



# Intentionality as Tendency and Intentionality as Consciousness-of

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## Abstract

In this paper, I argue that according to Edmund Husserl “tendency” does not designate a specific class of intentional experiences but rather, on par with “consciousness-of,” a universal mode of intentionality essential for any constitution of sense. In doing so, I explicate Husserl’s distinction between intentionality as tendency (*Tendenz*), which he describes as a striving (*Streben*), and intentionality as consciousness-of (*Bewusstsein-von*), which he describes as a presentation (*Vorstellung*) of an intentional object. Then, I discuss Husserl’s problematic way of relating these two universal modes of intentionality. Although he claims that intentionality as tendency presupposes intentionality as consciousness-of, I argue that the universal validity of this presupposition is put into question by the consideration of drives (*Triebe*), which Husserl describes as passive tendencies that originally lack any consciousness of the end strived toward, and, hence, do not seem to presuppose any presentation of it. I show that the lack of intentionality as consciousness-of poses two major problems in Husserl’s account, in that it makes drives seemingly unintelligible as (i) strivings and as (ii) motivated experiences. Lastly, to find a possible solution to these problems and better clarify the relation between intentionality as tendency and intentionality as consciousness-of at the level of drives, I explore Edith Stein’s account of drives as aimless strivings governed by experiential causality (*Erlebniskausalität*), discussing its advantages and potential drawbacks, as well as its compatibility with Husserl’s account.

In the phenomenological tradition, the description of the psychic life of the subject has revolved around the concept of *intentionality as consciousness of something*. The phenomenological analysis of conscious experiences aims to clarify how, for

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example, in perceiving I am conscious of a thing, in judging of a state of affairs, in evaluating of values, in willing of actions, etc. However, phenomenologists have also employed other concepts to analyze the structure of psychic life, notably the concept of *tendency*. Indeed, tendentious experiences seem to be present in all spheres of consciousness, from the passive level of instincts and drives to the active level of knowing, valuing, and acting. I can be passively driven and involuntarily strive toward something undetermined, such as when I am in a state of fatigue and my attention is pulled toward anything that could give me some relief, but I can also actively strive toward the achievement of a definite goal, such as when I want to spontaneously produce, cognize, or enjoy something of which I have a determined presentation (*Vorstellung*), e.g., a crafted object, a natural phenomenon, or a beautiful work of art.

In my paper, I will focus specifically on Edmund Husserl's and Edith Stein's phenomenological accounts of intentionality as tendency. The examination of Husserl is especially interesting, since in the recently published *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins* (Husserl, 2020a, b, c) one can find many analyses of the intentional experience of tendency. Even if quite extensive, though, Husserl's investigation is far from being exhaustive and systematic. On the contrary, it is tentative and explorative in nature. The *Studien* is, after all, a collection of research manuscripts that Husserl did not intend to publish, not in that form at least. Given this, considering how other phenomenologists, in the same years as Husserl, elaborated on the topic of tendency can be fruitful, not to say necessary, to gain further insights into the nature of tendency and to illuminate, by discussing convergencies and divergencies, Husserl's conception thereof. Among the many members of the phenomenological tradition, the figure of Stein particularly stands out, due to her philosophical affinity with Husserl,<sup>1</sup> but, more importantly, due to her own original contribution to phenomenology in general and phenomenology of tendency in particular. In the *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, Stein acknowledges the deep influence that Husserl had on her work. She states that her philosophical bond with her master is so strong that she is unable to tell whether the results of her study are entirely her own or whether they are, in fact, an appropriation of Husserl's thought motifs and ideas (see Stein, 1922: 1f.). Notwithstanding this philosophical bond, there is consensus among the scholars that Stein made original contributions on many topics, such as personhood, empathy, collective intentionality, the phenomenology of emotions and values, the nature of the state, the education of women, women's rights, and the nature of being and essence (see Szanto and Moran, 2020).<sup>2</sup> I claim that the phenomenological investigation of intentionality as tendency, especially in the form of a drive (*Trieb*), also offers us a paradigmatic case of Stein's originality. The dialogue with Husserl can show this clearly, precisely because of her strong philosophical bond with him. My aim is, thus, not so much that of proving that Husserl's and Stein's accounts of intentionality as tendency are similar. Rather, I aim

<sup>1</sup> Stein worked as Husserl's assistant from 1916 to 1918, transcribing and editing Husserl's research manuscripts, including those collected in *Ideen II* (Husserl, 1952a) and the *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins* (Husserl, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> For a study of Stein's original phenomenological analysis of personhood, empathy, and collective intentionality, see Jardine (2022), the contributions to Magri and Moran (2017), and Szanto and Moran (2015).

to assess especially the differences between the two, in the belief that, by uncovering the kernel of truth of each account, we can bring the phenomenological debate on intentionality as tendency to a higher level of understanding.<sup>3</sup>

In the first section, I explicate Husserl's distinction between intentionality as tendency, which he describes as a striving (*Streben*), and intentionality as consciousness-of (*Bewusstsein-von*), or, as he also classifies it, object-consciousness (*Gegenstandsbewusstseins*), which he describes as a presentation (*Vorstellung*) of the intentional object. In doing so, I show that according to Husserl "tendency" does not designate a specific class of intentional experiences, but rather, on an equal footing with "consciousness-of," a universal mode of intentionality that is essential for any sense bestowal (*Sinngebung*), i.e., for any intentional constitution of sense. Then, I discuss Husserl's problematic way of relating these two forms as universal modes of intentionality. Although he claims that intentionality as tendency presupposes intentionality as consciousness-of, in that tendentious experiences necessarily require a presentation of the goal strived toward, I argue that the universal validity of this presupposition is put into question by the consideration of drives (*Triebe*). Indeed, Husserl describes drives as passive tendencies that originally lack any consciousness of the end strived toward, and, hence, which do not seem to presuppose any presentation of it. I contend that the lack of intentionality as consciousness-of poses two major problems in Husserl's account, in that it makes drives seemingly unintelligible as (i) strivings and as (ii) motivated experiences. In the second section, to find a possible solution to these problems and better clarify the relation between intentionality as tendency and intentionality as consciousness-of, I explore Stein's account of drives as aimless strivings governed by experiential causality (*Erlebniskausalität*), discussing its advantages and potential drawbacks, as well as its compatibility with Husserl's account.

## Husserl on the Intentionality of Tendency as a Striving Toward Sense-bestowal

In the research manuscripts collected in the third volume of the *Studien*, Husserl makes a great effort to clarify the intentionality of tendency. Particularly insightful are the supplementary texts nr. 23 and nr. 67, entitled "Tendency as a 'form' of acts. The double sidedness of intentionality: tendency and consciousness-of [...]" (Husserl, 2020c: 308–311) and "Affection and attention as modes of object-consciousness (*Gegenstandsbewusstseins*). Striving as a universal modality of consciousness

<sup>3</sup> I would like to stress that the focus of my paper is the analysis of intentionality as tendency and, in relation to it, the discussion of its relation to intentionality as a consciousness-of. My consideration of drives (*Triebe*) as tendentious experiences, although relatively extensive, exclusively serves this purpose and the reader should not, therefore, expect a thorough characterization of the whole drive-related life of consciousness. I limit myself to covering the aspects of Husserl's and Stein's account of drives that I deem necessary to explicate the distinction and relation between intentionality as tendency and intentionality as consciousness-of. For more general phenomenological studies on drives and instincts in Husserl, see Lee (1993). For a general phenomenological account of drives, see Bernet (2020).

[...]” (Husserl, 2020c: 499–504), respectively.<sup>4</sup> In the former text, written in either 1913 or 1914, Husserl addresses the following phenomenon: every intentional act of consciousness, irrespectively of its type (e.g., perceiving a thing, judging a state of affairs, acting toward a goal, evaluating a valuable object, etc.) is accompanied by a tendency in its execution. More precisely, through the execution of an intentional act, a tendency is triggered. Indeed, tendency is not an independent experience that runs parallel to an intentional act, but rather it is the “form” of such an act:

Act and intention [*Akt und Intention*] – tendency. In every execution of an act [*Aktvollzug*] a tendency is triggered [*kommt zur Auslösung*]. [...] Tendency is a form. I-tendencies, acts. Basic types of acts, irrespectively of the form. The tendency toward fulfillment and the execution itself. The execution is a doing-occurrence [*Tuend-Geschehen*]. Under all circumstances, therefore, the I “does,” insofar as it executes acts, and the doing may already be a mode of a tendency, which in the doing satisfies itself [*sich sättigt*]. (Husserl, 2020c: 308)

The characterization of every intentional act as a doing-occurrence having the form of tendency poses a fundamental problem. If every intentional act, insofar as tendentious, is a doing-occurrence (*Tuend-Geschehen*), then one needs to determine how to differentiate between intentional acts considered “actions” in the proper sense—volitional acts through which the ego practically realizes something—and the intentional acts, such as acts of perception and judgment, in which the ego does not practically realize anything but rather cognizes it. Without operating this differentiation, one may erroneously conclude that Husserl’s talk of the constitution of objects through intentional acts implies that consciousness is a creating god, who makes objects, the world, and itself (see Husserl, 2020b: 202).<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, Husserl asks: “[...] how does actual perception differ from realizing, inner or outer doing?” (Husserl, 2020c: 304). After all, perception is something that often I happen to do and not necessarily something that I want to do. Also, I do not produce what I willingly perceive. Yet, Husserl claims that the “ready-made” perceptual objects, which confront us in life as mere physical things, are given as synthetic unities of passive experience (see Husserl, 1959: 78 [112]). Does this mean that, under closer examination, they turn out to be not ready-made, but rather products of the synthetic activity of consciousness? Similar considerations apply to judgment. I do not produce what I judge to be true. If I judge that such and such is the case, I am not producing any truth in the same way in which I produce, for example, a work of art. Nevertheless, Husserl characterizes “[t]he act of thinking as an action having

<sup>4</sup> All translations of Husserl (2020b) and (2020c) are mine. While the overall themes and chronological order of these and other quoted works by Husserl may vary, all the passages considered in the paper exhibit thematic coherence. They all contribute to the elucidation of Husserl’s claim that tendency is, on par with consciousness-of, a universal mode of intentionality essential for any constitution of sense.

<sup>5</sup> It is not my interest here to give a conclusive answer to the question of whether the will, in the form of tending, lies in every egoic intentional act, and, therefore, has no content peculiar to it but is, instead, a general mode of consciousness. For a discussion of this problem, see Melle (1997). In what follows, I will limit myself to clarify the sense in which every tendentious act can be considered, under a certain respect at least, a mode of the will and, hence, it can be distinguished from the intentionality as consciousness-of.

the practical goal of truth [...]” (Husserl, 2020c: 151). In Husserl’s view, the “goal” (*Ziel*) of an action is the practical “intention” (*Absicht*) of the ego’s will, which the ego endeavors to realize through its own doing. Does this entail that, according to Husserl, truth is the practical product of consciousness? And what does this mean exactly? In *Erste Philosophie*, Husserl also argues that “[t]heoretical life is a branch of the general practical life, whose practical field is cognition, and, on a higher level, the unity of a theory, at highest the unity of a universal theory” (Husserl, 1959: 203 [451]). Later on, in the *Cartesianische Meditationen*, he claims that logical objects—which, in their relations, make up the unity of a theory—are the products of practical reason in a maximally broad sense:

In active genesis the Ego functions as productively constitutive, by means of subjective processes that are specifically acts of the Ego. *Here belong all the works of practical reason, in a maximally broad sense. In this sense even logical reason is practical.* The characteristic feature (in the case of the realm of logos) is that Ego-acts [...] constitute new objects originally. *These then present themselves for consciousness as products [Erzeugnisse].* Thus, in collecting, the collection <is constituted>; in counting, the number; in dividing, the part; in predicating, the predicate and the predicational complex of affairs; in inferring, the inference; and so forth. (Husserl, 1950: 111 [77]; emphasis mine)

The quoted passages prompt us to pose the following question: how is it possible that all intentional objects, even those that are not practically realized but rather cognized, are produced by the ego through its own doing? In what sense are things, truths, states of affairs, collections, etc., products of the ego’s intentional activity? Husserl’s answer is that the intentional life is through and through a synthesis of consciousness (*Bewußtseins-synthese*), or, which is the same, sense-bestowal (*Sinngebung*). In the *Cartesianische Meditationen*, he writes:

This being-in-consciousness is a being-in of a completely unique kind: not a being-in-consciousness as a really intrinsic component part, but rather a being-in-it “ideally” as something intentional, something appearing or, equivalently stated, a being-in-it as its immanent “objective sense”. The “object” of consciousness, the object as having identity “with itself” during the flowing subjective process, does not come into the process from outside; on the contrary, it is included as a sense in the subjective process itself and thus as an “*intentional achievement*” of the synthesis of consciousness. (Husserl, 1950: 80 [42–43]; emphasis mine)

Similarly, in the *Studien*, Husserl argues the following:

Consciousness is through and through synthesis, and I-life [*Ichleben*] is act-life, activity (striving and willing), which the original form of giving sense [*Sinngebung*]. (Husserl, 2020b: 207)

An object is given “in” consciousness as an objective sense, i.e., as something that appears as having such and such sense (for example, as having the sense “red and round spatial thing,” “friendly person,” “threatening situation,” and so forth). Not objects simpliciter, but rather objects *qua* unities of sense are products of consciousness. They are so because they become *constituted*, or, which is the same, *synthesized* as stable unities of sense running through a manifold of appearances. For example, a red and round spatial thing does not appear as a series of totally disconnected sensible impressions, but rather as a relatively stable unity of sense against manifold appearances of extension, shape, color, causal properties, etc.<sup>6</sup> This stable unity of sense can emerge as an intentional object in the ever-changing stream of consciousness since certain appearances become synthesized by means of the execution of egoic intentional acts, which Husserl calls accordingly “sense-giving achievements” (*sinngebende Leistungen*). Insofar as intentional objects, *qua* unities of sense, are the products of these sense-giving achievements, intentional acts are characterized by Husserl as “doings” or “activities” executed by the ego. An intentional act of consciousness, thus, is a “doing-occurrence,” in the sense that it is a *synthetic activity through which the ego tends toward the production of a unity of sense*. In order to specify the essence of this tendentious activity, Husserl claims that “tendency is striving” (Husserl, 2020c: 308). The ego’s tending toward the production of unities of sense can be characterized in terms of striving (*Streben*). In general, a striving animates the subject in all its practical endeavors, and it is, therefore, a fundamental structure of action.<sup>7</sup> It turns out, however, that a striving can be found in all intentional acts, insofar as they are doings by the execution of which the ego strives toward the practical realizations of something. In the supplementary text nr. 23, Husserl remarks accordingly:

Every act, with the exception of the act in acting [*Handeln*], is a doing-occurrence with a content, in which a judgment, a joy, a desire, etc., is constituted, that is, actively produced [*tätig erzeugt*]. But in acting the same happens again, except that what is actively produced may appear as something external. (Husserl, 2020c: 309)

If all intentional acts have the fundamental volitional structure characterizing actions since through the execution of these acts the ego strives toward the production of intentional objects as unities of sense, what is the main difference between the intentional acts of perceiving, judging, valuing, etc., and those intentional acts called “external actions” in the strict sense of the term? The difference is that only by actions in the strict sense of the term the goal of the ego’s striving is the practical production of something in the real world and not just “in” consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Indeed,

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed phenomenological analysis of the constitution of a material thing, see Husserl (1952a, ch. I).

<sup>7</sup> At least, this seems to be the case for Husserl (2020c: 36), who describes an action as a volitional experience by the execution of which the ego strives toward the practical realization of the intended aim.

<sup>8</sup> In order to settle the question of the identity between willing and tending, one should therefore tackle the problem of the ontological status of the intentional object *qua* unity of sense and determine whether

the sense of the intentional object of outer actions is precisely that of a real thing practically produced by the agent.

## Consciousness-of and Striving as Two Universal Modes of Intentionality

The characterization of tendency as form of all intentional acts poses the problem of how to distinguish between the intentionality of tendency as the ego's striving toward the bestowal of sense and the intentionality of acts themselves as consciousness-of, i.e., a presentation (*Vorstellung*) having the intentional structure of a consciousness-of (*Bewusstsein-von*) or, as Husserl also class it, object-consciousness (*Gegenstandsbewusstseins*). He writes:

If we now have the “form” of tendency in acts, we still have to distinguish between the act itself and the tendency that is realized in the conscious existence of the act. Even if tendencies were to reign in all consciousness – and necessarily so – we would still have to distinguish: tending and acts, the “intentionality” of which is not itself the intentionality of a tendency. (Husserl, 2020c: 309)

Husserl gives a very concise answer to this question, pointing out in a footnote that, although short, his solution to the problem is fully satisfactory:

The idea of intentionality is what needs clarification here, and the double-sidedness that occurs in it must not confuse. If that form were to be considered, “intending” [*Intendieren*] would be precisely a tending. By contrast, what makes up the characteristic of presenting (believing), feeling, and willing consciousness would be the “consciousness-of” (Husserl, 2020c: 309).

In a sidenote commenting on this passage, Husserl writes: “But is this answer fully sufficient? Yes” (Husserl, 2020c: 309). Accordingly, in the acts of presenting (*Vorstellen*), evaluating (*Werten*), and willing (*Wollen*), we are theoretically, affectively, or practically conscious of something, respectively. This intentionality as consciousness-of is distinct from the intentionality as a tending toward the production of a unity of sense.

To understand why, in Husserl's view, this is a fully satisfactory way to distinguish the double-sidedness of the intentionality at play in the execution of acts, consider the following passage:

Objectivation, object-consciousness, for example (original case) a simple intuition. Universal form: continuous synthesis of original impression, original retention, and original protention. Original impression [is; NS] a mode of ful-

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this unity is identical to the object existing in the real world. As mentioned, I will leave this question aside, for it is not my interest here to address the problem of the identity between tendency and volition.



fillment. We have consciousness, “object-consciousness,” in different modes, unfulfilled and fulfilling modes. “Intention” says here only the type of “consciousness” as consciousness-of; “empty,” “still unfulfilled,” and “fulfilled consciousness” mean modes and likewise concrete forms [*Gestalten*] and transitional forms [*Übergangsgestalten*], a concrete unfulfilled consciousness fulfilling itself in the process of transition to a perception. There is however much to distinguish and describe. In this treatment, I thought this without regard to the modes of striving.\*

\* One could designate the protention belonging to every original time-consciousness already as a passive striving, as “tendency” (Husserl, 2020c: 499).

Here, Husserl openly states that the full characterization of consciousness-of, or object-consciousness (*Gegenstandsbewusstsein*), should take into consideration the modes of striving that essentially belong to it. A passive striving, he says, can be found already in inner time consciousness, which is the most universal and fundamental form of synthesis in the stream of conscious life. All intentional objects and conscious experiences are constituted or self-constituted as duration according to the synthesis operated by inner time consciousness through its interrelated moments of retention, primal impression, and protention. In this regard, it is worth considering some of Bernhard Rang’s (1973) insights. As part of his research, Rang attempted to clarify Husserl’s idea of intentionality as a striving, and, in my opinion, his account can be particularly helpful to clarify the distinction between consciousness-of and tendency starting from the notion of time consciousness, and especially protention. Indeed, Husserl states that in the moment of protention consciousness passively *strives* toward the “[...] closer determination of the indetermined-determinable horizon of experience” (Rang, 1973: 169).<sup>9</sup> In this respect, Rang stresses that Husserl abandons, without explicitly mentioning it, the position that he assumed in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, according to which the object of perception is, from the outset, fully determined according to all its properties. On this early account, *all* the properties of the objects are intended, although some of them are given in intuitive acts, while some others are intended in empty signitive acts (see Husserl, 1984: 590, 611). According to the late Husserl, however, this is not and cannot be the case, because, on the one hand, there is always something more than what is given in intuition, but, on the other hand—and this is what comes to the fore in Husserl’s mature account—, there is always something more in what is intuitively given than in what it is emptily intended. As Rang puts it, “[something; NS] emptily intended [*vermeint*] is something determinate, but in the mode of indeterminacy” (Rang, 1973: 177). That is to say, through the protentional intention, the horizon of the future becomes constituted not just as that which is yet to come, but also as something that, according to its sense, is not yet fully determined. Accordingly, in protention something is intended as something undetermined but determinable, or, as Husserl also says in *Erfahrung un Urteil* (see Husserl, 1939: § 21c), as something having the mode of indeterminate generality (*unbestimmte Allgemeinheit*). The classic example is the protentional intention of the backside of a thing. In perceiving a ball, I expect that in

<sup>9</sup> All translations of Rang’s text are mine.



the future course of experience, if I perform the kinesthetic movements necessary to see the backside of this object, I will see something colored. Yet, in my protentional expectation, the specific color (or its specific nuance) characterizing the backside of the ball remains indeterminate. It becomes determined only with the transition to the actual intuition of the backside of the thing. Now that I see the ball, I perceive not just something colored but, more specifically, something, e.g., yellow. In this respect, fulfillment is always a closer determination of the intentional object, and consciousness *strives* toward this closer determination through the moment of protention. Given this, Rang points out that, according to Husserl, an important distinction is to be made:

Intentionality as “striving” or “tendency” [...] is the *orientation toward something* [*Ausrichtung auf Etwas*] peculiar to the protentional modes of consciousness. In the open horizon of the future, the empty presenting is “not merely a presenting consciousness in general of its object [*von seinem Gegenstand*], but it is itself directed *toward* its object [*auf seinen Gegenstand gerichtet*]” (Husserl, 1966: 76). Husserl strongly emphasizes that the objective orientation does not pertain to the empty horizon as such, but only to those empty presentations that protentionally foreshadow [*vorausdeuten auf*] the future. Only protentional empty presentations, but not empty presentations in general, are directed. For Husserl, it is a matter of “sharply demarcating a class of empty presentations as ‘intending,’ directed toward their objects in the manner of intention. In simple becoming aware of [*schlichtes Gewahren*] we are directed toward what is presently appearing and at the same time ‘through it further toward what is to come’”. (Rang, 1973: 179)

In perception, the intentionality of tendency as an “orientation toward something” (*Ausrichtung auf Etwas*) is to be distinguished from the intentionality of the act as a “consciousness-of” since, to begin with, consciousness-of is not the expectation of what is to come, but it is simply the presentation (*Vorstellung*) of something as such and such determined.<sup>10</sup> It is only by taking into account the moment of protention, and, hence, the intentionality of the tendency that characterizes it, that we find the presentation of the future as something yet to come. This something is intended as the “goal” of the tendentious intention. The distinction at hand is not so obvious in the *Logische Untersuchungen*, in which Husserl argues that “[i]ntention is not expectation; it is not essential to it to be directed toward a future occurrence” (Husserl, 1984: 573). By the time of the *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis*, however, Husserl states, on the contrary, that “[a] being-directed stemming from an awakening [of protentions; NS] belongs to every actual intentionality” (Husserl, 1966: 83), where by “actual intentionality” he means any intuitive intention through which objective sense is constituted.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For a study of intentionality as tendency in sensible perception, see Summa (2014: 181–241).

<sup>11</sup> For a study on the symbolic character, and, in relation to it, the (un)intuitiveness and (un)certainly characterizing the tendentious protention of the indeterminate but determinable future, see D’Angelo (2019:

Why is tendency essential for the constitutive activity of intentionality, that is, for any constitution of sense? The answer should now be clear, if we keep in mind that, as we said in the previous section, tendency is the striving toward sense-bestowal. In this regard, it must be noted that the distinction between intentionality as consciousness-of and intentionality as tendency concerns not only the temporal aspect but also the intentional content, i.e., that which is intended in the intentional experience as a unity of sense. We saw that an essential aspect of a tendentious experience is that of being directed toward an object as something indetermined but determinable, or, which is the same, as something in the mode of indeterminate generality. This aspect is crucial to fully make sense of Husserl's claim that tendency belongs to any true intention as a sense-achievement (*Sinnesleistung*). Through tendency, consciousness strives toward the production of sense, since sense is not something ready-made. The sense of an object is not entirely determined from the very beginning of the perceptual experience that the ego has of it. On the contrary, it is constituted through the constant synthesis that takes place in the closer determination of the horizon of the experience. Importantly, this closer determination is not merely a transition from empty to intuitive intentions. If this were the case, there would not be any synthesis of sense but rather a mere change in validity: what was presumptively believed is now confirmed, insofar as it is no longer emptily meant through signitive intentions, but it is actually given in intuition. Other than tending toward confirmation, though, the closer determination of the horizon of experience also tends toward the enrichment of the sense of the intentional object. This enrichment—which occurs even if the protentional expectation is disappointed—is the goal of the synthetic activity of consciousness, which Husserl describes accordingly as teleologically oriented toward it in the mode of striving.

Notably, Husserl's characterization of consciousness as a self-enclosed stream of intentionality in the sense of consciousness-of is a well-known fact. For instance, in the *Studien* he states:

The monadic life is thoroughly “consciousness-of”. [...] Intention is the title for a universal mode of all conscious experiences, through which the I “enters into a relation to” the objects of consciousness. (Husserl, 2022b: 208)

However, the recognition of the universal role of tendency represents a crucial novelty. Only after the *Logische Untersuchungen* Husserl realizes that tendency is neither an experience among others nor an experience relegated to a specific domain of consciousness, but, on the contrary, a universal mode of intentionality as much as consciousness-of.<sup>12</sup> As he remarks in the *Studien*:

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255–286). For further studies on the experience of protention in Husserl's phenomenology, see the contributions to Soueltzis (2021).

<sup>12</sup> In this context, Husserl employs the term “mode” (*Modus*) not to indicate a modification of the validity of the intentional experience, such as when the certainty of belief is modalized into doubt or even negation, but rather to indicate the “form” (*Gestalt*) characterizing lived-experiences *qua* intentional (see Husserl, 2020b: 204; Husserl, 2020c: 501).

So we come to the question of whether object consciousness does not have a certain series of modalities, which the title “striving” designates, which [i.e., the striving; NS] is therefore nothing besides it, not a new consciousness that is merely founded in it, but something that constantly belongs to its concreteness, a variant form [*Abwandlungsform*] [...]. (Husserl, 2020c: 501)

In conclusion, consciousness-of and tendency are both universal modes of intentionality, insofar as a striving characterizes any execution of a sense-bestowing intentional act of consciousness. In order to fully understand the way in which the intentionality of consciousness constitutes unities of sense, one must take also tendency into account, since tendency is the necessary form of any true intention, that is, any consciousness-of through which the sense of intentional objects becomes constituted. However, if both tendency and consciousness-of are universal modes of intentionality, how do they go together? Do they not actually exclude each other? I turn to the consideration of this issue in the next section.

## **The Relation Between Consciousness-of and Tendency: The Problem of Drives**

The relation between intentionality as consciousness-of and intentionality as tendency remains problematic. The reason lies in Husserl’s claim that tendency presupposes a presentation (*Vorstellung*) of the end strived for. In the *Studien*, he writes:

Assuming that we are allowed to identify tendency and striving, what does each striving presuppose? [It still presupposes; NS] a “presentation” of that which is strived for [*Erstrebten*]. (Husserl, 2020c: 310)

That tendency presupposes a presentation of that toward which it strives seems to be justified. If tendency is a striving directed toward something, then this something must be somehow presented as the “end” of the striving, otherwise, it is not clear how the experience in question can aim at it and consequently be considered teleological oriented. However, Husserl describes not only ego-tendencies, i.e., active strivings of the ego through the execution of intentional acts. According to him, all acts of the ego originate from the sphere of passivity. In the *Ideen*, he writes:

In active genesis, the Ego functions as productively constitutive, by means of subjective processes that are specifically acts of the Ego. [...] In any case, anything built by activity necessarily presupposes, at the lowest level, a passivity that gives something beforehand; and, when we trace anything built actively, we run into constitution by passive generation. (Husserl, 1977: 111 [77–79])

The intentional acts originate, more specifically, from passive tendencies that are triggered before any active participation of the ego in the constitution of sense:

We have a sphere of tendency that is a sphere of passivity—generally an “unconscious” one, one situated outside of the pure I and the acts emanating from it—and a sphere of I-acts, especially I-volitions [*Ichwollungen*]. The sphere of possible acts of the will extends as far as tendencies and the entanglements of positive and negative tendencies and the events of self-triggering, self-discharge of tendencies. (Husserl, 2020c: 80)

Crucially, in the passive sphere, Husserl seems to put into question that tendency necessarily presupposes a presentation of the goal strived toward:

Genetically: the original awakening of drives. Drive without a co-starting presenting-horizon [*ohne miteinsetzenden Vorstellungshorizont*] of the process laid out in its sense. Later, drive with the drive-course presented in advance [...]. (Husserl, 2020c: 467)

In their most original awakening, drives (*Triebe*), i.e., passive tendencies that are triggered before any active participation of the ego, do not have, differently from ego-acts, a protentional horizon of the future in which the future course of the drive-process is presented, not even in the mode of a determinable-indeterminacy. Therefore, it seems that in the case of passive tendencies a consciousness-of, i.e., a presentation of that which it is strived for, is not presupposed.<sup>13</sup>

In my view, at least two issues follow from this. A first issue consists in the intelligibility of an “aimless” striving: if drives, in their most original awakening, do not have a presentation of that which is strived for and, therefore, are aimless (no presentation whatsoever of an “end” is constituted yet), why do they still count as strivings, i.e., as processes that are teleologically oriented toward (*ausgerichtet auf*) something?

A second issue concerns the motivation of the most original awakening of drives. According to Husserl, the general schema through which we can understand the triggering of passive tendencies is the following:

The schema is: stimuli are the starting point of tendencies; stimuli can trigger tendencies, and the tendencies come to fulfillment, to release [*Entspannung*]. (Husserl, 2020c: 413)

The validity of this general schema is put into question as soon as there is no longer a consciousness-of, i.e., a presentation whatsoever of something that, by appearing, functions as a stimulus that triggers the drive. Indeed, it is by referring to the notion of a “presented being” that Husserl specifies what plays the role of stimulus:

<sup>13</sup> Importantly, the consideration of drives does not simply put into question the necessity of consciousness-of *qua* the intentional relation between a self-identical object and the ego. The consideration of drives challenges, more radically, the necessity of consciousness-of even *qua* an egoless passive presentation (*Vorstellung*) of unities of sense, functioning as affective allures and objectlike formations (*Gegenstandlichkeiten*), on the basis of which any activity of the ego—including the constitution of objects (*Objekte*) through the spontaneous acts of perceiving, judging, valuing, willing, etc.—becomes possible.

*The drive is something “permanent” [Bleibendes] that is “awakened” only by an existing being [Daseiendes], which is “appointed” to function as the initial phase of the drive occurrence. This being [Daseiendes] therefore exerts an affection, a stimulus, on the I, namely on the I as an impulsive-I [Triebich], as the bearer of the drive. (Husserl, 2020c: 468)*

Thus, the second issue can be formulated *through* the following question: what triggers the drives in their most original awakening if any consciousness-of is missing?

In order to address the two issues identified above, I now turn to the examination of Stein, who gives an account of drives as aimless strivings in which no consciousness-of is yet at play.

### Stein on Drives and Experiential Causality

That Stein, like Husserl, addresses the problem of the intentionality of tendency, especially in the form of drive, should be no surprise. Thomas Szanto and Dermot Moran (2020) point out that Stein wrote the *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften* around the time she was editing *Ideen II*, in which Husserl developed, among other things, a transcendental account of the person, which essentially entails the analysis of passive tendencies such as instincts, drives, and habits.

In the section of her *Beiträge* entitled “*Drive and Striving*,” Stein points out that the target of her analysis is passive striving:

Obviously, strivings are not free acts. They originate in me without my doing anything myself, and they cannot be the outcome of a resolution. To be sure, it makes a kind of sense to say: I want or I plan to strive for knowledge. That striving then signifies a doing that is initiated in order to attain knowledge. But don’t confuse it with the striving that we have in view here, which should be delimited from willing. Don’t confuse deliberate striving with the drive [*Trieb*] to jump up and run out into the open air; or even with drive for knowledge, the mysterious urge [*Drang*] to break open some path that leads to knowledge; or with striving toward the kinds of doing that were designated above as “striving” in an equivocal use of the term. Striving, in the sense of the impulsive [*Triebhaften*], can only be awakened in me; it cannot be willed or freely executed. It is not a deed of mine; it just happens to me.  
(Stein, 1922: 54 [61]; translation amended)

Stein is not interested in the active, deliberate, and voluntary striving of the ego, but rather in passive striving, such as the drive to run out into the open air or the mysterious urge for knowledge. In this regard, she makes the important distinction between “drive” (*Trieb*) and “striving” (*Streben*):<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Although Stein makes the terminological distinction between “drive” (*Trieb*) and “striving” (*Streben*), from the passages under consideration it emerges that, at the conceptual level, she maintains that drives are

At this point we consider striving, which we now are separating from drive and characterizing by its “aim-consciousness” [*Zielbewußtsein*]. To begin with, we can consider it as one “conversion” [*Umformung*] of the drive, a conversion that is to be understood from the fact that something is presented that could satisfy the drive and, to be sure, as satisfaction of what was promising [*Befriedigung Verheißendes*]. The previously aimless drive now directs itself toward what’s presented. The drive to move perhaps turns into a desire for a hike.

(Stein, 1922: 61f. [68f.]; translation amended)

The “blindness” through which Pfänder wants to separate striving from willing is something that we will recognize for the drive but not—at least, not in the same sense—for goal-directed striving.

(Stein, 1922: 63 [70]; translation amended)

Stein’s distinction well captures Husserl’s claim that, from the genetic point of view, drives are first aimless strivings, which can then acquire a goal. Importantly, Stein also addresses the question of whether drives, as aimless passive strivings, are motivated or not in their awakening:

We begin by establishing: there is such a thing as unmotivated striving. The urge to get moving, which arises from an exuberant aliveness and releases itself in running, leaping, dancing, and such; the urge to keep busy, which issues from a state of hyper stimulation, a “nervousness” (understood, of course, only as a conscious state) and discharges in a quest for always new impressions and occupations—they are conditioned [*bedingt*] purely causally by these states. We wish to designate them as *drives*. The direction inherent in them is absolutely not grounded upon any objective having consciousness of a goal; it gets determined at all only in the experience of an actual fulfillment or the finding of a possible fulfillment. Here we have a mere being driven [*Getriebenwerden*], like the ball that is sent off in a certain direction by a bump. The “driven” I [*getriebene ich*] is admittedly conscious of being driven, but it doesn’t strive toward a previously grasped goal any more than the moving ball does. Thus in the drives we have experiences without objective grounding that—if we disregard a possible engagement of the will—depend purely upon the life condition [*Lebenszuständlichkeit*] at the moment, are produced by it, and increase or subside or even vanish altogether as it changes. Therefore there are states under which any drive ceases, wherein the power is lacking for any kind of activity of living [*Lebensbetätigung*] (of course “activity” [*Betätigung*] is not to be understood here as “free doing” but rather as a “going-out-of-itself” [*Aus-sich-herausgehen*] which is also to be regarded as a being-driven).

(Stein, 1922: 58f. (65f.); translation amended)

Unlike Husserl, Stein thus maintains that drives are *unmotivated* strivings. The law that governs the awakening and unfolding of these aimless experiences is not that of

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strivings, the only difference being that they are not *active* strivings executed by the ego but rather *passive* strivings that happen to it.

motivation, precisely because an objective basis, i.e., a presentation of that toward which the experience strives, is (still) missing. What is then, in Stein's view, "the source" (*die Quelle*) of drives? What awakes drives by functioning as a stimulus and, further, what is the law that governs their unfolding, which Stein describes as a mere "being driven" (*Getriebenwerden*) or "going-out-of-itself" (*Aus-sich-herausgehen*) similar to the movement of a ball that is sent off in a certain direction by a bump? Stein gives her own original answer, which we do not find in Husserl: the source from which drives originate is a "life-state" (*Lebenszuständlichkeit*) of the ego and, in relation to it, the law that governs the unfolding of drives is that of "experiential causality" (*Erlebniskausalität*). Let me clarify these ideas so as to answer, in the next section, the following questions: does Husserl understand drives teleologically while Stein mechanically? Are the two phenomenologists operating at the same level of analysis, or, rather, is Husserl working in a transcendental framework, while Stein is in a psychological one? By answering these questions, we can critically address the issue concerning the intelligibility of an aimless striving and the issue concerning the law of drives.

According to Stein, experiential causality is the analog of mechanical causality in the domain of physical nature:

Without doubt, we're correct to stake a claim to this phenomenon as a causality of the experiential sphere [*Kausalität der Erlebnissphäre*], as an analog of causality in the realm of physical nature, and, in fact as an analog of the basic case of causality (to which physics tries to reduce all other causal relations): mechanical effecting [*des mechanischen Wirkens*]. Just as a rolling ball sets in motion another ball that it bumps, just as the motion induced depends on the "momentum" [*Wucht*] of the impact as to direction and speed, so the "impetus" [*Anstoß*] that goes out from the sphere of life [*Lebenssphäre*] determines the manner of the course of the rest of the experiencing. Not only the quality but also the "strength" of the effect depends on the origin, except that the strength here isn't measurable as in the area of physical nature.

(Stein, 1922: 13 [15]; translation amended)

In Stein's view, the mechanical effecting that takes place in the sphere of physical nature is characterized by the following phenomena (see Stein, 1922: 13 [15]):

A "causing occurrence" (*verursachendes Geschehen*), e.g., the movement of a ball.

A "caused occurrence" (*verursachtes Geschehen*) or "effect" (*Wirkung*), e.g., another ball moving.

An "event" (*Ereignis*) between the two occurrences that is the proper "cause" (*Ursache*) of the caused occurrence, e.g., the event of the bump between the two balls.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Husserl offers a similar description by stating that natural causality takes place when two distinct and independent processes of nature,  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , are in temporal continuity or contact such that "if  $\alpha$  occurs, then  $\beta$  'must' occur" (Husserl, 2020c: 61).



With the characterization of physical causality in full view, Stein argues that experiential causality is similar to it to the extent that “the effect [*Wirkung*] cannot possibly fail to happen if the cause [*Ursache*] and causing occurrence [*verursachendes Geschehen*] have occurred [...]” (Stein, 1922: 14 [16]). That is to say, what experiential and physical causality have in common is the mechanical character of the relation of causation. Nevertheless, there remains an essential difference between physical and experiential causality:

However in the experiential sphere, the event that we designate specifically as cause is not inserted between causing and caused occurrence. Rather, the event determines the causing occurrence, which cannot possibly elapse “ineffectually” (Stein, 1922: 14 [16])

According to Stein, in the domain of physical nature, the “causing occurrence” (*verursachendes Geschehen*) takes place independently of whether the “event” (*Ereignis*) that causes the “caused occurrence” (*verursachtes Geschehen*) or “effect” (*Wirkung*) takes place or not. If we consider the example of the game of billiard, the movement of a ball can occur even if it is not followed by any impact, from which another ball would start moving. In case the intermediary event does not take place, thus, the causing occurrence takes place without being followed by any effect. Crucially, though, in the experiential sphere, the event does not occupy an intermediate position between causing and caused occurrence. The event determines not the caused but rather the causing occurrence, which is always effective from the causal point of view, i.e., it is always followed by the caused occurrence or effect. To understand why, let us take a closer look at what plays the role of cause, causing occurrence, and caused occurrence in the life sphere.

Whereas physical causality has to do with natural things, experiential causality has to do with experiences. The kind of experiences that play the role of causing occurrences, i.e., the experiences that mechanically cause other experiences, are called by Stein “life-feelings” (*Lebensgefühlen*). The life-feelings mentioned by Stein are the following: vigor (*Frische*); weariness (*Mattigkeit*); superalertness (*Überwachheit*); irritability (*Reizbarkeit*). Every change in life-feelings is a mechanical cause (*Ursache*) of a change in all other conscious experiences. Let’s see how Stein exemplifies this:

If I feel myself to be weary, then the current of life seems to stagnate, as it were. It creeps along sluggishly, and everything that’s occurring in the different sensory fields is involved in it. The colors are sort of colorless, the tones are hollow, and every “impression”—each datum that is registered with the lifestream against its will, so to speak—is painful, unpleasant. Every color, every tone, every touch “hurts.” If the weariness subsides, then a shift enters the other spheres as well. And in the moment where the weariness changes into vigor, the current starts to pump briskly, it surges forward unrestrainedly. Everything that’s emerging in it carries the whiff of vigor and joyfulness.

(Stein, 1922: 12f. [14f.])

Changes in the life-states of the psychic are experienced as changes in life-feelings.<sup>16</sup> Changes of life-feelings consist either in the passage from one quality into another, e.g., from vigor to weariness, or in alterations of the intensity of one and the same quality, e.g., the intensity of weariness. Both these kinds of experienced changes in life-feelings mechanically cause the awakening of drives. For example, if weariness turns into vigor, a drive to run is awakened. If I feel more and more nervous, I am eventually driven to move frantically. In the experiential sphere, thus, the mechanical effecting can be described by the following phenomena (see Stein, 1922: 12f. [14f.]):

The “event” (*Ereignis*) or “cause” (*Ursache*) in the proper sense is a change of life-feelings, e.g., the passage from vigor to weariness.

The “causing occurrence” (*verursachendes Geschehen*) is the life-feeling determined by the event, e.g., an increased intensity of nervousness.

The “caused occurrence” (*verursachtes Geschehen*) or “effect” (*Wirkung*) is the awakened drive, e.g., a drive to run.

With Stein’s account of experiential causality in full view, we can now turn to the problems concerning the intelligibility and the law of an aimless striving.

## The Compatibility of Stein’s and Husserl’s Account

On the basis of Stein’s account of drives and experiential causality, we can tackle the two issues raised at the end of the discussion of Husserl’s own account. As regards the issue concerning the intelligibility of an aimless striving, it seems that in Stein the problem is even aggravated, since she explicitly characterizes the unfolding of drives not as a teleological but rather as a mechanical process having the form of a “going-out-of-itself” (*Aus-sich-herausgehen*). Why does she call drives “unmotivated strivings” and does not actually claim that drives are not, in fact, strivings at all, but rather conscious processes that run purely mechanically?

Stein does not address this issue. Like Husserl, she does not even pose the problem of the intelligibility of aimless strivings. However, I contend that it is precisely this lack of concern that is philosophically interesting since it points to a conviction that Stein and Husserl share. I venture to say that, for both, there is no need to address the problem of the intelligibility of an aimless, and even mechanical, striving. The reason is that Husserl would solve this problem in the same way in which he solves the problem concerning the principle of unity of certain kinds of conscious experiences, namely objectifying and non-objectifying acts, sensible and categorial acts, and non-voluntary and voluntary acts. What gives unity to objectifying and non-objectifying acts? What allows us to say that non-objectifying acts, i.e., evaluations and volitions,

<sup>16</sup> In this respect, Stein remarks: “Determinations of a reality, its states and properties, manifest themselves as immanent contents in the life feelings - just as in the extraegoic data. The color of a thing manifests itself in color sensations as its momentary optical state, and in turn, such states manifest the enduring optical property. In the same way, a momentary determination of my ego - its life-state - manifests itself in the life feeling, and in turn, such determinations manifest an enduring real property: life-power” (Stein, 1922: 22 [19]; translation amended). For a discussion of life-power, see §II.2 below.

although they are not, strictly speaking, consciousness of objects, are nonetheless intentional? Husserl's answer is that there is the ideal possibility for the ego to convert, through a shift of attitude, non-objectifying acts into objectifying ones. As he claims in *Ideen II*, "all acts which are not already theoretical from the outset allow of being converted into such acts by means of a change in attitude" (Husserl, 1954: 8 [10]). Husserl adopts the same strategy when he argues that there is a unity between the sensible objectivity given in an act of perception and the categorial objectivity given in an act of thinking. Considering the example of nature, he remarks: "this (harmoniously flowing) experiencing [of nature; NS] already bears 'implicitly' in itself, 'before' our thinking and the categorial formations produced by our thinking, the being-sense of Nature, as the same sense that thinking explicates" (Husserl, 1974: 105 [119]). In general, all sensible objects already bear in themselves, as ideal possibilities, the categorial forms that are actualized through thinking by the ego, such that we say, accordingly, that through judging the ego determines the true being of sensible objects as exhibited in corresponding states of affairs. Last but not least, in the practical field, Husserl tackles the problem of how non-voluntary and voluntary acts can be unified as deeds of the ego. How can we claim that *both* kinds of acts are executed by the ego, thereby ruling out that non-voluntary acts are not the ego's deeds but rather just passive experiences that happen to it? Husserl's answer to this question is that "it belongs to the essence of a field of the non-voluntary that it can become a field of the voluntary; a possibility of voluntary perpetration corresponds to every possibility of non-voluntary perpetration" (Husserl, 2020c: 203). Non-voluntary and voluntary acts can be unified since there is the ideal possibility for the ego to turn the former into the latter. This ideal possibility is what gives unity to voluntary and non-voluntary acts and allows us to consider them both as "deeds" of the ego, i.e., as something that the ego practically realizes. I contend that Husserl and Stein presuppose the same kind of argument in the case of drives: although aimless, drives still count as strivings since there is the ideal possibility for them to become goal-directed. Notably, in Stein's work, we find a thorough account of how this "conversion" (*Umformung*) takes place, e.g., of how the aimless drive to move turns into a goal-directed drive for a hike, and, further, of how causality, motivation, and willing intertwine once drives become aimful strivings (see Stein, 1922, ch. IV, especially §§ 2–4, and ch. V).<sup>17</sup> To sum up, I maintain that for both Husserl and Stein an aimless striving is intelligible in that there is the ideal possibility that a consciousness-of teleologically develops from a blind drive, thereby converting it into a goal-directed experience.

As regards the question of what kind of law governs drives, I argue that, in this case, we find a great amount of originality on Stein's side. Husserl does not develop any idea of mechanical experiential causality but maintains that the universal law of passive genesis is that of association, which is a motivational law and not a mechanical law. Therefore, in what follows I would like to make some critical remarks about the compatibility between Husserl's and Stein's accounts. The question to be addressed is specifically the following: does a phenomenological account of drive

<sup>17</sup> For a study of Stein's description of the intertwinement between psychic causality and motivation, see Ales Bello (2010).

necessarily require the reference to the idea of experiential causality, since the law governing the awakening and unfolding of drives is the conscious manifestation of causal changes in the states of a psychic reality?

Before attempting an answer, let me stress that, from a methodological point of view, Stein's research seems to follow the main principles of Husserl's phenomenology. We are not comparing different ways of doing phenomenology, which have totally different goals, concepts, and problems. In the entry on Stein for the Stanford Encyclopedia, Thomas Szanto and Dermot Moran (2020) point out that in the *Beiträge* Stein developed her philosophy of psychology around the time she was editing Husserl's *Ideen II*. They add, notably, that Stein ties her own research with Husserl's aim of developing a transcendental phenomenological account of the human person. To be sure, the goal of Husserl's *Ideen* is not identical to the goal pursued by Stein in the *Beiträge*. Right at the beginning of her work, Stein writes that her goal is "[...] to penetrate into the essence of psychic reality [*psychische Realität*] and of the spirit [*Geist*] from various sides, and thereby to secure the ground for an appropriate demarcation of psychology and the humanities [*Geistwissenschaft*]" (Stein, 1922: 1 [1]; translation amended). According to Husserl, the goal of transcendental phenomenology is not the investigation of psychic reality. However, Husserl recognizes the deep impact that transcendental phenomenology can have on the reform of psychology. As he points out in his clarificatory remarks written for the English translation of the first volume of the *Ideen* in 1931:

The work in question is a philosophical one and does not make the reform of psychology one of its themes, although it cannot be totally lacking in indications for a genuine intentional psychology as a positive science.  
(Husserl, 1952b: 159; *Ideen II*: 427)

Stein is fully aware of this, and, even though in the *Beiträge*, she is not interested in the exploration of transcendental consciousness but rather in the phenomenological exploration of psychic reality, she does not make the fundamental mistake made by most psychologists, who, according to Husserl, erroneously think that the entire transcendental phenomenology of the *Ideen* is of no concern to them as psychologists:

I had to emphasize the distinction between transcendental subjectivity and psychological subjectivity, and so I declared repeatedly that transcendental phenomenology is by no means psychology, not even phenomenological psychology. Unfortunately, the effect upon most professional psychologists was their complete failure to notice the radical psychological reform that is implied in transcendental phenomenology. They interpreted my remarks to mean that the entire transcendental phenomenology of the *Ideen* would be of no concern to them as psychologists.  
(*Ideen II*: 425; Husserl, 1952b: 158)

Different from "most of professional psychologists," Stein stresses that the psychic is an intentional correlate of transcendental consciousness and is therefore constituted by it:

To every object and to every class of objects there correspond certain types of nexuses of consciousness. And conversely, if certain types of nexuses of consciousness are running, then to the subject of this living consciousness there must appear, with necessity, a certain type of objectivity. That's what the doctrine of the "constitution of objects in consciousness" states. There's an ideal lawfulness that regulates the nexuses of constituting consciousness and constituted objects. The exploration of this lawfulness is the task of pure transcendental phenomenology. For its subject matter, it has consciousness with all its correlates. Among what belongs to the set of those correlates is the psychic, which forms the subject matter of psychology. Like the entire natural world, the psychic is constituted in regulated nexuses of consciousness. (Stein, 1922: 5 [7]; translation amended)

The I is grasped only as a bearer of its properties, as a transcendent reality that comes to givenness by manifestation in immanent data but never becomes immanent itself. We shall designate this real I, its properties and states, as the psychic. We now see that consciousness and the psychic are distinguished from one another in their basic essences: consciousness as realm of "conscious" pure experiencing, and the psychic as a sector of transcendent reality manifesting itself in experiences and experiential contents. (Stein, 1922: 19f. [23f.]; translation amended)

Thus, to the extent that she investigates the psychic as an intentional correlate of consciousness, Stein remains faithful to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.<sup>18</sup>

However, the fact remains that Stein anchors the experiential causality governing drives in the manifestation of psychic causality:

The real causality of the psychic manifests itself in the phenomenal causality of the experiential sphere. The enduring properties of the real I, or psychic individual, appear as a substrate of the psychic causal occurrences which persists in a regulated changing of modes of those properties; so that a determinate property—lifepower (*Lebenskraft*)—is singled out as both setting the mode of the others by its own momentary modes, and set in its own states by them in turn. The fact that powers are supplied to or withdrawn from lifepower is a "cause" of the psychic occurrence. The "effect" consists in the alteration of other psychic properties. There isn't any direct causal dependence of other properties on one another without the mediation of lifepower. For example, receptivity for colors can be neither enhanced nor diminished by receptivity for sounds. Yet the two can be enhanced together by an increase of lifepower that's independent of both of them. Or, lifepower can be diminished by the activity of one, and in that way the other is diminished in turn.

(Stein, 1922: 121 [25]; translation amended)

<sup>18</sup> However, for Stein's criticism of Husserl's transcendental idealism, see Santis (2021), Heffernan (2021), and Burns (2021).

Life-power is an enduring property of the “psychic,” which Stein identifies as the transcendent real ego that manifests itself in experience. Life-power is quantitatively limited, exhaustible, and replenishable, thereby accounting for the “energy-turnover” that takes place in the causal change of the life-states of the psychic. Since changes in life-states are experienced as changes in life-feelings, changes in life-feelings are also manifestations of the increase or decrease of the psychic’s life-power, which causes all changes in life-states. Stein argues, accordingly, that experiential causality is the phenomenal manifestation of the psychic causality that, depending on the momentary mode assumed by life-power, determines the changes in life-states.

Would Husserl accept this? Is Stein’s account a compatible development of his own phenomenological analysis, or, on the contrary, would Husserl argue, against Stein, that “for those who live in the habits of thought prevailing in the science of nature it seems to be quite obvious that purely psychic being, or psychic life, is to be considered a course of events similar to natural ones, occurring in the quasi-space of consciousness” (*Ideas II*: 423; Husserl, 1952ab: 156)? If this is indeed the case, in Husserl’s view Stein would belong to:

The few who [although; NS] realized that something of great psychological relevance was being said here, and who then tried to make it accessible to others, did not grasp the whole sense and the entire import of an intentional and constitutive phenomenology.

(*Ideas II*: 425; Husserl, 1952a: 158).

All this indicates that Husserl would reject Stein’s account of drives. In § 32 of *Ideen II*, entitled “Fundamental differences between material and psychic reality,” Husserl openly states that psychic causality is not an analogon of physical causality, as Stein claims. To begin with, in opposition to Stein, Husserl does not consider the psychic, i.e., the real I, its properties and states, as a transcendent reality that comes to givenness by manifestation in immanent data but never becomes immanent itself. According to Husserl, the “soul” (*Seele*) constitutes itself as a reality not insofar as real properties of something transcendent manifest themselves through its own states (*Ideas II*: 139; Husserl, 1952a: 131). The states of the soul are not manifestations of transcendent unities but rather are the immanent lived experiences belonging to the stream of consciousness (*Ideas II*: 139; Husserl, 1952a: 131). Given this, Husserl clarifies that “the unity of the soul [*Seele*] is a real unity in that, as unity of psychic life, it is joined with the Body as unity of the Bodily stream of being, which for its part is a member of nature” (*Ideas II*: 146; Husserl, 1952a: 139). In Husserl’s view, thus, psychic reality is the unity of soul and body, and not a putative real I “in itself” that comes to manifestation in immanent data without ever becoming immanent itself. In relation to the issue of psychic causality, this marks a crucial difference from Stein’s view. Indeed, Husserl remarks:

[...] we must undoubtedly say there is no soul-substance: the soul has no “in itself” the way “nature” has, nor does it have a mathematical nature as has the thing of physics, nor a nature like that of the thing of intuition (since it is not a schematized unity). And as far as causality is concerned, we have to say that if

we call causality that functional or lawful relation of dependence which is the correlate of the constitution of persistent properties of a persistent real something of the type, nature, then as regards the soul we cannot speak of causality at all. Not every lawfully regulated functionality in the factual sphere is causality. (*Ideas II*: 139f.; Husserl, 1952a: 132)

It is well known that, according to Husserl, the psychophysical dependencies unifying the “soul” (*Seele*) and the “body” (*Leib*) are not relations of empirical consequence ruled by mechanical laws of natural causality (see Husserl, 1977: 101 [97f.]; Husserl, 1952a: 221 [218]; Husserl, 2020c: 53, 56, 64; Husserl, 1954: 219 [215]). Furthermore, Husserl maintains that psychophysical dependencies *alone* never determine a state of the soul, since motivation is always at play (*Ideas II*: 143; Husserl, 1952a: 135f.). As he says,

[...] the soul has complexes of dispositions and, thereby, real qualities, which manifest themselves in it as having originated from it itself out of its own influence rather than out of a relation to something external. It is clear that this type of dependency is still less to be considered an analogon of physical causality than is the conditionality through external circumstances [i.e., psychophysical conditionality; NS].

(*Ideas II*: 143f.; Husserl, 1952a: 136)

More generally, Stein’s account violates Husserl’s principle that the fundamental law of spiritual life is motivation (see Husserl, 1952a: § 56),<sup>19</sup> and further, it violates the principle of the self-sufficiency of the spirit as opposed to nature (see for example Husserl, 1970: 297).<sup>20</sup> In Husserl’s view, thus, a phenomenological account of drive *cannot* depend on the idea of experiential causality.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusions

In this paper, I argued that, according to Husserl, tendency is a universal mode of intentionality on par with consciousness-of. Whereas consciousness-of is the presentation of something as such and such determined, tendency is the striving toward

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the tension between a naturalistic-biological and personalistic-phenomenological account of drives, see Pugliese (2016).

<sup>20</sup> In this regard, in a recent study on the originality of Stein’s phenomenological thinking, Burns (2021: 479) argues that, by developing the concepts of the “Psychic” and of “Psychic Causality,” Stein attempts to do phenomenology without committing to Husserl’s idealistic claim of the dependency of nature on the spirit.

<sup>21</sup> Importantly, though, the question of the awakening of drives remains an open question in Husserl’s phenomenology. What triggers the drives in their most original awakening if any consciousness-of is missing? Perhaps the intentionality at play in the passive associations motivating the awakening of drives is not “presentational” (*vortellungsmäßig*) but purely “affective” (*gefühlsmäßig*): although the presentation of the end strived toward is missing, drives passively strive toward this end in the mode of feeling. I leave for future research the investigation of whether this is a promising and convincing phenomenological account of drives.



sense-bestowal (*Sinngebung*). Although Husserl claims that intentionality as tendency presupposes intentionality as consciousness-of, his own analysis of passive tendencies in the form of drives seems to put into question the universal validity of this presupposition. In this regard, I argued that the lack of any consciousness-of is problematic, in that it raises the issue of the intelligibility of drives *qua* strivings and *qua* motivated experiences. To tackle this issue and better clarify the relation between intentionality as tendency and intentionality as consciousness-of at the level of drives, I explored Stein's account. Through the examination of Stein's description of drives as aimless processes lacking any consciousness-of, I contended that, for her but also for Husserl, drives, even if aimless, are still intelligible *qua* strivings due to the ideal possibility of turning them into goal-oriented experiences. I argued, however, that Stein's claim that drives are unmotivated strivings governed by the law of experiential causality is incompatible with Husserl's account. I showed that this incompatibility is not simply attributable to the fact that Stein operates at the level of phenomenological psychology while Husserl operates at the level of transcendental phenomenology. The most crucial difference between the two philosophers is rooted in fundamental principles that are not subscribed to by both, namely the idea that psychic causality is not an analogon of physical causality, that the fundamental law of spiritual life is motivation, and that the spirit is self-sufficient as opposed to nature.

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