

Intentionality as a Genuine Relation (All You Need is Love)

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Intentionality is commonly defined either as the relational “property” that most mental states have to refer to, or to be about, something external to themselves, or simply as this “aboutness” relation as such. A seemingly equivalent idea, which is part and parcel of Brentano’s heritage although it could be in fact traced back to such late Medieval philosophers as, *e.g.*, Thierry de Freiberg, is that of an intentional state as being “directed” at its target-object.

As a French philosopher who, while a student nearly half-a-century ago, was first exposed to Sartre’s and other such phenomenologico-existentialist subjectivist metaphors about consciousness “aiming at” its intentional object, or about intentionality itself as some kind of unlikely *ex-stasis*, I must confess that, for many years, I have remained somewhat suspicious towards the very idea of an intrinsic “direction”, or “sense”, of mental acts. More recently, however, I came to realize that such misleading metaphors should be peeled off from the kernel of truth which they tend to conceal and which lied, in part, at the heart of the Medieval account of intentional relations as “unilateral” (or “non-mutual”).

Is intentionality, really, a full-blooded *relation*? It is the first and main contention of this paper that some, though presumably not all, mental states are, indeed, genuinely relational. I shall then further argue – in contradistinction, particularly, to Ingvar Johansson with whom I am, nevertheless, in full agreement for the remaining of this matter – that the relation involved is endowed with an *intrinsic*, non derivative, asymmetry and direction.

1. The problem of intentionality in a nutshell

It is clearly not the aim of this short note about intentional *relations* to provide a comprehensive account of intentionality as such. Were I to offer such an overall account, I suppose that I would have to draw at least a rough sketch of the complicated genealogy of this concept across centuries, beginning with Aristotle's *De Anima* and then proceeding, say, from Ibn Senna's *mana*, through the Medieval's theory of "intentions", towards Brentano's modern rediscovery (as well as re-interpretation) of the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition - with its famous and ambiguous focus on the intentional "inexistence" of objects of thought - and further on, *via* Chisholm and many others, until the late XXth century's debates about the so-called "naturalisation" of intentionality.

Although he never used the term himself (the paternity of which, it seems, should be attributed to Husserl), it was clearly Franz Brentano who famously gave birth to the modern concept of intentionality. Of course, in the much-quoted passage of his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* which is usually invoked in this context, Brentano explicitly refers to the Scholastic tradition, as well as to Aristotle himself, although there are also many reasons to consider that his own approach actually follows a quite different path. Suffice it to say that whereas most contemporary philosophers would regard the "problem of intentionality" as belonging primarily to the philosophy of mind - with a few of them taking into account, however, its metaphysical import -, there are some good reasons to think that for the Medievals, or at any rate from Aquinas' and his immediate followers' "realist" standpoint, the issue was basically a concern for epistemology.

Brentano's own initial characterization of intentionality has been so much commented and discussed that one has got somehow wary of quoting it once again. Yet, this is just what I am to do. According to Brentano,

"Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to content, direction towards an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire

desired and so on ".¹

I shall limit myself to a few more or less cursory remarks about this over-quoted passage. To begin with, a distinction should certainly be drawn between Brentano's qualification of intentionality, on the one hand, and what has come to be known as "Brentano's thesis" according to which intentionality, thus understood, is both a necessary and sufficient condition for, as well as a principled hall-mark of, the mental as such, on the other hand.

Brentano's thesis is that all, and only, mental states are "intentional" in his sense - or, anyway, appear to have a relational structure. *Prima facie*, it should count as a major rationale in favour of this claim that it provides a twofold uniform account of mental "acts". First, it is supposed to subsume altogether such various mental states as perceptual or emotional experience, on the one hand, and knowledge, belief, desire and various similar propositional attitudes on the other hand. Second, it is also meant to apply whether the "object" of the intentional so-called "relation" actually exists or not, and to be uniform across both cases. Let's call the conjunction of the two claims the *principle of uniformity*.

Uniformity is surely a nice thing by itself. But, in the present case, does it amount to a real advantage? One traditional line of attack relies upon the question whether intentionality, as construed in genuinely relational terms, is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for mentality as such: what, in particular, about so-called purely "qualitative" states such as raw sensations and would-be *qualia*? And, on the other hand, *quid* about what Searle defines as "secondary" intentionality with a view, especially, on the linguistic "expression" of our mental states? These are widely discussed issues that I do not intend, however, to examine in this paper.

More relevant to the present discussion is whether Brentano's thesis really implies, as it would seem, that every mental state is genuinely "about" *O*, whether *O* exists or not.

This leads us back to Brentano's initial description of intentionality, which is, famously enough, at least twice ambiguous. A first well-known source for ambiguity has to do with Brentano's equivocation as between the "object" and the "content" of the intentional "act". Another concerns even more directly the very notion of an "intentional" state. Does Brentano neo-scholastic idiom mean that the "object" of every *bona fide* intentional state is an imma-

¹ Franz Brentano, *Psychologie vom empirische Standpunkt*, Leipzig, 1874); *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p. 88

ment (" in-existent ") " intentional object ", *per force* distinct from its purported " real " object ?

The above-quoted few lines could seem to encourage such a hasty conclusion. Yet, after he had been criticized on this score by some of his best students, Brentano came to deny that he ever conceived of the intentional object of whichever kind of mental act as some " immanent " entity to be distinguished from its (putative) real object - a distinction that Husserl himself famously and rightly rejected. But then, of course, he had to cope with the issue of " empty " terms and cognitive states.

Regarding this problem (*i.e.* that of would-be referring expressions and/or intentional mental items without an actual " object "), there would seem to be just two answers only, once rejected the intentional/real object spurious divide One is Twardowski's (and, for a part Meinong's) more distinction between " object " and " content ". Another is the otherwise Meinongian over-generous attribution of *some* ontological status to every purported " object of thought ", whether actually existing or not.

Actually, Brentano rejects both ways out. No wonder, then, that he afterwards kept wavering on this issue, hesitating, as it seems, between a neo-Thomist and a neo-Scotist approach to the very idea of a mental " representation " ². No wonder either that he eventually came to regard intentionality as just " quasi-relational " (*Relativische*)³.

Ever since the Scholastics (at least) it has widely assumed that a *genuine* relation can only hold of relata that are really existing, themselves, and are really distinct from each other. Actually, this dictum might be disputed, in view not so much of the controversial " relation " of identity than of such relations as self-love or self-destruction (*e.g.*, suicide). However, for the present purpose, I shall leave this complication aside. Suppose, thus, that the dictum is taken to hold generally. What, then, of the intentional " relation " when the purported " object " of such or such mental act does not actually exist (and provided we don't turn toward some kind of neo-meinongian solution) ? Should we regard this, along with Reinhardt Grossmann⁴, as showing that the Scholastic criterion does not apply to *intentional* relations ? Or, following Keith Campbell⁵ should we interpret this, rather, as a clear indication that

² on this issue, see Dermot Moran, " Brentano Thesis ", *Supplementary Volume of the Aristotelian Society*, 1996, pp. 1-27

³ F.Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 272

⁴ R. Grossmann, *The Categorical Structure of the World*, Indiana University Press, 1983, pp. 1977 ff,

⁵ K. Campbell, *Abstract Particulars*, Blackwell, 1990, p. 178

“ intentional relations ” are not, as a matter of fact, genuine relations ? At the first blush, it would seem that a famous remark by the “ last ” Russell might reinforce the latter view :

“ The doctrine of internal relations held that every relation between two terms expresses, primarily, intrinsic properties of the two terms and, in ultimate analysis, a property of the whole which the two compose. With some relations, this view is plausible. Take, for example, love or hate. If *A* loves *B*, this relation exemplifies itself and may be said to consist in certain states of mind of *A*. Even an atheist must admit that a man can love God. It follows that love of God is a state of the man who feels it, and not properly a relational fact ”⁶

At first sight, Russell seems to concede that *some* relations - *v.i.z.* some psychological relations, such as love or hate - can be indeed analysed away, or might be reducible to monadic states or properties. However, as aptly remarked by Vincent Descombes⁷, this admission is, in fact, merely apparent, as Russell hurries to stress that “ relations ” of this kind are not genuine *relations* in the end.

Well, maybe so. However, this passage raises at least two different, though complementary, questions. Firstly, is Russell right to assert that even an atheist should allow that a believer can love God ? Secondly, does this particular kind of case suffice to licence the conclusion that love and hate in general are not genuinely *relational* states ? Let us begin by considering this second issue. It will be easily granted, I guess, that John love’s for Mary requires the existence in John of some internal states (be they conscious or not), or, to simplify, the exemplification of a number of monadic (in most cases, actually, dispositional) properties. Yet – unless we find ourselves in the extreme and most unusual circumstance where John has got mad about a wholly imaginary Mary, or has fallen in “ love ” with a really existing Mary he has been told about but actually never met –, I cannot conceive of any reason why we should *a priori* decree that John’s love towards Mary consists (or, at any rate, consists *exclusively*) in the co-occurrence of such more or less “ intrinsic ” properties in John. Thus, I cannot think of any good reason either why we should reject the idea that it is Mary *herself* who, in the most favourable and (hopefully) most frequent case, is the object of John’s love for Mary, nor of any serious ground,

⁶ B. Russell, *My Philosophical Development*, Unwin & Allen, 1959, p. 42

⁷ V. Descombes, *Les institutions du sens*, Minuit, 1996, p. 191

therefore, to deny that the latter is (or, at the very least involves) a genuine relation. But, then, how are we to account, all the same, for the former case – that is, for the scenario by the lines of which Mary, for instance, does not really exist (and never, in fact, actually existed), so that John's "love" would seem to involve, at best, what Medieval philosophers used to call a "relation of reason" and what Brentano, in turn, dubbed a "quasi-relation"? Once one has renounced, as I think we should do, the temptation to think that in both cases – *i.e.* whether Mary, say, exists or not –, John is (at least immediately) in a loving-relation with some representation of Mary (or with some unlikely "immanent" Mary, construed as a mere "intentional object"), we seem to be left with just two options. One of them is to allow that the verb "to love" is, as it stands, open to two different interpretations: *loving* could be read, as it were, either *de re* or *de dicto*. Now, it is a well-known fact that there exists, in common parlance, some sense in which John may well be said to be in "love" with some merely imaginary Mary – just as there is a sense in which Lady MacBeth can be said to "see" her hands covered with blood, or the average serial killer to "hear" extra-terrestrial incitements to further slaughters. However, one might as well decide that these are just non-literal, and more or less parasitic, uses of both kind of verbs. If so, John cannot any more literally "love" Mary than he can, literally again, "see" a pink elephant in front of him or "hear" any voices in his head. And, thus, an atheist should obviously *not* allow that a man can really love God: as Mark Sainsbury rightly observed⁸, if there is no God, even a sincere monotheist can at the very best believe or imagine that he loves God. The latter type of solution amounts to what one might call, *cum grano salis*, a "disjunctive" account of the loving experience – by analogy, of course, with the so-called "disjunctive" theory of perceptual experience. After all, the very principle of a "disjunctive" theory in the philosophy of perception (J.M. Hinton, P. Snowdon, J. McDowell) has already been extended to the epistemology of other kinds of cognitive states – and, primarily, to the interpretation of *knowledge* (McDowell himself and, above all, T. Williamson). And, clearly, *seeing that* is no less a "factive" mental state than *knowing that*, which just means that, if *S* knows/sees that *p*, then (*ex hypothesis*), *p* is the case. Not all perceptual experiences, however, are of the "epistemic" or "doxastic" kind – far from it –, so that it is of the highest importance that we should make, at the very least, a principled distinction between seeing *O* (or even, for that matter, seeing *O as* (an) *F* in a non-conceptual manner) and seeing *that O is F*. Yet, it remains that, even though it does not

⁸ R.M. Sainsbury, *Russell*, Routledge, 1979, p. 230

always imply the existence of the state of affairs that p – that, say, O is F –, the statement “ S sees O ” as (an) F ”, or just “ S sees O ”, does in any case entail, at least, the existence of O itself. In short, whether or not “factive” *stricto sensu*, perceptual states are clearly “object-dependent”

However that may be, I shall contend that *seeing* and *loving* are, for that matter, on the same boat. Once again, whether John can be said to genuinely *love* this ideal, and therefore non-existent, woman whom he secretly calls “Mary”, might look as a merely verbal issue. To speak the truth, I am inclined to take this would be an easy way-out. But never minds: what really matters is that in both cases (that is, whether we embrace some kind of “disjunctive theory”, or, rather, make ourselves content with the more traditional *de re/de dicto* distinction), we shall have to renounce what I have called above the *principle of uniformity*.

Clearly enough, what holds both of those such “factive” states as propositional knowledge or epistemic seeing, and of such typically object-dependent states as (genuine) love or “simple seeing”, is not generally true of many other cognitive states as ordinary beliefs or the mere fact that you are currently thinking of X . There is no need to say that the sheer *belief* that O is F does not, *per se*, no more implies that O is F than it entails, at the very least, the actual existence of O itself. Still, it remains that, for a long and rich intellectual tradition which bloomed towards the former century’s latest decades (although its origin goes back to Russell’s seminal intuitions about this issue), an important distinction has to be drawn, amongst beliefs and more or less similar propositional attitudes, between those which essentially, or constitutively, depend on the identity and very existence of their purported object (genuinely singular thoughts) and those which don’t (descriptive thoughts). What I have in mind, of course, is the by now well-established philosophical tradition (Kripke, Donnellan, Putnam, Kaplan, McDowell & *alii*) which kept putting an emphasis – and, as I see it, quite rightly so – on the “object-dependence” of both genuinely singular phrases and thoughts. This is plainly not the circumstance for revisiting the formerly widely discussed issue whether such linguistic or mental items should be regarded as “directly” referential or whether their semantic rôle (as I keep, in fact, inclined to believe as for me) could not be more accurately accounted for within a more or less strict Fregean framework. In my view, it is quite possible to subscribe to the overall principle of the so-called “causal theory of reference” – or, at least, to acknowledge that various categories of terms, as well as mental representations or acts, crucially depend upon the existence of a causal relation with its source on the side of the relevant “referent” or “intentional” object, and yet not

succumb to what Gareth Evans famously and ironically dubbed “ the photographic model ”, with its dubious implication that this causal relation, just by itself, might suffice to determine the meaning of the linguistic or mental items in question. Even so, another vivid issue in the eighties was between those, among the so-called “ neo-Fregean ”, who claimed to remain wholly faithful, in their own way, to Frege’s principle that the sense of any term or phrase strictly determines its reference (G. Evans, J. McDowell) and those who, themselves faced with Putnam’s Twin-Earth thought-experiment and various similar externalist arguments and challenges, favoured what was called, in those days, the “ twofold ” theory or mental content (e.g. K. Bach, C. McGinn, A. Woodfield and so forth), pleading in favour of some minimal mutual independence between “ sense ” (most commonly construed in terms of cognitive “ or functional terms) and “ reference ” (presumably accountable upon a mere causal, informational and, at any rate, “ external ” basis). Although my own inclination was, in those days, and currently remains in favour of the former option, I have no intention whatever, in this note, to revisit these most complicated issues. But could, please, my reader keep them in mind, all the same, when giving a look to the the two next sections ?

2. What is a “ real ” relation ?

For a while, suppose, in any case, that intentional “ mental acts ” - or at least *some* of them, including genuine love - involve a “ real ” relation towards their object. But what, then, is a real a genuine or “ real ” relation ? According to the Aristotelian and Scholastic tradition, which thought of relations in terms of relational properties (*relative accidents*), a dyadic “ real ” relation, as opposed to a mere “ relation of reason ”, is such as (i) it holds of two really existing terms, (ii) its terms are, themselves, really distinct ; (iii) the relation has a (monadic) foundation within both its relata. Clause (iii) is particularly important, as it means that, for the Scholastics, a real (categorical) relation is above all a *grounded* relation. Let’s name this third requirement the *foundation criterion*. A major issue among Scholastic discussions concerning these subjects, however, has famously to do with the question whether “ grounded ” relations should be allowed some kind of first-class and distinctive being, over and above that of their monadic foundations. This is surely not the place to revisit the many intricacies of the sophisticated and most fascinating debate which took place on this score, more particularly, some time between the late 13th and the early 14th centuries (and was *mutatis mutandis* revived re-

cently, about comparative and other supposedly “supervenient” relations). Suffice it to mention another ontological requirement which, however variously interpreted, seems to have then played a major rôle, as well, in this context: that according to which a real relation is one such that its occurrence makes a *genuine difference* to its relata (let’s call this the *genuine change criterion*).

So far as good old comparative “mutual” (i.e. multilateral or just, say, bilateral) relations are concerned, how to reconcile the foundation criterion with the genuine change requirement was, and remains, a most tricky issue, especially in view of Aristotle’s famous “indication” (as Peirce put it) that there is “no change” (i.e. no *real* change) within the category of relation, since “it may happen that when one correlative changes, the other can truly be said not to change at all, so that in these cases the motion is accidental” (Aristotle, *Physics*, V, c. 2 225 b, 11-13). To provide just an example, if both *A* and *B* are white, it would seem that, according to the “foundation” criterion, they are really similar, since the relation they have to each other – that is, in fact, *A*’s property of being similar (in colour) to *B* and *B*’s property of being similar to *A* – is grounded on both terms. But, on the other hand, does not Aristotle’s observation show that *A* might become similar to *B* merely in virtue of the fact that *B* has just been painted white, or *vice versa*? Here, clearly, we seem to record some tension between the foundation and the genuine change criteria. How could *A*, for instance, become “really” related to *B* without any change among its intrinsic properties? One remembers the answer put forward by Scotus: necessarily, if the relation is real, *A* undergoes a genuine change, but a real change involves the acquisition of some real property and, as there is no actual change in *A*’s absolute accidents, the new acquired property has to be distinct from any one of them. Thus reformulated, Scotus’ argument clearly invites Ockham’s reply: how could I, just by repainting a wall in Rome, really change the (colour of) a wall in Oxford or in London?

Be that as it may, things look quite different when we turn to unilateral, or “non-mutual”, relations – that is, to a two-term relation with a foundation in just one of its relata, like God’s relation to His creatures or like intentional relations within Aristotle’s (sub) category of the measure and the measured. This time, on the contrary, the foundation criterion and the genuine change requirement would happen to converge. Take Aristotle’s own example of the knower and the known: if *A* knows *B*, *A*’s relation to *B* would seem to have its foundation in *A* alone, so that *A* cannot acquire or lose it without undergoing some intrinsic change – while *B*’s property of being known by *A* does not make or imply any such change in *B*. Hence Aquinas’s well-known view, endorsed by many Scholastic philosophers, that *A*’s relation to (relational prop-

erty directed at) *B* is, indeed, a “ real relation ”, whereas *B*’s relation to *A* is but a “ relation of reason ”.

Now, most obviously, I don’t wish to suggest that we should return to the Medieval view of relations. Philosophers, nowadays, do not conceive of relations, generally speaking, in terms of “ relative accidents ”. Far from reducing relations to relational properties, most of them would rather regard the former as being (at best) both logically and ontologically prior to the latter – and I fully adhere to this post-Russellian view. Nevertheless, I would like to hint to what I take to be the main insight behind the Medieval account as far as intentional relations are concerned.

3. Inherent or extrinsic direction ?

However, before I endeavour to do so, let me first point at just two of the many difficulties met by the mainstream Scholastic tradition on this score. One of them is that, however construed (and insofar as the “ foundation ” requirement can be interpreted in the light of the more recent notion of “ supervenience ”), it is quite doubtful, to say the very least, that intentional relations “ supervene ”, *stricto sensu*, upon their unique subject-sided foundation. Clearly enough, that John *really* loves Mary seems to imply some form of acquaintance, or causal relationship, with dear Mary herself. As an aside, this comes rather as a piece of good news, considering the popular, albeit much controversial view, opinion that supervenient entities have no reality of their own over and above that of the underlying substances or properties (Armstrong’s famous “ free ontological lunch ”).

The second, and presumably the main, difficulty has to do with what Medieval philosophers used to call the *esse-ad* (as opposed to the *in-esse*) of relations and directly flows from the very fact that we regard relations, today, either as genuinely *polyadic* properties or as some kind of connective entities standing somehow “ between ” their relata. Although modern logic has it that every relation has a converse and that, exception being made for symmetric relations, a relation and its converse are, from a purely formal point of view, distinct from each other, many philosophers within the analytic tradition are inclined to think that every relation – whether symmetric or non-symmetric – is actually, metaphysically speaking, identical with its converse. In other words, since it is the case that Paris is north of Marseilles, it is ipso facto the case that Marseilles is south of Paris, and clearly this amounts to the very same

state of affairs. This is on this ground that Kit Fine⁹ (following Russell 1913)¹⁰ recently objected to what he regards as the “standard” view of relations, as previously and famously put forth by Russell himself (1903¹¹), according to which non-symmetric, or at any rate asymmetric, relations involve some form of intrinsic “sense”, or direction, and relate their terms in a given order. Fine’s argument is based on the consideration of “an important class of metaphysical and linguistic contexts which call for an alternative conception of relation”, in that they seem to involve the existence of relations “for which there is no meaningful notion of converse”. Since I have recently examined and discussed at full-length Fine’s own account of “neutral relations” thus understood, I shall not repeat, here, the detail of my objections¹². To put it in a nutshell, and putting aside some further more or less technical difficulties, I seems to me that what Fine’s has in mind under the name of the “standard view” of (non-symmetric) relations is actually the conjunction of two distinct theses which – just like Russell himself did – he takes to be so closely associated that they may well be regarded as forming just a single philosophical conception of relations in the end. A first thesis is that every non-symmetric two-term relation has a “sense” and is, to that extent inherently directional. A second thesis is the claim that every non-symmetric two-term relation has a converse which is, not just logically or conceptually, but also and above all ontologically speaking, distinct of itself. Now, as I see it, not only are those two claims quite distinct. I shall furthermore contend that they are independent from each other – or, at any rate, that the first thesis does not imply the second one, so that the falsity of the latter does not entail that of the former. As Erwin Tegtmeier and Ingvar Johansson have remarked, an important step towards dispelling any risk of conflation, here, is to realize how ambiguous the very notion of “sense” (of a relation) itself turns to be¹³.

Indeed, it is one thing for a relation to hold of its terms in some specific order, and it is quite another to enjoy some kind of inherent directionality.

⁹ K. Fine, “Neutral Relations” *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 109, n° 1, 2000

¹⁰ B. Russell, *Theory of Knowledge* (1913), in *Collected Papers*, vol. VII, George Allen & Unwin, 1983, part. II ; chap.1

¹¹ B. Russell, *The Principle of Mathematics*, Cambridge University Press, 1903, pp. 140-141

¹² F. Clementz, “Asymétrie, ordre et direction : la notion de “sens” d’une relation”, in A. Gay (éd.), *Autour des Principia Mathematica de Russell et Whitehead*, Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2012

¹³ E. Tegtmeier, “The Ontological Problem of Order”, in K. Mulligan & H. Hochberg (eds), *Relations and Predicates*, Ontos Verlag, 2004 ; I. Johansson, “Order, Direction, Logical Priority and Ontological Categories” in J. Cumpa & E. Tegtmeier (eds.), *Ontological Categories*, Ontos Verlag, 2011

As it happens, some relations – like, say, (*temporally*) *precedes* – do enjoy both properties. But many ordering relations, as *being greater than* for instance, do not display any kind of inherent direction. Most obviously, if $a > b$ and $b > c$, then $a > c$ – something we might as well express as “ if $c < b$ and $b < a$, then $c < a$ ” – no matters which way we are to read this ordered series of dyadic relations : clearly, there is no objective and inherent direction going from a to b , for instance, rather than the other way round. (My own view, actually, is that such relations nevertheless involve some kind of “ dissymmetry ” (no to be confused with asymmetry), or fonctionnal non-interchangeability – some kind of *proto-order* – between their terms. But this is another story¹⁴) On the other hand, and to take another example among those put forth by Russell in *Theory of Knowledge*, consider the *loves* relation. If A loves B , nothing forbids, but unfortunately nothing ensures either, that B loves A . Such a relation is non-symmetric (which means, according to me, that it also implies some form of intrinsic dissymmetry), but, thanks God, not asymmetric (which means that, not being transitive either, it can in no way serve as foundation for any kind of relation of order). But, by contrast with the *greater than* relation, it would seem to harbour some kind of essential “ sense ” or direction. Like it or not, if A loves B (and, therefore, if B is loved by A), it is not just accidental, or due simply to some obscure linguistic convention, that we usually describe this (unique) state of affairs using the former formulation rather than the latter alternative.

Intentional relations, such as loving, are clearly directional. But are they *intrinsically* so ? As for me, I am inclined to give an affirmative answer, and this is where I would now depart from, say, Ingvar Johansson’s full view as expressed lately¹⁵. As a matter of fact, Johansson’s main contention is that there are actually *three* sub-categories of relations with a “ sense ” : *order*, *priority* and *direction*, and that, in each case, sense actually comes “ from the outside ”. For sake of brevity, I shall only consider *direction*.. According to Johansson, in the (unique) state of affairs expressed both by “ A loves B ” and by “ B is loved by A ”, there is no inherent direction going from A to B : what “ smacks of sense, ” in this case, has its source within A alone. Johansson’s view, to begin with, is that we should distinguish between the actual relation of loving as such (*R-love*) and the corresponding intentional mental state of being in love with B (*I-love*). His main argument is that if A “ loves ” B , while B , unbeknownst to him, is in fact departed, and since there can be no real rela-

¹⁴ see Clementz 2012

¹⁵ I. Johansson, *op.cit.*, pp. 100-101

tions except among actually (spatio-temporally), existing items, *A* cannot be said to “*R-love*” *B*, although, in one sense, John presumably remains in the same intentionnal state (*I-Love*). From this argument, he infers, first, that the “direction” of this particular instance of *R-love*, far from being intrinsic to it, comes from the underlying psychological state (*I-love*), whose intentional character is a “un-reducible phenomenon”, and, second, that *R-love* is an *internal* relation, in that its exemplification by *A* and *B*, in our example, supervenes upon the existence of both *B* and *A*’s corresponding intentional state which Johansson takes to be “logically independent” from the existence of *B*. Indeed, according to Johansson -whose analysis presents some acknowledged similarities with Searle’s two-components view of intentionality, with internal as well as external conditions of satisfaction -, “all intentional act and states have so to speak a from-to structure”, in that they are directed towards a to-pole (an intentional object), *which may or may not exist*” (p. 100 ; my emphasis). *Prima facie*, this looks as a “conjunctive” view of the *loves* relation, as opposed to the “disjunctive” account which I suggested above. Which view should we favour ?

Consider, again, Johansson main argument :

“When *b*, unbeknownst to *a*, dies, the *I-love* remains, but the corresponding *R-love* disappears, since it requires the existence of both the relata (...) *It is as simple as that*” (p. 100 ; my emphasis).

Well, is it really “as simple as that” ? One might wonder whether such a view does not rely upon an excessively narrow construal of the Scholastic dictum that a real relation requires the actual existence of each relatum. However, I shall not dwell on this complicated issue, which I leave open to discussion. Indeed, my main worry concerns Johansson’s account of “*I-love*” and, in particular, his claim that its instantiation by John, considered by itself, is “logically independent” from the existence of Mary. For, how should we describe, in the first place, John’s intentional state (which, of course, must not be confused with the pseudo “relational property” of just being in love with Mary ? Presumably, *I-love* is a quite complex psychological state, which is in part comprised of a number of more or less general dispositions, such as John’s well-known fascination toward Irish girls with both green eyes and a solid sense of humour, or his propensity to associate lasting relationship with mutual intellectual esteem. But there is also every reason to believe that – except, of course, in the rather pathological (and unusual) case where John gets suddenly enamoured of a wholly imaginary Mary -, John’s *I-love* psychological state also (and mainly) consists of the semi-actualization of these

“ primary ” dispositional states in the form of more specific “ secondary ” dispositions, more directly *en rapport* with Mary herself and, as it were, “ Mary-dependent ”. If so, the “ internal ” foundation of the intentional relation under consideration consists of a complex of various psychological states (desires, feelings, emotions, beliefs, etc.) whose genuinely intentional nature in turn depends, if not on this very relation itself, at least of a whole series of subvenient intentional relations such as their own directionality cannot be, on pain of infinite regression, explained away in terms of so-called merely “ internal ” states. The only alternative, in my view, would be to explicitly renounce the view that love is, generally speaking, a *de re* intentional state and to allow that its “ intentional object ”, whether its “ real ” counterpart actually exists or not, enjoys some form of immanent (in)existence in its own right. However, I presume this is *not* the sort of conclusion that Johansson would welcome (or, at any rate, that we should endorse).

Arguably, the same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, of quite a number of psychological attitudes as well. My own view, indeed, is that most intentional relations, or many of them anyway, are both “ real ” and *inherently* directional. John’s R-love for Mary, in particular, is (in part¹⁶) an “ internal ” relation indeed, although not because it has a “ foundation ” in John’s intentional state (*I-love*), but, rather, because it is partly *constitutive* of this intentional state itself. I told you : all you need is love.

¹⁶ but in part only, since it is “ external ” to Mary.