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## Seeking and Finding

### Intentionality as an Internal and an External Relation

#### **Abstract**

*The author asks whether intentionality could be described as an internal or an external relation. After he has shown that it is impossible to reduce intentionality to mere external (e.g. causal) relations, he emphasizes that it is not possible either to consider it to be an internal relation exclusively. There is no intentional internal relation without its context of external relations that permit it to work. The author tries to make a case for that by analyzing the problem of the determination of intentionality as related to the anticipative structure of intentionality, with special attention, on the one hand, to the issue of ambiguities and, on the other hand, to the one of impossibilities. He tries to show that the ability for the intentionality to self-determine depends on conditions which pertain to circumstances. His demonstration is in line with some kind of externalism (intentional externalism) in the philosophy of mind.*

Internalism and externalism are two competing positions in the philosophy of mind. According to the former, the mind is just to be defined by itself, without any reference to anything else. According to the latter, the definition of the mind involves some external factors necessarily – the reference to something else than the mind.

If the contrast is put this way, it seems that intentionality, at least in some traditional use of it, comes under the externalist perspective. Because, if we need a tentative definition of intentionality in the traditional sense, we may put it as the conception of the mind that interprets it as essentially in relation to an object. The appropriate characterization of mental acts or attitudes is the one that describes them as ‘orientation towards an object’.

This reading seems to introduce some ‘transcendence’ (in Husserl’s words) into the mind. Intentionality was often interpreted this way as a power of ‘externalization’ of the mind, as that which allows it to be ‘with the things themselves’.

So we could contrast what is called now the representationalist position with the intentionalist position: according to the former, the mind is closed and has primarily to do with its own mental contents as ‘representations’ (which might be *caused* by some external conditions, but this is extrinsic to their definition); according to the latter, the mind is intrinsically openness to the world, and is defined by its referring to any object (this referring is supposed to be ‘intentionality’).

This seems to be quite obvious, as far as intentionality, at least in its phenomenological traditional interpretation, is linked with a referentialist conception of the mind.

Having said that, the problem might seem to be solved. However, to my view, this is where it starts. Because, then, everything hinges on how we interpret this ‘referring’. In fact, the internalism/externalism issue can be applied to the referring itself, and the fact of having interpreted intentionality as some kind of referring does not preserve us at all from any kind of relapse into internalism. This is what we are going to investigate.

We shall therefore focus on the supposed to be ‘relation to an object’, which is said to define ‘intentionality’ in a traditional perspective.

A strategy that can pay off is to ask whether this relation is what one traditionally names an ‘internal’ relation or an ‘external’. Here we must not go too hastily: the fact of the intentionality being an internal relation does not immediately imply internalism, nor does the fact of its being an external relation externalism. The truth might happen to be much more mixed. However, we are going to suppose, as a working hypothesis, that the investigation about intentionality being an internal or an external relation reveals something as to the internalism/externalism debate. Doing in such a way, we shall follow in Russell’s footsteps in his *Analysis of the Mind*, and dwell on some aspects of the criticism Wittgenstein made of it in the *Philosophical Grammar*.

In the first place, what is exactly to be understood by ‘internal’ and ‘external’ relation?

A relation is ‘internal’ if it is essential to its constituents (or at least to one of them).

A relation is ‘external’ if it is not essential and can be broken without altering the nature of any of its constituents.

In the case of mental acts or attitudes:

- if there is an internal relation between them and some objects, that means that it is engraved on the former to be referred to the latter, and exactly to these (to an object and not to another);
- if there is no internal relation (and just external relations) between them and some objects, that means that every act or attitude can lose its contingent object and have another without ceasing to be the same act or attitude.

What is exactly the nature of the intentional relation to an object?

It seems, in any case, that the mere fact of entering in relation to something is not enough in order to characterize intentionality. To take up an example of Russell’s that Wittgenstein discusses, if I am hungry one thing or another can appease my hunger (including getting punched in the stomach!). But for all that we shall not say that the punch is the (intentional) object of my hunger. In general it is difficult to say that hunger is anything intentional, because if it seems to require an object (as a fulfilment), it does not determine any particular object: it is not essentially, in a determined way, ‘hunger of’ – even if, of course, it does tolerate secondary uses (as for children, gourmet and lovers) in which it is.

Intentionality seems to determine a ‘richer’ relation to its object. If I feel like an apple – which is not exactly the same as just to be hungry: if I am really hungry, I eat anything – I feel like something determinate (one thing and not another). This is precisely in this sense that ‘feeling like’ is an intentional stance.

Intentionality seems then to imply something really important: something like the *predetermination of its object*. It is not just the idea of an act or an attitude which is correlated to an object, but of an act or an attitude which determines to some extent the object it is correlated to.

In other words, what we recognize here is the core of the traditional conception of intentionality: the mere idea of *aiming at*. There is no aiming without any anticipation of the object. To aim you need to some extent to know what you are aiming at.

This is this anticipative structure of intentionality we shall discuss here. How far does it go? Depending on the range we give it, the answer to the question we have asked about intentionality as internal or external relation varies.

In fact, the general trend of the traditional conception of intentionality seems to be to interpret it to the effect of a (very strong) internal relation. Intentionality determines completely its object – there is no room left for any kind of externality in that.

Of course, that does not mean that we cannot aim at anything vague for instance (the determination does not need to be full), but, in this case, the vagueness must be understood as the vagueness of what it is aimed at – therefore as *determined* by the aiming itself – and not as a vagueness of the aiming, as if this one required anything else than itself in order to be determined. Even the indetermination of what is expected is perfectly determined by the expectation.

According to the intentionalist ‘orthodox’ point of view, every intentional act or attitude determines by itself its object – to that effect it may be said to be in ‘an internal relation’ to this object.

This claim raises a first difficulty, that the theory of intentionality extensively copes with. What happens when the so-called object does not exist?

Before dealing with this difficulty, we must observe that it is unavoidable in this perspective. Because, if we were to maintain that intentionality, as an internal relation, should always be a relation to an *existent* object, it would have as a consequence an extreme indefensible sort of idealism. That would actually mean that thinking of something is enough to make it exist. The door of the reality would be open to centaurs, golden mountains and other fairy tales creatures – which it is important, for the sake of dream as for the sake of science, to deal with as unreal.

We must therefore apparently confront the problem of what internal relations with *inexistent* objects can ever mean. What seems *prima facie* a little weird, because at least in one interpretation of the so-called ‘internal relations’, the internal relations have to do with existential dependence and how might what does not exist existentially depend on anything?

In fact, the fact that intentionality does not imply at all the existence of what it is aimed at was one of the reasons why the modern rediscoverer of intentionality, Franz Brentano, could not see it exactly as a relation. He denied intentionality the status of something really relational (*Relatives*) and considered it just as something relational-like (*Relativliches*). In a normal relation, the terms exist. According to him (this point might prove to be important), intentionality becomes a relation only from ‘outside’, when I describe an intentional act: in this case I am forced to describe it *modo obliquo*, as in relation to the object it aims at, exactly as, when I use a rela-

tional predicate, I can only describe an object ('smaller than' another, for instance) in relation to another. To that effect, intentionality is only metaphorically a relation, and its apparent relational structure seems to have something to do with quotation (with the way of *ascribing* intentionality to another or one's consciousness). We might speak of a 'quotational theory of intentionality' to the effect of some kind of 'Brentano-Quine' thesis.<sup>1</sup>

As opposed to this conception, we are going to discuss in the first place what we shall call 'the substantial theory' of intentionality. To this view, intentionality has to be understood intrinsically (and not just 'under a description') as a genuine relation – even if it is a relation that can turn out to relate to something that does not exist, that is the price to pay in order to save it as a relation.

The problem then is: how can it be an internal relation if the object it is related to does not necessarily exist, if the existence of the object does not depend of the existence of the act?

The answer is: something else in the object than its existence must depend on the act or the attitude which is orientated towards it.

What might it be?

We are, in this case, obliged to suppose something like the 'essence' or the 'sense' of the object, to be distinguished from its existence. Definitely, if we stick to a realist framework, we cannot afford the existence of the object to depend on the act itself (at least in general). However, we can suppose that *what can exist or not* is anticipated by the act. In fact, we can conceive of the intentionality as of some kind of bid of existence. The intended object does not exist necessarily, but the intentionality determines at least exactly *what would exist* if the intended object existed.

This is to this 'possibility of existence' that intentionality seems to be a relation, if it is a relation – and, we can add, an internal relation, because, if intentionality is to be understood this way, every intentional act or attitude determines completely its object, whether this object be or not. To some extent, existence does not matter (intentionality can do without it), this is exactly that which allows the relation to be 'internal' – not bearing on any external givenness of the object.

This position raises two questions:

- how far such a notion of predetermination of the object does really make sense when the object is *not* given and is 'a mere intentional object'? (this is the traditional 'intentional object problem');
- what kind of relation must we assume between the so-called intentional object and the object that can be given when we meet one that seems to match our intention? (this is the case of the 'fulfilment').

As to the first question, there seems to hide a real difficulty under the apparent obviousness of the intentional anticipation. It seems that I can anticipate whatever I wish inasmuch as no existence constraint seems to play any more role. But the problem is that, in this case, it is not clear that it does still make any sense to anticipate anything. Because what else could I anticipate than an existence?

To put it another way, the interest of the notion of intentionality is that it potentially gives us a grip on the real. One more time, intentionality is supposed to tell us how it would be if we had the thing. The theme of the de-

termination seems to be exactly related to that: what is determined is what would be given if the object which is intended would be.

Thus, if we make the ‘internal relation’ (between intentionality and the intended object) transparent, by suppressing the reference to any given real object, and doing just with the mere intentional object, it is not that sure that the notion of determination still makes any sense. What is the determining power of intentionality outside its normative power over the real?

The fact is striking that, in general, taken independently from its application to a range or another of real, the so-called ‘intentional object’, that should have been the determinate in itself (because the bearer of the determination as such) seems to be irremediably indeterminate.

To take up Quine’s example, if I am hunting lions, what am I hunting exactly?

As to this question, we have certainly to tell apart diverse situations. I can happen to hunt a specific animal, as Achab does with Moby Dick. But, in this case, the fixation of my intentionality depends on the fact that the reference is already given as real.

It is not what we call ‘hunting lions’ in general, but ‘hunting a certain lion’.

On the contrary, if we are just ‘hunting lions’, we are open to any lion that might appear.

But does this mean that we are not hunting any definite lion, but just some ‘lion in general’, that would be the proper object of our seeking? Or a definite lion that would not be any of the definite lions we may eventually meet, but just an ‘intentional’ one?

The last case of determination seems to be really problematic. What does in fact determine the non existing lion in comparison with other non existing lions? As it is known (Quine made the most of this line), there are problems of identification with non existing entities.

What the intentionalist may reply is: the fact remains that we call what we hunt a ‘lion’. To call it a lion is definitely to determine it to some extent, even if not down to the individual. To that effect, every intending is determining.

But the problem is to interpret this partial determination as an (internal) relation between intentionality and a (partially) determined object. The suspicion may then arise that we just take something from the real objects in order to construct objects to which something is missing (‘shadows’ of objects) and which are no objects properly speaking.

Maybe we might be attempted to answer that this appearance results from the example we took. In fact, the problem of intentional objects in general is not to be confused with the one of the so-called general or abstract objects. *Singular* intentional reference can perfectly make sense. For instance, when the French poet Verlaine writes:

*»Je fais souvent ce rêve étrange et pénétrant  
D’une femme inconnue, et que j’aime, et qui m’aime«  
(I often dream this strange penetrating dream  
About an unknown woman whom I love and who loves me)*

his vision has typically the style of singularity, as many of ours.

<sup>1</sup>

It is just apparently paradoxical to associate both names. They diverge on *whether we can* *make a science of it or not*, but their diagnosis on the fact itself is identical.

However, if you ask him whether this so singular woman has or not a mole on her left cheek, he won't be able to answer. Or, more precisely, he can answer whatever he wants, but this answer is not a description, this is a decision – proof that the object 'in itself' is indeterminate, or not completely determinate. To determine it further is not to explicit an intention that is already there, but to add a new intention.

Which constitutive vagueness of imagination the continuation of the poem expresses:

*»Et qui n'est, chaque fois, ni tout à fait la même  
Ni tout à fait une autre...*

*Est-elle brune, blonde ou rousse? – je l'ignore.«*

*(And who is never exactly the same  
Nor completely different...*

*Is she brunette, blonde or red? – I do not know)*

The individualization of the reference fuels to some extent the idea of 'intentional object'. This vision seems really to be 'about' an object (which is the definition of intentionality) and this object is *one* object. This apparent singularity however does not mean as much as determination: as an intentional object, the object seems to admit of some kind of intrinsic vagueness, which makes it open to decisions.

This kind of indetermination is not to be confused with the kind of 'determinate' indetermination we spoke of. The fiancée of our dreams is not intended as a vague fiancée, who would be a partial or incomplete fiancée, thus as a determinately intended indeterminate object – she is much more indeterminately intended as a determinate object (with some kind of hesitation in the intention itself or with some constitutive insufficiency of the intention to determine its object). In this kind of (not merely objective) indetermination, it is difficult not to see a property of the intentionality itself and *therefore* of the so-called intentional objects, that, to that effect, seem to be only partially objects (and not any 'partial objects').

To some extent, one can wonder whether the very idea of predetermination of the sense of the object makes any sense where the question of the possibility for the object to be given, in a sense or another, does not arise. *Pre-determination*, but in contrast to what?

We are therefore going now to tackle the second question – the question about intentionality and givenness.

How is the relation between what is given and what is intended to be conceived of?

If intentionality determines something like its proper object (the so-called 'intentional object') it seems to be a matter of comparison or overlapping. As if we had, on the one side, the intentional object, on the other side, the real one, and the problem was to identify both. There is the situation as we have expected it, and the situation as it is.

Which happens very commonly definitely: isn't it the case every time the situation diverges from our expectations? As if there was some competition: between the realized situation and the possible envisaged one. At this game, the real necessarily wins.

The problem looks a little differently if we consider the case in which the situation *is* the one we have expected. In this case, it seems that the intentional object *is* the real object and it seems really difficult to speak of a comparison. The things are just the way we have expected them to be – it is not the real thing that is *like* the expected one.

What fuels this interpretation is the grammatical feature, observed by Wittgenstein, that, in case of fulfilment, there is no room for a sense of the expected beside its own reality. Expecting something is not expecting something plus expecting its being the case, but it is exactly expecting that this thing be the case. In case of fulfilment, I cannot stop the intention short of the reality. It is the reality itself to which the intention is aimed at, and, in this case, it is hit.

The problem with this interpretation is the case in which the intention is not fulfilled. What to do with that? Are we to suppose that, in this case, there is something that is aimed at, that, contrarily to the case of the fulfilled intention, is not real?

This asymmetry would be quite paradoxical. Because the same attitude, according to what contingently happens, would not have the same meaning. I wait for my friend to come. If he comes, this attitude turns out to be a full-blooded relation to the real; if not, it is a mere relation to an ‘intentional object’ – and, in this case, his coming can be separated from the being the case of his coming, in an abstraction that constitutes the ‘intentional object’ itself.

There is a Wittgensteinian solution to this asymmetry. That is to stress the fact that *even if my friend does not come*, what I am waiting for is his coming being the case. But the expectation is just not satisfied exactly as a description happens to be false – incorrect. In any case, the intention is orientated towards the real, but the real can correspond more or less to its expectation. In fact, intentionality provides us with a norm in order to investigate the real.

That which goes in this direction (which consists in making the problem of ‘adequacy’ intrinsic to intentionality) is the fact that it makes perfectly sense to distinguish degrees in this fit of the real to intentionality.

To take up one of Wittgenstein’s example, if a gun is fired, it may happen that I find the shot not as noisy as I expected. Are we allowed to consider, in this case, that there was ‘a louder bang in my expectation’?

Wittgenstein doubts it, correctly to my view. There was no bang in my expectation and the impression of inadequacy certainly does not result from any comparison between two ‘bangs’ strictly speaking. What is true is that my waiting has defined something as a normative framework for the event and the event matches it or not. What is even more significant: it matches it *more or less*. It is not that the space is open to as many comparisons – between as many possible realities of the object and its unique intentional original – but that as every application of a standard as such, it allows degrees and fits more or less. What is involved is the attitude itself, as having its kind of normativity, and not any other ‘object’ than the (real) objects this attitude may turn out to be applied, more or less adequately. I am waiting for something. Something happens. The question is: is it what I was waiting for? And the answer is not to be found in any comparison (at the same level), but in the variable adequacy of that which happens to my expectation. In fact, within a limited range of possibilities, at least, there is no

‘difference’, properly speaking, between what is experienced and what was expected, but rather more or less adequacy. This is the sense we can make of the example of the muffled ‘bang’ – which is not the same as a ‘no-bang’.

To some extent, it seems to us that we can apply to what Wittgenstein says about expectation what Austin says about truth in his famous essay.

»There are numerous other adjectives which are in the same class as ‘true’ and ‘false’, which are concerned, that is, with the relations between the words (as uttered with reference to an historic situation) and the world (...). We say, for example, that a certain statement is exaggerated or vague or bald, a description somewhat rough or misleading or not very good, an account rather general or too concise. (...) There are various *degrees and dimensions* of success in making statements: the statements fit the facts always more or less loosely.«<sup>2</sup>

It is the same with expectation, even if the ‘direction of fit’, to speak like Searle, is not the same. What is expected in expectation is the real to fit the expectation. But this fit can be also ‘more or less loose’. It has all the uncertainties of a relation to the real. There is not one situation and just one which is expected, but the expectation works much more as a ruler that measures what is given, according to its lower or higher conformity to the expectation, to take up Wittgenstein’s image. A ruler does not refer to one and only one object – it is applicable to a real diversity of objects.

This interpretation of intentional attitudes considers them to be in any case relations to the real, to the effect of normative relations to the real. It might be interesting to sketch even a theory of fiction from that perspective – the fiction as exercise of representation of the real – but it is not our problem today. We shall just note that this interpretation, although it contests the autonomy of the supposed-to-be ‘intentional object’, is not that far from the classical (phenomenological) framework, in the sense that this one, while emphasizing the autonomy of intentionality that might intend whatever, claims as well that there is no intentionality without the horizon of a fulfilment (we might say: the *question* of a fulfilment), even if this one is impossible. According to the classical framework, thus, there is no intentionality without at least the question of its fitting the real.

Our reinterpretation seems to make intrinsically a connection between the intentionality and the real. We might wonder whether this idea of an intrinsic connection does not revive the risk of some intentional idealism. The answer however seems quite obvious: as the connection is normative, there is no risk. The real can fit or not – it is essential to the very idea of normativity.

To get back to our initial question, the model we are to adopt seems to drive us to a characterization of intentionality as some kind of external relation – since it stresses the fact that the object can be or not as it is intended, and that this is that object that can be or not as it is intended that is intended, and not another.

However, it may turn out that it is not that clear.

We have overcome any conception of intentionality as an internal relation to an object – the object, to some extent, is always external, it is that whose conformity to the intentional stance is at stake. But something is still ‘internal’: that is to say, the ability of the so-called ‘intentional stance’ to self-determine.

In other words, the *anticipating* structure of intentionality remains – we cannot see how the very idea of intentionality would make any sense with-



out that. That means that, to some extent, the intentionality must *know* what it intends.

Wittgenstein puts it that eloquent way:

»Die Tatsache ist durch die Erwartung auf ja und nein bestimmt.«<sup>3</sup>  
(The fact is to the expectation as the answer to a yes/no question)

This way of speaking seems to contradict with the precedent idea of *degrees* of satisfaction of the expectation. Anyway, Wittgenstein does not endorse it literally – he adds immediately: »unless the expression of the expectation is indefinite«. What really matters and what Wittgenstein wants to consider is the mere idea of *predetermination*, one more time. There is no intentionality without some kind of predetermination, which is *internal* to it. Here we find, beyond the idea of ‘intentional object’, very likely the real core of the idea of an ‘internal relation’ between ‘the intentionality and its object’.

However, as we glimpsed it with Quine, this idea is quite problematic.

In fact, two different kinds of problems are to be considered.

The first realm of problems regards *ambiguities*.

The second realm regards *presuppositions*.

In order to set up the first problem, let us get back to our Quinean example of hunting lions.

Let us suppose I am hunting lions and I shoot and kill a ‘liger’ – that is to say, the offspring of a male lion and a female tiger. Have I succeeded in my hunting lions? Obviously, from the naturalist’s point of view, I haven’t killed a lion. However – and this is an important point about intentionality – from the point of view of hunting lions, maybe the thing I have killed will do. Perhaps we can hold it to be a special case of hunting lions, because, *on the whole*, it does satisfy the requirements of hunting lions. At least, it is worth considering.

As to any intentional attitudes, whatever is given as a fulfilment, it is possible to ask whether this fulfilment fits or not.

Now it is not that clear, for many things, to which extent they fulfil the attitude. It would be really naïve to believe that there is some absolute ‘rule’ in the attitude itself that can determine which cases match the standard and which do not exactly. If intentionality works as a ruler, it is impossible to override the problem of its application. In every measure there is some uncertainty, and this uncertainty has to be defined so that the measure itself makes any sense.

Of course, Wittgenstein paid much attention to this problem. This is the exact purpose of his famous observation in the *Philosophical Investigations* (§ 242) about the necessity of agreeing ‘not only in definitions but also in judgments’, so that any language game is possible. He precisely takes the example of the measurement, and affirms:

»What we call ‘measuring’ is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement.«

What is decisive in this observation is the fact that, in order to secure the kind of determination we need for intentionality in general – the measure-

<sup>2</sup> Austin, »Truth«, *Philosophical Papers*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, 129–130.

<sup>3</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Grammatik*, § 112 / *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, § 465.

ment case is just an example – we seem to require *results*, that is to say already fulfilled intentionalities.

In other words, it is on particular cases of fulfilment, and only on them, that the exact nature of that whose fulfilment is sought is determined. That does not mean that what fulfils the intention will always be of the same kind. That just means that special cases of fulfilment necessarily play a paradigmatic role in the determination of the intention itself – that is to say, as its constitution as a ‘determinate’ intention.

As far as we have reached, that means that even what we have supposed to be most ‘internal’ to the intentionality – its determination – must to some extent be externalized. It is impossible to deal with an intentionality while bracketing the world. Because, in the sense, itself of an intentionality is very commonly involved a reference to cases of its fulfilment. It is really difficult to see how to make sense of most of intentionalities without considering this reference. Even if intentionality is not a genuine relation, but just an ‘orientation’, this orientation cannot still be internal. It is intrinsically exposed to the exteriority of its application – or at least of what the intentionality has to do with, if you refuse to speak of it in terms of ‘application’. To give an example, the *meaning* itself of hunting lions varies depending on whether I accept or not the shot of a liger as an instance of it – but, to some extent, this meaning does not precede this decision.

The fulfilment is therefore not just something additional to intentionality, as it could have seemed. That may happen that it plays a *paradigmatic* role for intentionality.

This is the first condition of externality that we find, from a mere logical point of view, for intentionality – intentionality cannot be (or at least not completely) defined by itself.

There is however another problem about externality, that arises just a step farther: beyond *ambiguities* (how far does the standard apply or not and could we consider the case to be a lower degree of what has been intended or to be off limit?), there are *impossibilities*.

Let us get back to my example of the ‘liger’. This example in fact poses a problem. Because there is no ‘liger’ in the nature. They only happen to be born in captivity. Therefore, unless we suppose (what is not very likely) that they have released one, it is probable, if I say to have killed a liger, that I have shot the animal of a zoo or something like that. Now shooting an animal in a zoo (one more time, except for exceptional circumstances) is not what corresponds exactly to that which one means by ‘hunting’. Therefore, not because it is a liger, but because of *that which the fact that it is a liger presupposes*, one can contest my right to speak of ‘hunting’, if I say that I have fulfilled my intention of hunting lions by killing a liger.

Now, the question is: does that mean that, in this case, I have *not* ‘hunted lions’? It depends on what one means by this negation. More specifically, my question is: is this negation an expression of non-fulfilment in the sense of incorrect fulfilment? – something is given that does not match the standard.

It seems that it is definitely not the case. Because this way not to fit would suppose some kind of minimal fit. If I say: ‘I was hunting lions, but, at last, due to what I killed, I failed’, that usually means that the object was not the expected one, but that the hunt – in some sense, at least, the ‘intention’ of hunting – remained.

In the case we consider, the inadequacy of the object, on the contrary, suggests that it was no hunt, but slaughter.

What I want just to stress is the fact that not every ‘answer’ is *relevant* to an intentionality. If I was hunting a lion and I kill a duck, I have not killed the correct kind of thing. If I was hunting a lion and I kill a liger, due to the special conditions in which it is possible to meet a liger, there are questions to be asked about the point to know if I was really hunting – the special kind of ‘fulfilment’ disqualifies my hunting as a hunting. That is to say: in fact, it has nothing to do with the intention of hunting lions, it is even not an incorrect answer to it – because an incorrect answer would suppose that we remained within the realm of what can be called ‘hunting’.

What we shall call ‘hunting lions’ depends to some extent of what we shall acknowledge as (real) fulfilments of this intention. According to the resulting standard, there will be situations we shall characterize as not or imperfectly matching. If you bring me a leopard, I shall deny that you have succeeded in your intention of hunting lions. But there are also many situations in which that does not make any sense to ask if the object really complies with the intention, because *the very conditions of the intention are not fulfilled*. A fulfilment that precedes the possibility itself of the other fulfilment and the sense it makes or not to consider the latter as obtained.

To make it more explicit, previously, when I quoted Austin about the degrees of satisfaction (and the fact of its having degrees), I deliberately truncated the quotation. Austin does not content himself with saying that »the statements fit the facts always more or less loosely«, but he adds that they do »in different ways on different occasions for different intent and purposes«. This reference to ‘intents and purposes’ could make happy the friends of intentionality who see it as a principle of determination. However, it intervenes here as an aspect of a more general principle of context. If we read intentionalities as defining some conditions of satisfaction, as we did, that means that over intentionalities themselves there are also some contextual conditions and limits. The problem of relevance concerns intentionalities as well. Every intention does not make sense in every context. As a rule, to make sense, an intention supposes some ontological conditions, that precede it and that exceed it. Because, beyond the situations that falsify a given intention, there are the situations that disqualify it. For instance, it does not make sense to believe anything in any given situation. There is necessarily a *presuppositional* structure of believing, and this presuppositional structure refers to the world.

This second dimension of externality is probably even more important than the first, ‘paradigmatic’ one. To some extent, the paradigmaticization of a case integrates it into the intentional structure itself. On the contrary, the externality of the pre-conditions of one intentionality is something that this intentionality cannot absorb – unless we adopt the notion of background, but to adopt it means as much as to recognize the impossibility to have a mere ‘internal’ theory of intentionality.

At last, it is impossible to stay ‘within’ one intentionality, nor within the intentional as such – to conceive of it exactly requires to consider the nexus of external relations in which it is involved. Outside this being involved, there is no intentionality – this one fades to full indetermination.

That does not mean that intentionality is merely an external relation, but that means that we need something (a real) to support us in order to deter-

mine the intentional (to give a clear shape to it), as well as something is required to support the intentional, in its own constitution, so that it is able to determine itself. The necessity is both epistemological and ontological, due to what intentionality is: something about *access*.

What has what we have said to do with the usual debate between internalism and externalism?

It seems quite obvious: if intentionality can be defined by itself, it seems that it might have also some kind of ontological autonomy – to belong to a realm of ‘inner’ entities or activities. The importance of the *result* and of the *context* we have emphasized, on the contrary, is at odds with any idea of absolute internalization – which does not mean that we must throw ourselves in the arms of any behaviorism. That just means that there is no mental achievement without a mental life and that such a life is in the world. Even its sense depends on that – far from being anything that might be studied ‘for itself’. There are external conditions for the intentionality to do its job – which sounds clearly like some kind of externalism.

There is no intentionality without an *intentional history*. And this, as every history, is outside.

Jocelyn Benoist

### Suchen und Finden

#### Intentionalität als interne und externe Beziehung

*Der Autor stellt die Frage, ob sich Intentionalität als interne oder externe Beziehung beschreiben lässt. Nachdem er gezeigt hat, dass es unmöglich ist, Intentionalität auf blosse äussere (d.h. kausale) Beziehungen zu reduzieren, betont er, dass sie auch nicht als eine ausschließlich interne Beziehung zu begreifen sei. Es besteht keine interne intentionale Beziehung ohne ihren Kontext von äusseren Beziehungen, die ihr Funktionieren erlauben. Der Autor versucht dafür ein Beispiel zu geben, indem er das Problem der Determinierung der Intentionalität so analysiert, dass er sie mit ihrer antizipatorischen Struktur in Verbindung stellt, einerseits mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Ambiguitätsfrage und andererseits auf die Unmöglichkeitfrage. Er sucht zu zeigen, dass die Fähigkeit der Intentionalität, sich selbst zu determinieren, von den Bedingungen abhängt, die den Umständen entsprechen. Seine Demonstration steht auf einer Linie mit einer Art Externalismus (intentionalem Externalismus) in der Philosophie des Geistes.*

Jocelyn Benoist

### Chercher et trouver

#### L'intentionnalité comme relation interne et externe

*L'auteur se demande si l'intentionnalité peut être décrite comme une relation interne ou une relation externe. Après avoir montré l'impossibilité de réduire l'intentionnalité à de simples relations externes (causales), il insiste sur le fait qu'il n'est pas possible non plus de la concevoir exclusivement comme une relation interne. Il n'y a pas de relation intentionnelle interne sans son contexte de relations externes qui lui permettent d'agir. L'auteur essaie de l'expliquer en analysant le problème de détermination de l'intentionnalité comme liée à la structure anticipative de l'intentionnalité, avec une attention particulière accordée, d'une part, aux questions relatives aux ambiguïtés et, d'autre part, à celles relatives aux impossibilités. Il démontre que la capacité de l'intentionnalité à se déterminer dépend des conditions qui se rattachent aux circonstances. Sa démonstration va dans le sens d'une espèce d'externalisme (intentionnel) dans la philosophie de l'esprit.*