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1. Introduction

In modern semiotic literature, the term “sign” is, in the broad sense, defined as anything representing another thing—something other than itself—which means that anything can become a sign if its existence is recognized. The force or the medium by which the existence of a sign is recognized is the “vehicle of the process of semiosis” and has been termed “mind” or “quasi-mind” (CP 4.536, 4.551), “organism” (Johansen 1999), “codemaker” or “agent” (Barbieri 2007, 2008), and “interpreter” (Emmeche et al. 2010). This multiplicity of terms has prompted us to study the matter and propose a neutral term as an attempt to avoid confusion in modern semiotic terminology. The first sections of this paper look into the vehicle of the process of semiosis with its different terminologies.¹ Subsequently, the reasons why the vehicle of the process of semiosis has different terminologies are investigated via descriptions of the processes of semiosis as worked out by Peirce and Johansen, with a brief discussion on informational and communicational semiosis, intentionality, and source and destination.

We know that the semiotic capacity of the vehicle of the process of semiosis to extract information from the surrounding world and behave ac-

¹ The term “vehicle” in the “vehicle of the process of semiosis” is not the same as the term “sign vehicle” used by Peirce (CP 1.339, 1.212), Morris (1938: 3), and Johansen (1999: 68). Peirce (CP 1.339) used it to refer to a “representamen” as “a vehicle conveying into the mind something from without.” Morris (1938: 3) referred to the term “vehicle” in defining one of the four factors in the process of semiosis, which he labels “the *sign vehicle*, the *designatum*, and the *interpretant*; the *interpreter* . . .” Hence, the choice of the term “vehicle” in this article as a part of the term the “vehicle of the process of semiosis” is different from the usage of the same term by Peirce and others.