



Introduction: Affect, Tendency, Drive—Perspectives on the Basic Structures of Intentionality

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“Intentionality” is a key concept in 20th- and 21st-century philosophy of mind and phenomenology. Different from “intention,” “intentionality” is not a concept of ordinary language; it has been introduced in philosophy to refer to a structural feature of consciousness, namely its “aboutness” or “directedness” towards something (see, for example, Jacob, 2023; Müller & Summa, 2018; Siewert, 2022; Summa et al., 2022). As is commonly known, Franz Brentano, inspired by Aristotelian-Scholastic philosophy, discussed the relation between mental phenomena and their objects using the expression “intentional in-existence” (*intentionale Inexistenz*), denoting the “reference to a content, direction toward an object (...) or immanent objectivity” (Brentano, 1995: 68). Such a relation to an intentional object, according to Brentano, distinguishes mental phenomena from physical phenomena, for “[e]very mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself” (Brentano, 1995: 68). Brentano identifies different classes of mental phenomena and argues that the way in which the relationship to the object is established varies according to each class. However, he maintains that the intentional in-existence of the object is the mark of the mental: “[i]n presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on” (Brentano, 1995: 68).

In the last few decades, several authors in the philosophy of mind have adopted Brentano’s approach to the intentional relation of consciousness to an object. These authors have not only further investigated the extent to which the intentional relation represents the mark of the mental, but have also closely analyzed how this relation is specified in cognitive, volitional, and emotional acts (e.g., Albertazzi, 2006; Albertazzi et al., 1996; Crane, 1998, 2009, 2013; Kriegel, 2017, 2018; Montague, 2016; Textor, 2017).

Acknowledging Brentano’s legacy and critically assessing it, Edmund Husserl also considers “intentionality” to be a key concept for describing the structures of consciousness. However, his view on intentionality differs from Brentano’s in

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several ways. Husserl notably emphasizes that intentionality is not the mark of the mental *tout court*, but rather the mark of conscious *acts*. Furthermore, he argues that the relationship between the intentionality of cognitive, volitional, and emotional acts requires a more nuanced understanding of acts, contents, and objects than what Brentano proposes (see Husserl, 2001b: 94–128; Müller & Summa, 2018).

Against this background, Husserl and his scholars develop the phenomenological approach to study the intentional structures of consciousness in various ways. The early phenomenological debates raise important questions about intentionality that continue to shape current philosophical discussions. These questions include the distinction between the intentionality of cognitive, emotional, and volitional acts, the unity of intentional consciousness, and the relationship between individual and collective intentionality. Thereby, phenomenology primarily designates a method for systematically describing and analyzing the intentional structures of conscious acts, their relationships, and the different levels and layers in which they are organized.

A significant part of the investigation of intentionality is thus devoted to the analysis of the experiential structures that constitute conscious acts and their objects. Typically, intentional directedness at *determinate* objects has been taken as paradigmatic for phenomenological inquiries. Thereby, the focus is on the intentional consciousness of objects with features that can be specified. You see a cup on your table, you remember your friend Pierre or imagine what he is doing in a Parisian café, you are happy because Pierre came to visit you, etc. However, phenomenological research is far from being exhausted by the study of intentional directedness at determinate objects. One way to broaden the scope of phenomenological inquiries is to look at intentional experiences that are not, or not yet, directed at a determinate object: an open and initially indeterminate form of directedness, which can, however, become determinate.

Consider, for example, the following scenarios: you notice a hazy figure in the distance, which instinctively compels you to approach it to identify what it is. Your friend Pierre talks with you about Café de Flore, a place you have never visited, and as he speaks, you find yourself associating various vague images with what he is saying. You are sitting at your desk and writing a paper and meanwhile forming the undistinguished desire to be elsewhere, but you do not know where: maybe hiking in the hills, maybe lying at the beach, or maybe somewhere else; all you feel is the urge to leave the current situation. And finally, you are engaged in an everyday task, like writing an e-mail, when suddenly your attention is captured by a melody playing in the distance; you start to impulsively improvise movements experimenting with your fingers on the table, until you find yourself creating a rhythm that gradually takes shape.

In all these cases, your activities are intentional, although what they are directed at is not determined from the very beginning. These cases notably encompass moments of tentative exploration and are characterized by an open and indeterminate form of being-directed, an intentionality which becomes determined to the extent that conscious activity unfolds.

In the ongoing exchange with philosophy, psychology, and psychoanalysis, concepts such as “affect,” “tendency,” and “drive” have become increasingly relevant in phenomenological research. Various authors have adopted these concepts to

elucidate the fundamental structures underlying the interplay between indeterminate and determinate intentionality. By shedding light on the directedness of tendencies, drives, and affects, this Special Issue aims to investigate the basic structures of indeterminate intentionality and their connection with determinate intentionality. The contributions of the collection draw from different prominent figures in the history of philosophy, particularly thinkers of early phenomenology, Husserlian, and post-Husserlian phenomenology. Some of them also discuss insights from psychoanalysis and philosophical psychology. Against this background, it should be noted that the concepts of tendency, drive, and affect vary sometimes significantly among the contributions. What they all share is nonetheless the reassessment of specific types of cognitive, affective, and volitional experiences, all of which are central to human experience and cannot be understood in terms of a determinate object-directedness.

Several contributions to this Special Issue explore the historical origins of the phenomenological tradition, notably focusing on the phenomenological understanding of the concept of tendency. Given that the discussions concerning this concept find their roots in the intellectual milieu of the Munich and Göttingen schools of phenomenology, these vibrant academic environments, in which phenomenologists engaged in lively debates, also receive significant attention. Thus, this Special Issue addresses a wide range of phenomenological analyses and covers various philosophical perspectives. It includes contributions on Theodor Lipps' philosophy of tendency, on Alexander Pfänder's philosophy of action and motivation, and on Husserl's account of the role of tendency in cognition. It also comprehends comparative studies, for instance on Moritz Geiger's and Husserl's approach to feelings and affects, on Husserl and Edith Stein's approach to drives, and on Husserl's and Max Scheler's interpretation of intentionality as "oriented and blind". In addition to early phenomenologists, consideration is given to other influential philosophers and psychologists who addressed the basic structures of intentional experiences, such as Plato, Sigmund Freud, Wilhelm Wundt, Karl Bühler, Gilles Deleuze, and numerous contemporary scholars.

In what follows, we will introduce the meaning of the concepts of tendency, affect, and drive in relation to indeterminate intentionality. In order to clarify in what sense these concepts are related to the basic layers of intentionality, we will mostly focus on Husserl's contributions. We will also provide an overview of the topics that are addressed by the contributions to this collection and indicate how they align with the notion of a "basic" form of intentionality.

Tendency as a "Basic" Structure of Intentionality

In philosophy and psychology, the concept of tendency generally refers to a pull towards a certain progress within consciousness. To better illustrate this idea, it is helpful to consider the widely recognized concept of *action tendencies* in the context of emotion theory (Frijda, 1987; Lowe & Ziemke, 2011). Emotions have been described as involving or even *being* action tendencies to convey the idea that they can trigger specific responses within us, urging us to perform certain actions. For example, when we experience fear in response to a threatening

situation, such as encountering a thief at night, we feel an urge to either run away or confront the thief in a burst of panic. Emotions are consequently understood as action tendencies insofar as they pull us towards certain actions.

For Husserl, “tendency” neither exclusively nor primarily refers to emotion and related feelings but is involved in different kinds of conscious experience as a “basic” form of intentionality. What does “basic” mean in this context? Speaking about “basic” structures of intentionality suggests a layered view of consciousness and conscious activity. Husserl develops such a layered view at least since the *Logical Investigations*, where he distinguishes the simple (*schlicht*) intentionality of perceptual acts from the higher-order intentionality of categorial acts (Husserl, 2001b: 269–320) and conceptualizes the latter as univocally founded upon the former. Thus, for example, the intentionality of a judgment such as “this cup is green” presupposes, or is founded upon, the simple intention towards the object referred to as “cup” and to the quality “green” as well as a more complex categorial intention attributing the property of “being green” explicitly to the cup. In his later work, Husserl develops his view on the relation between basic or simpler forms of intentionality and more complex forms of intentionality in genetic terms (see, e.g., Husserl, 1969, 1973a, 2001a), investigating not only the foundational relations between simple and categorial acts but also the origins and the processes of formation of intentional directedness at different layers.

Husserl considers the static and the genetic phenomenological methods to be complementary and equally indispensable for the phenomenological inquiry into the structures of consciousness (Husserl, 1973b: 613–626, 2001a: 624–648, 2006: 4–6). While the focus of static phenomenology is primarily on foundational relations between layers of intentional experiences, genetic phenomenology pursues the question concerning the origin and dynamic development of those structures (see, e.g., Aguirre, 1970; Bégout, 2000; Lohmar, 2017; Welton, 1983).

The adjective “basic” related to the structures of intentionality assumes a different meaning nuance in static and genetic phenomenology respectively. While “basic” in static phenomenology means that the simple acts are foundationally prior to and entailed by more complex acts, in genetic phenomenology, “basic” refers to structures of experience that are primary to the extent that they represent the source or the origin for a development that leads to complex structures. The basic structures of intentionality are therefore presupposed by and more fundamental than the more complex ones. Yet, they also contain the seeds for the development of more complex structures. Accordingly, when saying that tendency is a “basic” form of intentionality, we are not only referring to processes in the passive sphere of consciousness but also to the dynamic nature of all intentional activities: “all intentionality is in itself also ‘tendential,’ permeated (*durchwaltet*) by tendencies” (Husserl, 1987: 196).

One of Husserl’s crucial insights, developed around the 1910s is that the primal layer of intentional directedness has the structure of an indeterminate tendency and that the structure of a tendency is characteristic of consciousness from the primal layer of the passive syntheses and sensible experience to the more complex layers of meaning intentions and meaning fulfillment (Husserl, 2002: 272–292, 2005: 131–224, 2020b; see Melle, 2002, 2005, 2015, 2020).

This is confirmed by several contributions in the Special Issue, which show how the concept of tendency in Husserlian phenomenology assumes various nuances of meaning: it applies to both perceptual experience and the consciousness of signs and their meanings; it appears to be mostly tied to drives, passive strivings as proto-forms of active volitions, and in a broader sense applies to cognitive and emotional acts as well; it designates both a passive and an active accomplishment, etc.

If we consider tendency against the background of Husserl's layered and dynamic account of conscious life, we can say, in general terms, that passive tendency can be seen as a primary and still indeterminate mode of pre-egoic intentionality, which also animates acts characterized by intentionality towards determinate objects. In genetic terms, tendencies arise within a "field of pregivenness, from which a particular stands out and (...) 'excites us' to perception and perceptive contemplation" (Husserl, 1973a: 72). Such standing-out of a prominence yields a centripetal affective tendency toward the ego: it strikes us passively, catches our attention, and sets a centrifugal active tendency into motion (Husserl, 1973a: 76). Accordingly, a "graduated tendency links the phenomena, a tendency of the intentional object to pass from a position in the background of the ego to one confronting the ego" (Husserl, 1973a: 77). Tendency animates the life of consciousness even in the absence of a specific object to which the ego actively turns, but remains operative in the process of determination of the object. Intentionality as a tendency shapes our cognitive, emotional, and practical orientation in the world. In these various domains of our lived experience, and as a consequence of the awakening of attention, a primal and indeterminate tendency becomes object-directed, acquiring a more determinate orientation toward the object as the active experience unfolds.

As Emanuele Caminada (this Special Issue), expanding on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's metaphorical portrayal of intentionality, emphasizes, tendency is "blind" but also "oriented". Delving into both Husserl's account of tendency as the basic structure of consciousness and Max Scheler's nuanced differentiation of tendential life, Caminada advances an understanding of tendency as being at the same time the most basic and the most encompassing form of intentionality. He also shows that tendency does not focus on something that is determined from the very beginning (for this reason we may say that this kind of intentionality is "blind"), but has from the start an "orientation," which allows it to acquire determination.

Assuming that consciousness is oriented, even when it is—metaphorically speaking—blind or when it lacks determination, means that there is a primal structure of experience even in the absence of a determining higher-order activity and that this primal structure contains the seeds for further developments and structuration of conscious activity. A crucial moment for the open directedness of tendency to gain determination is what Husserl calls an affective awakening of the ego and the corresponding phenomena of affection and interest. Turning to an object requires something to emerge in the field of consciousness, something that affects us, catches our attention, and thus provokes forms of egoic activity. A sound heard at a distance, or a vaguely perceived shadow are affections that provoke a turning of attention and thus move to a form of activity. The primary and indeterminate tendency thus gets concentrated, while still animating the movement of conscious life, and acquires directedness (Husserl, 2020b: 67–86). We are now not just blindly oriented

at something but begin to see something. It is within this process that the progressive determination of the object to which the intentional act is directed also takes place.

In this regard, Summa (this Special Issue) shows how a crucial phenomenon for our experience and knowledge, and also one of the epistemic virtues that set in motion and motivate knowledge—curiosity—is to be located at the juncture that marks the processes of determination of intentionality. Evaluating the limitations inherent in exclusively semantic interpretations of curiosity, Summa advocates for a more comprehensive approach to curiosity—one that recognizes its being structured as a tendency and its being motivated by affection and the awakening of attention.

The primal structure of intentionality as tendency, which contains the potential for the development and structuring of conscious activity, is evident in phenomena where beliefs, certainty, and their modalization are formed (Husserl, 2001a: 63–105, 1973a: 87–102). These phenomena are grounded on an open tendency, and presuppose that something stands out, affectively captures our attention, and motivates our interest. In the case of confirmation, the process of determination unfolds smoothly as the tendency is followed. One can simply pursue their interest or curiosity. However, if an expectation is formed and then disappointed, or if one oscillates between perceiving something, for instance, as a human being or a mannequin, obstacles or hindrances disrupt the unfolding of the inclination. These interruptions give rise to the consciousness of negation and possibility. In all of these instances, we are dealing with conscious and cognitive structures (affirmation, negation, problematic possibility, and open possibility) that can be made explicit through judgment, but are initially experienced in a non-judgmental consciousness.

Such processes presuppose an indeterminate tendency, an affective awakening, and an orientation toward fulfillment, which may proceed uninterrupted and undisturbed, or encounter breaks and disturbances. This implies the assumption of a teleological orientation of tendency (Summa, 2014: 213–245). As Philipp Schmidt (this Special Issue) emphasizes, such a teleological understanding of tendency is arguably developed in the work of Theodor Lipps and goes back to Johann Friedrich Herbart's metaphysics. Schmidt emphasizes the pivotal role of tendency in shaping the teleological structure and dynamics of psychic life, through which the ego strives toward the determination and realization of its objects of experience. Schmidt also argues for the historical-philosophical claim that Lipps's doctrine can be understood as a distinctive version of Herbartianism. Examining tendencies, he suggests, may also offer a new perspective on the comparison between the still not fully understood relationship between Lipps's philosophical psychology and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, particularly concerning the conceptualization of the genesis of object-consciousness and the lawful processes of experience therein.

One of the authors in early phenomenology who was inspired by both Lipps and Husserl is Edith Stein. Nicola Spano (this Special Issue) focuses on the comparison between Stein's and Husserl's accounts of intentionality as tendency. He explores Husserl's differentiation between the tendential and the presentational form of intentional experiences, highlighting the essential role of tendency for any sense bestowal, which makes it a universal mode of intentionality on a par with consciousness-of.

Tendency and Drive

Spano's article raises some concerns that touch on another crucial concept in our Special Issue: the concept of drive. Spano indeed discusses the challenges in comprehending drives as goal-directed passive tendencies and motivated experiences within Husserl's framework. To find a possible solution, he turns to Stein, who characterizes drives as aimless strivings governed by "experiential causality" and not motivation. While acknowledging Stein's profound philosophical affinity with Husserl and her significant contributions to the phenomenology of drive and tendency, the author critically assesses the incompatibility of Stein's perspective with Husserl's phenomenology, attributing it to fundamental differences in their analyses of the psychic subject.

This discussion leads us to ask how the relation between tendency and drives is to be understood. In fact, one may take Husserl's discussions of *Triebintentionalität* as suggesting an identification between the intentionality of drive and tendency. After all, drive-intentionality, according to the later Husserl, is also genetically primal and permeates the life of consciousness (see Bernet, 2020; Brudzińska, 2019; Lee, 1993; Mensch, 1998; Pugliese, 2009). However, the unconscious structure of drives, as shown particularly by works discussing the relation between phenomenology and psychoanalysis, involves diversities, dynamics of conflict, overlapping variable weighing, etc. (Bernet, 2020; Brudzińska, 2019). Based on such diversity and dynamics, phenomena such as repression or the compulsion to repeat traumatic experiences are understandable. In this sense, it is appropriate to identify the structures of tendency that are characteristic of different drives. Line Ryberg-Ingerslev (this Special Issue) discusses connected issues and expands on the analysis of the relation between tendency and drives by showing how a combined phenomenological and psychoanalytical approach can enhance our comprehension of experiences involving traumatic repetition as a manifestation of a weaker form of agency. Drawing on Freud's concept of the compulsion to repeat the trauma, Ryberg-Ingerslev delves into the mental processes underlying repetitive actions associated with emotional traumas. In so doing, she does not only recognize the destructive nature of such behaviors but also emphasizes their potential for survival. She underscores the temporal gap between pre-traumatic and post-traumatic reality, characterizing the repetitive activity of the mind as a struggle to grasp the possibility of one's survival. In this sense, scrutinizing the structure of traumatic experiences to discern elements that enable the traumatized individual not only to be compelled to repeat but also to carve out a space for mourning.

A plural understanding of drive-intentionality may also allow us to draw some consequences from the discussion of the relation between tendencies and drives valuable for our understanding of intersubjectivity and ethics. This is argued by Claudia Serban (this Special Issue) when addressing mother–child relationships against the background of Husserl's and Scheler's philosophies. Serban's analysis highlights the elements of convergence in Husserl's and Scheler's use of the mother–child relationship as paradigmatic for understanding intersubjectivity and

affectivity. Through a comprehensive discussion of the family as a “community of love” and an exploration of the roles of the mother and child within it, she elucidates a specific form of drive-intentionality: one that can be comprehended as an instinctive form of orientation toward others, serving as an affective ground for ethical behavior.

The specificity of striving and its relation to tendency is investigated by Karl Mertens (this Special Issue). Mertens identifies a close tie between striving, willing, and acting and critically evaluates phenomenological theories of agency in relation to theories of action in analytic philosophy. He argues that the standard analytic approach primarily focuses on intentional events described linguistically and thereby overlooks the crucial transitions from behavior to action. Such a transition is investigated by phenomenologists such as Pfänder and Husserl through intentional analyses of striving and willing. Emphasizing the merits of both phenomenological and analytical theories of action, the author argues for their mutual integration: while phenomenological approaches may profit from a more detailed analysis of language and ascription in the analyses and determination of action, the analytic theories of action should be supplemented by an inquiry into the intentional structures that precede linguistic determination.

Affection, Affectivity, and Expression

Discussing the relation between tendency and drives brings us to the last issue to be addressed in this introduction: the phenomena of affection, affectivity, and their relation to agency. In the lecture course *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis*, affection is defined as an “allure (*Reiz*) given to consciousness” or a “peculiar pull that an object given exercises on the ego” (Husserl, 2001a: 196). We have touched on this general understanding of affection above when discussing how an indeterminate tendency gains orientation toward an object. Something stands out in the field of experience, calling for the ego’s attention, and ultimately resulting in the objectifying intentionality of the *cogito*. Thus understood, affection is a basic structural phenomenon, which crosses the cognitive, affective, and volitional dimensions of conscious life.

Besides this general sense of affection, relevant to all the different typologies of conscious experience, affectivity designates a crucial and specific dimension of human experience, having to do with the moments of pathic aspects of emotional life and the feelings involved. These are issues investigated in the second volume of Husserl’s recently published *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins* (Husserl, 2020a) and are a crucial topic of investigation in early phenomenology (see Szanto & Landweer, 2020; Vendrell Ferran, 2015).

One aspect of the debate on affect and emotions is addressed by Íngrid Vendrell Ferran (this Special Issue) investigating Husserl’s philosophical engagement with Moritz Geiger’s account of emotional intentionality. Vendrell Ferran develops an inquiry into the complexities of the phenomenological debate surrounding intentionality, specifically in the realm of affectivity. She scrutinizes Geiger’s nuanced analysis of affective consciousness and critically examines the disagreement between Geiger and Husserl concerning the intentionality of feelings.

Besides, she interprets this disagreement as a manifestation of significant differences between the positions defended by authors of the Munich school of phenomenology, of which Geiger is a key figure, and Husserl's own positions. Vendrell Ferran thoroughly explicates how these differences primarily concern the ontology of the mind and the nature of consciousness. In particular, through the paradigmatic example of Geiger, she shows how Munich phenomenologists, by challenging the intentional characterization of feelings, introduce a dichotomy between affective and cognitive states, and, in contrast to Husserl, assert that intentionality is not the most fundamental structure of consciousness.

The connection and co-belonging between affect and expression is investigated by Basil Vassilicos (this Special Issue), who provides a dynamic perspective on affects and delves into the role of affective expression in illocution. By mapping ongoing discussions on the "expression of affect" and narrowing the focus to non-conventional expressions, Vassilicos draws on Karl Bühler's action theory of affect to develop an account of how the non-conventional expression of affect may play a vital role in achieving specific illocutionary acts. His argument proposes that in understanding certain affective illocutions, such as the expressions of fear or concern, bodily movements serve as meaning expressions that offer teleological guidance beyond the present situation that is common to the acting subjects involved. Vassilicos concludes by addressing potential criticisms related to the relationship between illocution and perlocution, asserting that, although not all illocutions may be understood in terms of the expression of affect, some can.

Laura Candiotta (this Special Issue) addresses the specific affect of eros, by presenting it as an embodied power that shapes human connections through participatory sense-making. Candiotta draws insights from Plato, Luce Irigaray, and Gilles Deleuze to introduce an embedded view of this phenomenon, emphasizing its situated character. She highlights eros as a force and power between lovers, contributing to both self-making and world-making. Candiotta argues that eros is both relational, existing "in-between" lovers, and immersive, acting as a generative power influencing ongoing processes of participatory sense-making and becoming. Ultimately, she distinguishes this type of eros from other experiences of desire, emphasizing its ethical value and the responsibility to cultivate it for the well-being of oneself and others.

To sum up, this Special Issue delves into the central role of intentionality in making up the structure and dynamics of conscious life. It shows how a variety of experiences are intentional while not yet being directed at a determinate object, and analyzes how determination comes about through processes of affection and the awakening of attention. It provides historical and systematic grounds to scrutinize the teleological orientation of intentional consciousness and to investigate the relation between cognitive, emotional, and volitional acts. The contributions highlight intentionality not only as a structural feature of consciousness but also as a dynamic orientation that binds together the different modalities of conscious life. Our overarching goal is to contribute to the ongoing philosophical investigation of intentionality by presenting a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of intentional experiences.

As editors, we hope this Special Issue in *Human Studies* may spark intellectual curiosity, foster critical engagement, and encourage a deeper understanding of intentionality in its various dimensions. Our desire is fulfilled if these pages offer new perspectives, invite reflection, and contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue within phenomenology and the broader landscape of philosophical inquiry.

Acknowledgements We would like to thank all contributors to this Special Issue for discussing the question of the basic structures of intentionality in the context of their respective research interests and projects. We would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their thorough feedback on the submitted articles. We also thank Martin Endreß and Stefan Nicolae, editors of *Human Studies*, for the inclusion of the papers in the journal and their supervision of our Special Issue as well as the excellent editorial collaboration. Furthermore, we would like to thank the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG, German Research Foundation), for the financial support to our research project “Non-Objectual Intentionality: Tendency and Affect”. The present Special Issue is part of this project (Project-ID 446126658).

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

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