

First and Second Intentions in Paul of Venice

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Paul of Venice

- Born in Udine, 1369.
- Moved to Oxford, 1390.
- Lectured in Padua, 1408.
- Lectured in Siena, 1420.
- Lectured in Bologna, 1424.
- Professor at Siena, 1427.
- Rector of Siena, 1428.
- Died, 1429.

The *Logica Magna*

The treatise covers most of the topics discussed by medieval logicians. . . but [it] is definitely not a textbook [Venice, 1979, p. xviii].

- Part I: On terms
- Part II: On propositions

Focus today: On the treatise on terms (Part I, Fasc. 1). No other treatise is a more natural place for a treatment of intention.

Categorematic vs. syncategorematic terms

Terms: divided into categorematic and syncategorematic (“*Pro quo primo notatur terminorum quidam sunt categorematici, quidam syncategorematici*” [Venice, 1979, p. 2].)

Definition (Categorematic terms)

A categorematic term is a sign, inwardly as well as outwardly simple, in accordance with a common law, without any sort of unifying effect on subject and predicate, but leading *per se* to a conception of something other than itself and what is equiform to it [Venice, 1979, p. 3].

Terminus categorematicus est signum, tam implicite quam explicite simplex, de communi lege, non extremorum aequaliter unitivum, sed alterius a se et suo consimili per se in notitiam deductivum [Venice, 1979, p. 2].

What is signification?

Definition (Signification)

To signify is nothing other than to represent the likeness of a thing to the memory or the cognitive faculty, or to cause the first concept ⟨of it⟩ in the mind [Venice, 1979, p. 41].

significare non sit aliud quem rei similitudinem memoriae vel virtuti cognitivae repraesentare vel conceptum primum in anima causare
[Venice, 1979, p. 40].

(Note here the use of '*conceptum*'.)

Natural vs. arbitrary signification (1)

Categorematic terms can signify in two ways, naturally and arbitrarily.

Definition (Natural signification)

I call a term *naturally significant* which signifies something which it is impossible for it not to signify as long as it is significant [Venice, 1979, p. 41].

Terminum voco significare naturaliter qui aliquid significat quod impossibile est significando non significare [Venice, 1979, p. 40].

Natural vs. arbitrary signification (2)

Mental terms always signify naturally, “for they cannot signify without primarily representing themselves and their distinct significata to the understanding, as is the case with such mental terms as *man*, *animal*, and *body*” [Venice, 1979, p. 41].

Note that this is substantially broader than earlier definitions of natural signification.

Written and spoken terms can also signify naturally

... but also spoken or written terms naturally signify themselves, just as other sensible things do. For they present themselves to the understanding through a proper intention, as do a man, a stone, and other ⟨sensible things⟩ [Venice, 1979, p. 41].

Why does this matter?

Terms are the spoken/written analogues of *intentions*. Cf.:

Suppose that just before the present instant you were uninterruptedly compounding:

You are a man,

and that just now for the first time you are putting into writing the intention every in the predicate position.

Pono quo continue ante instans quod est praesans componebas sic:

Tu es homo,

et quod nunc primo describas illam intentionem omnis a parte praedicati [Venice, 1979, pp. 12–13].

Concepts, judgments, and intentions (1)

Let's unpack this:

The “compounding” action here is one of judgment, of bringing concepts together. An intention is such a concept (or “mental image” in Kretzmann’s gloss) — what is at stake here is not that the reader began writing down “*omnis*” but that they were bringing in the concept “every” into the act of judgment they were making.

For “to compound is nothing other than to affirm one intention of another, and to divide is nothing other than to deny one intention of another. But because an intention such as *man* is distributed by a distributive act of the mind, the intention and the distributive act of the mind are predicated together” [Venice, 1979, p. 25].

Quia componere non est aliud nisi unam intentionem affirmare de alia, et dividere non est nisi unam intentionem ab alia negare. Sed quia talis intentio homo distribuitur per actum animae distributivum, ideo simul intentio et actus animae distributivus praedicatur [Venice, 1979, p. 24].

Concepts, judgments, and intentions (2)

Intentions are apprehended by a cognitive faculty:

Every sensible, proper or common, arouses an intention of itself in some interior faculty by means of which ⟨intention⟩ it is apprehended by the cognitive faculty [Venice, 1979, p. 43].

Omne sensibile, sive sit proprium sit commune, sui ipsius agit intentionem in aliquam virtutem interiorem, mediante qua a virtute cognitiva apprehenditur [Venice, 1979, p. 42].

A puzzle about intentions

Suppose that A is the intention of Socrates, with whom you are face to face, and that you are concentrating on that intention. Then the argument proceeds in the following way. A now naturally signifies Socrates to you because of the association and resemblance between A and Socrates, and it is consistent that this intention should signify while not signifying Socrates; therefore this intention signifies arbitrarily [Venice, 1979, p. 47].

Pono quod A sit intentio Sortis, qui sit coram te, et advertas te ad istam intentionem. Tunc arguitur sic. A significat tibi modo naturaliter Sortem propter convenientiam et similitudinem inter A et Sortem, et stat illam intentionem significare non significando Sortem; igitur ista intentio significat ad placitum [Venice, 1979, p. 46].

What justifies the minor premise?

Suppose that Socrates is receding from your sight as Plato is approaching and that throughout this process the intention A remains just as it was in your mind. Then: A is now signifying Plato while not signifying Socrates [Venice, 1979, p. 49].

Ponendo quod Socrates recedat a visu tuo, adveniente Platone, consimiliter disposito manente A intentione continue in animo tuo. Tunc arguitur minor sic: A iam significat Platonem non significando Socratem; ergo etc. [Venice, 1979, p. 48].

First and second intentions (1)

It is in the context of responding to this argument that Paul first uses the distinction between first and second intentions.

He argues:

Theorem

No intention that now primarily represents one thing by which the intention is primarily caused can represent another, distinct thing while not representing the former thing [Venice, 1979, p. 49].

Nulla intentio repraesentans modo unam rem primarie a qua primarie talis intentio causatur potest aliam rem distinctam repraesentare non repraesentando priorem [Venice, 1979, p. 49].

First and second intentions (2)

Why?

Proof of Theorem.

This is because no first intention representing one thing can represent another, distinct thing while not representing the former thing unless it is altered in one way or another [Venice, 1979, p. 49].

Quia nulla intentio prima repraesentans unam rem potest aliam rem distinctam repraesentare non repraesentando priorem nisi ista intentio aliter et aliter se haberet [Venice, 1979, p. 48].



What is *prima intentio*?

This is the first place where Paul even uses the notion of *prima intentio*. Kretzmann says in a footnote to this occurrence:

A first intention is one that is naturally significant (of itself and) of some entity other than an intention. The mental term man may be considered a first intention. An intention that is naturally significant (of itself and) of another intention only is a second intention. The mental term genus may be considered to be a second intention [Venice, 1979, p. 293].

Paul or Kretzmann?

The question is: Is this Paul speaking through Kretzmann? Or is this Kretzmann constructing a definition out of how these terms are used by other authors?

Given Paul's divergent account of natural vs. arbitrary signification, it is not obvious that he would maintain an account of first vs. second intention that mirrors earlier accounts.

More about intentions (1)

Since an intention caused or effected in the mind is a species of its individuals, an intention caused or effected in the mind by any of those individuals is equally a likeness of each of them as of the one [Venice, 1979, p. 91].

Cum intentio in anima causata vel effecta (est species eius individuorum), igitur intentio in anima causata vel effecta (per aliquod illorum individuorum) aequaliter cuiuslibet individui est similitudo sicut unius [Venice, 1979, p. 90].

More about intentions (2)

... I deny the second part of it—viz., that any altogether similar intentions are associated equally with every thing with which any of them is associated [Venice, 1979, p. 221].

Nego secundam, videlicet, quod quaecumque intentiones omnino consimiles aequaliter conveniunt cum omni re cum qua altera illarum convenit [Venice, 1979, p. 220].

Intentions represent their effective sources

Paul argues that an intention *A* which is associated with Socrates “as his likeness” *cannot* be generated by anything other than by Socrates:

Thus just as it is not possible that A should be produced in the intellectual power by Plato but only by Socrates, so it is not possible that it should be the image or likeness of Plato [Venice, 1979, p. 221].

Unde sicut non est possibile quod A fiat a Platone in potentia intellectiva sed a Sorte solummodo, ita non est possibile quod sit Platonis imago aut similitudo foret [Venice, 1979, p. 220].

Just as an image of Socrates in a mirror cannot be caused by Plato, no matter how similar they may seem to be, so “in the same way it is impossible that the image of the one should represent the other. It represents its effective source only” [Venice, 1979, p. 221].

Intentions and terms (1)

This means that intentions mirror the type of terms that engender them (similarly to how they mirror that which engenders them!): There are both *demonstrative intentions* and *common intentions*, because there are both demonstrative and common terms.

For instance, “take the intention corresponding to the pronoun ‘this’ which is suited to Socrates and let it be *A*” [Venice, 1979, p. 217] / *et assigno intentionem correspondentem huic pronomini ‘hoc’ quae competit Sorti, quae sit A* [Venice, 1979, p. 216]. This, then is a demonstrative intention, corresponding to the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’.

Intentions and terms (2)

Paul considers a case where there is a second demonstrative intention B , “which is an intention of Plato” [Venice, 1979, p. 229]. Even if Plato and Socrates are so similar as to be indistinguishable, there is no intention common between A and B that picks out both of them (the mirror argument above is the justification for this); and this is because despite ‘this’ being usable to signify more than one item, it is not itself a common term:

Although a demonstrative pronoun signifies more than one thing, it is not a common term because it cannot supposit for everything it signifies, but for only one [Venice, 1979, p. 219, 221].

quod pronomem demonstrativum plura significat, non tamen est terminus communis quia non pro quolibet quod significat potest supponere sed solummodo pro uno [Venice, 1979, pp. 218, 220].

Proper intentions

Similarly, there are certain intentions or concepts of a person which are *proper*:

One can, however, reply to these arguments in a way that takes more cognizance of natural things by summarily denying either that A signifies Plato or that Plato is what it signifies if it used to be a proper and distinct cognition of Socrates. Instead Plato is now cognized through a proper concept or intention of which he is the objective cause, distinct from a cognition or concept of Socrates [Venice, 1979, p. 53].

(From this we also see that 'intention', 'concept', and 'cognition' are all being used as synonyms.)

Notions are not intentions

If a man is far away and I take him to be a donkey, the notion of a donkey is not caused by him, but only that of a man, because of which a memory image of a donkey, properly representing a donkey, can be aroused [Venice, 1979, p. 53].

Si homo esset a longe quem putarem esse asinum, non propter hoc causaretur notitia asini, sed solum hominis, ratione cuius posset moveri species asini existens in memoriam proprie asinum representans [Venice, 1979, p. 52].

So what are we left with?

- No clear account of first intentions.
- Intentions are mental entities.
- Intentions, concepts, and cognitions are all the same thing.
- No account of second intentions.
- A wider account of natural signification means less use for second intentions?

References

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Edited with an English translation and notes by Normann Kretzmann.