparing them to logical implications. He characterizes both as cases of the semantic notion of *necessitation*, the general logical concept that establishes that the validity of an inference from a proposition A to a proposition B. So, for van Fraassen, if A either presupposes or implicates B, the inference from A to B – *modus tollens* for presuppositions, and *modus ponens*, for the material implication⁵⁴ – is valid. For the philosopher, this strategy has the advantage of explaining presuppositions in terms of familiar truth-relations, without much concern with the validation of logical truths and the principles of bivalence and the excluded middle (cf. *ibidem*, p. 138). In this view then, a sentence A presupposes B if both A and (not-A) presuppose B.

This definition of presupposition depends on the concept of negation and falsity, as opposed to acceptance and rejection, i.e., on relations between sentences and their contents rather than on relations between agents. Purely pragmatic theories tend to put less emphasis on how presuppositions relate to sentential constituents, focusing on speaker's meaning, intentional interpretation and speech act performance.

Strawson (1950; 1952) has the earliest distinction between the role of semantics and the role of pragmatics for presupposition triggers in the 20th century, namely his distinction between sentence, use and utterance and his account of the effects of spurious uses on truth-evaluation. For Strawson, the meaning of sentences with uniquely referring expressions (Strawson's designation for singular terms) are bearers of the semantic properties of *types*. Semantically speaking, they consist in collections of orientations and conventions of use. While sentence meaning is a conventional component of the semantics of singular terms, reference and truth are properties of the uses of such sentences. About his definition of meaning, Strawson affirms:

Meaning (in at least one important sense) is a function of the sentence or expression; mentioning and referring and truth or falsity,

⁵⁴ The rules of inference that are valid in each case are what differentiates presuppositions, on the one hand, from implications, on the other, even though both involve necessitation.

are functions of the use of the sentence or expression. To give the meaning of an expression (in the sense in which I am using the word) is to give *general directions* for its use to refer to or mention particular objects or persons; to give the meaning of a sentence is to give *general directions* for its use in making true or false assertions. (Strawson, 1950, p. 327)

Earlier, he comments on the relation between truth and the pragmatics of reference.

...we cannot talk of *the sentence* being true or false, but only of its being used to make a true or false assertion, or (if this is preferred) to express a true or a false proposition. And equally obviously we cannot talk of *the sentence* being *about* a particular person, for the same sentence may be used at different times to talk about quite different particular persons, but only of *a use* of the sentence to talk about a particular person. (*ibidem*, p. 326)

It is important to briefly recall that Strawson is dialoguing with Russell (1905)'s concurrent position about the semantics of singular terms. While Russell claims that the logical form of sentences with singular terms hides an existential proposition that, when false, renders the whole sentential complex false, Strawson holds that referring is not something that sentences "do"; only agents refer – more precisely by applying the meanings of sentences to instances of use. In response to Russell's prediction about the effects that nonexistent referents have on truth-value attribution, which are motivated by his assumption that the existence of the individual is part of what is said, Strawson chooses a clearly pragmatically-oriented strategy.

But *the one I meant* is quite different from *the meaning of the expression I used* to talk of it. In this special sense of "mean", it is people who mean, not expressions. People use expressions to refer to particular things. But the meaning of an expression is not the set of things or the single thing it may correctly be used to refer to: the meaning is the set of rules, habits, conventions for its use in referring. (*ibidem*, p. 328)

So, reference, for Strawson, is pragmatic. It should not be described in terms of linguistic rules or logical form, but in terms of how such norms are used. For Strawson (1950), making the same use of a sentence is expressing the same

proposition. In distinguishing uses from sentences, he remarks that different uses determine different *aboutness*. The meaning of ‘that’, for example, is a property of the type of the expression – namely the norms, habits and conventions that direct different uses – and it does not determine *aboutness* by itself. Only uses of ‘that’ carry *aboutness*.

When I say that the presupposition of salience is associated to uses of sentences with demonstratives, I assume that it is triggered by the linguistic characteristics of demonstratives which constrain use. In terms of the semantic-pragmatic distinction then, we can say that the presupposition of salience – like the existential presupposition – is conventionally associated to a specific lexical item, even though it functions as external to meaning, to what is encoded in language. The presupposition of salience, in a strawsonian framework, is better described as a condition on successful use of predications with demonstratives, as a *requirement of aboutness*. This cannot be taken to depend solely on linguistic encoding, since, in conversational settings, determining the *aboutness* of an utterance is a task that depends not only on the speaker’s intention to refer to a certain individual, but on how well she can coordinate her whole plan of referring with her addressee.

As Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs point out, reference is established in conversations collaboratively. So, the *aboutness* of an utterance becomes part of the common ground by means of collaborative behavior (acceptance, rejection, etc.), by the systems of repair and reinforcement that permit communicational improvement whenever it is necessary:

People in conversation manage who is to talk at which times through an intricate system of turn taking [...]. Further, when one person speaks, the others not only listen but let the speaker know they are understanding-with head nods, yes’s, uh huh’s, and other so-called back channel responses (Duncan, 1973; Goodwin, 1981). When listeners don’t understand, or when other troubles arise, they can interrupt for correction or clarification [...]. The participants also have techniques for initiating, guiding, and terminating conversations and the topics within them [...] (CLARK & WILKES-GIBBS, 1986, p. 2)

In instances of the no-reference problem involving demonstratives, as we have seen, referring to a non-salient individual provokes certain pragmatic reactions (yet to be determined). Luckily for speakers, linguistic communication is the fluid,

self-preserving process described by Clark and Wilkes-Gibbs above. We have mechanisms to accommodate or exclude non-collaborative conversational contributions and recuperate the rational and collaborative character of paradigmatic communication. One such way is by cancelling presuppositions or asking for context revision, as we will see in the next sub-section.

2.4.2. On presupposing salience

Start by taking an example. Suppose that Jane, from S1, arrives at a friend's wedding reception and stops by the window, outside the building as she waits for her sister, who is trying to park her car. Her old friend Jim, who is inside the building, sees Jane through the open window and comes closer to say hi. Jane and Jim haven't seen each other in a while and when Jim tells Jane that he has a new girlfriend, she asks him who the girl is. Jim, then, answers with an utterance of (17), pointing to a girl inside the building and outside of Jane's visual field.

(17) That girl over there is my girlfriend.

The use of the demonstrative 'that' seems to presuppose that the referent stands out in the interpreter's visual field as a consequence of the speaker's indication. This is the presupposition of salience, namely that *there is a salient object*. The notion of salience I adopt here takes it to be a matter of attention. I will not discuss the difficult question of what makes a body of information be perceived as an object: if interpretation or conscious experience are necessary, for example.

By uttering (17), Jim implicitly conveys the information that the object he is talking about can be identified perceptually. He indicates that he is committed to the truth of the assumption that his addressee can coordinate her attentional focus with his own. As old friends, Jane and Jim share information from past experiences – what Clark and Shaefer (1990) call *personal common ground*. Things like, for instance, that they went to school together or that Jim knows Jane's sister and that they are both very happy for the couple of friends whose wedding reception they are attending.

They also share information regarding the concrete situation in which their conversation takes place: their position in space, the perceptually manifest environment, not to mention the *community common ground*, which includes shared knowledge about language, nationality, education, religion etc⁵⁵. Finally, as participants in a linguistic practice, Jane and Jim are required to adjust their behavior to what Austin (1962) refers to as *conventional procedures*. Asserting (or making a statement), not unlike other kinds of speech acts ought to be performed in accordance with certain *rules* – or principles. I favor an Austinian view on preparatory conditions. We have good reasons to assume that conversations are collaborative practices that depend on the propositional commitments speakers undertake. If the rational practice of informational exchange through language is somehow jeopardized by procedural mistakes, collaboration is also jeopardized.

In Jane and Jim's case, we would expect that Jane reacts to Jim's assertion by recognizing that he did not proceed appropriately. This is a pragmatic reaction to his conversational contribution, but it is elicited by the fact that Jane cannot load 'that' with the proper information, following the instructions contained in the reflexive truth-conditions of (17). This information is a part of the common ground in virtue of the linguistic constraints that are part of Jim's plan of action. Jim commits himself to its truth when he utters (17), simply by the fact that he uses 'that' and appeals to the cognitive path that takes Jane to his girlfriend via demonstration – as opposed to naming or describing.

The propositional commitment Jim undertakes is presupposed in the sense that is conveyed without articulation, but it sets a condition on the conversational practice. Imagine a continuation to the dialogue between Jane and Jim in which Jane replies:

(18) Jim, there is no one where you pointed.

The act of uttering (18) is a reaction that puts the conversational context itself at the heart of the conversational exchange. Jane chooses to propose a revision of

⁵⁵ Community common ground may influence semantic interpretation pre-semantic uses of context. When it is not clear to interpreters what language is in use, for example.

Jim's plan of referring by indicating a contextual malfunction. In (18), Jane indicates a performatic equivocation in Jim's speech act. A more theory-laden version of what Jane means is something like "Jim, you are compromising a joint activity. Let us reconsider the conditions for your use of 'that'".

One of the evidence for that is truth-value gap. If asked for the truth or falsity of (17), Jane would probably reply "I don't know". In cases such as this, the inconsistency, self-contradiction or incoherence of an utterance relatively to previous commitments will indicate that collaboration should be suspended or corrected.

For my purposes, the presuppositional account has the advantage of accounting for both sub-classes of cases of non-paradigmatic communicative situations I distinguished earlier, referential failure for lack of information and referential failure in fiction. I take sentences that instantiate these sub-classes of referential failure to express non-propositional truth-conditional content. As a concluding remark, now, I will outline how token-reflexivity and presuppositions relate. First, with referential failure of demonstratives in situations of lack of information and, secondly, I will advance, in a very schematic way, my view on names in fiction, the topic of Chapter 3.

As we have established so far, cooperative speakers build demonstrative content, for example, from the conditions of identification that the reflexive component of the conventional meaning of the demonstrative expression carries, by loading contextual information. Failure in making the intended referent salient will generate a disruption in interpretation, typically manifested as a truth-value gap. This kind of referential failure can be accommodated in our Perry-inspired system of truth-conditional contents.

Presuppositions are not conditions that affect reflexivity. Reflexive content is always made available simply by linguistic competence and other faculties involved in incrementing conventional meaning – like identifying values for coordinates of time and place of utterance, for example. Propositional content, on the other hand, involves a specific kind of increment: the *designatum* as a propositional constituent. That, on its own turn, requires a special kind of informational connection to the world that is not assumed in semantic

interpretation solely in terms of reflexivity. The same seems to stand for names. The interpreter of (6), for example, has limited access to relevant semantic information for loading 'John' with a proper referent. Due to her competence, though, she identifies 'John' as a proper name, even if she lacks information regarding the individual named by 'John'. So, all she can gather from the token is that the referent of the naming convention associated to 'John', if there is any, wants his books back. Such reflexive content is, then, about the utterance itself and not about John.

Nevertheless, proper names differ from demonstratives pragmatically, among other reasons, because naming conventions are carried over between distinct contexts. Typically, according to Referentialism, speakers use a proper name in different contexts with the purpose of referring to the same individual, by intentionally recuperating historic chains of reference. Each token of the same proper name is a link in one of these chains. Individuals are the final contributions of names, whereas naming conventions are the mechanisms through which individuals are accessed. Just as, for demonstratives, conventional meaning (plus salience) is the mechanism through which demonstratives designate. Because interpreters can load reflexive content with any semantically relevant information they can access in the situation of utterance, the identification of the linguistic convention at use works as a kind of increment for names.

As to what concerns how reflexive content may affect the interpreter's plans of action and cognition, Korta & Perry, discussing the pragmatics of reference, use the interesting notion of *target intention*, which they define as follows:

If S is at all adept at using language, he will not only intend to get H to have a belief about some object, but will also have at least a vague intention of the type of cognitive fix on that object that H should have, in order to be in a position to have whatever further thoughts and actions S has in mind for him; that is, an *apt* cognitive fix. This is the *target intention*, one aspect of the referential intention (KORTA & PERRY, 2011, pp 42-43).

The authors introduce target intentions while talking about *plans of referring*. Having a target intention aids the speaker in her path to communicate something about an individual, by allowing her to get her interlocutor(s) in the proper cognitive position to follow her plan of action. Given that singular terms are being used, one of them is surely the existential presupposition – the assumption that the referent exists. And this assumption may be contested by pragmatic reactions of context revision⁵⁶. Reflexive content is important in these examples of non-paradigmatic communication because it explains what interpreters do apprehend of such utterances and what motivates them to reject new assertions. Other advantages of adopting reflexivity are:

- i. It helps us explain intuitions of meaningfulness for utterances with vacuous terms – fictional or cases of vacuity of reference for lack of information –, by appealing to the concept of (incremented) reflexive content and the distinction between the singular term's contribution to content and the mechanism by which it designates its referent. So, adding reflexivity to the presuppositional account of vacuity of reference permits us to explain truth-conditional expressivity and information sharing for singular terms when referring is unsuccessful.
- ii. It encompasses different requirements on truth-conditions: 'truth about language' (reflexivity) as distinct from 'truth about the world' (referentiality).

As I expect to have shown in Chapters 1 and 2, in instances of the no-reference problem, speakers will construct semantic interpretation basically with the information that language rules provide, in the absence of worldly information that

⁵⁶ Von Fintel (2001) presents an interesting test which purports to show that the referential presupposition (for names as well as demonstratives) is an implied assumption rather than a truth-conditional constituent. His test is called *the "Hey wait a minute!" test* and here is how it is supposed to work. Take (1). An interpreter is justified in uttering something like "Wait a minute! Anna Karenina does not exist! How can she be Russian?". This reaction presumably indicates that the conversational coordination needs adjustment, so there is a problem in the common informational content, one that requires a solution if the interaction is to continue in a rational, cooperative way. But we will see more about that in Chapter 3.

allows for determining *what is said*. The process by which reflexive meaning “drops out of the picture” is the process by which conventions are loaded by information and the interpreter moves from one structure to another (from reflexive to propositional) in the architecture of content. Demonstratives, particularly, are loaded with perceptual information that depends on salience, but also on collaboration. Demonstrative reference is better understood as a kind of joint effort, an interactive phenomenon (Clark and Bangerter (2004)) in which retrieval strategies are available, such as context revision. In such a view of the semantics of demonstratives, establishing reference is a continuous process in which the speaker gives clues to hearers with the purpose of making the thought she entertains apprehendable to the hearer. It is only natural that the process, though asymmetrical in a sense – after all, it is the *speaker’s* plan of referring and the hearer cooperates to carry it collaboratively – will depend on the hearer being able to follow the plan in a way that makes it clear for the speaker that her plan is being carried out. Thus, referring by demonstrating is not unilaterally a task to be accomplished by the speaker. It is, again, a joint task (for both speaker and hearer) (Perini-Santos (2006)).

2.5. Conclusion

As the case of Jim and Jane indicates, context revision will serve communicative purposes of repair, allowing participants to momentarily departure from the main course of the interaction, pointing back to prior talk (Schegloff (1992)). The suspension of the ongoing sequence, by redirecting the participants to a troublesome aspect of the talk, is one of the phenomena through which the social and interactive character of demonstrative reference is intuitively evidenced. The nature of the trouble is evidenced precisely by the format of repairs. For example, Jane’s possible response to Jim’s conversational contribution was to make him realize that she was not in a position to perceive the individual he was talking about and, consequently, she could not understand an important aspect of the conversation. The problem and the type of solution proposed, in their case, establishes that Jim did not properly calculate what was salient for his interlocutor. Because there is a species of division of labour in Jim’s plan of

referring Jane to his girlfriend, in which Jane takes responsibilities relatively to the plan and her intervention is clearly legitimate. Her role is just as important as Jim's in guaranteeing reference. Repair mechanisms enable participants to accomplish communicative plans even in face of fallibility. It is because agents can navigate their talks about individuals in this very human manner that more complex plans involving individuals can be realized.

CHAPTER 3

What we presuppose when we use names

In chapter 1, I presented a preliminary definition of referring and naming. Recall that referring was characterized as a mechanism of designation – in contrast with denoting –, and naming was defined as a mode of designation. Designation, as we saw, is a linguistic practice that binds words to world objects, and naming is one of its modes. The prevalent presence and vast variety of naming practices – to what regards places, artifacts, people, animals, pet objects etc. – signals that the habit of naming individuals serves some strong, perhaps unique, purpose in human cognition and communication. It is, thus, wanted that questions about the specifics of naming may arise. For instance, do proper names form an autonomous grammatical category? What is the relevance of use for naming? Other related concerns, over and above, include the grounds for singular reference. Can descriptions refer? Can a name not refer? In this section, I will deal with distinctions that enrich our concept of referring and our understanding of reference as a philosophical topic.

I begin by stating my agreement with Bach (2008) that reference consists in a relation of identification of cognized objects that stand in an appropriate epistemic relation – to be clarified later – to the cognizing subject. I will restrain my attention to what names are, gathering syntactic, semantic and pragmatic indications in support of the claim that names are expressions used for singular thought. For that, I intend to combine a grammatical study of names with a philosophical characterization. Then, I shall proceed to an analysis of how names that fail to refer contribute to content, much in the same spirit of Chapter 2, i.e., by defending a token-reflexive framework. Finally, I will discuss the content of fictional names and offer a description of how the existential presupposition works in this kind of discourse. I will build my general argument on an eminent distinction between the semantics and pragmatics of referring.

3.1. The relevance of speaker reference

In discussing demonstratives in Chapter 2, I stated my agreement with Strawson's view regarding what singular reference is. One of Strawson's most significant contributions to the study of reference is his emphasis on speaker reference; the idea that acts of reference depend on the speaker's recognition of the circumstances in which reference occurs just as much as on mastering the conventional rules that govern usage. The concepts of referential and spurious uses – discussed in Chapter 2 – reflect this aspect of Strawson's view.

One of Strawson's point, in Strawson (1950), is that singular terms are not "linguistically referential", that is, he suggests that the semantic property of reference is not determined by linguistic encoding; rather, it depends on *how speakers use* language (meaning) to convey thoughts about individuals. Strawson's overview was developed later by Bach (2008), who sustains the idea – not explicitly stated in Strawson – that usage is audience-directed and that an account of reference should include the interpersonal dimension of communication. Bach holds that reference is a four-place relation in which *speakers* choose *expressions* whose uses enable their *audience* to think about the *individuals* they refer to, as what they intend them to think about. These referential intentions depend greatly on what is given in the speech situations: their informational content and the communicative plans of the participants. In this sense, following Strawson (and Donnellan), Bach indicates that modes of designation are not a matter of convention, but of using language (in contexts). Here is how he puts it.

[...] a speaker, in choosing an expression to use to refer the hearer to the individual he has in mind, is in fact answering the following question: given the circumstances of utterance, the history and direction of the conversation, and the mutual knowledge between me and my audience, how informative an expression do I need to use to enable them to identify the individual I have in mind? Note that informativeness here can depend not only on the semantic information encoded by the expression, but on the information carried by the fact that *it* is being used. (BACH, 2008, p. 21)

So, Bach's understanding of referring reflects the now rather uncontroversial claim (for linguists as well as philosophers) that reference depends on speech situations and what they *give*. Take the example of Julie's friend from Chapter 2 again. Julie's friend, let us call her Lily, knows that 'Julie' refers to the individual Julie, and wishes to refer her father to such individual, by uttering (19).

(19) Julie will play Snow White.

Lily knows the linguistic reference of 'Julie', but reference to Julie (the individual) will depend on Lily's recognition of how to *use linguistic information in that context* to enable her father (the audience) to think about Julie. This depends on the type of use she makes. Here, Lily made a referential use in which 'Julie' functions as the grammatical subject of the sentence in (19). The definition of reference as a four-place relation is especially useful for treating cases of informational insufficiency, as the ones we have been investigating so far. So, it will be decisive for the general argument in this chapter.

Furthermore, Bach's contribution to Strawson's framework, with the idea that reference depends on the relation between speaker and audience just as much as it depends on the relation between expression and *designatum*, is in tune with two other frameworks utilized in arguments of this dissertation. One of them is Korta and Perry's theory of Critical Pragmatics, developed in their 2010 book. The other is the philosophical concept of joint activity, developed in the works of Clark (1992), Gilbert (1992), Roth (2004), which will be discussed in section 3.3.

Korta and Perry's book presents a valid insight on referring as something speakers do with words to achieve communicative goals. According to them, an act of reference to an individual *x* depends on a plan of referring to *x*, in which the speaker, *S*, identifies the best way to put the audience, *H*, in the adequate cognitive position to receive the information *S* intends to share about *x*. This will be reflected, for example, on *S*'s choice of mode of designation, expression, etc.: "S's goal is not merely to refer to the object his motivating belief is about, but to refer in a way that is apt for bringing about the right sort of understanding on the part of *H*" (KORTA & PERRY, 2010, p. 42).

Notice that there is a common denominator in Bach's Strawson-inspired view and Korta and Perry's: reference is conditioned by the fact that we share information about individuals, given the many roles they play in our every-day life, our thoughts, knowledge, emotions and actions. The underlying issue is, as such, that reference is something we do mostly for communicative purposes and, therefore, it should be understood as a *shared cooperative activity* (Bratman (1992)), an interpersonal interaction in which agents are engaged in accomplishing a common goal (information exchange), and all participants are responsive to each other's intentions: the speaker is committed to conveying all that is necessary to update the audience's informational status adequately, and the audience collaborates with the speaker's communicative plan. Of course, speakers/ interpreters may fail to be cooperative, but those are precisely the cases, specifically referential failure, that motivate the present work. I will be looking in this chapter for a notion of *referring by naming* that takes into consideration the concepts and observations found in Bach, Korta and Perry and Gilbert, Roth and Bratman. We shall begin by inquiring after the relation between speaker and linguistic reference of proper names.

3.1.1. Speaker reference and the linguistic reference of proper names

Bach argues that speaker reference should be treated as prior to linguistic reference. According to him, non-referential uses of proper names, indexicals, demonstratives and, of course, definite descriptions – found in discourse reference, predicative and attributive uses – indicate that singular terms are not inherently referential. He takes such cases to be good evidence that referring is a property of use.

Since Bach denies that proper names are inherently referential, supposedly, one could not accept his observations and still defend that proper names trigger the existential presupposition as a matter of semantics. Here, I will discuss this consequence, arguing that it is possible to accept the primacy of speaker reference, safeguarding the role of semantics in the explication of singular reference. My inspiration comes from Ken Taylor's 2003 book,

Reference and the rational mind. In this series of essays, Taylor presents conceptual distinctions meant to contribute to referentialist accounts of the co-reference and no-reference problems. Taylor's idea is that semanticists have mistakenly focused too much energy on explaining reference in terms of word-world relations, thus neglecting word-word relations, where the key to solving many classical problems rests.

The first distinction I take from Taylor is between *referential success* and *referential purport*⁵⁷. He defines referential purport as "the antecedent readiness to refer" enjoyed by an expression, the property of being ready for the job of standing for an object. Referential success, on the other hand, is what happens when an expression not only purports to refer, but effectively *does the job* of standing for an existing object.

Taylor further suggests that purport and success to refer depend on a primary representational word-word relation, called *objectuality*. Roughly speaking, the objectual relation is what allows the conversion of worldly objects in subject matter of thoughts and utterances. Here is how he presents it:

By a fully objective representation, I mean one that, as it were, reaches all the way out to real existents, to real properties and objects. When a singular representation is fully objective, it *refers* to a real object. When a predicate is fully objective it *expresses* a real property. A merely objectual representation, by contrast, is one that, although "fit" or "ready" for the job of standing for a real existent or expressing a real property, nonetheless does not succeed in doing so. I will sometimes say that objectual representations are referentially fit and that fully objective representations are referentially successful. (TAYLOR, 2014, pp. 188-189)

Perhaps Recanati's concepts of *thought-vehicle* (in Recanati (2014)) comes in handy for understanding Taylor's concept of objectuality. According to Recanati, file-like mental representations of objects are, ultimately, what warrants the referentiality of a name.

⁵⁷ Taylor (2014) reconstructs the discussion about referential purport, first addressed by him in his 2003 book, but the notion of referential purport can also be found in Recanati (1993) and Brandom's discussion of Quine's works (Brandom (1994)).

The now trendy concept of *mental file* is a metaphor for cognitive correlates of objects, which serve the purpose of storing information that permits us to think and talk about objects⁵⁸. It is then a *vehicle* for singular thought. Objectuality is the representational relation warranted by this file-like mental address; it sets the ground for singular reference and singular thoughts.

In Taylor's theory of names, objectual representation is defined in terms of lexically-governed syntactic factors, established by conditions a) to d) below:

- a) names flank the identity sign;
- b) names occupy the argument place of verbs;
- c) names serve as links in co-referential chains; and, finally,
- d) names serve as premises in substitution inferences⁵⁹.

There is, of course, much more to be said about the referential purport of names, but I will return to this issue in sub-section 3.2.2. and in section 3.3. For now, it suffices to say that if we agree with Taylor's definition of objectuality, we need a place for linguistic factors in our story about names, contrary to what Bach claims.

Bach's defense of the primacy of speaker reference is based on the challenges raised by three families of problems related to the thesis that names are inherently referential: the problem of unsuccessful reference, non-referential uses of names and the problem of opacity. The second family shows data suggesting that names function grammatically as other nouns. This motivates the assumption that, since names can also be used not to refer, they are not inherently referential.

The first and second families of problems are meant to attack the Millian thesis at the heart of referentialism (seen in Chapter 1), namely that names

⁵⁸ See Recanati (2013) and Murez & Recanati (2016) for a better comprehension of mental files.

⁵⁹ Consider the following example: a) Pele is Edson Arantes do Nascimento; b) Pele made over 1000 goals; c) Pele is a soccer player so Edson Arantes do Nascimento is a soccer player.

convey no attributes of their bearers. Bach points out that Millianism cannot offer an individuation criterion for dealing with co-referential names and thereon, it should be abandoned. I stated before, in Chapters 1 and 2, that I believe that token-reflexive theories of reference may give us a good answer to the problem of individuation, but, given that co-reference related problems are simply not the focus of this investigation, I will refrain from discussing the first and second families of problems proposed by Bach.

Bach holds that the following sentences evidence that names permit grammatical uses in which their semantic role is not to pick an individual, but to serve as a predicate:

(20) Leningrad became Saint Petersburg in 1991.

(21) Don Quayle is no Jack Kennedy.

(22) There are hundreds of O'Learys in Dublin.

Bach's point is that 'Saint Petersburg', 'Jack Kennedy' and 'O'Learys' are used literally in those examples, though they appear in secondary application, playing the role of common nouns. Evidence that 'O'Learys', in (22), for example, functions as a common noun is that it admits of a variation in number (the name is pluralized) and quantification. Yet, proper names, in English at least, are invariant for number and generally not preceded by modifiers, articles or determiners. So, either these specific occurrences are being used non-literally somehow or proper names, as a grammatical category, are not inherently referential after all. Bach claims that, since the expressions in (20) - (22) are being used literally, the only valid option is to acknowledge that referentiality is not a property encoded in the meanings of names.

I believe his reasoning should be taken cautiously, though. This kind of syntactic evidence is dearth and far from conclusive. It suggests, of course, a syntactic equivalence between names and proper nouns, but, it does not follow from that that singular reference is not a constitutive property of the category NAME. Furthermore, names and proper nouns have contrasting semantic roles that reflect different referential relation with, respectively, individuals and classes

of individuals etc., regardless of their syntactic similarity. So, we should not disregard the distinctive semantic properties of names so hurriedly. A preferable strategy is to get a better grip on what names are and if there is an identifiable criterion that characterizes the category NAME. The question we should ask at this stage is: is the category NAME an essential category, with distinctive syntactic features? Whatever the answer to this question may be, it is important to remark that markers of the function of names are relative to natural languages. For example, as shown by Bach's examples, though names resist pluralization in English, some sentences manifest such variance – for example, (22). Also, names in languages, like German, Italian and some dialects of Brazilian Portuguese are preceded by the definite article, differently from names in English. Another pertinent observation is that they can also function as vocatives or performatively, in acts of nomination (Lyons (1977)). Correspondingly, it is hard to address the question above in the face of an apparent incommensurability that derives from differences in linguistic representation observed in different languages.

We end up then with a messy landscape: the syntactic proximity of names to nouns conflicts with the semantic proximity that names bear with demonstratives and pronouns (Halliday (1994)). Add to that, the semantic poverty of names⁶⁰ and the pervasive desire among language users to find 'meaning' in them.

The key to organizing the picture could be finding a criterion of demarcation that separates names from other word classes. Withal, the search for criteria has been a priority for philosophers of language rather than linguists. In linguistics, the traditional approach has been either to place names as a sub-class of other word classes or as an autonomous class that shares constitutive features with others. Anderson (2006) exemplifies the second strategy. His extensive investigation of the syntax and semantics of proper names, grounded on notional grammar, carries valuable insights on the categorization of names;

⁶⁰ It is commonly accepted that the lexical entry for a name contains, other than gender, a concept that gives access to encyclopedic information and idiosyncratic information about the name-bearer. This constitutes a mental address, which is not part of the linguistic system itself. Recanati (1993), for example, defends that names do not belong to language in the same way as other words.

one that may help us delineate in a more prolix way the relevance of speaker reference relatively to linguistic reference.

A grammatical proposal

He dispenses the names-as-nouns more “traditional view” in favor of the view that names are like determinatives. His starting point is to adopt a notional approach – according to which words are categorized in terms of meaning and defined in everyday, intuitive terms, for example, names are explained as being related to persons and places – to the study of nominal structures⁶¹, gathering evidence that names are equivalent to phrases rather than word-level categories, like NOUN. Anderson found that names behave like head determinatives of NPs rather than head nouns of NPs⁶², given their function as prototypical arguments in predication structure. Moreover, in notional grammar, determinatives are characterized as maximally referential and non-predicable.

But what about the semantics of names? Anderson’s notional “grammar for names” again offers some interesting insights. He dedicates a substantial part of his book to discussing onomastics and non-referential uses of names, which I will not reproduce in detail here⁶³, focusing more on his conclusions than his argumentative trajectory. Names, he claims, are part of the onomasticon of a language until, by nomination, they are activated and acquire definiteness via name-referent association (in Nicolaisen (1976)’s sense). So, inactive names, those that have not yet been used in an act of baptism (in the sense of Kripke’s causal theory of reference), are destitute of the grammatical properties of determinatives. That would explain why names admit vocative and performative uses. Likewise, it suggests that names are not inherently determinative, at least not until they are turned into devices of reference.

⁶¹ Their main thesis is that basic syntactic distribution and morphological differentiation reflect the semantic character of syntactical categories.

⁶² Anderson (1997; 2003; 2004) suggests that the determinative/noun distinction is semantically motivated, as invoking, respectively, instances of individuals vs. classes. The determinative grouping seems to be justified in many languages by the distribution: the core instances of names and pronouns pattern, as arguments, like determined phrases and phrases headed by determiners.

⁶³ See Anderson, 2006, pp. 71-130.

Anderson's claims might give us reason to disagree with Bach. The point is not that names are not inherently referential. Apparently, their reason for being in a system of language is, on the long run, to permit that things that matter to us can be thought of and talked about. Nomination is an indicator of human involvement and, generally, play an anthropomorphizing or intimacy-indicating role (Van Langendonck's (1998))⁶⁴. It seems then that we have reason to define NAME, notionally, as a functionally determinative and lexically nominative category that serves an inherently referential purpose in linguistic practices. In this sense, pragmatics and the "anthropology" of naming is of great importance to us. That is not quite the same as Bach's Strawson-inspired recognition of the importance of use for naming, but it is fairly close to it and it fits a referentialist framework better.

A philosophical proposal

On the philosophical side of the study of names, Taylor (2003) presents a theory that is compatible with Anderson's general observation regarding the semantics of names. As we saw, Taylor treats referential purport as objectual representation and categorizes names from a lexical-syntactic standpoint. Notwithstanding, it is quite undimmed that Taylor was determinately motivated by philosophical problems. He wishes to present a philosophical theory of the categorization of names, not to propose a grammar for names that depends on categorization, like Anderson. His proposal hardly explores linguistic evidence other than introspection, while Anderson grounds his investigation essentially on contrastive linguistic methods. So, it is as clear as possible that Taylor's intents are directed towards classic philosophical problems that date back to Frege's Puzzles.

That being said, we can move on to Taylor's description of what names are. He starts by assuming that there is such a thing as a category NAME and that membership in it can be established by the following conditions:

⁶⁴ Children recognize at an early stage that names are given to people (and anthropomorphic extensions thereof) and not inanimates, as noted by Jaswal & Markman (2001). This recent cognitive developmental literature, presents extensive evidence that children do not think about people as they think about inanimate objects. Hall (2009) attributes that to a tendency, observed in very infants at the age of six months only, to see people as entities whose individuality is "important its own right".

- (i) An expression *n* is a name if all its tokens are explicitly co-referential, that is, when all its tokens are causally related and, therefore, dependent on the same reference⁶⁵.
- (ii) Sameness of pronunciation and spelling does not guarantee that two tokens are tokens of the same name.
- (iii) The fact that all tokens of a name refer to the same object is explained by lexically-governed word-word relations in the language, not by lexically-governed word-world relations.
- (iv) The coreference of name-tokens has a global character, reliant on the interlocking and interdependent referential intentions of a linguistic community.
- (v) That community must have some practice or other that serves to bind name-tokens together in chains of explicit⁶⁶ co-reference.
- (vi) Names are suitable to occupy the subject position in a grammatical sentence, operate in anaphora, substitute another singular term in premises of inferences etc.

As seen in items, (i) and (v), the concept of coreferentiality plays an indispensable part in Taylor's theory. In very general terms, coreference is a relation between two linguistic elements that semantically relate to the same object. In Text Linguistics, coreference is exemplified by anaphora, the endophoric relation between two linguistic elements in which the semantic value

⁶⁵ The concept of explicit co-reference resembles Perry's concepts of coco-reference and coco-descendance. In contrast with Perry, though, Taylor makes no distinction between explicit co-reference and coco-descendance. The extract below illustrates how Perry defines both concepts:

[...] Elwood tells you that Jack drank the last beer. You leave me a note saying, "Jack drank the last beer". I tell Marsha, "Jack should be whipped". She tells Fred, "Jack's becoming unpopular because of all the beer he drinks". Your note coco-refers with Elwood's utterance. My utterance coco-refers to your note, and Marsha's utterance coco-refers to mine. Marsha's utterance doesn't coco-refer with Elmond's utterance, but it is a coco-descendant of it, because of the chain of coco-references. None of this depends on Jack existing; I could have made Jack up in order to blame him for drinking beers that I had actually taken (PERRY, (2012), p. 40)

⁶⁶ As opposed to coincidentendal coreference. Taylor claims that two tokens, like 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus', co-refer, but the chains of coreference that are associated to each name are independent from one another. When two tokens belong to the same chain of coreference, we say that they are explicitly coreferential.

of one term can only be ascertained by interpreting its antecedent. Pronouns are the most emblematic anaphors, but anaphora is a pervasive phenomenon of discourse preservation⁶⁷ and a relevant concept in Taylor's characterization of proper names.

In a nutshell, Taylor's idea is that names are anaphoric devices. So, every occurrence of a name should have the same referent, since, as he argues, every name-token of a name is causally related to the same world object. For example, all the occurrences of, say, 'Pelé' co-refer, in virtue of the interlocking and interdependent referential intentions of all those who, being familiar with the naming convention associated to 'Pelé', produce occurrences of that name. How a name acquires a referent, or better still, how a referent acquires a name in the first place is a question that pertains to the domain of foundational studies in language, as defined by Stalnaker (1997): theories that deal with "[...] what the facts are that give expressions their semantic values, or more generally, about what makes it the case that the language spoken by a particular individual or community has a particular descriptive semantics". And he characterizes descriptive semantics as a theory that "assigns semantic values to the expressions of the language, and explains how the semantic values of the complex expressions are a function of the semantic values of their parts" (*ibidem*, p. 535). Here, I hope that it is clear that we are focused on descriptive aspects, and foundational ones will not be dealt with.

Taylor further characterizes this token-token coreferential binding as syntactically ordered, based on the fact that names are suitable to occupy the subject position in grammatical sentences – and, thus, function as arguments in verbal structure – as well as to operate in anaphora.

He goes on to suggest that knowledge about the anaphoric nature of names is part of a speaker's linguistic competence and is independent of word-world relations. For example, a speaker may not know if the token of a given

⁶⁷ It is a challenging topic for interface studies in syntax and semantics – for example, inquires on the (structural) constraints on interpretation in Government and Binding theory. Also, anaphora is a phenomenon linked to same-purport: anaphors allow for continuity of referential purport throughout the course of a discursive practice.

name has a referent, but in virtue of recognizing the syntactically relevant properties of the item, she knows that all tokens of that name are coreferential. The contours of Taylor's characterization of names also includes an account of how speakers know that two tokens belong to the same name and, inversely, how speakers diagnose that two tokens belong to two different names (see footnote 12).

Criteria for establishing the kinship of a token to a name are essentially semantic, although phonological and orthographic input is indispensable. Two tokens of the same name, thus, will manifest similarity in pronunciation and spelling, but that is not enough to warrant that they represent the same individual linguistically. Just think about all the children, young and older women who are named 'Julie' or 'Lily'. These problems concerning the individuation of name-types will be dealt with 3.2.1.

The resulting panorama of what names are

I will now proceed to analyze just how this summarized presentation of Taylor's position is in tune with Anderson's general ideas of a grammar for names. Let us start with referentiality. Anderson affirms that names acquire a "semantics" by a process of nomination (also name-giving or name-assigning)⁶⁸. He observes that names are semantically poor, in the sense that they lack lexical meaning and variance – except for gender⁶⁹. Though Anderson is sympathetic to a version of descriptivism about names, I do not think that his characterization of names conflicts with Taylor's, despite of the latter's commitment to referentialism. The proximity between their categorizations is rather immune to taking sides on this debate, given that Anderson does not think that the (descriptive) cognitive content of a name is a semantic issue – but rather a cognitive science issue; also, Taylor would probably explain the semantic poverty of names by restating the Millian thesis of referentialism and justifying the cognitive constraint on semantics.

⁶⁸ Or a baptism, as in Kripke (1981 [1972]) and Carroll (1985).

⁶⁹ That reflects the functional categorization of names, given that, like Unsurprisingly for a determinative (which agree in case, number and gender), names agrees gender, as well as definiteness, with the head noun.

Taylor and Anderson both suggest that the referentiality of a name depends, from a practical perspective, on naming practices as well as on what grounds our need for them. Naming would be, as such, a role-oriented practice manifested in language: we name objects/individuals, because we think about them, use them, have emotions towards them. This assumption seems even more plausible if we consider data from research on cognitive ageing and neuropsychology. It has been widely accepted, since Cohen (1990), that names are more difficult to retrieve from memory than common nouns, because proper names convey very limited information about their bearers. This hypothesis is essentially motivated by evidence suggesting that a) brain damage can delay proper names retrieval; and b) exceptional or disproportionate age-related impairment problems⁷⁰.

These phenomena have been explained by the hypothesis of the lexical poverty of names: the absence of a semantic relationship of synonym between names⁷¹ and the unavailability of other levels of categorization other than the level of individuals. This last point can be shown by comparing a definite description to a proper name. In the definite description ‘the queen of England’ more categories are used, allowing for more inferences about properties of the individual; that is, it is possible to derive more encyclopedic information about the referred exemplar from the denoted category ‘being queen of England’ than from the proper name ‘Elizabeth’. For example, that the individual it describes is a sovereign, a European, that she occasionally wears a crown, that England is a monarchy etc.

But, if names are harder to process, why do we use them and not definite descriptions to refer to people, places etc.? Even though the answer can only be highly imprecise, the grammatical and psychological perspectives explored here motivate us to speculate that labelling individuals has to do with the demand to

⁷⁰ Even though the results obtained in these researches are not conclusive and an array of new studies on the area are currently in development, as stated in Brédart & Valentine (1998).

⁷¹ Though one person may have two names, like ‘Pelé’ and ‘Edson Arantes do Nascimento’ or ‘Bob Dylan’ and ‘Robert Zimmerman’, each pair refers to the same individual, but their meanings – if they have any – are not the same, nor approximately the same, as for synonyms, like ‘flawless’ and ‘impeccable’ or ‘intact’ and ‘untouched’, for instance.

store information about individuals with whom agents are *involved*, individuals that matter in a special sense. Naming indicates that the name-bearer, for some reason, merited a kind of mapping that does not depend on denoted categories, but goes from word to world directly, referentially.

Another reason may be that names can be transported from one context to another, which makes naming the most appropriate mode of designation for acts of referring in nonostensive contexts as well as inter-contextually. Think about Bach's defense of speaker reference again. Naming is only adequate if it can be used to enable an audience to think about the individual that the speaker has in mind; it will be the best mode of designation whenever it is manifest that speaker and audience are acquainted with the referent, especially if the referent can not be demonstrated. These are not, by all means, the only adequate conditions in which a name can be used, but they mark a clear contrast with demonstrating and describing.

We may, thereupon, end with a clear-cut approximation to what names are and to how they contribute to plans of referring. Naming is a communicative choice of the speaker, one among a series of modes to designate individuals that are constituents of thoughts. A name will be appropriate as a mean to refer if the audience can entertain a thought that is object-involved, even though that is not always the case. So, names reflect, in their semantics, just this role.

Furthermore, they reflect human involvement, and these can be attested by all the cross-linguistic evidence in Anderson (2006) that indicate that names are given to people and places and that other nominations are further anthropocentric extensions of this practice. Their grammatical categorization as common nouns that acquire a distinctive semantic status of standing for a fixed particular reference shows just how we can say that names are inherently referential, because of the distinctive part they play in allowing us to think and talk about the individuals we are involved with, for example, in our communal practices and plans of communication. The intricate relation between linguistic reference and speaker reference, for them, seems difficult to deconstruct.

3.2. Interpreting proper names

So far, we have accepted that truth-conditional content is a goal-oriented and situationally-dependent classificatory concept, whereupon, one utterance may express more than one content, depending on what the speaker/interpreter means to classify and on what information is available in the context for interpretation. One of the sources of information for interpretation is the realization of the utterance itself. So, content is a relative concept that can be redirected to acts of communication themselves.

In studying demonstratives, we saw that reflexive content is an important tool for upholding cooperation between peers, making it possible that, in situations of scarcity of information, the grounds for comprehension and communication can be either established or restored. From the point of view of agency, the rational reconstruction that reflexive content potentializes is relevant for joint activities. Philosophically, reflexive content is a central concept for token-reflexive versions of referentialism, like Perry's. In this section, we will fixate on how names are interpreted in situations of scarcity of information, applying the concept of reflexive content to account for referential failure. I will attempt to make two separate points: a) that the interpretation of names demands lexical disambiguation, given that one name may be associated to several different permitting naming conventions; and b) that semantic analysis alone does not suffice to account for the truth-value gaps elicited by names that occasionally fail to refer. I shall begin by considering the lexical ambiguity of names. Take the example of an utterance of (23).

(23) José is Brazilian.

We saw, in Chapter 1, that naming is a conventional mode of designation that employs referential mechanisms. Names contribute to truth-conditional content by singling out conventions that permit language users to refer audiences directly to individuals. The primary way contexts impact the interpretation of names is by providing cues for lexical disambiguation. Disambiguation is a *primary pragmatic process* (Recanati (2003)) that consists in a derivation of primary meaning and

involves a pre-semantic use of context. The process, though not consciously available for the interpreter, can be accessed through introspection for truth-evaluation, for example. This need for disambiguation does not mean that names are morpho-syntactically ambiguous, as the classic example of the word 'bank' – or 'bar'.

The apparent context-sensitivity of names has originated much discussion in philosophical circles. Philosophers affiliated to the New Theory of Reference differ as to what kind of sensitivity names have. Kaplan, for instance, affirms that “there is a sense of meaning in which, absent of lexical or syntactic ambiguities, two occurrences of the same word or phrase must mean the same. (Otherwise, how could we learn and communicate with language?)” (KAPLAN, 1989, p. 524). He well-knowingly argues that this sense must be the character of the word; however, he refuses to apply such characterization to names, given that, according to him, character, content and referent collapse in one only thing for names. A name like 'José', for example, has José as its content, referent and character. This, supposedly, brings a problem for Kaplan's account, considering that, if names do not differ in character, they must differ in content, and if character, content and referent are all one and the same thing, Kaplan's account fails to offer an individuation criterion for names (Ackerman (1989)).

This insight might have taken him to adopt the alternative view that names are simply lexically ambiguous. But this view, on its turn, carries problems of its own. If he took that names are lexically ambiguous, he would seem to lose the grip on what name-types or generic names of a natural language's onomasticon have in common. Kaplan would be forced to accept the counter-intuitive consequence that two people named 'José' do not have the same name. In response to that, he prefers to take Kripke (1980)'s position to be essentially correct: *the reference of a name is established by pre-semantic facts, not by semantic ones*. So, the individuation of a name-token does not depend on character or content (both, semantic notions), but on pre-semantic facts. Cummings (2016) offers insightful observations that help understanding Kaplan's summarized account and work as a defense of the view that names are sensitive to context only in what concerns its pre-semantic interpretation.

While the causal-historical theory implies that the reference of a name is determined by facts about the context, this context-dependence should not necessarily be encoded in its character (linguistic meaning). The covariation of reference with alternative facts about the context could, however, correspond to our *imperfect knowledge* of the settled (pre-semantic) facts that determine meaning. [...] The character-like function from contexts to individuals [...] might nevertheless correspond to its cognitive significance for language-users with a less than perfect grasp of the pre-semantic facts. This means that the function will still fulfill one of the key roles of sense. Stalnaker (1978) pursues a solution to Frege's puzzle along these lines.

I shall endorse the same view here: names manifest a kind of pre-semantic context sensitivity. I take Perry (2001) to describe how the pre-semantic use of context affects the identification of meaning is a good strategy.

With both homonyms and indexicals we use context to help determine what is designated. In the case of homonyms, the context is anything about the facts surrounding the utterance that will help us to figure out which words are used [...]

An *ambiguous* expression, like 'bank' may designate one kind of thing when you say "Where is a good bank?" while worried about finances, another when I use it, thinking about fishing. Its designation varies with different uses, because different of its meanings are relevant. Again, all sorts of contextual facts may be relevant to helping us determine this. Is the speaker holding a wad of money or fishing pole?

It isn't always simply the meaning of a particular word that is in question, and sometimes questions of meaning, syntax and the identity of the words go together:

(12) I forgot how good beer tastes.

(13) I saw her duck under the table.

In (12) knowing whether our speaker has just arrived from Germany or just arrived from Saudi Arabia might help us to decide what the syntactic structure of the sentence is and whether 'good' is an adjective or an adverb... (*ibidem*, pp. 41-42)

In compliance with this view, there are many univocal names with identical spelling, like the millions of instances of 'José'. Nonetheless, each 'José' has a distinct semantic content, since each naming convention associated to the name-type 'José' refers to one individual, and facts surrounding the utterances, as Perry points out, will help the interpreter determine which naming convention and which referent the speaker intends to refer to. Names are therefore *morphologically*

*identical homonyms with lexical ambiguity*⁷². The same name, nonetheless, admits of morphological variations. Think about the different spellings of ‘Ockham’ or ‘Plato’ in different languages. The many versions of the generic name ‘José’, as ‘Giuseppe’, ‘Joseph’ etc.

To interpret (23), a speaker needs to use context pre-semantically to identify the grammatical function of the name – referential or predicative – and the convention associated to it. In using context pre-semantically, they reckon fitness to refer, the “readiness for the job of referring” that Taylor (2003) talks about. Remember that fitness to refer is guaranteed by lexically governed syntactic relations between words that accompany objectual representation. Objective representation will be attained only if the naming convention leads all the way down to a real object.

I believe Taylor’s concepts of objectual and objective representations can be combined with Perry’s theory of content. We can say that, if the referent of a name cannot be assessed due to the occasional impossibility of disambiguation then the content expressed by an utterance that contains it will be reflexive. That is what happens in some situations of scarcity, in which the sources available are not enough to determine reference and the only source of information available to the interpreter is the utterance itself. Moreover, in the absence of a suitable contribution, reflexive content will capture only referential purport (not reference), viz., the lexically governed syntactic properties of the names as opposed to lexically governed semantic ones. And, how is it that the referential purport of a name is captured by reflexive content?

We can answer that with an example. Imagine that a friend addresses you with an utterance of (23). You happen to know two men who are called ‘José’,

⁷² Moreover, I am sympathetic to Schoubye (2017)’ argument that names carry a kind of type-ambiguity. He sustains that names come in two different types, a referential type and a predicative type. According to him, this characterization of names is preferable, since it entails that names are both lexically ambiguous and type ambiguous, and it can be used by referentialists in defense to attacks on the Millian thesis and still preserve relevant cross-linguistic evidence that names also admit predicative uses. See Schoubye, 2017, pp.10-22, for a more detailed account of his view. On a side note, it bears to point that proponents of the New Theory of Reference tend to agree that names are not semantically context-sensitive, and I follow that tendency. Names exhibit a kind of pre-semantic context sensitivity that differs from semantic ambiguity and homonym.

but none of them is a common acquaintance of both, you and your friend. In this conversational exchange, an utterance of (23) would no doubt motivate a move in favor of an adjustment of context. As the addressee, you might ask things like, “Which José? Do you know José too?”⁷³. The possibility of this kind of intervention indicates that a revision of *personal common ground* (Clark & Shaefer (1990)) is required. Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs (1986) frame these mechanisms of repair in what they call *acceptance cycles*.

The basic process, which might be called the acceptance cycle, consists of a presentation plus its verdict. Let X, y, and z stand for noun phrases or their emendations. A presents x and then B evaluates it. If the verdict is not positive, then A or B must refashion that presentation. That person can offer: a repair x', an expansion y, or a replacement z. The refashioned presentation, whether x', x + y, or z, is evaluated, and so on.

Acceptance cycles apply iteratively, with one repair, expansion, or replacement after another, until a noun phrase is mutually accepted. With that, A and B take the process to be complete [...]. (CLARK & WILKES-GIBBS, 1986, p. 24)

Acceptance cycles are proposed to explain reference in terms of collaboration. The idea is that all participants are mutually responsible for establishing what was said, mostly because they rely on shared information all the time and they make assumptions about each other's statuses. Also, speakers need the repair mechanisms because accomplishing plans of referring depends greatly on how well the interlocutor is following every step, grasping every piece of information delivered by the speaker. The idea fits our explanatory needs in accounting for situations of scarcity of information perfectly.

Let us return to (23). In using ‘José’, the speaker is implying that you two share a personal common ground that includes knowledge of which José he is referring to; this miscalculation on the part of the speaker will certainly affect the flow of conversation, given that information that is important for the speaker's plan of referring is not mutually manifest. Here is where reflexive content may come in

⁷³ Dingemanse (2015) calls this a restricted request: to request an specification of a component of the trouble source.

handy. In case the personal common ground remains discrepant, you will apprehend reflexive truth-conditions, like (P_r23) below – and not a proposition that incorporates truth-conditions, like (P23).

(P23) **José** is Brazilian.

(P_r23) *The individual the permitting convention associated to ‘José’ designates* is Brazilian.

(P_r23) specifies the mode and mechanism of designation of ‘José’, thus fixing the semantic relationship between name and name-bearer. It will only be accessed once the interpreter has identified ‘José’ as a name, i.e., as an exemplar of the grammatical category NAME. In case ‘José’ has more than one lexical entry in the interpreter’s mental repertoire - ‘José₁’ or ‘José₂’ –, (P_r23) will be incremented with contextual information that disambiguates the name.

The utterance of (23) in the speech situation presented previously, for example, provokes the intuition of truth-value gap mainly because of the miscalculation of the speaker, that is, affording less information than necessary for the identification of the referent. The truth-value of the existential presupposition is not protruding enough to dispose the speaker to refrain from evaluating the utterance. If asked to explain an intuition of truth-value gap, the interpreter would probably point the speaker’s miscalculation in providing information rather than to saying that she cannot determine the truth-value of (23), because she does not know if José exists.

Recall that, as we saw in Chapter 1, accommodation is an essential mechanism for the continuity of cooperation in conversational settings. It was first discussed by Karttunen (1974), who outlines it as a general phenomenon that characterizes the dynamics of pragmatic presupposition as well as conventional ones:

Ordinary conversation does not always proceed in the ideal orderly fashion described earlier. People do make leaps and shortcuts by using sentences whose presuppositions are not satisfied in the conversational context. This is the rule rather than the exception [...] I

think we can maintain that a sentence is always taken to be an increment to a context that satisfies its presuppositions. If the current conversational context does not suffice, the listener is entitled and expected to extend it as required. (KARTUNNEN, 1974, p. 191)

In what concerns accommodation, the introduction of proper names “out of the blue”, that is, without the previous preparation, has been a particularly interesting topic for theorists of presuppositions. In general, such introductions are considered improper and elicit requests of repair. For example, for an utterance of (23) out of the blue, the interlocutor might ask “José who?” or “Who is that?”. If it is not a common ground that all participants know who José is, utterances like (23) will be infelicitous. This motivated Van der Sandt to assume that the “poor semantics of names”, under the assumption that names contribute only their referents to content, is what is behind the need for more preparation, in the comparison with other singular terms.

Later, Beaver and Geurts (2014) will acknowledge that van der Sandt’s observations are merited, but they also point out that this special difficulty in accommodation for names is often resolved *in context* and derives from the nature of accommodation itself, not necessarily from the directly referential character of names. They argue that what makes any term used referentially harder to accommodate is not only “semantic poverty”. Using them defectively by imposing an unnecessarily heavy cognitive burden in the interlocutor, due to lack of attention to the common ground, may also be a cause. I will return to this last point later. First, I would like to focus on the existential presupposition (for a little while) and on how it behaves in situations with scarce information, as well as in fiction. The questions I want to answer are: what are the effects of the falsity of the existential presupposition to interpretation? Given that in general we do not assume that fictional characters exist, is it correct to say that the presupposition is cancelled in fiction?

I take von Stechow’s working hypothesis in addressing the second question to be the best resolution. He sustains that presuppositions are never cancelled, though they “disappear”. For simple sentences, like (23), the existential

presupposition *is conventionally triggered*, simply in virtue of the presence of a trigger. In some contexts, the presupposition will function as a reason to suspend cooperation, as in fictional discourse evaluated extrinsically to fiction. In others, it will not, resulting in truth-value intuitions of falsity. I will discuss this in the next section, but I can anticipate that my position echoes von Fintel's critics to the use of truth-value gap intuitions as *explananda* of theories of presupposition. He insists that the most merited evidence for the presence of presupposition comes from projection and that the dynamic of accommodation is the key to understanding the relation between simple sentences, like (23), and the existential presupposition.

A natural reaction at this point is to consider people's intuitions about truth-value gaps to be too unreliable to merit scientific attention. This does not at all mean that semantic theories that assume the existence of truth-value gaps are thereby discredited. Far from it. But argumentation cannot and should not proceed by simply polling naive speakers about whether sentences are false or neither true nor false. Unsurprisingly then, the attention of research on presupposition has been directed elsewhere, primarily toward an adequate analysis of the projection behavior of presuppositions. (von FINTEL, 2004, p. 274)

Truth-value gaps are, thus, relevant to the explication of how pragmatic mechanisms of truth-evaluation operate, but they are mute in what concerns semantic properties.

For now, we can explore a temporary conclusion: names are presuppositional triggers, but the relevance of the presupposition as an explanation for moves of adjustment of common ground vary with context. The truth-value gaps that affect situations of scarcity of information do not derive directly from the semantic conventions used in the sentence or, at least, we have no strong reason to believe that they do. That is why projection and accommodation should be more trustworthy as evidence for the presence of presuppositions. We will now focus on the cases in which the existential presupposition is a cause of truth-value gap intuitions: fictional discourse.

3.3 Fictional discourse and truth-evaluation

The more general problem concerning fictional names is that, at the end of the day, for referentialists, the sentences that contain such names do not contribute individuals to propositions. The referentialist is then forced to accept that whatever content these sentences express, it cannot be propositional⁷⁴. Hopefully, the answers we come up with will allow us to account for the particularities of fictional discourse: how it impacts our emotions, knowledge and cognition in general. For that to be achieved, we will need to go deeper into the pragmatics of reference. But before we move on to the dynamics of fictional discourse, it is important to say a few words about the classical problem of negative existentials. Consider the following sentences:

(24) Capitu had eyes like the tide.

(25) Capitu does not exist.

The interpretation of (25) is assumed problematic (for presuppositional semantics) for two reasons. Firstly, because it supposedly triggers the presupposition that Capitu exists, thus presupposing precisely what the triggering sentence denies. Secondly, (25) expresses, at least intuitively, a true proposition, even though the most accepted models of presuppositional strategies, from Frege to Karttunen, predict that it is truth-valueless.

There are at least two possible maneuvers to avoid these problems. Either we have to say that the existential presupposition of (25) is not triggered, and that there is a model of accommodation and projection for simple sentences that predicts such result, or we say that there is something wrong with the intuitive

⁷⁴ I will reject the option of gappy propositions beforehand. In RRT, language is the source of information on which truth-conditions are built. So, strictly speaking, it is not entailed by such framework that truth-conditions can ever be gappy, if gappy means incomplete. In those cases, presumably, given that truth-conditions are incorporated by content, an intuition of incompleteness of content would be expected. I see no reason to think that is necessarily the case. Reflexive truth-conditions can play the role of content. They are actually thought of as a tool for reconstructing rational behavior and restoring cooperation when information is scarce. The only sense in which reflexive truth-conditions might be like the proposed gappy propositions is that both are not truth-evaluable material.

truth-value attribution given to (25). I believe that the second option is better; but checking the first one might also be benefic and elucidating, so that will be our starting point.

Affirming that the existential presupposition triggered by (25) is not triggered *in some circumstances* entails that names are part-time presuppositional triggers. If we want to avoid this conclusion and maintain a unified presuppositional account of names, we need an analysis that shows, at least for simple sentences like (25), the pervasiveness of projection to segments of discourse (as opposed to mere sentences). Though this is desirable, it is very difficult to treat systematically, given that discourse is multifactored, and its fluidity is hard to scrutinize in an orderly way. We should then settle for a view of projection that simply captures the general dynamics of contextual adjustment, precisely by analyzing repair mechanisms.

As we saw in our discussion of Stalnaker, in Chapter 1, presuppositions project to if all participants presuppose it. In this conception of context, the common ground conception of discursive context⁷⁵, what determines that an assertion of (25) will be felicitous is how the discourse segment was before its realization. This will give us what was presupposed by the interlocutors just before the introduction of the trigger to the global context. Suppose that the context of utterance of (25) includes the mutually manifest information that ‘Capitu’ is a well-known Machado de Assis character (from the romance *Dom Casmurro*). This context entails that the presupposition is false and, thus, (25) is true.

Cooperative participants tend to be charitable about new contributions. Typically, they will adjust context via accommodation, if there is no grave infliction of previously established procedural norms. So, the simple introduction of a fictional name might be enough to motivate a rearrangement of the conversational rules (procedural norms) in force in the previous context. For example, in a conversation about women with remarkable features, an utterance

⁷⁵ See page 17.

of (24) will be true. Its truth however differs from the truth of (26) in the same context.

(26) Lauren Bacall had eyes like the tide.

We could say that (24) is true *in fiction* while (26) is simply true – that is, if the interpreter also believes that Lauren Bacall had eyes like Capitu's. This strategy, famously defended by Lewis (1978)⁷⁶ and resumed by Walton (2003), suggests that the truth-conditions of (23) include a fictional operator and correspond to something like: that Capitu has eyes like the tide *in Dom Casmurro*. But accepting this seemingly simple solution implies that we inherit the following complicated problems: a) we need to explain what in 'Capitu' unlike in 'Lauren Bacall', authorizes the introduction of an operator; and b) we need to clarify what *reference in fiction* means for a referentialist. I will discuss only a) now and go back to b) later. According to my characterization of names earlier in this chapter, 'Capitu' and 'Lauren Bacall' do not differ as to their lexical-syntactic categorization. Both words are proper names and belong to the same grammatical class. Hence, both are anaphoric devices of explicit coreference; nonetheless, they do differ as to their lexical-semantic features. While uses of 'Lauren Bacall' successfully refer, uses of 'Capitu', despite of having referential purport, do not successfully refer. The lack of objectivity is a cognitive-semantic defining feature of 'Capitu', that has to do with foundational semantic issues. 'Capitu' does not contribute to content with an individual, but it carries general attributes of a name, such as being a conventional mode of designating an individual. The difference in their word-world relation comes from the distinctive causal connection between 'Capitu' and Capitu. After all, Capitu is a fictional character in Machado de Assis' romance and the ultimate causal connection that instances of the name 'Capitu' have is relatively to that literary work. So, we could say that this foundational particularity of 'Capitu' echoes in its descriptive semantics.

⁷⁶ The "in fiction strategy" purports to preserve the intuition that (24) is true, i.e., that it has a truth-value. In Lewis, 'in fiction' is an intensional operator that shifts circumstances of evaluation. The claim is that the content of (24) has an internal metafictional statement: (roughly) 'according to *Dom Casmurro*...'. Lewis' position, relatively to the realism/antirealism debate is a version of modal realism (see footnote 82).

A way to include this foundational particularity may be to claim that ‘Capitu’ is an elliptic expression, an abbreviation for *Capitu from Machado de Assis’ romance, Dom Casmurro*; a position that has been defended by Field (1973), Devitt (1981) and later, by Kripke’s 1973 John Locke Lectures, published in 2013. I see no reason to oppose the core assumptions of this view, since I do agree that one of the contents expressed by (24) includes the information that ‘Capitu’ is associated to a permitting naming convention that begins in *Dom Casmurro*. Call it a fictional naming convention. According to my previous observations, ‘Capitu’ will allow for a paraphrase, roughly like the one above, in the situations that contain the information that ‘Capitu’ is a fictional name⁷⁷.

In the contexts that include the information that ‘Capitu’ is a fictional name, the content expressed will be an incremented version of the reflexive truth-conditions that articulates such information. Compare (P^r24), (Pⁱ24) and (P^r26) below.

(P^r24) that *the individual associated with the permitting naming convention ‘Capitu’* had eyes like the tide.

(Pⁱ24) that *the individual associated with the permitting naming convention ‘Capitu’ in Dom Casmurro* had eyes like the tide.

(P^r26) That *the individual associated with the permitting naming convention ‘Lauren Bacall’* had eyes like the tide.

⁷⁷ Another alternative strategy on the vicinity of the elliptical solution is the *No-name solution*, extensively discussed in Predelli (2017). The idea proposed by this position is that ‘Capitu’ does not have the necessary qualities to be counted as a proper name and, therefore, it is not like ‘Lauren Bacall’ in any relevant way for a semantic theory. I do not think this is particularly problematic to the position defended here, because lexical-syntactically, as Taylor puts it, ‘Capitu’ and ‘Lauren Bacall’ are the same – fit to refer, for example. ‘Capitu’ may receive the status of a no-name if we take into consideration *exclusively the lexically governed semantic* properties of the names. Yet another classic strategy, the one Lewis (1978) takes is introducing operators. In such a strategy, the semantic particularity of ‘Capitu’ authorizes the introduction of fiction operator to the content expressed by the sentences that contain the name. Perhaps some version of this strategy can be maintained in congruence with what I am defending here, by adding that the fictional operator should be taken as a semantic representation of the fact that segments of discourse are adjusted to plans of referring in a dynamic fashion; and that speakers have the skills to adapt interpretation to kinds of linguistic practices in which the conditions of success of assertions do not include truth, such as acts of fictional storytelling or pretense activities. I see no clear motivation to do that, though, if the Stalnakerian framework already gives us the necessary apparatus.

Notice that the information that ‘Capitu’ is a fictional name is crucial for interpretation because this increment is what explains why, in such contexts, the presupposition fails to project. This information is part of the truth-conditional interpretation of (24), the situationally-bound and jointly constructed interpretation of (24) in the overall plan of referring to the fictional character Capitu. The analogy with (P^r24) and (P^r26) helps us understand the role of this increment⁷⁸ in explaining presuppositional projection with even more clarity. While (Pⁱ24) generates a rearrangement of the rules in the conversational interaction, triggering the shift from truth-telling to pretense (which I will discuss with more detail in sub-section 3.3.1.) and, thus, the inadequacy of the existential presupposition relatively to the context, (P^r24) and (P^r26) represent contents that do not elicit blocking mechanisms for the presupposition. If the content expressed by (24) is (P^r24), the presupposition stands, because information is too scarce to justify taking it as false. In (P^r26), the same is valid. If the interlocutor does not know who Lauren Bacall is, there is no *prima facie* reason to take the presupposition as false. Besides, pragmatically speaking, it is a costly conversational move. Cooperative participants respond to such situations by accommodating the information, by manifestly accepting it.

But, if the inexistence of Capitu is a given fact, the name ‘Capitu’ will be interpreted as a name that carries referential purport but fails to refer successfully. What are our truth-value intuitions in this case? Again, certainly, that (24) is true *in Dom Casmurro*. If it is not a given fact that Capitu is a fictional character, then

⁷⁸ One might, however, explore the common objection that reflexive and incremented truth-conditions are not what the speaker intended to say by uttering (24). I believe Friend (2011) has an elegant reply to such objection. She claims that we privilege the classification “proposition” – <Capitu; having eyes like the tide> – rather than “incremented truth-conditions”, in accounting for what is said by utterances like (24), because the proposition expressed tells us *what* (24) is about. But Friend’s point is that it fails to give us *how* (24) is about Capitu. What tells us how we are to think about Capitu, if we wish to grasp what the speaker says, is the prescription to imagine – or, in the vocabulary I am adopting *invitation to pretend* – that is in the incremented truth-conditions expressed by (24). (Pⁱ24) tells us to imagine Capitu in a way that is prescribed by *Dom Casmurro*, participating in the notion-network of Capitu (what supports the convention associated to the character *in Dom Casmurro*) that we have. This is not given by the proposition. The reason why I do not discuss this problem in detail here is that I am more interested in the violations that affect the truth-evaluation of (24) – and elicit reflexive truth-conditions like (P^r24) – than on how (24) is interpreted when it is common ground that ‘Capitu’ is a fictional name. This case is discussed only insofar as it marks a contrast.

our intuitions would have to be that (24) is neither true nor false, since the situation is informationally poor⁷⁹.

This strategy sheds light on the fact that our intuitions of truth for (24) are not really intuitions of truth simpliciter, but intuitions of a sense of ‘truth’ – that, maybe, the vocabulary of naïve speakers is not, and does not need to be, fine-grained enough to articulate. For an utterance of (24) to be fictionally true, it must allude to a work of fiction (to a non-veridical linguistic practice) in which there is a fictional character named ‘Capitu’, who has the property of *having eyes like the tide*. Now, the non-veridical linguistic practice relative to which (24) is true is constrained by the text of *Dom Casmurro* – it is, in Walton (1990)’s terminology, intrinsic to an *official make-believe game*. On the other hand, (25) is an external metafictional sentence that describes the *metaphysical status* of Capitu relatively to the same non-veridical linguistic practice, namely, *Dom Casmurro*. Bearing this proximity between (24) and (25) in mind might help explain intuitions of truth elicited by uses of *metafictional statements*. We just need to lay the distinction between the two uses of ‘Capitu’ – in (24) and (25) – down. For that, we can borrow Evans (1982)’ distinction between *conniving* and *non-conniving* uses (which is parallel to the distinction between *fictional* and *metafictional statements*). In (24), we have an exemplar of a conniving use of a name, a use that captures what is said *in fiction* and, in (25), we have a non-conniving use, that is, a sentence that is *about fiction*.

A similar way to deal with negative existentials is proposed by Perry (2001). He appeals to the notion of *intentional content*, arguing that the intention behind an utterance of (25) is often simply to state that the permitting naming convention associated to ‘Capitu’ does not have an origin. In Perry, origins are referents, in cases of successful reference. If they do not have a causal connection to a worldly entity, we say that the name has no origin. Sentences like (25) are meant to express precisely that lexical-semantic fact, which might not be

⁷⁹ So, my characterization of the pre-semantic use of context for names is in need of an addendum: if the name is fictional, once it is disambiguated and the permitting naming convention associated to the name is identified, this information must become manifest in the context. Failure in elucidating this fact may preclude the accomplishment of a plan of referring.

manifest to the audience⁸⁰. The intuition of truth for assessments of (25) is then explained away by the intentional content – in contrast with referential and reflexive contents from Perry’s system of contents – of the utterance. Perry’s position is concentrated on speaker reference and on the reasons that agents may have to utter true negative existentials.

Since we can borrow Perry’s stance towards the subject, we can move forwards to outlining how the existential presupposition operates in a dynamic view of context and to analyze some nuances of the truth-evaluation of utterances containing fictional names. My claim will be that the truth-evaluation of utterances with fictional names is not the best evidence for the presence of the existential presupposition.

As a matter of fact, the question concerning the explanatory status of truth-value intuition in what concerns presupposition dates back to Strawson (1964). According to him, only singular terms in topical position motivate intuitions of truth-value gaps. When a definite description, for example, appears in a different syntactic position, intuitions are changed. He concedes that, unlike in (26), speakers intuit falsity rather than squeamishness in interpreting (27).

(26) The king of France is bald.

(27) The Exhibition was visited yesterday by the king of France.

In a nutshell, Strawson’s solution to the truth-value elicited by (27) is simply to argue that the utterance is not ultimately about the nonexistent King of France, but about an actual exhibition, taking place in a specific and independently verifiable occasion. So, because the sentence is not about the inexistent king of France, the truth-value gap disappears. End of story.

Von Fintel construes his 2004 paper *Would you Believe it? The King of France is Back! (Presuppositions and Truth-Value Intuitions)* on the assumption

⁸⁰ Perry’s discussion of the case of Jacob Horn in Perry (2001) seems a good example of those situations: Jacob Horn was taken as an existent object until it was discovered that he had been made up by his self-alleged great-grandson. The statement that ‘Jacob Horn does not exist’ was informative when such fact was first unveiled. The intention of the utterer was precisely to state a metafictional fact relative to an unofficial game of pretense.

that Strawson's answer to the nuances of truth-evaluation of empty names is essentially wrong. He starts by testing other examples in which the definite description occurs in a non-topical position, but the truth-value intuitions are of truth-valuelessness or falsity.

(28) I hope that the King of France attends the Exhibition tonight.

(29) Let me tell you about my friend, the King of France

(30) If the King of France comes, the Exhibition will be a success.

The sentence in (28) is intuitively truth-valueless, even though the king of France is not the subject matter of the sentence. The sentence in (29) is false, even though it is about the king of France and, finally, (30) is truth-valueless, even though the king of France is not the topic of the sentence.

In the face of these examples, Von Steinhilber advances the position that intuitions of truth-value are altogether not systematic enough to ground the generalization that sentences about non-existent entities, with definite descriptions in topical position, always elicit truth-value gaps. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't. To explain this erratic behavior of presuppositions, he develops Lasnik (1993)'s idea that the intuitions of falsity in Strawson's contrast between (26) and (27) illustrate that the rejection of new contributions to common ground are not always dependent on the presupposition as a condition on truth-evaluation. In (27) and (29), the interpreter intuitively feels that the utterances are false, because they have an independent way of rejecting the contents expressed, regardless of the presence or absence of the presupposition. So, Strawson's contrast is not caused by the grammatical position of the definite description in the sentence, but by the independent reasons that ground a rejection based on falsehood. The same applies to names. Take (24) and (31).

(31) Capitu will love the gift I bought her.

The interpreter of (31) has an independent reason to consider the utterance false, other than her knowledge that 'Capitu' is a fictional name. She knows that her interlocutor could not possibly be asserting a true proposition. Thus, the assertion is rejected due to infelicity.

Von Fintel's approach has an epistemological bias that contrast with my definition of presuppositions as propositional commitments (from Chapter 1.), but his general idea that presuppositions should be treated in terms of reasons for (pragmatic) rejection may be imported to the account I favor here. But, since we accepted a pretense solution to sentences like (24), an approach of what truth in fiction is is required. That is what the next sub-section is about.

3.3.1. Saying the truth and asserting in fiction

Naming is a recurring mode of designation in fiction, notably for the part anthroponyms and toponyms play in narrative genres. A particularly burdensome philosophical problem, other than the problem of the content of sentences like (24), is how to evaluate non-conniving uses or *discourse about fiction* (artistic criticism being the most common example), like (32) below.

(32) Anna Karenina and Emma Bovary are tragic female characters.

Utterances of (24) in fiction are instances of *assertion of a special kind*. I qualify them as special in contrast with Austin's observations that assertions imply belief-states – seen in Chapter 1. Assertions in fiction do not require believe or truth as conditions of satisfaction. My motivation to stick with the assertive illocutionary act, as opposed to postulating a fictive illocutionary force, is simply that it seems more intuitive. And the fact that this motivation is present in positions of philosophers, like Lewis (1978) and Searle (1975), I believe, also works in my favor.

Searle sustains that fictional narratives incorporate *illocutionary pretense* to familiar kinds of speech act, like assertion. Emulating Searle's theoretical move, one of the things I do, in this sub-section, is to develop a brief account of assertions in fiction as *pretense assertions*. Philosophical literature about fiction addresses an array of different problems, not far from the metaphysics of fictional objects, the epistemic status of assertions of narrators or story-tellers, implicit and

explicit content and, of course, truth. I will not devote much attention to issues like the status of narrators or to implicit content⁸¹, and I shall not detain myself on metaphysical concerns about fictional objects⁸². What I will try to do in this subsection starts with an overview of what the content of an utterance of (24) *is not*, and then proceeds to a general discussion about a proposal concerning truth in fiction.

For a sympathizer of the New Theory of Reference, what characterizes naming as a referential mode of designation is that, in interpretation, the name-bearer – and subject matter of discourse – is determined relationally and not satisfactionally. So, for proponents of referentialism, acts of referring are causally and historically connected to an original individual – one that was perceived, is being perceived or speakers have been informed about –, upon whom a permitting naming convention was bestowed. And the reason why speakers engage in such practices of naming is, as we saw earlier in this chapter, the decisive role that individuals play in their everyday life, cognition etc. This lexical-semantic particularity of names – differently from common nouns, for example – is at the heart of the referentialist thesis that names contribute individuals to truth-conditions.

Bach (2008) assumes that *being in the position* to have singular thoughts is a condition for referring to individuals. I am amenable to Bach's assumption, in inspite of the fact that he offers no defense of his particular conception of singular thoughts. Still, he manages to offer one valuable criterion to distinguish them. He claims that one refers by using a name if one entertains a thought that is singular, as opposed to general. For example, the use of the definite description 'the queen of England' is not thoroughly referential, because a thought that contains such

⁸¹ See Walton (1990), Kania (2005) and Alward (2010).

⁸² Here, the main concern is with the existence of fictional objects. If non-veridical linguistic practices, like fiction, mirror veridical informational exchanges in any important way, the existence of the referents of fictional names would be a condition for the truth of predications about them. The philosophical dispute that marks discussions about the status of fictional objects has two main positions: realism and antirealism. Since the existence of fictional objects matters to us just inasmuch as it affects our conception of truth-evaluation (the commitments that are entailed by saying that a sentence like (24) is true), I will discuss fictional objects only relatively to semantic arguments. I will end up committing to an antirealist position that appeals to a pretense theory strategy. For ontological arguments in favor of realism, see Thomasson (1999, 2003) – who postulates that fictional objects are abstract objects – Voltolini (2010) and see Everett (2005), for a (recent) ontological argument against realism.

description is not singular and, consequently cannot be interpreted relationally, via convention. Instead, a thought about the queen of England sets a general condition to be satisfied by an individual, if any. Notice that Bach is rather Russellian in holding that one cannot have a singular thought about an individual if such an individual is known only by a description, even though he is far more flexible about the form in which speakers come to know individuals⁸³.

Taking this characterization of names into account and Bach's view on singular reference, we can say that an utterance of (24) does not express a singular thought about Capitu, but rather about the utterance of (24)⁸⁴. Our intuition that it expresses a true proposition does not emanate from word-world semantic facts about 'Capitu', but from what Perry calls *mere discourse*.

Informational exchanges using names where there is no possibility of direct interaction with the relevant object. More than two thousand years after Socrates' death, we still talk about him. We no longer interact with Socrates, but we still talk about him. We no longer interact with Socrates, but we interact with people who have notions of Socrates and beliefs about him, and with written material about him. (PERRY, 2001, p. 167)

Although Perry is engrossed in the topic of objects that no longer exist, he offers an interesting cue for understanding why we intuit that (24) is true. Fictional

⁸³ See Bach, 2008, pp. 18-20.

⁸⁴ But is it a kind of proposition does it express? A possible answer can be found in Metalinguistic Descriptivism (MD). In accordance with this position, proper names contribute to propositional content with a predicate. So, the meaning of the name 'Lauren Bacall' might be the property of being called 'Lauren Bacall'. In a russellian vein, advocates of MD state that names are shorthand for some complex determiner phrase. Burge (1973), Bach himself, most explicitly in Bach (1981) Katz (2001) are famous proponents of MD. This position has the special merit of preserving the referentialist tenet (the Millian thesis) that the reference of a name is not mediated by sense. I do not subscribe to MD, however, two reasons: a) the metalinguistic interpretation of compound names work as counterexamples to the early branch of MD, represented by Burge and Bach, since the metalinguistic paraphrases of names do not work compositionally, as Geurts (1999) shows; and b) as Kripke himself – the main adversary of MD –, the assumption that any words and not just names can be taken to bear metalinguistic interpretations, what renders the position either ad hoc or too ample. I take names have reflexive content, though. The difference between a metalinguistic interpretation and reflexive content is, first, that reflexive content is relative to tokens, not to linguistic types; secondly, the main argument for reflexivity does not depend on how predicates work (as MD), since it is compatible with the Millian Thesis of the New Theory of Reference. For more criticisms to MD, see Schoubye (2017). My answer to the question about is that (24) expresses reflexive truth-conditions, if the inexistence of Capitu is a given fact in the speech situation. Referentially successful names, like 'Lauren Bacall', on the other hand, permit that a sentence like (27) expresses a proposition. Reflexive truth-conditions are not general, they are always about the token.

discourse is very much like mere discourse in what concerns the possibility of interaction with referents. Naming practices enable us to continue to think and exchange information about things that matter to us, even after they pass out of existence. Similarly, things that never existed, such as beloved fictional characters and mythical deities, can be thought and talked about. That is possible in virtue of the file-like mental representations that make names fit to refer, as we discussed previously in this chapter.

The popular Brazilian romance *Dom Casmurro* narrates many events and characteristics of the putative bearer of such fictional name 'Capitu', and these events and attributes have been a subject of literature classes all over Brazil for a long time. Many secondary school students have debated over Capitu's fidelity to Bentinho, as if Capitu and Bentinho had existed in a version of XIXth century Rio de Janeiro. Accordingly, their opinions about these characters were enabled because the names 'Capitu' and 'Bentinho' have file-like representations in their mental repertoire.

But these observations, though adequate to explain why we have intuitions of truth-value about (24), do not suffice to explain why the truth-value we assign to (24) is truth and not falsity. Compare (24) and (33).

(33) Capitu was unfaithful to Bentinho.

Given that Bentinho is an unreliable narrator – a self-proclaimed wronged husband, seeking absolution for his moral faults concerning Capitu's son, young Ezequiel – trying to convince us that Capitu had betrayed him with his best friend, perhaps our intuitions will be of a truth-value gap for (33). In *Dom Casmurro*, readers are never conclusively informed that Capitu was indeed unfaithful, regardless of Bentinho's efforts to persuade them. Our intuitions for (24) and (33) seem to depend substantially on the reliability of the narrator or story-teller. The discussion concerning narrators is extensive, and, as said beforehand, not a topic to which I will devote much attention. So, I will simply endorse what I take to be the best theory about the relation between narrator/reader available in the market: Alward (2010)'s analogy between narrators and informants (from crime scenes).

When interviewing informants, interrogators do not come to the table emptyhanded. Rather they come to the table with various kinds of background information, including both specific information about the circumstances under discussion— perhaps gleaned from forensic evidence or revealed by other informants—and more general information about the world writ large [...] If he thinks the informant is reliable and sincere, the interrogator will accept as true her account of the circumstances she has described [...] but if he judges her to be unreliable or insincere, some of what she has said will have to be rejected and, if her distortions are judged to be systematic, replaced in the interrogator's theory by inferences drawn from it. (ALWARD, 2010, p. 357)

In accordance with Alward, then, assertions in fiction are grounded not only on the reliability of the narrator, but on possible inferences drawn from what is explicit in the narrative. Fictional narratives never completely specify a world. Like an informer's report, they leave indeterminacies to be figured out. We intuit that (33) is truth-valueless, because we believe that the most responsible epistemic attitude towards it is to admit that we lack conclusive evidence in favor of its truth, relatively to *Dom Casmurro*⁸⁵. As it is, it seems that attributions of truth-value and reference for (33) are amenable to contextual criteria – namely, to what is said implicitly and explicitly in *Dom Casmurro*. The utterance will be interpreted in accordance with its relevance to the context of the literary work, rather than by its “simple truthfulness”. As Orlando (2017) puts it: “In fictive uses, the underlying intention seems to be not only to talk about a character but also to replicate what the literary artwork's author has written about it” (*ibidem*, p. 62). The truthfulness of a sentence like (33) then does not depend on matters of fact about individuals, but on “the conceptual world of a certain fiction”.

Story-truths are otherwise determined by general inference rules for fiction, such as the *Reality Principle* proposed by Walton (1990). This principle conforms to yet another principle, *minimal departure*: “The idea is that we hold the primary story-truths fixed and ask what the real world would be like if they obtained. The implied story-truths are those that would also obtain in those circumstances” (FRIEND, 2006, p. 5). So, the principle establishes that the

⁸⁵ Of course, for those who are convinced by Bentinho's narrative, (33) might be evaluated as *true in Dom Casmurro*. This possibility confirms that not only the narrative, but background information also constitutes the basis for intuitions of *truth in fiction*.

conceptual world of a fiction remains as close as possible to the actual world. It is largely accepted that inferences in fiction take the actual world as a basis for inference, but, of course, genre, time etc. are taken to play a role too. For example, in trying to understand *Dom Casmurro*, we need to reproduce, to some extent, XIXth century mentality, their morality etc. We will distance ourselves greatly from the current state of the world, but not as much as in reading a fantasy novel. In the last case, we might depart dramatically to worlds where there are such things as monsters, ghosts etc. Friend (2006) dispenses Reality Principle, partially motivated by these considerations, but she safeguards *The Reality Assumption*, which, in her view, is a default position that instructs interpreters to take for granted that everything that obtains in reality is storified, adjusting this presumption only as needed.

Nevertheless, she does not attribute to it the status of a principle. Friend highlights the fact that much in fiction is decided relatively to contextual restrictions and individual previous background (as Alward suggests). Moreover, her argument is successful in explaining why we react emotionally to artworks, exploring extensive evidence in favor of this conclusion (FRIEND, 2006, pp.6-8). Her point is that this default position reflects the fact that fiction is “[...] a mental activity that involves constructing a complex representation of what a story portrays. So, the fact that we imagine storyworlds provides no motivation for severing fiction from reality. Indeed, the motivation is all on the other side. If works of fiction do not concern reality, we must face serious puzzles about how we learn from fictions and why we care about the characters that populate them” (*ibidem*, pp. 12-13).

So, determining a story-truth is a complex task, but one that is quite familiar to us. The reliability of the narrator is most certainly relevant, but the inferences authorized by the narrative and the reader’s background information are also essential. The combination of all those factors is what makes us intuit that (24) is true in *Dom Casmurro*.

It bears to emphasize that I am not interested in discussing the metaphysics of truth here⁸⁶. Truth in a fictional work does not need to be understood as a species of truth, but merely as what Taylor (2014) defines as *truth-similitude*. The predicate *true in fiction* *X* would then function as a device to claim entitlements to perform certain acts and to commit to certain facts. For example, one is entitled to assert (26) – about the non-fictional object Lauren Bacall – because one takes the propositional content of (26) as true; one will not be entitled to assert (26) in case one is committed to the truth of its negation. Similarly, one will be entitled to assert (24) only if one takes (24) to be *true in the fictional work* Dom Casmurro.

Recall Perry's suggestion that, despite of the impossibility of interacting with no-longer-existent objects, we can talk about them, because we have notion-networks as mental representations of such objects. The same applies to fiction. The objectual mental representations we have of putative referents of fictional names enable us to talk about them. This *dialogical* aspect of language, which permits informational exchange, is present in fiction too. The only difference between truth and truth-similitude, in that respect, would be that truth allows us to classify states of affair in terms of our possibilities of interaction with genuine objects, and truth-similitude allows us to engage in dialogical practices *as if* we were talking about genuine objects.

As to what concerns the existential presupposition, we saw that there is reason to assume that, relatively to sentences like (24), though triggered, it does not seem to project to the main context. A possible comment on why it happens can be helped by Byrnes (1993)' notion of *invitation to fiction* (or make-believe). Byrnes states that, like implicit assertion in fiction can be recovered by pragmatic inference, invitations to engage in fiction-telling can also be recovered by the same means⁸⁷, engaging cooperative principles, like the Gricean principle of relevance. Take the extract below:

⁸⁶ This is in line with what Taylor (2014) says about the issue of the metaphysics of truth. In what concerns the relation between truth and falsity for deflationist accounts of truth, see Stalnaker (1975) and Field (1993; 1994).

⁸⁷ Although, as Alward elaborates, the way these inferences can be derived in fiction are mysterious, since we cannot rely on principles of cooperation that regulate veridical language interactions. Besides, the

Fictionality is not understood as a problem of non-truth, but of relevance. Rather than any expectation of accuracy, the expectations of relevance are responsible for propelling the reader to seek appropriate interpretive context. Starting from a clearly false expression, evaluations of truth only come into play due to the inferential process [...] Thus, it is possible to find relevance by constructing assumptions about the behavior, intentions and desires of the characters. These assumptions do not depend on the value of literal truth, since its validity is contextual rather than referential, not excluding yet the possibility that some of the available assumptions are referential, for example, in the case of a historical novel. (GODOY & FERREIRA, 2014, p. 533).

In a relevance-theory framework, as proposed by Godoy & Ferreira, *fictional competence* is an ability to represent intentional states. Since speakers intend to achieve optimal relevance⁸⁸, not literal truth, the truth of an assumption needs not depend on the truth encoded in an utterance or on literal meaning. It will depend on contextual restrictions provided by the fictional narrative. Invitations to pretense function as invitations to accept assertions that are similar to truth in the context of a fictional work. In compliance with this framework, I assume that we can account for invitations to fiction in merely pragmatic terms, as put by Orlando: “What determines the referential shift characteristic of fictive uses is thus not the presence of a certain kind of grammatical item (such as a psychological verb or a modal operator), but the presence of a certain kind of intention” (ORLANDO, 2017, p. 62). We need only to account for cooperation, its regulating principles and the implicit mechanisms typically applied.

This explication of why we accept invitations for pretense is built on the acknowledgement that fiction is a relevant linguistic practice. It seems, indeed, hard to deny that, by analogical thinking, fiction offers valuable insights about

maxims of quality, quantity and manner are almost never respected in storytelling. How, then, do such inferences operate? I will suggest that the maxim of relevance seems to be operant for fiction and relevance theory might offer us a clue as to how inferential thinking happens in fiction.

⁸⁸According to Sperber and Wilson’s original proposal, optimal relevance is achieved when:

- a. Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time;
- b. Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.” (SPERBER AND WILSON, 2002, p.252).

For more on the concept of optimal relevance, see Walsh (2007) and Wilson (2011).

emotions, morality, social-political reflections and the like. We might find, for example, some interesting material about gender oppression by interpreting Bentinho as an insecure man, haunted by jealousy, using Machado de Assis' work to elaborate a psychological profile of abusive men. Perry makes this witty remark on the relevance of fiction:

Indeed, perhaps the main reason we ever use language to help us directly interact with people is that it helps us spend the rest of our time dealing with the dead and non-existent. I talk with librarians, and hold office hours with students, because these interactions help find books about Hume, recruit others to the wonderful institution of reading and thinking about dead philosophers and pay the bills. (PERRY, 2001, p. 165)

Fictional anthroponyms and toponyms are used to allow us to entertain thoughts and have emotions about fictional characters, places and relations, because, more often than not, they influence our moral, intellectual and psychological development. The intuitions of truth-value we have about fiction mirror this important function of games of pretense in human life. Presupposing the existence of the putative referents of names like 'Capitu' and 'Bentinho', then, becomes an infliction of the conventions that govern pretense. Moreover, they denounce a misunderstanding of the purpose of engaging in pretense talk itself. So, it seems plausible to suppose that the contextual restrictions established in the interpretation of a fictional name block projection.

Withal, it seems that, just like explicit and implicit invitations to pretense may trigger a kind of switch from fact-telling to story-telling, so the falsity of the existential presupposition can work as a reason to suspend pretense talk. These are cases that have received little or no attention in the literature about pretense. Take an example.

(34) Snow White has dark hair.

Suppose that 7-years-old Rose is playing with her slightly older cousin, Lily. They are deeply engrossed in a make-believe narrative in which they are Disney World princesses. Now, Lily, who is blond, chooses to play the role of Snow White, but Rose, a dark-haired girl, also wants to "be" Snow White. Rose then utters (34),

expecting to convince her cousin to let her have her way. Lily, however, gets really frustrated and utters (35):

(35) There is no Snow White, so it is not true that Snow White has dark hair. I am not playing this game anymore!⁸⁹

What did she just do? She brought the requirement of truth back to the context. In so doing, she also proposed a radical change in the general requirements of the common ground: switching from a non-veridical to a veridical linguistic interaction, by explicitly articulating that her intervention was justified by the falsity of the existential presupposition associated to (34). The utterance of (35) is predicted by views on context like Lewis' score-keeping one and Stalnaker (2014): it is a non-cooperative response of rejection that articulates the fact that the contexts carry information about the conversational exchange itself. The literature in philosophy of language has been so focused on dealing with accommodation, that situations of rejection have been massively neglected. Maybe this reflects the assumption that these cases are exceptions rather than the rule. The important thing for my current purposes, though, is to remark that interactions as Lily and Rose's also shed light on the fact that referring is a cooperative endeavor and, thus, it depends on the joint effort of participants. As a concluding remark, I would like to briefly enumerate the benefits of the notion of joint activity for the comprehension of communicative exchanges with singular terms used referentially.

I start by making explicit the assumption that, directly or indirectly, communication is in the service of basic joint activities. For example, two people trying to move furniture from a place to another will use communication to coordinate their activity. A teacher uses communication in the service of the higher purpose of transmitting knowledge to her students. A mother and a father

⁸⁹ This example further suggests that kinds of games or linguistic interactions may be changed simply by the introduction of an assertion to the conversational context, or better still, by explicitly breaking propositional commitments by means of an assertion. I will not explore this consequence here, but I believe that the dynamic semantic framework can offer some interesting developments based on such assumption.

talking about one of their three children will be extra careful in determining which one, so that they know they are talking about the same child and jointly exchanging information about her. Typically, in informational exchanges, speakers ground⁹⁰ what is said on shared information, that will depend on what medium and goal they have. For example, story-telling has different goals than fact-telling, and oral narratives use different media from written ones.

As Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs (1992) comment, basic joint activities are prior to the dialogues that agents create in order to manage them. These dialogues involve a general expectation of jointly realization, not only of the dialogue itself, but of the basic activity that it is in service of. So, in the duration of an informational exchange, agents will use communication to navigate through the overall project of joint activity they are engaged in. Acceptance cycles, as discussed in section 3.2., and the mechanisms of repair help participants navigate such projects, bringing attention to the dialogue when necessary. For example, if the expectation of jointly realization of an activity, like moving a piece of furniture from its original place, is compromised because, say, one of the participants tried to refer to an object that was not salient, the participants will most likely turn their attention to the communicative interaction, before continuing to move the furniture around. Similarly, after their play date, if Lily and Rose need to organize their toys, they will use dialogues to navigate this project. Lily can tell Rose to put costumes in the blue box next to her bed and toys back on the shelves. They will need mechanisms that enable coordination. Rose may say things like “uh-huh”, “what blue box?”, “does this tiara go in the box or on the shelf?”

Dingemanse (2015) shows evidence that these joint arrangements follow remarkably similar pragmatic patterns throughout different cultures. According to him, competent speakers use mechanisms of repair and consent for coordination

⁹⁰ In conversational settings, agents seek to establish that utterances are understood in a collaborative process of *grounding*, where “participants try to establish the mutual belief that the listeners have understood what the speaker meant to a criterion sufficient for current purposes” (CLARK, *idem*, p.178).

that showcase three core elements that are essential to the pragmatics of human language:

- i. Reflexivity: the possibility of communication about the communication itself⁹¹;
- ii. A theory of mind that permits to monitor discrepancies in knowledge and understanding.
- iii. Our specie's unique capacity for cooperative course of behavior.

These pragmatic tenets can serve the view I presented in this work, first by offering a glimpse on why appealing to reflexive content serves as a repair strategy for truth-conditional interpretation when information is scarce. In all the examples showed here, reflexive content appears as a form of preserving rational cooperation by using elements of the communication system itself to reconstruct speaker meaning.

Secondly, i., ii, and iii, shed light on why participants intervene on acts of communication by offering grounds not to accept new speech acts. Remember the example of Jane and Jim from Chapter 2. Jane evidences a discrepancy in understanding, when she asks Jim to attend more carefully to what is salient to her. Finally, tenets i., ii. and iii can also be combined with the concept of *implicit common ground* (Pichering & Garrod (2004)) to enlighten why presuppositions, understood as implicit propositional commitments, are automatically accommodated when conversational participants are aligned.

Implicit common ground becomes common ground of assumptions, then, only when repairs in coordination are necessary, as pointed by Karttunen. If there is no misalignment, there is no reason for context revision or rejection. The tenets also offer us an explanation of why conventional presuppositions do not have a special status when it comes to seeking the elimination of discrepancies in knowledge and understanding; namely, because any discrepancy, misuse or

⁹¹ Notice that this sense of reflexivity might be behind Perry's notion of reflexivity: the possibility of using classificatory content that is about the utterance itself is ultimately guaranteed by the fact that we can communicate about communication and this is an integral cross-culturally pervasive pragmatic trace of human communication.

malpractice can serve as reason to break joint activities. Only in a limited range of cases, the existential presupposition, the presupposition of salience and other procedural norms will prevail as reason to revise or reject cooperation.

Pretense activities have been approached here taking tenet iii. into consideration. Humans receive help for building up an essential characteristic of our species, cooperative behavior, partly from incorporating pretense to their early (and adult) lives. Again, this is a statement in favor of the relevance of fiction and of why, as speakers, we are willing to construe contexts that permit us to engage in such activities⁹². Of course, the variety of genders, style, media etc, makes rational cooperation *in fiction* an elusive subject, especially hard to contrive. As I tried to show, perhaps the only maxim of cooperation that seems to regulate inferential processes and the division of labor between participants in veridical interactions as well as in non-veridical ones, is the maxim of relevance.

3.4. Conclusion

We started this chapter asking if names can be explained by Referentialism, without forcing defenders to abandon the core assumptions of the position, viz., Millianism and direct reference. I hope to have shown that the answer is yes. The difficulty in dealing with names for the referentialist arises from three points. As grammatical categorization and psycholinguistic evidence suggest, the conventional and referential character of activated⁹³ names make them particularly hard to interpret, if compared to descriptions and demonstrations. This is due to the fact that, supposedly, they carry limited lexical content, contributing only individuals to interpretation. Also, their lexical-semantic description allows us to infer that names are not functionally referential and gain

⁹² It is commonly assumed in psychological, anthropological and linguistic works that social interactions involving pretense impact the development of social-cognitive skills. For example, it has been shown that children between the ages of four and six who were exposed to more juvenile fiction score higher on measures of empathy and theory of mind than children with less exposure (Mar *et al.* (2010)). Other developmental works demonstrate that the use of mental state terms in stories that contain more emotional convincing content – like romances (Fong *et al.*, (2013)) – determines empathy and socioemotional adjustment (Aram and Aviram (2009)). So, empirical evidence from different fields indicate that the simulation of the mental and emotional lives of characters – in make-believe games, parent and child picture book reading, oral story-telling, and fiction reading – improve the capacity of attention to others' mental states. Also, the high-quality practice of mental construction of social contexts and other people's subjective experience helps in the development of social cognition, like adaptation to norms of conduct and cooperative behavior (Zunshine (2006)).

⁹³ See page 87.

referentiality only after the process of name activation – which, on its own turn, depends greatly on communal linguistic practices. Purportedly, these observations would force the referentialist to accept that conventional features of names are, actually, features of *uses* (of them). Above all, in the face of the fact that we use names not only in other grammatical functions, but also in linguistic practices that do not involve reference, like fiction. So, if names are lexically poor and not inherently referential, how do they contribute to truth-conditions, when the referent cannot be determined?

Although we can accept that names are not inherently referential – whatever that means exactly – we can say that they become referential after their activation without great losses to the thesis of direct reference. Perhaps, the referentialist needs only a better theoretical cutout that singles out that their focus is on activated names. Or she can simply focus on the features of names that are encoded in the language and categorize them lexically as referential words. Secondly, though we can say that names are “lexically poor”, the concept of reflexive content can be used to explain what content is expressed when speakers fail to identify the contribution of a name. Thirdly, in fiction, names are not meant to have reference, because strictly speaking, fiction involves acts of communication and not acts of reference.

In what concerns the question of truth-evaluation, a name that occasionally or systematically, fails to refer may cause intuitions of truth-value gaps, when uttered in veridical linguistic practices, that is, when assertions have truth as a condition of satisfaction. That is the case of truth-value gaps caused by the falsity of the existential presupposition associated to uses of singular terms. In many other occasions, however, discrepancies in informational statuses, that have nothing to do whatsoever with conventional aspects of the uttered sentence, will be the cause of the truth-value gaps. Section 3.2. has examples of these situations.

In fiction, we do not observe such gaps, given that, once speakers yield to explicit and implicit invitations to engage in fictional thinking, the existence of fictional characters is simply not a part of the relevant context. This can be

explained by the primacy of the linguistic practice of pretense over the communicative goal of truthfulness of veridical informational exchange. Fiction propels participants to seek truth-similitude and not truth. Hopefully, with these remarks in mind, the referentialist might have ways to shield herself, at least, from the no-reference objection.

CONCLUSION

The problem investigated here was the *no-reference problem*, which consists in explaining the content expressed by uses of names and other singular terms that fail to refer. The purpose of this dissertation was to offer a modest solution to this problem within the framework of the Reflexive-Referential Theory (RRT), whose key concept is that of reflexive content. As other advocates of versions of RRT, I attempted to sustain that reflexive content explains how hearers cognize significance and how they represent other's mental states as well as states of the world, especially in situations of very limited informational content. I investigated these situations by examining intuitions of truth-value gaps.

The cases of interest encompassed utterances about individuals that either did not exist or could not be determined, in virtue of defective communication. While the content expressed by those utterances was explained in terms of reflexive content, their truth-value was explained in terms of presuppositional failure and repair mechanisms applied to common ground. For instance, in the case of an interpreter who failed to determine the *demonstratum* due to the speaker's inefficiency in making the putative *designatum* salient, my solution was twofold: first, the content apprehended/recovered by the interpreter was reflexive (about the utterance itself), and intuitively, the utterance has no truth-value. This work was, thus, devoted to the application of the apparatus of reflexive semantics and presuppositional semantics to explain content and truth-evaluation in situations of scarcity of information.

In chapter 1, I started by typifying these situations, in accordance with how their limited informational content undermined the determination of reference. I distinguished between *occasional referential failure for lack of information*, cases with demonstratives and names that fail to pick up individuals as referents, given specific situational configurations, and *referential failure in fiction*, involving the

classic cases of fictional names⁹⁴. Also, in Chapter 1, I presented a study of John Perry's RRT – grounded on Perry (2001). The greatest virtue of Perry's theory is that it conciliates the idea that the interpretation of utterances with singular terms depends on classificatory practices that allow agents to rationally reconstruct cognitive states. His theory's main tenet is that content categorizes information. It is, ultimately, what makes states of affairs and other people's minds and behavior intelligible to us.

It bears to emphasize that Perry's RRT is a branch of token-reflexive theories of indexicals and a form of pluri-propositionalism. So, according to RRT, in cases of occasional referential failure for lack of information, as well as in fiction, token-reflexive rules, carried by singular terms do the job of explaining meaningfulness in rational reconstruction. They help explain how interpreters make sense of utterances in situations that provide less information than necessary. Furthermore and, most importantly, we saw that content in RRT is a relative concept, determined by what information is provided by the situations in which utterances occur. The main idea was that, in using content to classify world and mind, agents have a system of possibilities that go from mere linguistic conventions, in a process of incrementation, all the way up to full-blown propositional content. Consequently, in the view defended here, content is not defined necessarily as propositional, rather it will be determined relatively to an interpretative architecture.

Still in Chapter 1, I introduced the theoretical apparatus of the presuppositional solution to truth-value gaps. Presuppositions were defined in terms of their *triggers*, lexical items and syntactic constructions that *conventionally* carry associated implicit propositions, which function as truth-value conditions. For linguists, the most relevant questions regarding presupposition are: a) how they differ from other forms of implication; b) if it is possible to make predictions about their semantic behavior in embedment; and

⁹⁴ In the last case, referential failure was explained taking into consideration the conflicting intuitions of truth that are elicited by the uses we make of statements with fictional name: in fiction, about fiction, evaluated extrinsically to fiction.

c) if presupposing is triggered by conventional or non-conventional aspects. These were the questions I tried to answer.

Evidence that speakers do, in fact, presuppose comes from *projection* and *cancellation* tests. They supposedly work as indications that, as a linguistic phenomenon, presuppositions have a conventional dimension which can be evidenced and tested by embedding triggering sentences. We saw, in Chapter 1, however, that projection and cancellation, as Garcia-Carpintero (2015) suggests, are indications of conventionality. A more adequate criterion of demarcation for presuppositions is determined by contrasting *asserting* and *presupposing*, in terms of the commitments they involve, in the form of *attitudes of acceptance* (Stalnaker (2002)). We concluded that presuppositions are *conditions on the success of new assertions*. Chapter 1, thus, presented the theoretical background that I used to explain content and truth-evaluation. In the following chapters, I set to apply the combination of RRT and the presuppositional account to two cases: demonstratives that occasionally fail to refer for lack of information and the referential failure of names caused by occasional lack of information and in fiction.

The chapter devoted to applying RRT and the presuppositional account to demonstratives was divided in two parts. First, I discussed how Perry's notion of content gives linguistic conventions a special explanatory status. The second part attempted to show that indicating the referent of a demonstrative, namely its extension, in a successful way, requires, at least partially, some ability of adjusting attentional behavior. So, in Part 1, we talked about communicative situations in which conventional meaning *is recruited to play the role of content in interpretation*. In Part 2 of Chapter 2, I discussed joint attention and its relation to demonstratives used exaphorically. I first defined joint attention and then presented evidence, mainly from human ontogeny (in first language acquisition), that demonstratives appear at the same time as certain skills of attentional manipulation. I took this to indicate a chronological and cognitive priority of exaphoric uses for demonstratives, suggesting – as Diessel (1999, 2006) and Levinson (2004) have defended – that demonstratives are essentially resources for attentional manipulation, like gesturing and eye-gazing.

In the end of Part 2, I conclude that the evidence borrowed from developmental research in linguistics and psychology suggest that, in using demonstratives, children add linguistic expressions to other communicative resources they already possessed, namely, engaging in joint attention activities to talk about individuals. This took me to advance the thesis that salience is presupposed as a condition on the truth-evaluation of utterances with demonstratives. The overall strategy that authorized this conclusion was the analysis of truth-value gaps when speakers fail in making a putative *demonstratum* salient, and the dynamic mechanisms of reaction to such failures, in the attempt to preserve cooperation.

Chapter 3 followed the same strategy as chapter 2. It applies RRT and the presuppositional account to the study of proper names. I started with a categorization of the category NAME from the perspective of linguistic studies in notional grammar (Anderson (2006)) and according to a referentialist characterization in philosophy (Taylor (2003; 2014)). From the first perspective, we concluded that names are not functionally referential – rather, they operate like determinatives – and gain referentiality after the process of name activation – when the name is bestowed on an individual – which, on its own turn, depends greatly on communal linguistic practices. From the philosophical perspective, we concluded that the referential purport of a name is guaranteed by lexically-governed syntactic factors, established by conditions a) to d) below:

- a) names flank the identity sign;
- b) names occupy the argument place of verbs;
- c) names serve as links in co-referential chains; and, finally,
- d) names serve as premises in substitution inferences.

In joining the two perspectives, linguistic and philosophical, in categorizing proper names, the most interesting result was to recognize, at the end, that the referentiality of a name depends, from a practical perspective, on naming practices as well as on the facts that ground our need for them. Naming would be, as such, a role-oriented practice manifested in language: we name

objects/individuals, because we think about them, use them, have emotions towards them. This assumption seems even more plausible if we consider data from research on cognitive ageing and neuropsychology, as seen in subsection 3.1. 2..

In presuppositional theories, names are also characterized as presuppositional triggers. My effort, in Chapter 3, was, nonetheless, to defend that the relevance of an existential presupposition – the presupposition that the referent of the name exists – in causing truth-value gaps vary with context. In many occasions, discrepancies in informational statuses will explain the intuitions of gap, as shown in section 3.2. Moreover, that meant that the truth-value gaps elicited in situations of scarcity of information do not derive directly from the semantic conventions used in the sentence or, at least, we have no strong reason to believe that they do. That is why projection and accommodation remain the most trustworthy evidence for the presence of presuppositions, as opposed to the intuitions of truth-value gaps themselves.

After categorizing names and looking at the behavior of presuppositions in situations of scarcity of information, I turned to fictional names. My strategy was to defend that assertions with fictional name are *of a special kind*. I argued that assertions in fiction do not require believe as a preparatory condition or truth as a condition of satisfaction. Assertions in fiction are what Perry (2001) calls *mere discourse*: “informational exchanges using names where there is no possibility of direct interaction with the relevant object” (*ibidem*, p. 167). Naming practices enable us to think and exchange information about things that matter to us, even if they never existed, such as beloved fictional characters and mythical deities.

As to what regards the intuitive “truth” of such assertions, supposedly evident in truth-value attributions to assertions made *about fiction*, I take what is said by Orlando (2017) as true: truth about fiction does not depend on matters of fact about individuals, but on “the conceptual world of a certain fiction”. Truth *in fiction*, on the other hand, is explained away with the notion of *invitation to fiction* (or make-believe). These invitations are typically recovered by pragmatic inference, by changing conventional procedures and conditions of acceptance.

Once speakers yield to explicit and implicit invitations to engage in fictional thinking, the existence of the object that is talked about is simply not a part of the relevant context. Fiction propels participants to seek truth-similitude and not truth. If there is no requirement of truth, there can be no requirement that the utterance expresses a singular proposition, so Referentialism seems to still stand, at least in what concerns fiction. But, in what concern situations of scarcity of information, too. The difference is only that the kind of cooperation required is different. The fundamental insight, present in all three chapters of this dissertation, is that conversational interactions should be understood as a *shared cooperative activity*, in which agents are engaged in accomplishing a common goal (information exchange), and all participants are responsive to each other's informational statuses: the speaker is committed to conveying all that is necessary to update the audience's informational status adequately, and the audience, on its own turn, collaborates with the speaker's communicative plan. What happens in the non-paradigmatic cases in which cooperation backfires, are evidenced by recovery strategies, such as, repair, context revision, engagement in non-veridical practices. These mechanisms reflect precisely this: we refer because we cooperate.

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