UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Act and Intentionality

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Philosophy and Cognitive Science

by

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2016
The dissertation of Benjamin C. Sheredos is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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University of California, San Diego

2016
As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed,

I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to make the being of a gigantic structure...

After having formed this determination and having spent some months in

successfully collecting and arranging my materials,

I began.

— Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

If thou are bored with this wearisome method of calculation, take pity on me,

who had to go through with at least seventy repetitions of it,

at a very great loss of time.

— Johannes Kepler, Astronomia nova
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Despite all the support I’ve received, I’m sure I’ve botched something or other in
the pages that follow. That’s my own fault.
VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Act and Intentionality

by

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University of California, San Diego, 2016

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Understanding the “intentionality” of mental phenomena is widely regarded as a key problem in philosophy of mind. Franz Brentano (along with his students, especially Edmund Husserl) is widely credited with bringing intentionality to philosophers’ attention. In early treatment by the Brentano school, intentionality is at least nominally understood as executed, brought about, or achieved in mental acts. And in the early 20th century, historians of psychology regarded this “act conception” of intentionality as integral for understanding the phenomenon. Yet the secondary literature on Brentano and Husserl
provides no clarification of mental acts as acts, and in contemporary philosophy, we have no workable account of what it could mean for intentionality to arise through mental acts. The main difficulty is that “act” is widely regarded as synonymous with “volitional personal action.” Since we as human agents certainly do not willfully bring about much of our own mental life, and since (on the standard analyses) all such volition presupposes intentionality, it is a mystery to work out what the act conception of intentionality could have amounted to.

This dissertation is a systematic explication of the historical act concept of intentionality. Part I examines Brentano. I show that his early work on Aristotle’s psychology provides resources to think coherently about many mental phenomena as acts, even if they are not personal actions. However, I also show that Brentano’s mature psychology is not Aristotelian, at least insofar as it does not (and cannot) deploy an Aristotelian conception of mental acts. Part II examines Husserl. I show that Husserl’s mature transcendental phenomenology works with a robust and many-layered conception of mental acts, and that understanding intentionality as active is essential to the phenomenological viewpoint. Moreover, I argue that Husserl’s conception of mental acts can be viewed as a transcendentalized, neo-Aristotelian view.

The results will be of special interest to historians of philosophy, but also have a much broader significance. Husserl’s view provides us with a model of what can be called an “internalist enactivism.” Any view along these lines represents a novel position that has not been articulated (or even considered) in contemporary debates.
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 How we Arrived at Intentionality without Act

The intentionality of some mental phenomenon is usually glossed as its aboutness, of-ness, or directedness. Our thoughts and beliefs are about some claim. Our perceptions are of a world of objects. Our desires are directed at some (usually non-actual) state of the world. It is universally agreed that making sense of intentionality is a central aim of the philosophy of mind.

There is a puzzling historical dissonance in contemporary views of intentionality. On the one hand, Brentano is widely credited with specifying this explanandum for philosophy of mind. The following is a popular passage for sourcing intentionality in Brentano:

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

This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves (Brentano, 1874, pp.88-89).


On the other hand, it is not widely appreciated that in the early 20th century, intentionality was widely regarded as the specialized posit of a school of thought (held to be founded by Brentano) called “Act Psychology” – in the way, e.g., that forces are a posit of Newtonians, or that caloric was a posit of the eponymous theory of heat.

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1Pagination from the 1973 McAlister translation of Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint.
2There is an even larger class of authors who cite Brentano in an extremely oblique manner. Chisholm (1957, p.170ff) cited Brentano’s passage and attempted to clarify what he regarded “Brentano’s thesis.” After Chisholm, it is not uncommon to find some thesis or other regarding intentionality introduced as “Brentano’s Thesis,” or some problem or other regarding intentionality introduced as “Brentano’s problem,” and then treated in some detail, though without any explicit reference to Brentano. Some examples are: Field (1978, p.9); Fodor (1990, p.79); Millikan (2004, p.65); Mole (2010, p.136); Pylyshyn (2007, p.8); and Quine (1960, §§32, 45, 56).

Haugland actually attributes to Brentano the verbatim claim that “intentionality is the mark of the mental” (1997, p.4), which is something that Brentano never himself said in precisely these words.
3Even some quite recent reference texts in psychology maintain the legacy of treating “intentionality”
What one finds in the historical record, repeatedly, is the claim that intentionality must be understood in light of Act Psychology’s focus on “psychical” or mental *acts*.

Historians of psychology identified Brentano and Husserl as the central proponents of “Act Psychology” (“AP”). Other theorists’ status as members of AP was disputed (such as Lipps, Meinong, James, Stumpf, Ward, Witasek, and Stout). Likewise, AP’s relation to other schools of thought was never made precise. Boring (1950) portrays Act Psychology as a forerunner to Gestalt Psychology, superseded in the works of Köhler and Koffka, whereas Brunswik (1952) sees Act Psychology giving way to American functionalism in the hands of Tolmann, Hull, and the “cybernetic” movement. Brett (1930) and Flugel (1951) portray Act Psychology as a return to the faculty psychology of the 19th century, whereas Müller-Freienfels (1935) rejects this reading. Further, historians never radically clarified the precise doctrines of AP. Often, AP was introduced thematically simply by glossing the views of a variety of theorists held to be proponents of AP (though again, there was not widespread agreement about who belonged on the roster). Often, the term “act” appears as a technical term, but receives no concise elucidation. But one can also locate claims by historians which suggest a more substantive reading of AP:

"The very datum of psychology [according to AP] is the unique kind of activity which constitutes a psychic event” (Brett, 1930, p.39).

AP’s notions of intentionality and intentional in-existence “become intelligible only when it is realized that psychical phenomena are to be thought of as *acts*” (Boring, 1950, p.360, original emphasis).

AP’s mental acts are “dynamic creations of the mind” (Flugel, 1951, p.147).

With his intentionalism, Brentano’s AP was “emphasizing the dynamic

*explicitly and exclusively* as a posit of “Act Psychology” – see Eysenck et al. (1982); Corsini (2002).
component of such psychological ‘acts’ as perceiving or judging” (Brunswik, 1952, p.54).

“The term Akt is a translation of the scholastic actus, which in turn is a translation of the Aristotelian [energeia]. It is likely to carry a suggestion of activity, in the sense of ‘voluntary acts,’ ‘acts of kindness,’ etc.” (Titchener, 1922, p.44, fn.4).

On this reading, we suppose that when Brentano and Husserl spoke (as they often did) of intentional phenomena as “mental acts,” they were genuinely committed to viewing them as acts, i.e., dynamic doings or performances, as opposed to things which just happen, and as opposed to static properties which a mind simply has. I call this the (substantive) Act Conception of intentionality.

Today there is little awareness that the Act Conception could be a substantive conception of intentionality. Looking back over the pre-history of analytical philosophy of mind, perhaps the last thinker to take the Act Conception seriously was G.F. Stout. In his Analytic Psychology (1896), Stout began by providing an taxonomy of conscious phenomena. He declared Brentano to be “the only modern writer who appears to have fully realized the importance of this preliminary inquiry” into the defining features of consciousness (1896, p.36). And Stout adopted Brentano’s appeal to “the mode in which consciousness refers to an object” (what we now call “intentionality”5) as the criterion

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4In this passage from Titchener, and in many passages from Brentano below, I have replaced their rendering of the Greek with modern orthography.

5Here is as good a place as any to note that calling Brentano’s concept by the title of “intentionality” is in fact historically inaccurate. Brentano speaks of “intentional relations,” “intentional objects,” and “intentional in-existence.” He always uses the adjectival form, and does not, to my knowledge, ever use any German equivalent of the English noun-form “intentionality.” The reader who is deeply disinterested in historical minutiae may freely abandon this footnote here (and has my apologies for the remainder of this dissertation).

Prior to the end of the 19th century, there was in English a term “intentionality,” but it was typically used to implicate an intention-to-act according to some design or purpose. One finds it invoked in teleological conceptions of the cosmos as arising from the design of a divine creator (see e.g. Winchell 1877, pp.150ff). Along these lines, Roget’s 1875 English Thesaurus lists “intentionality” on p.224 under the heading
by which classes of mental phenomena were to be distinguished (1896, p.40). Stout did not endorse Brentano’s claim that there are only three fundamentally different forms of intentionality (what Brentano called presentation, judgment, and phenomena of love and hate). Instead, Stout distinguished several other varieties of intentional phenomena. With his account of the distinct classes of mental phenomena in place, Stout proceeded to explain the sense in which they are regarded as activity. He devoted an entire chapter to this topic, with his express aim being to “guard against the supposition that the application

“prospective volition,” sub-heading “conceputal volition,” and offers as synonyms: “intentions, intent, intentionality, purpose, design” etc. This is retained in the 1912 edition. (footnote continues)

To provide a more substantive example, when translating Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, Francis Haywood employed the English term “intentionality” to render Kant’s phrase “als Glieder eines Ganzen zweckmäßig vereinigt sind” translating it: “as members of a whole, are united with intentionality one to another” (1838, p.626; retained in 1848, p.576). In contrast, the more recent translation is “purposively united with each other as members of a whole” (Guyer & Wood, 1998, p.692). Likewise, Haywood translated “Ordnung und Zweckmaßigkeit” as “order and intentionality” (1838, p.581; retained in 1848, p.533). By contrast, the more recent translation is “Order and purpose” (Guyer & Wood, 1998, p.660).

Likewise, in German texts in the mid-19th century, one finds a similar usage of the noun-form Intentionalität. For example, Trendelenburg (Brentano’s teacher) uses the term in this way. Trendelenburg (1862, p. 472) discusses Kant’s rejection, in his Critique of Judgment, of any kind of idealism which denies the reality of natural purposes (den “Realism der Naturzwecke”); and Trendelenburg characterizes such a view as denying the “purposiveness” of natural things, or their “intentionality” (“der...streitenden Systeme leugnen an den zweckmäßigen Naturdingen die ‘Intentionalität’”) – cf. Kant’s own usage of the term in this manner, 1867, p.405. Even post-Brentano, one can find this usage recommended; one German-English dictionary provides the entry: “Intentionalität, f. intentionality, design(edness), purpose” (Flügel et al., 1896, p.27).

NB: This linguistic fact makes it difficult to locate clear-cut instances of historians of psychology emphasizing the dynamic character of mental acts. If an historical text (or translation thereof) asserts, for example, that Act Psychology emphasizes “intentionality,” our present-day conception of “intentionality” may lead us to regard this as unremarkable. But at the time of writing (or translating), this alone may have been meant to convey (in part) the more active connotation I am drawing out here.

In German, at least, it appears to have been Husserl (1901) who originally re-appropriated the noun-phrase “intentionality” (intentionalität) to denote the direction of a conscious experience on some object. (Schutz (1996) likewise attributes the origin of the term “intentionality,” in this sense, to Husserl.) It is unclear when this new connotation became attached to the English usage of the term. It would be an interesting historical project in its own right to work out how the English term “intentionality” was originally mis-associated with Brentano in the philosophy of mind, and how Husserl’s influence on this point was covered over. The first English usage of “intentionality” in this sense which I can find is on p.205 of the 1914 translation of Klemm’s 1911 “Geschichte der Psychologie,” and Klemm associates the term amorphously with Brentano and Husserl. Parkhurst (1917) quite forcefully, but mistakenly, associates the term with Brentano. Later the term appears in Titchener (1922, fn.4 – a very influential text) and is amorphously attributed to Brentano and Husserl. Swabey (1924a,b) correctly attributes it to Husserl.
of the term *activity* to mental processes is in any sense metaphorical” (1896, p.179).

The fine details of Stout’s own account do not concern me here. What is important is only that he, like many others, took seriously the possibility that it might actually be of some importance to regard intentionality as arising through some form of endogenous, end-directed *activity*. Two of Stout’s most influential students, Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore, did not uphold this claim, and since their time, analytic philosophy of mind has scarcely considered it.

Russell seemed to tolerate talking of “mental acts” as the locus of intentionality in his *Problems of Philosophy* (1912, see e.g., pp.65-66, 140, 154, 197-200). However it was unclear whether he read this term as indicating any substantive Act Conception of intentionality. He expressed reservations regarding Kant’s talk of synthesis as a mental activity in a slightly later text, *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914, pp.155-156). He clearly rejected an Act Conception in his *Analysis of Mind*. There Russell’s treatments of mental phenomena are made subservient to his focus on the theory of knowledge, and he frames this explicitly in terms of Brentano’s claim that all mental phenomena are “directed to objects” (Russell, 1921, p.14). One who is interested in knowledge, according to Russell, emphasizes mental phenomena’s intentional relation to an object.

Russell does not in fact endorse Brentano’s claim that all mental phenomena involve

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6In Stout’s account, mental activity is a “directly experienced” (1896, p.159) “process in time” (1896, p.144) which exhibits both “immanent causality” (or, equivalently, is “self-determining”) as well as “transitive causality” (or, equivalently, determines also some other thing) (1896, p.145); mental activity has a kind of momentum, which contrasts with most instances of physical momentum in that (i) it involves “transition from one state to another” and (ii) “direction towards an end” (1896, p.148). Mental activities are selective and adaptive in unfolding to attain their ends (1896, p.156). In this dissertation, I will eventually locate a comparable view in the works of Husserl.
intentional relation to an object. But even before treating that question – the question of intentionality – Russell has already divorced it from talk of “mental acts.” Citing Meinong as a proxy to Brentano, Russell considered an analysis of intentionality which distinguishes in every instance of consciousness an act, a content, and an object. These Russell introduced as follows:

The act is the same in any two cases of the same kind of consciousness; for instance, if I think of Smith or think of Brown, the act of thinking, in itself, is exactly similar on both occasions. But the content of my thought, the particular event that is happening in my mind, is different when I think of Smith and when I think of Brown. The content, Meinong argues, must not be confounded with the object, since the content must exist in my mind at the moment when I have the thought, whereas the object need not do so (Russell, 1921, p.16).

Russell then immediately retorts:

The first criticism I have to make is that the act seems unnecessary and fictitious. The occurrence of the content of the thought constitutes the occurrence of the thought. Empirically, I cannot discover anything corresponding to the supposed act; and theoretically I cannot see that it is indispensable. We say: “I think so-and-so,” and this word “I” suggests that thinking is the act of a person. Meinong’s “act” is the ghost of the subject, or what once was the full-blooded soul. It is supposed that thoughts cannot just come and go, but need a person to think them... I think the person is not an ingredient in the single thought: he is rather constituted by relations of the thoughts to each other and to the body... It would be better to say “it thinks in me,” like “it rains here”; or better still, “there is a thought in me” (Russell, 1921, pp.17-18).

Russell here divides act from intentionality, supposing that the question of whether or not an “act” is involved can be distinguished from the question of how a content relates to its object. Russell makes an important point regarding the Act Conception: it involves commitments regarding what brings it about that e.g., a thought of some object occurs, and such commitments go beyond the more minimal claim that a thought of
some object occurs. This is what leads to Rusell’s complaint against the Act Conception: Rusell holds that the Act Conception can provide no empirical (experiential) support for supposing that an act is what brings thought about. This was a popular complaint against talk of “acts” in psychology around the turn of the century.\footnote{Titchener (1909) collects many such claims, and endorses them himself. His most extended arguments against mental activity are found in Titchener (1896, Ch. VI, esp.pp.119-135). The issues Russell raises here will prove to be of relevance in discussing Brentano’s work, in Ch.4 below. A similar argument can be found also in Natorp (1888), and I shall discuss Husserl’s engagement with it in Ch.6 below.} Supposing this is so, Russell offers a linguistic diagnosis of AP as arising from a simple mistake. If we could only (as, Russell seems suggest, we can) eliminate the personal pronoun “I” in statements like “I think so-and-so,” then the thin façade of motivation for the Act Conception would vanish. This linguistic diagnosis is consistent with the supposition – long-running and extremely influential in philosophy of action – that all acts are personal actions of some volitional agent. Most mental phenomena, of course, do not seem to us to be things we willfully bring about. It is, on Russell’s account, only a linguistically-driven illusion that we “do” anything in, e.g., thinking. Following on this brief rejection of “mental acts,” Russell prefers throughout the remainder of The Analysis of Mind to speak of mental occurrences, events, or facts. He thereby strips away any active connotation from the notion of intentionality.

G.E. Moore, another student of Stout’s, likewise abandoned any active connotations attaching to “intentionality.” Moore (1899; 1903; 1905) is sometimes retroactively read as endorsing an “act-object” theory (by, e.g., Crane 2000) – although Moore does not employ the terminology of “mental acts” in any of these texts (or, to my knowledge, anywhere else). Moore, like Russell, distinguishes content and object, and seems to
regard this as sufficient for understanding intentionality. (Unlike Russell, Moore does not appear to offer support for the dismissal of “mental acts” via explicit argument.) Like Russell, Moore prefers to speak of mental events or facts. Like Russell, Moore thus takes it for granted that intentionality, understood as the relation between content and object, can be treated without concern for how it occurs, and he says nothing to suggest that it is a live option, in his view, that it might be brought about through some kind of act.

Even Crane, who invokes the language of “acts” to characterize Moore’s sense-datum theory, includes a hedge which strips it of any clear active connotation: a sensation is, on Moore’s sense-datum theory, “the act or event” of being aware of a sense-datum (Crane, 2000). This correctly suggests that for Moore, it is apparently of no consequence whether a mental phenomenon is brought about by an act or is some other form of event or occurrence. But whether or not this should be regarded as a substantive issue is not addressed or considered by Crane (or, so far as I can see, by Moore). Likewise, in using the language of “acts” to state his own views, Crane sometimes offers such claims as that “all intentional objects are the objects of intentional states or acts,” but he clarifies this (or rather, muddles it) by stating parenthetically that “by ‘act’ I mean the mental phenomenon that has an object and has a place in a time-series, like an act of judgement, or a decision” (Crane, 2001, p.342). This renders mental “acts” no more than events in time, without addressing the question of whether or not they are to be substantively regarded as acts, in the sense that they are dynamically wrought, brought about through doings or performances, or produced by a kind of striving for a goal.

Thus, starting at least as early as Moore and Russell, the Act Conception was
largely dismissed in the philosophy of mind, and the question of how intentional mental phenomena come about was largely set aside in favor of inquiring independently after the relation between “content and object.” In the mid-20th century, the mainstream conception of intentionality was pushed even further from its roots in AP, as the focus on mental phenomena was swapped for a focus on linguistic structures. For example, Peter Geach adopts the traditional label “mental act,” but defines these only as whatever-it-is that is expressed in a linguistic report of what one thought, how one felt, what one saw or heard, etc. (1957, p.1). This relocates the analysis of intentionality, moving away from mental phenomena to linguistic entities, and Geach was not much concerned to determine (a) what it is that is being linguistically expressed, or (b) how these things come about, prior to their expression. He treats as interchangeable the expressions “mental acts or mental events or what happened in a person’s mind” (1957, p.2). Even Chisholm, often regarded as a champion of Brentano’s work within Anglo-American philosophy, contributed to this displacement of the analysis of intentionality. In his (1957) opus, Perceiving, which treats of Brentano’s conception of intentionality in some detail, Chisholm makes no use of the term “mental act” whatsoever. Like Geach, he relocates the analysis of intentionality to an analysis of linguistic structures – an analysis of “intentional sentences” (1957, cf. ch. 11). The linguistic displacement of intentionality was perhaps most forcefully imposed upon analytic philosophy of mind by Quine’s recommendation of the method of “semantic ascent” (1960, see §§32, 45, 56).

Not everyone followed Geach, Chisholm and Quine in their linguistic reorientation, and in more recent 20th century writings, philosophers have been less shy about
treating intentionality where it resides, as a feature of mental phenomena. But the ques-
tion of whether the occurrence of intentionality has anything to do with “mental acts,”
in a substantive sense, has never been properly revisited. In more recent works which
discuss the texts of Act Psychologists, one can occasionally find the term “mental act”
deployed for convenience or continuity, but there is no reflection on whether or not
it means anything substantive to speak of intentional mental phenomena as acts. For
example, the works collected in Textor (2006) move freely and comfortably between talk
of mental acts (which connotes a dynamic character) and talk of mental states (which
rather suggests something static). Likewise, in an influential and historically-informed
work on intentionality, Richard Aquila simply defines “mental acts” as mental states
which exhibit intentionality (1977, p.ix). If we treat these locutions as interchangeable,
we implicitly suppose that there is really nothing lost in throwing overboard the active
connotation. Or at best, we might hope to recover the active connotations later, regarding
this as something that can be tacked-on if it proves to be appropriate. This is today the
default view, and “intentional mental state” has been the default locution for decades.
Among theorists who emphasize the dynamic aspects of the mind, there has been worry
over whether there is room for representations, construed in the default mode as isolated
mental states – see for example Hutto & Myin (2012).

In this dissertation, I aim to explicate an historical Act Conception of intention-
ality, locating it in the work of Edmund Husserl. In this introductory chapter, I aim to
remove some preliminary concerns which arise for this view, and to sketch how later
chapters proceed.
1.2 A Dilemma for the Act Conception?

The Act Conception may seem to face an insurmountable, in-principle difficulty. It is widely agreed that any event’s status as an “action” presupposes prior intentional mental phenomena. Causal accounts of action hold that an action is both (a) individuated with reference to, and (b) caused by, some intentional mental phenomenon or other (see, e.g., Mele 1992). Non-causalist accounts (e.g., Wilson 1989) agree regarding (a), but reject (b). Both camps appeal to a representation so as to fix the goal or success condition(s) of the action. The widespread agreement is that no event can count as an “action” unless it is done to attain the satisfaction of a determinate goal, and an appeal to a representation of a goal is a wildly popular method of specifying what the goal of any action is. This (allegedly) allows us to overcome metaphysically “creepy” teleological conceptions of action, without recourse to a “final cause” that (supposedly) somehow works backwards in time. Instead, the content of a representation specifies the goal for-which an action is done, and representations are held to be readily naturalizable in some fashion or other. That is the core of the representationalist analysis of action (RAA), which both the causalist and non-causalist share.

(RAA) has been applied to bodily action for decades. As I shall discuss further in §1.3 below, (RAA) has also recently been applied to mental actions (see for example the authors whose work is collected in O’Brien & Soteriou 2009). On any such account, what distinguishes mental actions from bodily actions is only that they are not overt bodily movements, but rather thinkings, judgings, and the like. But mental actions are,
like bodily actions, commonly regarded as individuatable only with reference to some prior represented aim. This leads to an apparent dilemma for the Act Conception of Intentionality.

First horn of the dilemma: suppose the Act Conception (in full generality) is simply combined with (RAA) (in full generality). Problem: we are started on a regress. By the Act Conception, any intentional phenomenon $I_n$ is an act. By (RAA), any “action” is individuated with reference to another intentional mental phenomenon $I_{n+1}$. But according to the Act Conception, $I_{n+1}$ is, qua intentional or representational, also an act. So by (RAA) it too must be individuated by reference to another intentional mental phenomenon $I_{n+2}$. By the Act Conception this too will be an act, and will again presuppose further intentionality, and so on, endlessly. Then if we have any intentional mental phenomena at all, we have infinitely many of them – which is, I suppose, false (but see, e.g., Klein 1998).

Second horn of the dilemma: suppose that mental acts are not individuated with reference to further intentional phenomena, in the way (RAA) requires. Regress is avoided by giving up (RAA). Problem: many philosophers are cheerleaders for (RAA), and regard it as providing roughly the correct analysis of actions. If the so-called “Act Conception” is not consonant with (RAA), then (so the envisaged objection goes) we have strong, if not decisive, theoretical motivation to resist or reject the Act Conception, on the grounds that it cannot assign intentional mental phenomena the status of “acts” in any substantive sense – i.e., in a way consistent with (RAA).

I intend to commit to the second horn. I stress in advance that the Act Conception
of intentionality is not ultimately and generally compatible with (RAA), and mental “acts,” in the most basic sense I am concerned with here, are not mental “actions” in any sense which presupposes further intentionality. I do not, however, believe that this dooms the Act Conception to being a facile thesis, or a bit of mistaken wordplay. That is because (RAA), despite its popularity, cannot plausibly provide a general analysis of all acts in any case. “Philosophy of action,” to the extent that it remains committed to (RAA), cannot hope to be a philosophy of all acts. It is thus no mark against the Act Conception that it recognizes mental acts where (on pain of regress) we cannot clearly presuppose prior intentionality, for we ought already to countenance acts of this sort. If an affinity for (RAA) leads us to think otherwise, then it simply mis-leads us. My aim in the remainder of this section is to show why this is so, and to dispense with this preliminary objection against the Act Conception.

1.2.1 The Philosophy of “Action”

Imagine Jones studies dogs, but has no proper understanding of the general concept “animal.” In fact, Jones describes his dog-studies as “studying the nature of animals” as such. Jones’ understanding would necessarily be imperfect: he does not understand this genus, nor dogs as a species of this genus, nor dogs in proper relation to other species of that genus. Suppose Smith comes along and points out that cats are animals, though they are not dogs. She accuses Jones of failing to distinguish the genus of animals from the species of dogs, and thus failing to properly understand either. Now Jones responds that Smith is confused, saying: “I aim to understand dogs, not cats. For
purposes of dog-studies, I simply define ‘animals in the strict sense’ as dogs, excluding cats as irrelevant. Cats are animals only in some fairly weak sense.” We should, I hope, side with Smith, rejecting Jones’ rejoinder as confused.

Yet a parallel confusion is, I argue, nominally endorsed in the philosophy of action. Focusing on such worthy concerns as personal freedom, agency, and responsibility, philosophers have sought to understand a few select species of acts, excluding others from consideration. Yet they describe their work as “studying the nature of action” as such. When I raise worries, suggesting that some acts do not fit their favored analyses, philosophers of action often respond by declaring me confused. They declare they are concerned only with “actions in the strict sense;” which are defined as the (species of) acts which they study. The marginalized species of acts which I bring to their attention, they declare to be acts “only in some fairly weak sense.” I suggest we should reject this rejoinder as confused.

A general philosophy of acts ought to provide analyses which regiment (and perhaps correct) our pre-theoretic understanding of “acts” as doings, contrasted with mere happenings. There is intuitively a plenitude of things we do, bodily, which have not held much interest for philosophers. When reading, I tap my toes. When a thesis strikes me as wrongheaded, I shake my head. I am not befallen by these movements: they do not, like a reflex, just happen in my body. I do them. They are examples of what O’Shaughnessy (1980) called subintentional acts. Subintentional acts, as we shall see, are not clearly amenable to analysis in terms of representation. Thus if we have any good reason to regard them as acts (and if this reason is not defeated by some other), then we
shall have good reason to suppose that not every kind of act must be analyzed along the lines of (RAA), and that (RAA) cannot provide us with a complete philosophy of acts.

I argue that we should countenance subintentional acts, despite the fact that they resist analysis by (RAA). Once this conceptual elbow room has been cleared away, it is open for the Act Conception to posit subintentional mental acts. The Act Conception will thus avoid the threat of circularity: mental acts, as subintentional, need not presuppose intentionality. It can then commit to the “second horn” of the dilemma I sketched above, without fear of diminishing its status as a substantive thesis. The trick is to distinguish kinds of acts, and to recognize that – quite apart from consideration of the Act Conception of intentionality – not all acts can be aptly treated by (RAA). In what follows, I invoke O’Shaughnessy’s distinction between three kinds of acts, defend the status of subintentional acts, and highlight the possible extension of this view, the possibility of countenancing subintentional mental acts.

1.2.2 Intentional Acts

Intentional acts (“IAs”) are paradigmatic bodily actions. Parenthesizing existing points of dispute, in an IA, roughly, I exercise certain mental capacities (e.g., for believing, desiring, reasoning, trying, deciding, intending) which guide my (willful) bodily pursuit of some personal aim. By having some such mental capacities I have agency; by exercising them to acquire certain (conscious) mental states (e.g, beliefs, desires, tryings, intentions) I may (take myself to) have a reason for pursuing my ends. By attributing to me such mental states and abilities, one can explain (perhaps causally, rationalistically,
Throughout this introductory chapter, I use the expression “intention” as a place-holder. By it I mean whatever representations one takes to individuate IAs. Some have offered belief-desire pairings, others have suggested that intentions cannot be reduced to any other form of representation. Many hold that one can do things intentionally without specifically intending to do them. I am employing the term “intention,” and correspondingly the term “intentional action,” more narrowly here. This is a purely semantic issue, and I shall address below a wider variety of things one might be said to do “intentionally.” For those who are naturalistically minded, the final analysis of “intentions” may be substantially complicated, as it is difficult to square philosophical conceptions of intentions with neural evidence (Uithol et al., 2014).

IAs have normative dimensions: they are goal-directed, and thus evaluable for success or failure. The consensus view is that IAs are individuated with reference to personal mental representations (what I am calling “intentions”) whose content specifies the goal of the IA. This ties IAs to traditional conceptions of personal agency, freedom, and responsibility. Consider Davidson’s example of a man stamping his own hat, thinking it is his rival’s (1974b, p.229). Since (under one description) the man intended to stamp his rival’s hat, the act’s failure is analyzed in terms of its failure to fulfill this represented aim. Causal accounts like Davidson’s (or Mele 1992) maintain that IAs are caused by personal representations of the right sort, in the right way. Non-causalist accounts (e.g., Wilson 1989) still appeal to representations to specify the action’s goal, but do not regard representations as causes of the action.
We must crucially distinguish the normativity of our *analysandum* from that of our *analysans*: an action’s normativity is not *itself* a representations’ normativity (success in action is not synonymous with semantic satisfaction). The hat stamper’s action is a failure, and we substantively analyze *that* failure (a failure of the act to meet its success conditions) by invoking a different kind of failure: the failure of a represented aim to be fulfilled, or the failure of a representation’s satisfaction conditions to attain. What makes any variant – causal or non-causal – of (RAA) *substantive* is its proposal to understand an actions’ goal-directedness *in terms of* a represented goal. These are conceptually separable (as they must be, if (RAA) is to be a substantive analysis). Suppose S is tasked with mimicking my movements. I move, and S fails to mimic me. We can directly assess the normativity (failure) of S’s action *independently of, and prior to*, positing representations to account for it.

To bring out the separability of these two forms of normativity, consider the following. Suppose that you are a philosopher who is interested in understanding the normativity of action, as a phenomenon. As it happens, you favor (RAA) in your analyses of actions’ normativity. However, you are also the sort of philosopher who is inclined to incorporate the findings of cognitive neuroscience in order to construct a robust account of the mind. Now suppose it turns out that cognitive science finds no explanatory value for the notion of “representation.” Then one will be precluded from pursuing any robustly empirically-informed (RAA) as an analysis of the normativity of IAs. The conceptual separability of these two forms of normativity should be apparent so long as one recognizes that giving up (RAA) is not tantamount to doubling back on the
normativity of actions. Actions will not, as *analysanda*, cease to be normative, even if it turns out that an empirically-informed (**RAA**) – or any other variant of (**RAA**) – cannot plausibly be applied to IAs.

It is, indeed, a real empirical possibility, entertained and explored by many authors as of late, that appeals to “representation” may turn out to be of little explanatory value in the cognitive sciences (for a concise summary and forceful arguments, see Hutto & Myin, 2012). And some non-representationalist accounts of complex action have been prospectively explored (Keijzer, 2001). Any such non-representationalist analysis of IAs would be idiosyncratic and unorthodox, to be sure. But – and this is the main point – it need not be incoherent. Pursuing a non-representational analysis of IAs does not conceptually require abandoning the normativity of IAs as *analysanda*: it only requires foregoing (**RAA**) and its *analysans*. Likewise, it would be idiosyncratic, but not incoherent, to provide an analysis of actions’ goal-directedness which appealed to a “goal” (*telos*), without appealing to a representation to specify what that goal is.

I am not making any empirical bet here that anti-representationalist accounts of IAs will emerge as the correct account. I invoke the empirical possibility of such an account only to underscore the *conceptual* separability of actions’ normativity *versus* representations’ normativity. With the distinction in mind, we may roughly summarize the consensus conception of IAs as follows:

**CIA:** “Intentional Acts” are those acts whose normativity (as *analysandum*) is to be understood in terms of the normativity of personal representations such as intentions (as *analysans*).

For present purposes, I am quite happy to endorse (CIA), and to suppose that all IAs
are properly analyzed in accordance with (RAA). My own preference would be for a causalist variant of (RAA) in such cases.

1.2.3 Preintentional Acts

Another variety of bodily acts are preintentional acts ("PAs"). Suppose Davidson’s hat-stamper balances on one leg whilst stamping the other. PAs are the suite of micro-movements (shifting his weight just so, driving the right leg downward with just this force, etc.) which (if all goes well) jointly constitute the IA’s execution. PAs are doings, not mere happenings: the hat-stamper was not befallen by balancing, he balanced.

PAs force us to distinguish two instances of normativity in our analysanda. The hat-stamper might succeed in balancing by extending the stamping-leg to shift his center of gravity, whereby flustering the stamp. Let us say that success/failure-in-balancing involves a non-relational normativity (the balancing is the success), whereas facilitating/flustering-the-stamp involves a relational normativity (the balancing is a failure considered in relation to the stamp). Again, such normativity is conceptually distinct from any representations’ normativity: even an anti-representationalist could characterize this PA, as analysandum, as a success-in-balancing which is also a flustering-of-a-stamp.

Representationalist analyses of PAs correspondingly invoke two distinct kinds of representations as analysans. PAs are regarded as done for, or in the service of some represented personal aim (e.g., intention to stamp a hat), and the relational normativity of PAs in facilitating/flustering an IA is analyzed through assessment of whether or not they
contribute to fulfilling that overarching intention. (For this reason, some – e.g., Mele (1992) call both IAs and PAs “intentional acts” in an extended sense). But there is a one-many relation between any intention (e.g., to stamp a hat) and a multitude of PAs (all the micro-movements involved). Thus the overarching intention for-which many PAs are done cannot be cited to individuate each PA. And we plausibly have no further, highly specific personal intentions (“to shift my weight just so”) which individuate each PA. As Searle puts it: “I just do these actions; I just act... without having formed a prior intention to do it” (Searle, 1983, pp.84-85).

Since one has no intentions specifically to perform PAs, the non-relational normativity of PAs cannot be analyzed in terms of intentions (in the sense of “intentions” I am employing here). The representational analysis requires a new class of _analysans_ representations which (a) account for PAs non-relational success and failure, and (b) individuate PAs. There is no consensus regarding the nature of these “missing” representations. Searle posits “intentions-in-action” with desire-like satisfaction conditions (“world-to-mind” direction of fit) (1983, p.97). Pacherie (2000; 2002) calls upon motor representations which simultaneously exhibit belief-like (“mind-to-world”) and desire-like (“world-to-mind”) satisfaction conditions. Rowlands (2006) argues that PAs _themselves_ are representational, and have their own satisfaction conditions (as representational _analysans_) which specify their own success conditions (as _analysanda_). I shall not mediate the dispute. I only summarize a thin consensus view of PAs as follows:

**CPA:** “Preintentional Acts” are those acts whose relational and non-relational normativity (as _analysanda_) are to be understood partly in terms of the normativity of personal representations such as intentions (as
analysans), but also in terms of further representations (about which there is no consensus).

For present purposes, I am quite happy to suppose that (CPA) is correct, and that a representationalist analysis of PAs is apt, and should be pursued. The key attraction of pursuing (RAA) here lies in the fact that the non-relational normativity of PAs appears highly determinate, and so it would be parsimonious to simply iterate (RAA)’s analysis, positing represented aims whose satisfaction conditions specify PAs’ success conditions.

1.2.4 Subintentional Acts

O’Shaughnessy called a third variety of bodily acts “subintentional acts” (“SAs”). His own gloss runs:

We perform it; we know or are aware of it neither in the conscious nor unconscious sector of the mind; we do it out of a feeling-like; it is not performed for any reason that is our reason; and the faculty of reason plays neither a positive nor negative causal role in its genesis (1980, v.2, p.62).

I am not committed to precisely this gloss on SAs, but a novel class of acts is suggested here. Some examples that might occur in the reader could include absent-mindedly wiggling one’s tongue, tapping one’s toes or fingers, or shaking one’s head.

I mean for SAs to be a class of movements which are, like PAs and IAs, pre-theoretically thought of as things we do, not mere happenings: I do not intend them to be “all bodily movements which are not IAs or PAs.” If asked why you jerk your leg when your knee is struck, an apt response is: “I do not do that, it happens of itself.” In disowning this reflexive movement, one does not regard it as a doing at all, and I do
not regard it as a candidate SA. If asked why you tap your toes when reading, an apt response is “I do it, yet for no reason of mine at all.” Candidate SAs are movements which one does not disown. We must assess whether a movement is a candidate SA on a case-by-case basis. Likewise, it is well-known that even IAs cannot be discriminated superficially, and that the same gross bodily movement may be sometimes an IA and sometimes not. The same points holds for SAs. It is no objection to point out that some persons suffer from Restless Leg Syndrome, and disown some token toe-tappings as something that happened “of itself.”

One may not be especially aware of such acts, but one can recall them in memory, or someone else might point them out, and one can recognize, pre-theoretically, that one has been doing it. One can (intentionally) refrain from doing many SAs, which further distinguishes them from hard-wired reflexes, which merely happen in our bodies, come what may.

We can sometimes recognize normativity in SAs akin to that of PAs. Suppose that while absent-mindedly tapping your toes, you absent-mindedly shift your weight, balancing in response to a strong gust of wind. Like PAs, one “just does” these acts. We may assess whether you succeed in shifting your weight to balance, and whether this facilitates or flusters further toe-tapping. These SAs can thus be said to exhibit both relational and non-relational normativity, like PAs. Even where one only toe-taps, there is a non-relational normativity (one could succeed or fail), which we can recognize prior to and independent of any appeal to represented goal as analysans.
Unlike IAs and PAs, SAs are not plausibly done for any intention. Despite this, they fall under a broader class of “purposive behaviors” (Frankfurt, 1978). If I tap my toes in an SA, and you ask “why did you do it?” the apt answer is: “I didn’t realize I was doing it, but I didn’t mean to.” This is roughly in keeping with Anscombe’s influential analysis of actions. Anscombe (2000, §§16–18) defined “intentional actions” extremely broadly, as movements about which it makes sense to ask “why did you do it?” It is not required, on her account, that intentional actions are events for which a certain kind of answer to this question is apt: for example, it is not required that we (or anyone else) be able to specify an intention for which the act was done. SAs are, I shall say, personally non-normative in their execution: they are not done for any personal aim which I could succeed or fail to achieve (or facilitate or fluster) in doing them. I offer the following negative characterization of SAs:

**CSA:** “Subintentional Acts” are acts whose relational and/or non-relational normativity (as analyses) is not to be understood in terms of the normativity of personal representations such as intentions (as analysans),

This purely negative characterization does not indicate how SAs should be positively analyzed. I am familiar with three options in the philosophy of action.

O’Shaughnessy initially analyzed SAs as caused by “non-intentional tryings” (2008, v.2, pp.95ff). Rowlands (2006) has pointed out the difficulties facing this proposal. In short, the goal-directedness of many SAs is diffuse and difficult to determine. As such there is no determinate aim which one can be said to be (even “non-intentionally”) trying to achieve. In wiggling my tongue, for example, there is no event (wiggling my tongue just so) which counts as determinate success. Even when we can locate relational
and non-relational normativity in SAs, it is not plausibly of the determinate sort which characterizes PAs. Whatever one just does in an SA, O’Shaughnessy asserts that one was unintentionally trying to do that. But since the success conditions of the act are indeterminate, likewise the posited “trying” has no determinate satisfaction conditions; since representations are individuated by reference to their satisfaction conditions, the posited “trying” is itself indeterminate (Rowlands, 2006, p.102). It is unclear what the value is of positing represented goals where the goal-directedness of the act is itself unclear. The chief explanatory payoff of (RAA) appears to be idle in such cases.

Revising his (1980) for the second edition, O’Shaughnessy rejected SAs’ status as subintentional. He offered a second candidate analysis of SAs, claiming that one in fact does have some personal intention to do them (2008, v.2, p.361). This is a re-labeling of the problem. On the one hand, we are told that “SAs” are done for some intention, and are not radically distinct from IAs or PAs; on the other hand, the “intention” in question is radically distinct from the usual case, such that one cannot be determinately aware of what one is intending to do, and may be (unawares) intending nothing more than indeterminately “allowing more of the same” behavior to occur (2008, v.2, p.357). Positing such pseudo-intentions appears deeply ad hoc.

A third option is to analyze SAs not via pseudo-intentions, but by appeal to a distinct class of represented aims. Some have suggested (a) treating the “missing” representations which individuate PAs as representations of subpersonal aims, and (b) citing them to explain SAs (see for example Searle 1983, pp.84-5, or Pacherie 2002, p.67). Since we lack consensus regarding the nature of such representations, it is unclear
precisely how such an account of SAs should go. In any case, Rowlands’ complaint against O’Shaughnessy would recur: it is difficult to specify satisfaction conditions for representations posited to analyze SAs, hence difficult to individuate the posited representations, and difficult to see what (RAA) is to provide in such cases. Should such an account attain consensus, the personal non-normativity of SAs (their detachment from intentions) would remain a distinguishing mark. Thus I rest content with my negative characterization of SAs in CSA.

1.2.5 The Genus/Species Problem

Many will object that my gloss of SAs relies on the ill-specified, pre-theoretic conception of acts as “non-disowned doings,” even in the face of their indeterminate goal-directedness. I am forced to do so: robust analysis of SAs has not been pursued, and is not available. It is difficult to even locate explicit dismissals of candidate SAs in the philosophy of action: SAs lie so far afield from mainstream concerns that most philosophers of action do not even comment on them. But, for example, Davidson (1974a, pp.43-44) admittedly pursues an “oversimplification” in setting aside (what I would call) candidate SAs. He remarks that “there may, after all, be important and general truths [regarding “intentional actions” in the more restricted sense], and if there are how else will we discover them?” (1974a, p.43). Similarly, Mele sets aside “mindless” human actions, aiming instead to study “human action par excellence,” which he believes we can do “without struggling to locate the lower boundary of human action” (2003, p.218, see also p.224). Overall, SAs are widely regarded as actions only “in some fairly
weak sense,” and philosophers of action focus attention on actions exhibiting “a richer psychological structure” and “full-blooded’ human agency” (Wilson & Shpall, 2012, §1, ¶1-2). Similarly, Velleman (2000) distinguishes between “action” and “mere activity,” setting aside the latter without further ado.

Actions “par excellence,” exhibiting “richer psychological structure,” surely deserve scrutiny. But SAs are pre-theoretically acts (doings) in some sense, and we are the actors who execute them in some sense. Unlike Velleman, I do not presuppose that “mere activity” is “a partial and imperfect exercise of the subject’s capacity to make things happen” (2000, p.4). I presume, instead, that a robust philosophy of acts – an enterprise which is concerned to analyze the nature of all acts – owes us some account of SAs. Philosophers of action have not analyzed SAs, I suggest, since their personal non-normativity has worked against their inclusion in mainstream philosophy of action, where (thanks to (RAA)) personal representation serves as the touchstone to more central concerns: personal agency, responsibility, etc. These concerns – not a concern for understanding acts as such – are the central proccupations of contemporary philosophy of “action.”

I am not questioning the utility of the categories of IAs and PAs for the typical purposes of philosophy of action. Davidson and Mele are quite right: if one wants to form generalizations regarding one type of act, then one does well to oversimplify and set aside other types. But after half a century of pursuing this strategy, it is apt for philosophers to guard against the presupposition that we are only interested in acts insofar as they connect with personal agency, responsibility, etc. The typical orientation of philosophy
of action precludes study of SAs. But if our aim is to understand acts as such, we cannot reject SAs as “not really” acts solely because they are not readily analyzed in terms of represented goals: this would conflate analyses with their analyses. Nor can we declare that we are interested in “the nature of action as such” so long as we assume them all to be personally normative: this would conflate a species with a higher genus. One could just as well claim to study “animals as such” by studying only dogs (thereby failing to understand either).

In short, there is an unresolved, foundational issue within philosophy of action.

In CIA, CPA, and CSA, each class of acts is characterized as a species of act which is or is not susceptible to a certain kind of representational analysis – but what makes them all acts, generally? Put one way, the problem is this:

The Genus/Species Problem: philosophy of action fails to provide a unifying analysis of what makes items members of the genus of acts (doings), instead presupposing a division of that domain, focusing on species of acts presumed relevant to traditional concerns (personhood, agency, responsibility, etc.).

This statement again invokes the pre-theoretic view that acts form a unified class of doings, contrasted with mere happenings. One naively hopes to see this view legitimated through a unifying analysis of all acts. Failing that, one hopes a disjunctive analysis will be accompanied by some error theory which corrects naive expectations of unity. We currently have neither a unifying nor a disjunctive analysis of acts, because we have no suitable analysis of SAs whatsoever.

8The disjunctive conception of action sketched here is to be contrasted with Elijah Millgram’s pluralism about action (cf. his (2010) for an overview). Millgram only considers pluralism about IAs and PAs; he does not appear to consider SAs at all.
Analysis might reveal SAs as heterogeneous, in a variety of ways. We might distinguish subspecies of “SAs,” or replace that category with some other(s). For example, it is unclear whether Pollard’s (2010) “habitual actions” might be a sub-species of SAs, or a distinct species of acts which are not IAs or PAs. For Pollard, it is a “conceptual truth” that habits are acquired through practice, and must have been performed in the past (2010, p.77). I see no reason to generalize this claim to all SAs, though we might distinguish between practiced and unpracticed SAs. Or, to provide another example of how SAs may be heterogeneous, perhaps some SAs will turn out to connect with philosophy of action’s traditional concerns. For example, it may be of some importance to assess the degree of personal control which we are capable of exercising over SAs, or the aptitude with which we are able to refrain from doing them. This might be of some use in understanding the notion of personal control, which is central to many analyses of personal agency.

We will not know how these issues are to be resolved until we allow the characterization of SAs as acts, and set about analyzing them. Without such an analysis, we can have no general understanding of what makes acts acts, and thus only an incomplete understanding of even favored species of acts like IAs and PAs.

1.2.6 The Dilemma Discarded

Thus far, I have focused on cases of bodily action to sketch out the class of SAs, and to show how they undermine the assumption that all acts are personally normative. But consider the possibility that we might extend this account, recognizing mental IAs,
PAs, and SAs. If this extension can be defended, then, the “dilemma” for the Act Conception (§1.2 above) can in principle be avoided.

The first horn of the dilemma can in principle be avoided if we understand the Act Conception as providing an account of subintentional mental acts as the loci of intentionality. SAs are acts whose normativity is not clearly analyzable, in any substantive way, by (RAA). The first horn of the dilemma, the threat of infinite regress, can be avoided if the Act Conception provides an account of intentionality as arising from mental SAs, and makes good on a non-representational account of SAs. Intentionality would be part of the analysandum, but not part of the analysans. Note that with such an account of intentional mental phenomena in-hand, one could presuppose them (as usual) in distinguishing a variety of IAs and PAs. What is at issue here is not the success of (RAA) – either the causalist version, or the non-causalist version – as a method of analyszing IAs and PAs, but rather the possibility of a non-representationalist analysis of SAs.

The second horn of the dilemma proves to be non-fatal to the Act Conception so long as we recognize The Genus/Species Problem in the philosophy of action. However, it is that one hopes to resolve The Genus/Species Problem, one must discard the a priori assumption that all acts exhibit personal normativity, and take seriously the task of analyzing SAs on their own terms. It is then an open question whether or not SAs are to be analyzed along the lines of (RAA). As sketched already above, it is unclear what, precisely, (RAA) could hope to provide here. Although we pre-theoretically regard SAs as acts, and although we can (at least sometimes) identify them as exhibiting
both relational and non-relational normativity, their success conditions appear to be indeterminate. Thus the chief payoff of (RAA) – the appeal to the satisfaction conditions of a representation to fix the success conditions of an act – does not seem to be aptly pursued for SAs. But this need not be taken to diminish SAs’ status as acts. Likewise, if it should turn out that “representation-talk” can be assigned no clear explanatory value in cognitive science, this need not prevent a naturalistically-minded philosopher from recognizing, nonetheless, that there is a unique class of events called acts. If the Act Conception holds that intentionality is brought about in a mental SA in a way that does not presuppose a prior intentional mental phenomenon, it may yet provide a substantive account of mental acts as acts – not IAs or PAs, to be sure, but doings nonetheless.

1.3 Subintentional Mental Acts

So if there are mental SAs, and if they are the locus of intentionality, we will have a substantive reading of the Act Conception of intentionality. Why might we consider this extension of the taxonomy of bodily acts to the case of mental acts? In part, it has already been pursued in the philosophy of action.

Mele (1997) was one early defender of mental IAs. He claimed that mental events could count as IAs in precisely the same way bodily events do (on his causalist account). He defined a class of mental IAs in which “what it is to be actively thinking [a] series of thoughts – to be an agent with respect to them – involves their being motivated by a suitable desire or intention,” e.g., an intention to reflect upon some topic (1997,
For example, intention-formation, as a mental event, could occur as an IA if, when “an agent decides to A, [the resulting] intention to A is caused ‘in the right way’ by an effort to decide what to do, and that effort is motivated by a mental cause ‘of the right sort’” (1997, p.242). Just as with a bodily IA, we cite some represented aim (an intention-to-decide-what-to-do) to specify the goal of a mental IA (in this case, the IA of making a decision and thereby forming a new intention to act).

Mele initially considered mental IAs to be rare, holding that one often makes a decision in the absence of any specific intention to make a decision (Mele, 1997, p.242). His rejoinder to Hugh McCann on this point is notable:

Al decides (hence intends) to walk to work today, and he acts accordingly. He intentionally walks to work. In the process, he takes numerous steps... But there is no need to suppose that Al had an intention specifically to take [each] step... McCann writes: “it is impossible to make a decision... without intending to decide exactly as we do. That is why we never hear of anyone accidentally, or inadvertently, or unintentionally deciding to do something”... To argue in this way is to presuppose [that doing anything requires a specific intention to do just that]. Al does not accidentally, inadvertently, or unintentionally take the step discussed above either, but it does not follow that he was possessed of an intention to take that step... Similarly, an intention [generally] to decide what to do may normally be expected to do its work (e.g., prompt deliberation that issues in a decision [e.g., to A]) without the assistance of an intention specifically to decide to A (1997, pp.242-243).

This is a fairly explicit argument for mental PAs, on analogy with bodily PAs. Mele is here asserting that some mental acts, though they are “done intentionally,” cannot be individuated with reference to a highly specific intention. As noted above, (RAA) here incurs commitment to an additional class of representations in addition to intentions, about whose nature there is no consensus.
More recently, the literature on mental actions has largely abandoned the claim that thinking, at least, could ever be a mental IA. This is largely due to an influential argument from Strawson (2003). Any mental intentional phenomenon is generally held to be individuated with reference to its content. (This is precisely what undermines the plausibility of (RAA) as an analysis of SAs, since no clear goal can be specified as their content, hence the alleged representations cannot clearly be individuated). So a thinking of $P$ will be individuated with reference to its content, $P$. If this thinking is itself an IA then, by (RAA), it must be individuated with reference to a prior representation of a goal, whose goal must be, roughly “to think about $P$.” But then, in order to think $P$ in an IA, one must already have a way of thinking of $P$, else one could not have a representation whose represented goal is to think that $P$. As Strawson puts it, the content one might’ve aimed to think about “must already have ‘just come’ at some previous time” – otherwise one could not even represent the aim of thinking it (2003, p.235). But if one has such a representation, then there is no need to aim to think it: just in virtue of aiming to do so, one would already be doing so.

Whatever the virtues of this argument, its influence (see O’Brien & Soteriou 2009, pp.3-5) indicates again the widespread endorsement of (RAA). Despite the questionable status of mental IAs, many authors have pursued accounts of what are essentially mental PAs. The account of mental PAs from Mele, reviewed above, is not threatened by Strawson’s argument against mental IAs. Rather than intending specifically to think that $P$, I may simply have an overarching intention to solve some puzzle. As it happens, I solve it by thinking $P$. But I need not have intended specifically to think $P$ in advance;
rather, I wind up thinking *P in the service of* my overarching intention to solve the puzzle. As usual, (RAA) is to be applied to make sense of how I pulled this off.

Of course, the way in which (RAA) is to be applied is unclear, since we do not have consensus regarding what ‘missing representations’ are to be cited to explain a mental PA. I shall provide one other example of an account of mental PAs which highlights this issue. Proust (2012) has provided an analysis of “agentive mental acts.” In this view, a mental act involves “intentionally [i.e., volitionally] activating a certain mental disposition in order to acquire a desired mental property,” where this must be “voluntarily brought about” or “brought about willingly, rather than automatically triggered” (2012, p.262). Despite that, Proust’s analysis does not individuate mental acts solely in terms of an overarching intention. In Proust’s final analysis, the voluntariness of mental acts involves a novel class of representations, which are associated with “error signals and self-directed doubting” (2012, p.277, cf. §III). These are closely akin to the motor representations that Pacherie has posited to deal with bodily PAs. As one is trying to fulfill an overarching intention (e.g., to think of the solution to some puzzle – whatever it might be), one must monitor how well one is faring in carrying it out. Proust posits a novel class of representations to accommodate such monitoring of mental processes, just as Pacherie does to accommodate monitoring of bodily processes. In both cases, this commitment to an additional class of representations is incurred simply by the basic commitments of (RAA). So we have, in Proust’s account, precisely the kind of representational analysis sketched above for bodily PAs. There is always a background role for an overarching intention - which is what sets the overarching goal of a mental act,
and enables the assessment of “error” in its pursuit. This is insufficient to individuate each component of the mental act, and so another class of representations is called upon. The set of mental processes which one carries out (just so) in order to fulfill an overarching intention, like bodily PAs, all get classed as acts one does intentionally, since they are done in the service of the overarching intention.

So the extension of the taxonomy of bodily acts to mental cases, recognizing mental IAs and PAs, has already been considered. Unsurprisingly, mental SAs have not been considered. Just as in mainstream philosophy of bodily action, mental SAs have been dismissed out of hand in discussions of mental acts. Again, the status of SAs as personally non-normative has worked against their inclusion in philosophy of action.

For example, any mental event which did not fit Mele’s early account of mental IAs and PAs, he declared to be mere mental happenings. Consider the following hypothetical scenario. Al is trying to solve a puzzle: how to attain checkmate in three moves, given the present state of a chessboard. Al tries and fails to solve the puzzle, setting it aside. While engaged in other tasks, Al suddenly has the thought “that if he were to move white’s remaining bishop to queen-six, he might create a nasty problem for black’s king” (Mele, 1997, p.236). Mele asked whether it could be said of Al that he was trying to solve the puzzle, since, if he was, his having the thought would be an “intentional mental action” (Mele, 1997, p.236, original emph.). This appeal to trying is an attempt to determine whether Al’s thinking exhibits personal normativity. Since there is no personal aim which Al is currently trying to achieve or facilitate by thinking the thought, Mele concluded Al’s thinking is no act of his at all:
...Al had no desire or intention to solve the puzzle (or to try to solve it). In virtue of what would Al be an agent with respect to the identified thoughts? In virtue of what would these thoughts be, or be associated with, mental actions – as opposed to being beliefs that come to mind without Al’s actively bringing them to mind? Of course, it might be said that Al is now thinking [the thoughts...] But this might come to no more than that Al now has this belief about the bishop’s move; and again, many beliefs come to mind passively (Mele, 1997, p.237).

...to be actively thinking this series of thoughts – to be an agent with respect to them – involves their being motivated by a suitable desire or intention (Mele, 1997, p.238).

In Mele’s scenario, Al’s thinking the thought is not a mental IA or PA. It is not personally normative. Yet Al’s thinking might well be a mental SA: a personally non-normative mental act which is not individuated with reference to any personal aim. Mele does not consider this possibility.

Likewise, Proust has no place for mental SAs. Her “agentive mental acts” are one and all personally normative, and the only other class of mental events she recognizes are mere mental occurrences. A mental event only counts as an act if it is personally normative, and is done in the service of some personal intention. This overlooks the possibility of mental acts which are done, but which are not personally normative.

Or to provide just one more example, Soteriou (2005) is concerned to explain one’s first-person knowledge that one is now actively judging that $P$, where judging that $P$ is a transient event (which he sometimes treats as synonymous with “non-enduring act”) (2005, p.96). He remarks: “When one judges that $P$, although the truth of the content judged [i.e., that $P$] might be a discovery, one’s knowledge of what one is doing when one knows that one is judging that $P$ cannot be a discovery, in the way that one might discover what one is doing when one realizes that one is tapping one’s fingers on the
Set aside the question of what sort of mental act judging might be, and suppose Soteriou’s claims regarding our immediate knowledge of judging are correct. Why should self-knowledge of all mental acts work in this distinctive way? Why shouldn’t there be mental events which we can discover we have been doing, just as tapping our fingers is a bodily event we may discover we have been doing? Why shouldn’t there be mental SAs, in parallel with the bodily SAs Soteriou seems to recognize here?

Just as philosophy of bodily action cannot continue to forego an analysis of candidate bodily SAs if it seeks to overcome The Genus/Species Problem, so likewise a philosophy of mental acts cannot continue to overlook the possibility of mental SAs. Thus an initial exploration of mental SAs is demanded simply by the current state of the philosophy of action. My aim in this dissertation is to show that, with sufficient attention to the historical roots of the Act Conception of intentionality, one can plausibly read the view as claiming coherently that some mental SAs are the locus of intentionality.

1.4 The Plan for this Dissertation

As indicated in §1.1, any adequate account of the historical roots of the Act Conception of intentionality must examine the status of mental acts in Brentano’s work. That is the aim of Part I of this dissertation. A more detailed overview is provided in Chapter 2, but the basic progression of Part I is to explore Brentano’s early work on Aristotelian psychology in Chapter 3, and then to examine his own mature psychology in
Chapter 4. Brentano’s conception of Aristotelian psychology offers a variety of ways of understanding what mental acts might be. My task is to clarify these, and to then assess whether Brentano endorses any such view, or some alternative conception of mental acts, in his own mature psychology.

In Part II, I continue to examine the historical roots of the Act Conception, turning to Husserl’s work. A more detailed overview is provided in Chapter 5 below, but the basic progression of Part II is to consider Husserl’s early work in Chapter 6, and then to examine his own mature phenomenology in Chapters 7 and 8. Husserl’s early work contains a novel re-appropriation of Brentano’s notion of intentionality. His mature phenomenology is a more radical reorientation, away from any empirical psychology.

The upshot of these investigations is a comprehensive account of the various meanings one could assign to “mental act” in the core works of Act Psychology. As we shall see, not all of them are suitable for providing a coherent Act Conception of intentionality. At the end of each substantive chapter (3, 4, 6, 7 and 8), I offer a summary of the doctrines endorsed by Brentano and Husserl at each stage of their thought.

The task throughout Parts I and II is to locate and explicate the commitments of an historical Act Conception of intentionality. I had initially planned a “Part III” of the dissertation. The goal was to examine whether, and if so how, this historically-sourced Act Conception – or some modulation of it – might find a tenable place within contemporary philosophy of mind. I underestimated (a) the amount of exegesis required for adequate treatment in Parts I and II, (b) the richness of Husserl’s analyses, and most centrally (c) the difficulty of making the Husserlian view clear. Part III remains unwritten.
1.5 The End-Game:

A Robust Husserlian Act Conception

Allow me to sketch the basic conclusions of this work.

1. An Aristotelian psychology, as expressed in Brentano’s early work, could support several robust Act Conceptions of intentionality.

2. Brentano’s mature empirical psychology is not Aristotelian, and cannot adopt any such Aristotelian Act Conception.

3. Brentano offers no alternative, non-Aristotelian, Act Conception.

4. Husserl’s early work is, overall, fairly Brentanian, and he also offers no Act Conception.

5. Husserl’s mature work, his transcendental phenomenology, offers a robust and many-layered Act Conception of intentionality.

6. The Act Conception is in fact a doctrine which serves as a kind of Rosetta Stone for understanding transcendental phenomenology. The entire method of phenomenology, as well as all of its results, return us again and again to the Act Conception.

In short, the historians of psychology were mistaken in lumping Brentano and Husserl into one class of Act Psychologists. Brentano has no Act Conception to offer in his empirical psychology. Husserl’s Act Conception is not at home in any empirical psychology.
We shall see that Husserlian phenomenology enables us to distinguish a wide
variety of subintentional mental acts. Some of them are egoic acts – they are carried
out by us. But they are not understood as personal acts, and they do not presuppose
any of our personal intentions. They are to be regarded as pre-personal acts – acts of
the pure transcendental ego – which are in fact presupposed in constituting any person,
and in constituting any personal representations. Meanwhile, underneath these egoic
acts is a whole network of further subintentional mental acts which are not egoic at all:
every single intentional mental phenomenon originally fits this mold. Husserl offers us
what I call a “quasi-volitional” account of basic intentionality, in his account of “passive
intentions.” The result is that in his view, we are licensed in treating all intentionality
in terms of acts, even though they are subintentional since they cannot be explained in
terms of personal intentions-to-act, etc. The quasi-volitional framework is robust and
many-layered: not only are intentional mental phenomena themselves quasi-volitional
acts, but all of them arise though even more basic acts. Our entire mental life, in the
Husserlian view, is a performative life of dynamic achievement. I shall argue, further,
that the Husserlian view re-appropriates the main lines of the Aristotelian view which
Brentano sketched: Husserlian phenomenology is a transcendental neo-Aristotelianism,
and Husserlian intentionality may be understood in relation to Aristotelian mental acts.
The chief contribution of the dissertation, then, is to clarify how an Act Conception could
be workable at all, using Husserl’s view as an exemplar.
Part I

Brentano on Mental Acts
Chapter 2

Overview of Part I

2.1 Brentano’s Aristotelianism

Franz Brentano completed his dissertation in philosophy (*On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*) in 1862. While continuing to study philosophy, he also pursued theology, and was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1864. At this time he studied the works of St. Thomas Aquinas closely. To attain his first teaching appointment at the University of Würzburg, he completed and defended a *Habilitationsschrift* in 1866, entitled *The Psychology of Aristotle*. Less than a decade later in 1874, having left his position both in Würzburg and in the church, Brentano would publish the first two books of his influential *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (with another three books planned, but never coming to fruition). Here Brentano would put forth his own views regarding the nature and classification of mental phenomena, and the proper method of their empirical study. Brentano continued to work on his psychology until his death. Two later texts have been
published posthumously and translated under the titles *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness* and *Descriptive Psychology*. Brentano also published another two texts on Aristotle in 1911 (*Aristotle and his World View*, and a 2nd edition of *Aristoteles Lehre vom Ursprung des menschlichen Geistes*).

Given Brentano’s long-lasting affinity for Aristotle, many have looked to his earlier works – especially *The Psychology of Aristotle* – to locate Aristotelian precedents for Brentano’s mature views in psychology. Libardi (1996, p.35) suggests that Brentano’s early work on Aristotle “provided him with a set of premises which constituted the conceptual basis” for his mature psychological work. More concretely, George & Koehn (2004) appeal centrally to *The Psychology of Aristotle* to locate Aristotelian precursors to Brentano’s later views on (a) intentionality and judgment, (b) the perception of substances (and not just their accidents), (c) the similarity of the proper methods of philosophy and science, (d) the relation and distinction between sensory and noetic (intellectual) consciousness, and (e) the rejection of Cartesian dualism. Smith (1995) endorses all these same points in essence, appealing to the same text. Many others have devoted special attention to the Aristotelian basis of (a), with the Scholastics often serving as intermediary (Gilson, 1976; Spiegelberg, 1976; Marras, 1976). Brentano himself acknowledged this connection explicitly (1874, p.88, *cf. fn‡*). Fugali (2009) identifies Brentano and his teacher, Trendelenburg, as proponents of a broader 19th century movement to revitalize an Aristotelian approach to psychology, centrally targeting the *Psychology of Aristotle* for discussion. Fugali’s remarks support George & Koehn in locating Aristotelian precedents for (a)-(d), though he is hesitant regarding (e). In addition, Fugali emphasizes Aristotelian
precursors for Brentano’s views regarding (f) temporality as the ground of individuation and unity of a mental subject.¹

Brentano’s early works on Aristotle were significant contributions to philosophy in their own right. The rigor and ingenuity of Brentano’s work in *The Psychology of Aristotle* was not lost on his superiors at Würzburg. In his report to the school Senate regarding Brentano’s *Habilitationsschrift*, the Dean declared that “of all the works that had been submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of his university in the course of half a century this was definitely the outstanding one” (reported by Stumpf (1976, p.11)). But the novelty of Brentano’s thought, and its vicissitudes over time, provide at least three reasons for caution in branding Brentano’s views “Aristotelian.” None of these interpretive issues is insurmountable, but they should each be kept in mind.

First, many have noted that Brentano’s own readings of Aristotle can be difficult to square with the source materials: “Brentano’s Aristotle” is perhaps not best regarded as Aristotle. This is so especially in the case of *The Psychology of Aristotle*, which has served as a touchstone for grounding Aristotelian commitments in Brentano’s later writings. Brentano promotes a reading of Aristotle’s *De Anima* which cannot be tied to any isolated passage, but rather relies on a doubly holistic assessment of how well Brentano’s overall interpretation fits with an integration of Aristotle’s broader corpus.

¹Fugali (2009) writes as if Brentano’s *Psychology of Aristotle* were intended to be a statement of Brentano’s own views, rather than an exegesis of Aristotle. As I shall discuss further in-text, it is not clear that this is so. Likewise, the majority of Fugali’s references to Brentano’s later work (ibid., pp.193, 201) concern archived manuscripts wherein it is not clear that Brentano’s intent is to state his own views, or rather to clarify Aristotle’s as he understands them. A single cited manuscript (ibid., p.95) may clearly be counted as Brentano’s own voice, but (so far as I can tell) is indeterminately dated as being written between 1867-1873, while Brentano was in Würzburg. Thus it is not clear that it is intended as a statement of Brentano’s own mature psychological views, which would not begin to be published until 1874.
If we call Brentano’s later views on psychology “Aristotelian” on the basis of their
congruence with his remarks in *The Psychology of Aristotle*, we should not thereby
suppose that they are entirely loyal to Aristotle’s own most explicit remarks.

Second, Brentano vigorously opposed many contemporary interpretations of
Aristotle’s view, and so counting him as one “19th century Aristotelian” among others
would fail to underscore the novelty of his own view. For example, in *The Psychology of
Aristotle* Brentano forcefully disagreed with Trendelenburg and other commentators on
many points – especially concerning the active intellect (*nous poiētichos*), which is the
central concern of the text. A complete account of a “Brentanian Aristotelianism” should
follow him in carefully distinguishing it from other varieties.

Third, while Brentano was adamant in maintaining that his reading of Aristotle
was superior to others, still it is not entirely clear that *The Psychology of Aristotle* was
meant to put forth any view to which Brentano *himself* was committed. “Brentano’s
Aristotle” is perhaps not best regarded as Brentano.² True, throughout the text and
throughout his life, Brentano is unmistakably enamored with Aristotle, and (as noted
above) there is some sense in which Brentano’s later views (especially regarding the
proper method of philosophy) can be called Aristotelian. But every argument and
conclusion in *The Psychology of Aristotle* is steeped in an Aristotelian metaphysic
of the body and soul, of causation, of capacities, of forms and matter, etc. If any
such metaphysic is present in the later *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, it is
masterfully suppressed: Brentano does not appear to state arguments or conclusions in

²See again fn.1
straightforwardly Aristotelian terms, which he clearly has at his disposal. George and Koehn suggest that in in this later texts, Brentano can be read a supporting, via “further argument,” some of the same Aristotelian ideas discussed in his earlier work (2004, pp.30, 31). Titchener goes so far as to say that Brentano’s psychology simply “looks back over the past, weeds out its errors with a sympathetic hand, accepts from it whatever will stand the test of his criticism, and organises old truth and new into a system” (1976, p.89).

One reason for the suppression of Aristotelian claims in *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* may be due to methodological constraints: Brentano’s aim is to establish an *empirical* approach which does not traffic in any metaphysical posits. But it is also a live possibility that the suppression of Aristotelian claims may be due, instead, to Brentano’s rejection of the metaphysical presuppositions which are required, in his view, for a properly Aristotelian account. As George and Koehn note, more than forty years after the publication of *The Psychology of Aristotle*, Brentano still maintained that his reading of Aristotle “could [dürfte] be refuted in no point by anyone, or even improved” (Brentano, 1909, p.136). Yet while he maintained that his account was correct as a reading of Aristotle, he was far from presupposing that the view expressed therein was simply *correct*. For example, he noted that he was “far from agreeing unreservedly” with what he regarded as Aristotle’s doctrines of substantial form and matter – a crucial component of Brentano’s reading of the Aristotelian soul, without which the entire account would collapse (ibid., p.146). In *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Brentano clearly sets aside the Aristotelian conception of an unconscious, vegetative part of the soul, instead supposing that only conscious mental phenomena are the province of empirical
In at least this last respect, Brentano’s later views would appear to be decidedly different from a complete Aristotelian psychology. Finally, although Brentano continued to publish works on Aristotle after he put forth his own empirical psychology, he is quite clear in stating that he does not himself endorse every view he attributes to Aristotle. For example, he published a comprehensive introduction to Aristotle’s philosophy in 1911 (translated as Aristotle and his World View). Brentano concludes that text by saying “It would not be very difficult to show that the system as a whole is not tenable; on some, though not all, important points I have not suppressed a brief critical remark” (1978, p.125).

In light of these three interpretive issues, one must be cautious in appealing to Brentano’s early work on Aristotle in seeking the precursors of Brentano’s later views. Even if Brentano later supported claims which could be supported on Aristotelian grounds, this would not imply his own commitment to an Aristotelian method of providing support for them, or an Aristotelian construal of the claims in question. While Brentano was admirably clear in stating in early work what he thought could count as Aristotelian arguments in favor of psychological theses, this does not imply endorsement of such arguments in his later work.

Providing an analysis of Brentano’s corpus which is capable of overcoming all three of these issues is a task worthy of book-length treatment in its own right. My aim here is more modest, and can be delimited as follows. I am not concerned here with

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3Citations to Psychology From and Empirical Standpoint give: (i) the pagination of the 1973 McAlister translation and (ii) that of the 1995/2009 re-issue. Unfortunately they do not match
the first issue. That is, I am interested only in “Brentano’s Aristotle,” not in the views expressed in primary texts of the historical Aristotle himself: henceforth all reference to “Aristotle” should be read with this modulation in mind. Similarly, I shall not take up the second issue. I am interested in “Brentanian Aristotelianism,” but will only pursue it on its own terms, and will not closely examine Brentano’s disagreements with other 19th century Aristotelians. It is the third issue which is my main concern: the question of the extent to which Brentano’s later views in psychology – and especially his concept of “mental acts” – can be grounded in a Brentanian Aristotelianism.

2.2 The Plan for Part I

The purpose of Part I of the dissertation is to provide an overview of Brentano’s conception of “mental acts.” The focus here is less on the well-worn question of the status of intentional objects in Brentano (though this will receive treatment in due course) and more on the question of whether there is any significance to Brentano’s use of the term “mental act” to denote mental phenomena. In his mature psychology, Brentano defined as synonymous the terms “mental act,” “intentional mental phenomenon” and “conscious mental phenomenon” (1874, p.102/78). Many have doubted whether these last two are synonymous: philosophers of mind (and many empirical psychologists) readily suppose that there are a plethora of intentional mental phenomena which are not conscious. But few have inquired after the third term here, and this is my quarry: what could Brentano have meant in saying that conscious, intentional mental phenomena are acts?
In Chapter 3, I examine Brentano’s early work on Aristotle to work out the conception of mind and intentionality presented there. This investigation provides a map of conceptual fault-lines which define a number of possible, Aristotelian conceptions of mental acts. In this introduction I shall briefly describe the two which are most relevant for my purposes – the two which are most interesting for the purposes of assessing Brentano’s later views. I call these the *permissive Aristotelian conception* and the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts.

First, the Aristotelian holds that any token mental phenomenon is an actualization of psychological capacity. Among these, as instances, are token mental representations (*Vorstellungen*), which are actualizations of some capacity for representation. On the *permissive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts, both the conception of “act” and the conception of “mentality” (or “the psychological”) are extremely broad. Any actualization of a capacity is called an “act” in a very broad sense: they are occurrent *exercising* of capacities. Even at the lower limit, they are a form of responsive “activity-under-passivity” – a *being-triggered-into-activity* under the influence of some distinct causal agent. In some cases, the capacity *happens* to be a capacity for conscious representation, and so in those cases mental representation arises through a mental act. But *it is not at all essential* to the *permissive Aristotelian conception* that the result of a mental act be a representation. And it is not at all essential to the basic, broad conception of acts that they be *mental* acts. One could just as well say that a glass is active when I act by striking and shattering it: this is just as well an actualization of a passive capacity of the glass to break.
The Aristotelian does, indeed, say that in a case of a glass breaking when struck there is a kind of striving, in the broadest possible sense — a tendency or propensity — of the glass to exhibit the activity of breaking. And the Aristotelian maintains that some such tendencies are properly regarded as “psychological.” Again, this conception of mentality is extremely broad: tendencies-to-activity are counted a mental insofar as (a) those tendencies actualize capacities which are characteristic of living organisms (versus inanimate matter), and (b) all capacities which are unique to living organisms are said by the Aristotelian to be powers of a soul (psuchê). All activities-under-passivites are “acts” in a broad sense, and all such activities which are characteristic of living systems are “mental” in a broad sense. In contrast, we generally take as our paradigms of “acts” cases in which autonomous agents strive, in a spontaneous or volitional manner, to bring it about that some event occurs. And we typically take as our paradigms of “mentality” cases in which a human is conscious, or at least where representation is involved. It is in virtue of its departure from these paradigmatic cases that this first Aristotelian conception of “mental acts” may be regarded as quite permissive.

There is, however, a more restrictive Aristotelian conception of “mental activity.” Brentano holds that an Aristotelian is committed to positing an unconscious mental capacity of humans — the active intellect (nous poiêtichos) — whose activity is involved in (and presupposed by) the occurrence of any conscious, intellectual representation. On Brentano’s reading of Aristotle, the intellectual mind is essentially and inherently active in bringing about or enacting any intellectual representing (i.e., a thought). One intellectual capacity — the receptive intellect, or the “intellect which becomes all things”
(nous dunamei) (cf. Brentano 1866, p.74ff)\(^4\) – is the receptive capacity of all conscious thought: it *thinks* by passively receiving an intelligible form in an instance of activity-under-passivity. Such receptivity implies a further activity. In the case of sensory perception, this activity is imposed upon us from without, by some effective stimulus. In contrast, in Brentano’s Aristotelian view, an intelligible form is actively *wrought* by the active intellect: the activity which triggers the receptive intellect to think is *itself* a mental activity of humans. And this is no activity-under-passivity, but rather, as we shall see *pure activity*.

This intellectual activity is not itself the locus of intellectual intentionality: the active intellect contains no representations and *does not think*. It is instead more fundamental than this: it is what actively brings about any intentional intellectual representation in the first place. It is the mental activity which *generates* intelligible forms and *affects* the receptive intellect, thereby *inducing* conscious thought. To be sure, since the activity of the active intellect is held to be (a) unconscious, and (b) prior to (and enabling) all intellectual representation, it *also* does not fit the commonsense paradigm of a conscious, volitional striving-towards the attainment of some represented aim. It is not conscious. It involves no representation. But one can at least see how the active intellect is claimed to be itself *active* and effective, rather than being an activity-under-passivity, or a mere actualization. In this sense, it is a rich and *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental activity.

\(^4\)George variably translates *nous dunamei* as “receptive intellect” and as “potential intellect.” Brentano disagrees with other interpreters in treating this as equivalent to the “intellect which becomes all things” (1866, cf. p.148). I cannot address this here.
These two Brentanian-Aristotelian conceptions of mental acts are worked out in detail in chapter 3. In chapter 4, I turn to Brentano’s mature psychology, examining the account of “mental acts” presented there. My main focus is the 1874 *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, however I also draw upon later works, including his additions to the 1911 edition of *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint*, and a variety of posthumously published texts. The chapter provides a detailed introduction to Brentano’s conception of intentionality and mental phenomena, and moreover provides an exegesis of what “mental acts” could be in this account. The chapter pursues three tasks simultaneously.

One task is to show Brentano himself does not clearly deny that mental acts are to be regarded substantively as acts. This point has been obscured by the editor of *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint*, Oskar Kraus, who repeatedly undermines any active construal of mental acts in a number of editorial footnotes. I show that there is little support for this view in Brentano’s own writings.

The second task is to contrast Brentano’s mature psychology to his Aristotelian psychology. One major conclusion of Ch.4 is that Brentano’s mature psychology is not robustly Aristotelian, as judged by his own lights, in a variety of ways. For introductory purposes, it is most important to note that Brentano’s *empirical* psychology cannot invoke the Aristotelian metaphysics which is required to uphold either the *permissive* or the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts, and further, he rejects the Aristotelian epistemology which motivates central aspects of the *restrictive conception*. The mature Brentano could at best support a restricted version of the *permissive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts. Brentano’s mature psychology regards *all and only* conscious,
intentional mental phenomena as “mental acts.” This restriction of the field of psychology to conscious mental phenomena rules out both the permissive and the restrictive Aristotelian conception of mental acts as stated above. If the “mental” must be conscious, then the unconscious active intellect is immediately excluded from consideration, and the restrictive Aristotelian conception of mental acts is not available: even if there is some unconsciously active Aristotelian agency behind intellectual representation, it will not be treated in Brentano’s empirical psychology, and so it cannot be called upon to ground a conception of mental acts as acts. Further, since Brentano restricts the domain of psychology to conscious mental phenomena, he cannot lay claim to the permissive Aristotelian conception of mental acts. For on the weaker Aristotelian view, even plants, as living organisms, would exhibit unconscious psychological “activities-under-passivity;” but the mature Brentano will not count these as psychological at all, insofar as they are unconscious. At best, the mature Brentano’s “mental acts” are a more limited subset of “activities-under-passivity,” namely those that result in conscious mental phenomena. However, I will argue that even this more limited conception of mental acts would require commitment to an elaborate Aristotelian metaphysics which has no place in Brentano’s empirical psychology.

The third task pursued in Ch. 4 is to try to determine if Brentano provided any other clear, substantive conception of mental acts. I fail to locate such a view in his work. Brentano’s mature view rules out the use of any commonsense notion of an “act” in calling intentional mental phenomena “mental acts.” The main difficulty here is that Brentano explicitly reduces the mental subject to nothing but the unity of all intentional
phenomena, or the unity of all mental acts. This renders it nonsense to ask who performs a mental act: there is no “performer” who lurks behind and actively carries out mental acts. What we call the mental subject just is the unity of all mental acts, and is nothing apart from this. Rather than being a free agent who consciously executes and freely determines mental acts, the mental subject is itself determined as the unity of conscious mental acts. Despite that, I do locate the resources in Brentano to muster one argument in favor of a substantive Act Conception – what I call the Argument From Unity. If we found this argument convincing, we would be forced to posit mental acts without an actor. This would require a striking departure from paradigmatic cases of “acts,” and I cannot locate in Brentano any resources to work out such a view in detail.

Thus, there are great difficulties in treating Brentano’s mature conception of mental acts as genuinely substantive. This in turn puts the historians’ conception of “act psychology” in question, insofar as the founder of “act psychology” seems incapable of supporting the school’s central doctrine in a clear way. This drives me, in Part II of the dissertation, to ask whether Husserl (the other central proponent of “act psychology,” according to the historians) can do any better.
Chapter 3

Brentano on Aristotle

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of Aristotelian psychology as it was understood by Brentano. I proceed as follows. First, in §3.2, I will introduce five basic principles of the Aristotelian view. The first principle (§3.2.1) concerns the individuation of substances and their natures. The last four principles (§3.2.2) concern the “activities” which substances exhibit. While this collection of principles may initially appear somewhat disjointed, collectively they form the conceptual arsenal which Brentano will deploy in providing his reading of Aristotle’s psychology. I turn to this more specific application of the five principles in §3.3. There I provide a preliminary overview of the Aristotelian’s three parts of the human soul: the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual. This analysis continues in §3.4 with a more detailed discussion of Brentano’s constraints upon, and his positive account of, the active intellect (nous poiētichos). Finally, in §3.5, I
will conclude the chapter with a summary of a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology, and the place(s) of “mental acts” within it.

### 3.2 Aristotelian Building-Blocks

The purpose of this section is to provide a concise introduction to some points in Aristotelian metaphysics which are presupposed in the main line of argument in *The Psychology of Aristotle*. I articulate five distinct Aristotelian principles in their generality, but also provide some initial indication of how they are applied particularly in the context of an Aristotelian theory of the soul. A more complete discussion of the soul is the task of §§3.3 & 3.4 below.

#### 3.2.1 Substances, Powers & Activities

Our first Aristotelian principle can be brought out by asking how we are to distinguish substances. The basic Aristotelian division between substances (roughly, property-bearers) and their accidents (roughly, properties) requires clarification, since not all accidents are equal. (So goes an essentialist intuition, at any rate.) Some accidents are fully contingent, whereas others are rooted in the *nature* of a substance. If one heats a piece of iron it will glow red. If one cleverly paints a piece of iron, it might appear to glow red. The iron’s actually glowing red depends upon the nature of iron. In the Aristotelian account, we here invoke an ontology of *dunameis*, understood as “powers,” “potentialities,” or “capacities” (Brentano’s favored terms are *Kräft*, *Potenzen*,...
The iron’s powers are here actualized under the external influence of applied heat. The iron’s looking-such-and-such-a-way after being painted does not arise from the nature of the iron as an activation of its powers to act, rather it is fully imposed upon the iron from without.\(^1\) If we were to attempt to delineate the nature of the substance of iron by relying on such properties as “looking-such-and-such-a-way after being painted” we would do a poor job: anything painted in the same way would be lumped together as a substance of the same sort, and our distinction between substances would fail to track their natures.

The Aristotelian thus claims that the way to distinguish substances is by looking to their natural powers. But a power, in itself, is only a potentiality or capacity. To discover which powers are possessed by an actual substance, one must look to the actualization of those powers in state-changes, effects, movements, and activities. We “discover the nature of powers [Kräfte] by using knowledge of their effects [Wirkungen] and activities [Thätigkeiten]” (Brentano, 1866, pp.27, 35). There is thus a basic “functionalistic” orientation in an Aristotelian epistemology of substances and their natures: we look to the manifest effects of a substance’s powers in order to identify its powers, and thereby, distinguish its nature. We do not look, for example, at the matter or substrate of a substance in order to determine its nature, even though it must have a matter if it is to be actual. The nature of a substance is not to be confused for its matter. For example, the Aristotelian view permits that it is in the nature of (a part of) a functionally-defined

\(^1\)All this is a bit coarse-grained: it skips over the distinction between first- and second- actualizations of capacities. I have decided to leave this out of account here, but have addressed it more fully in other manuscripts that cover the same ground.
human soul (e.g., as a nature which enables activities of *thinking*), that it may persist
after death, even though it would then no longer be *actual*, and would not be bound to
matter (e.g., would have no body).

I thus define the following Aristotelian Principle:

**Functionalistic Principle of Natures:** The nature of an actual substance
is distinguished by its natural powers (potentialities), and powers are
distinguished by their actualized activities and operations.

In *The Psychology of Aristotle*, this basic principle is applied in two main ways. Both
points will be addressed more fully in §3.3 below, but I offer a gloss on each here.

First, the Functionalistic Principle of Natures enables the Aristotelian to distin-
guish living things, in their *nature*, from all inanimate matter. This is so because the
*powers* of living organisms are distinct from those of inanimate objects. And the evidence
for this claim is that living organisms exhibit natural (un-enforced) movements which are
distinct from those seen in inanimate matter (e.g., locomotion in humans and animals,
movements to acquire nutrition in all organisms, including plants, etc.) (Brentano, 1866,
p.29). In the Aristotelian view, the distinction is drawn by saying that living things are
ensouled (German: *beseelt*), and ”soul” (*psuchê*) is the term of art used to refer to the
locus for the foregoing powers and activities.

Second, however, the Functionalistic Principle of Natures will also enable the
Aristotelian to distinguish *parts* of a soul. This division relies on showing that diverse
powers, exhibited by different organisms, are separable from each other: some occur in
the absence of others. This in turn relies on distinguishing a variety of “movements,” or
actualizations of a power, which occur separably. For example, all living things exhibit
basic nutritive movements which distinguish them from inanimate things. Plants show these vital movements, but humans show many others (e.g., volitional movement) that distinguish them even further from inanimate objects, and also from plants. Thus plants and humans share one set of powers which distinguish them from the inanimate, but humans exhibit (in their movements) another set of powers that plants lack. In this way, using the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, the Aristotelian distinguishes the vegetative, the sensitive, and the intellectual parts of the human soul.

Again, these points will be revisited in §3.3 below. For now, I continue to canvass further basic Aristotelian principles.

### 3.2.2 Four Principles of Activity

Given the foregoing, a great deal depends on how we conceive of activities, since these are the origin-point for any distinction of powers, and thereby of substances’ natures. The Aristotelian holds four general claims regarding activity which are worth stressing.

The first principle regarding activities is a complement of The Functionalistic Principle of Natures. By that principle, we distinguish a substance’s nature by looking at its powers (potentialities); we distinguish its powers by looking at its activities (the actualizations of those potentialities). These activities must always have some object. We must be cautious here: the object of an activity in this sense is not, for example, the stimulus which initiates the activity, or some environmental object which the activity operates upon. Rather, the object is to be thought of as the “end” (Ende, or Terminus) of an activity (Brentano, 1866, see pp.51, 52). The “object” in this sense is the final
cause of an activity, the end towards which it aims. It is worth distinguishing these
two senses of object through some examples. A plant orients its leaves towards the sun,
and the sun is an environmental “object.” But the end-object of the plant’s movements,
in the sense at issue (that “for the sake of which” it moves) is not the sun, but rather
sustenance or nutrition. A human’s volitional movements may aim at manipulation of
some worldly object or other; but the end-object of the human’s movements, in the sense
at issue, is manipulation (or its effects), not the manipulated object as such. And any
animal’s sensory capacities will only be actualized if an object (what one might call an
effective stimulus) triggers them; but famously, for the Aristotelian the “proper object”
of the sense of, e.g., vision, is not an environmental object as such, but rather a color:
the “end” of vision is the perception of color, not the full-bodied environmental objects
which occasion perception.

The way to individuate activities is by reference to their end-objects, or that-for-
which-they-aim. Brentano summarizes the point in several ways: “in conception, acts are
earlier than potencies and objects earlier than acts” (1866, p.51); “potencies differ where
their acts differ, and acts differ where their objects differ” (1866, p.55). I summarize it as
the following Aristotelian Principle:

**Teleological Principle of Activities:** Activities and operations are to be
distinguished by their end-objects.

Putting this together with the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, the starting point for
any Aristotelian analysis of the nature of a substance will lie in delineating the end-objects
which individuate its natural activities.
This in turn implies a further Aristotelian principle as corollary. For any activity which an entity exhibits, the entity must be said to have a tendency to exhibit that activity. As Brentano sometimes puts it, "Each activity [Wirken – operation] proceeds from a striving [Streben]" (1866, p.42). This notion of a “striving” must be read extremely broadly: it need not imply a conscious intention to pursue any event. In illustrating the claim, Brentano offers as an example that “a warm body because of its warmth necessarily has a tendency [Neigung] to warm up a colder one” (1866, p.42). Here a basic caricature of an Aristotelian explanation of gravity is helpful: objects seek their own natural place or level, with heavier objects “wanting” to get further down. However, this basic and broad notion of “striving” is also meant to apply to the activities which are unique to living systems. A plant, for example, strives for sustenance, and this striving actualizes its capacities for nutrition by inducing the activities of photosynthesis. Further, this broad notion of striving is also intended to capture human, volitional strivings as a special case. Several features of human volitions distinguish them from the “strivings” which bring about the activities of a warm body in transmitting heat. First, human volitions are conscious. Second, unlike natural impulses, human volitions do not occur with complete necessity, but rather through free choice: “For example, two physicians may have the same concept of health, but one of them wants to bring about recovery, the other sickness” (Brentano, 1866, p.42). Another way of putting this point is that while “natural” tendencies are always necessarily actual (they will always eventuate in an activity wherever possible), human desires are instead contingent actualizations of a disposition-for-striving (Brentano, 1866, see p. 45). But despite these differences in
how they occur, in the Aristotelian view, human volitions and human activities are only special cases. They fit the following principle as do many other cases:

**Principle of Striving:** Every actual activity proceeds from a striving.

Some such striving is always involved in moving from the mere potentiality of an activity to its actualization – in *actualizing* the capacity.

The foregoing two principles mainly concern what an activity is, and what must be co-posited along with any activity for it to come about. The remaining two principles provide some further constraints on what activities do, and how they do it. A third Aristotelian principle is initially introduced with reference to a special class of activities: the activities of *generation* whereby something is created or brought into being. The claim is that “whatever comes into being, comes from something synonymous with it [from its namesake]” or that “like things are generated by like” (Brentano, 1866, p.42; bracketed comment added by the translator). Some illustrative examples are provided. Humans generate (*via* biological reproduction) other humans, and thus that-which-creates and that-which-is-created are called by the same name: “human.” Or to take another case, when a house is built in the world, it is done in accordance with some design or plan drawn up by an architect, who relied on some idea of the house. Thus that-which-is-created (a house) has its precedent in an *idea* in the intellect of the designer, which we cannot help but call an idea of a *house*, thereby applying a similar name to the cause as we do for the effect. I summarize this in the following Aristotelian Principle:

**Principle of Synonymy in Generation** In any activity of creation or generation (whereby something is brought into being) the created must in some sense share a name with the creator which was responsible for its
Again, at present this appears to be a highly specialized Principle which applies only to a subset of activities.

The claim here is not, however, intended to be restricted to only those activities of generation. Or rather, in the Aristotelian view, “generation” occurs more frequently than one might expect. In the Aristotelian scheme, any change – e.g., a state-change of some object through actualization of one of its powers – involves generation or becoming. Whenever one object takes on a new property, something must disappear and be replaced, and a new property must be “generated” – if this did not occur, there would be no change, but only rest. Yet insofar as it is the same object which has changed, something has remained the same: otherwise we should not be able to say that one thing has changed, and should rather say that it simply ceased to be at all. The general principle is:

**Principle of Change** “In anything that changes two things can be distinguished: one that remains during the change and is its ground, and another that [appears or] disappears during it and through it” (Brentano, 1866, p.30).

There are, however, two broad varieties of change to be distinguished, and the principle applies to each of them.

In cases of accidental change, a substance’s nature stays the same while it loses one accidental form and gains another: the substance’s nature persists through this change because in its nature it contains the potentiality for both of these accidental forms. For

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2The German term Brentano uses here is genuinely “synonymy:” “[W]hatever comes into being, comes from something synonymous with it [alles Werdende aus etwas Synonymem werde]” (1866, p.42). He prefers this formulation over the claim that “like things are generated by like [das Aehnliche bringe das Aehnliche hervor],” but the thought is roughly the same (1866, p.42).

3For more on this principle, see Brentano (1978, pp.50-53).
example, locomotion is an accidental change (Brentano, 1866, p.30). It involves a body which, in potentiality, is both in location $X$ and location $Y$, but which is in actuality only in one place. As the locomotion occurs, the location of the body (an accidental form of the body) changes, even while the nature of this body (considered with regard to its natural capacity or potentiality for locomotion) stays the same. Indeed, the nature of the body is itself the ground of this change, insofar as the change occurs in accordance with the potentialities which define the nature of the body. The body is, by nature, potentially in any number of locations; in the change, the body actualizes its being in one of those locations (and simultaneously un-actualizes its being in another).

Things are different with regard to a change of actual substance. For example, when inanimate matter becomes enlivened (Lebendigwerdends) during the usual biological processes of generation, the Aristotelian claims this is a change of substance, with the old substance being replaced by a new one. The same change takes place in reverse in death. This claim is made with the license of the Functionalistic Principle of Natures (see §3.2.1 above). Since a living thing has different powers than a non-living thing, we distinguish the nature of these two substances, and we do this without attention to the matter involved. By the same principle, we cannot say that the nature of an actual substance (in this functionalistic sense) persists throughout the changes of enlivening and dying, for it does not: after the change, the material has lost or gained powers, and thus cannot be counted as having the same nature. The matter persists, but again, the Aristotelian distinguishes the natures of substances functionally, not by appeal to matter. What persists through a substantial change and serves as its ground is something
more abstract, and yet more fundamental: “a mere substantial potentiality [die blosse substantielle Möglichkeit]” which is itself devoid of any matter (Brentano, 1866, p.31), or a mere “substantial form [substantiellen Form]” (1866, p.52).4

Up to a point, we may think of this “mere substantial potentiality,” which is the ground of a substantial change, on analogy with the ground of an accidental change. In the case of locomotion, what persists through the change of actual location and serves as its ground is the potentiality (of a body) of being in any number of locations. This potentiality persists through the accidental change, since an accidental change just is this very potentiality taking on new actualizations. Now we have a case where the change consists in a change of substance. The suggestion is that what persists is the potentiality of being a substance of a certain sort, or the potentiality of having a nature of a certain sort. The change just is this potentiality becoming actualized. In the sense that both changes are actualizations of a potentiality, the cases are analogous. Beyond this, however, the analogy breaks down. In the case of accidental change, the ground of the change is a capacity which has a further subject which also persists throughout the change: e.g., the capacity which persists throughout locomotion is the capacity of a body to be in many distinct locations. In the case of a substantial change such as enlivening or death, however, we must regard the ground of the change as “the ultimate subject of being since, unlike accidental potentialities, it is not attached to another subject” (Brentano, 1866, p.31).5

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4Brentano provides a long list of alternative titles which, in his view, Aristotle also uses to refer to this “mere substantial potentiality;” these are: “the matter, the substance in the sense of matter, or in the sense of the substratum, the principle from which something comes into being, or is, the receptacle, the potentiality or substance in potentiality, the non-being...” (Brentano, 1866, p.31)

5As Brentano makes clear in a later letter to Twardoski, this ultimate subject of being which underlies a substantial change (also called by Brentano a “substantial matter [substantiellen Materie]”) relates to
Only the potentiality of being a living thing persists through the change, and this has no further subject. This is the soul in its broadest possible sense: “the first entelechy of a natural body [eines natürlichen Körpers] that is potentially alive” (Brentano, 1866, p.32).

If there is to be any soul for us to speak of, this potentiality-for-life must be actualized, and we must discuss not souls themselves (as mere potentialities) but rather ensouled bodies, as matters which have been enlivened.

This notion of the soul as a “mere substantial potentiality” is of great importance. For the Aristotelian (unlike, say, the Cartesian) the soul is not a separate real substance, “which inhabits the body and moves it in the way that the sailor moves the ship” (Brentano, 1866, p.32). Rather it is the potentiality of a real substance: namely, the potentiality of an actual living body. The soul is a form, the form of a living substance, and can only be found in actuality if it is bound up with the matter of a living body (which is itself an actual substance). The soul is “the substantial form of ensouled matter; it is not a separate substance; it belongs essentially to the body and only through abstracting understanding is it posited as something separate” (Brentano, 1866, p.33). This enables the Aristotelian to explain, for example, why only some material bodies are capable of sustaining life: only some of them have the potentiality to be living bodies in the first place, and are thereby able to actualize this possibility in being alive (Brentano, 1866, p.32). Here the what the Scholastics called “materia prima” (1909, p.144). Brentano regards Aristotle as holding that this ‘subject” is real only in an improper [uneigentlichen] sense – i.e., as not real. Only unities of form and matter are real, but neither considered in isolation. All one wants to say in cases of a substantial change is just that the form of a soul was not in a matter, but now it is. One does not here distinguish two things (the soul-before-it-is-in-matter, versus the-soul-after-it-is-in-matter), anymore than one distinguishes a portion of air-before-it-is-mixed-with-water from the same air after it is mixed with water. Linguistically, one must speak of the soul as if the soul was someplace before it ensouled the body, and so one is forced so speak of the “subject” of the substantial form. But in Brentano’s view this is a fiction, akin to a mathematician defining “negative sizes” (1866, p.145).
Aristotelian grounds an important distinction between (i) any mere physical body, (ii) the subset of these which are even potentially alive, and (iii) those which are actually alive, or organic bodies (*organischen Körpers*) (Brentano, 1866, p.32). No body can be living if it is not ensouled; no soul can occur in actuality if it is not enlivening a body.⁶

I shall examine the Aristotelian soul more closely in §§3.3 & 3.4 below. For now, note that with the Principle of Change in place, the import of the Principle of Synonymy is greatly increased. For every change will involve an instance of “generation” or “creation” (a generation of a new accidental form in *accidental* changes, and a generation of a new actual substance, with a new nature, in a *substantial* change). In each case, that which is created is required to share a namesake with the ground of its creation. Generally, “what is to be wrought must be contained in the agent through similarity,” which in the Aristotelian view means that the form of the active agent must be similar to that of what is created – similar enough that we have good grounds to call them by the same name (Brentano, 1866, p.53).⁷

To provide some initial clarification regarding the manner in which that-which-comes-to-be shares a “namesake” with that-which-brings-it-into-being, note the following schema: any change in the actuality \(X\) will have its ground in a power or capacity whose potentialities concern \(X\); a change in the actuality of \(X\) *just is* a change relative to the capacity for \(X\). For example, the change of a matter from lifeless into *living* substance

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⁶This is one place where one could pin down the distinction in German between a mere material body (*Körper*) and a living body (*Leib*). I do not introduce this centrally here since Brentano does not always make use of these locutions, and instead sometimes uses such phrases as “*organischen Körper*” as a replacement for *Leib*. We shall see in Ch.7 that a similar division is central in Husserl’s later thought.

⁷George’s translation here revises the original sentence structure quite severely. I only note in passing that the term for “similarity” here is *Aehnlichkeit*. 
has its ground in a material body’s potentiality for life. Or again, the locomotive change of a body’s location has its ground in the body’s potentiality for being in many locations. In this way the alteration and its ground will always “share a name,” since “a capacity for X” is always in some sense the ground of “a change in X.” (We shall see below that this basic schema will not cover all cases, but hopefully this basic gloss is of some use).

This completes my overview of basic Aristotelian building blocks. These are the Functionalistic Principle of Natures (§3.2.1), and the four principles of activity (the Teleological Principle of Activities, the Principle of Striving, the Principle of Synonymy in Generation, and the Principle of Change). I turn now to examine more closely how these principles are applied in the special context of Aristotelian psychology.

### 3.3 The Aristotelian Soul

In the Aristotelian view, any living organism has powers which distinguish it from an inanimate piece of matter. These powers are exhibited in an organism’s distinctive movements. Thus (by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures) living organisms are said to have a distinct nature: they have a soul (ψυχή), or are ensouled (beseelt).

As noted above (§3.2.2) in connection with the substantial change of lifeless into living matter (and vice versa), the soul is not itself a real substance, but rather only a “substantial form,” the potentiality of a living substance. As such, the soul cannot be said to have literal “parts” or components, since the soul itself (as a mere form) has no matter which can be divided. But the soul is the form of a living body, and when
this form enlivens a matter, the result is a living body which exhibits a diverse array of
activities which distinguish it from inanimate matter. We may thus speak “derivatively”
of the parts of a soul (Brentano, 1866, p.37). We do this by appeal to the Functionalistic
Principle of Natures. We look to the life-activities (Lebensthätigkeiten) and life-functions
(Lebensfunctionen) which distinguish living matter from inanimate matter, and find
separable subsets of such activities. The separability of different sets of life-functions
allows us to speak derivatively of separable parts of the soul, which often (though not
always) correspond to separable organs in the living body.8

The preferred method for finding separability in life-functions is to compare
different kinds of organisms: if an organism \( O_1 \) possesses a set of life-activities \( \{L\} \) and
another organism \( O_2 \) possesses all of \( \{L\} \) plus \( L_x \), then \( L_x \) is separable from \( \{L\} \). The
Aristotelian then claims that separable life-functions arise from different parts of the soul.
So \( O_2 \) is said to have a soul-part which is responsible for \( L_x \), and also a soul-part which
is responsible for \( \{L\} \), whereas \( O_1 \) has only a soul-part which is responsible for \( \{L\} \).9

It is through this comparative method that the Aristotelian distinguishes three parts
to the human soul (Brentano, 1866, cf.p.36). These are the vegetative, the sensitive, and

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8Brentano admits the possibility of, but does not centrally pursue, a “physical” division of the parts of
the soul which relies upon dividing organs of the ensouled body, preferring instead the “logical” division
in terms of activities (1866, p.38ff). In part this is because it is difficult, at the time of writing, to say much
regarding the neural “organs” of some higher functions such as sensory representation and imagination;
in part it is because the intellectual soul is regarded as unmixed with body, and hence does not readily
admit of physical division (on this see §§3.3.3 & 3.4 below). For these reasons I simply pursue the logical
division, which is in any case sufficient to capture the view.

9Note that by this procedure, the number of soul-parts need not be equal to the number of distinct
powers associated with that soul-part: a single soul-part may be linked with multiple powers, so long as
those powers always co-occur in all organisms (see Brentano, 1866, p.37). By the Teleological Principle of
Activities, we can attend to the objects of two activities \( a_1 \) and \( a_2 \), and distinguish them as actualizations
of distinct powers. We can do this even for powers which are held to belong to the same soul-part.
the *intellectual* parts. All living organisms have a soul which supports the *vegetative* life-functions; all animals (as opposed to plants) exhibit further the *sensitive* life-functions. Humans are regarded as unique among terrestrial beings in additionally exhibiting *intellectual* activities. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the basic features of each soul-part in turn. However, since the main task of *The Psychology of Aristotle* is to articulate a claim about the intellectual soul, the preliminary gloss I provide in this section will be only introductory, and I will discuss the intellectual soul in greater detail in §3.4.

### 3.3.1 The Vegetative Soul

The vegetative soul is understood functionalistically (by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures) as the most basic difference between the natures if living and lifeless bodies. The vegetative soul is that natural feature of some bodies which enables them to exhibit the activities of nutrition, growth, and procreation (“*die... Functionen der Ernährung, des Wachstums und der Erzeugung*”) (Brentano, 1866, p.36). These are the activities which distinguish any living body from lifeless matter. Plants, regarded as the lowest rung of living systems, possess only a vegetative soul, as the only activities which distinguish them from inanimate matter are these vegetative activities.

Now, by the Teleological Principle of Activities (§3.2.2) we must specify the *end-objects* or final causes of the foregoing “vegetative activities” in order to properly distinguish them. Here again, the distinction between (*a*) those environmental objects with which the activity engages, and (*b*) the activity’s end-object, is important. In a
sense, each of these vegetative activities is engaged with environmental objects which are food, or which are nutritive ("der Nahrung") (Brentano, 1866, p.51). However, the three vegetative life-functions are concerned with such environmental objects in different ways, and they have different ends. The activities of nutrition operate upon food “insofar as food can be transformed into the substance of the living being itself” – this latter transformation is the end-object of the activity; the activities of growth operate upon food insofar as food “can contribute to the perfect measure of it [the animal]” – this contribution is the end-object of the activity; the activities of procreation operate on food insofar as food “can be transformed into the substance of a new being” – this transformation is the end-object of the activity (Brentano, 1866, p.51). It is in this teleological fashion that the activities are distinguished, even though each of them is an activity which engages with “food.” Although we can in this way distinguish the corresponding powers of nutrition, growth, and procreation, the Aristotelian lumps them into a single “part” of the soul, on the supposition that they always co-occur in all living organisms. (See again fn.9).

By the Principle of Striving, all of these vegetative activities must arise from some kind of striving, in the broad sense defined in §3.2.2 above. These strivings are, in this case, not conscious. Instead, the “strivings” which are involved in actualizing the capacities of nutrition, growth, and procreation are held to be mundane propensities or tendencies (Neigung) of the ensouled body which are akin to a “blind natural drive [blinde Naturtreib],” such as, e.g., the natural tendency of a warm object to impart warmth to a cold object (Brentano, 1866, p.44). In blind natural drives, an actualized
form necessitates a striving. In the case of a warm object, it has an *accidental* form (heat) and its having this form necessitates that it also has a tendency (striving) to transfer that heat to any nearby cold body. Once this occurs, the form is no longer actualized in the formerly-warm body, and so the tendency is also no longer actualized, and the activity ceases. The difference in the case of vegetative strivings is that they arise from the *substantial* form of a living body. As such, they do not cease when an activity is once carried out; instead an organism is *constitutively* striving for nutrition, growth, and procreation (Brentano, 1866, p.45). In a sense, the manner in which the operations and activities of the vegetative soul are actualized is no different from the manner in which any activity in lifeless matter occurs: they are simply actualized whenever conditions permit, with the force of natural necessity. In this sense, the striving of the vegetative soul is “not a special life-function” at all (Brentano, 1866, p.53). What differs between living and lifeless beings are the activities that are actualized through such strivings, but not the strivings themselves: in each case these arise from an actual form of the acting agent. It happens to be the case that warm bodies, once they have dissipated heat, no longer possess the accidental form which leads to their propensity to dissipate heat, and so the striving ceases. It happens to be the case that a living organism is *constitutively* and *constantly* striving to exhibits its activities, since it can never lose the form which leads to these propensities, unless it simply dies.

Now, when such vegetative activities occur, they induce some form of change. In all cases, foodstuff is made into (a part of) an organism (though in different ways). By the Principle of Change, all such changes will involve a generation or creation. By
the Principle of Synonymy in Generation, we must say that in each case, that-which-is-created shares a “namesake” with that-which-creates.

The synonymy is easiest to see in the activity of natural procreation: the foodstuff is utilized by an organism with name \( N \) (e.g., a human) to create another organism of the same name (another human). But more fundamentally, what occurs here is that a living substance “introduces its own substantial form into an alien matter” and as such its end-object, or that which it acts to bring about, “is identical with it in kind” (Brentano, 1866, p.42). And this is so in each of the vegetative activities: a living thing renders inanimate matter into (part of) a living thing. In each case, that which is created (a living thing or some part thereof) shares a “namesake” with that which creates (a living thing), and this is because the change consists in the form \( F \) of a living thing being introduced to a matter \( X \), though the activity of substance \( S \) which already possesses \( F \).

In this way, the form of the cause (acting agent) comes to be contained in the affected object. This is intended to be no different from the manner in which mundane physical causation occurs. Likewise, when a warm body heats a cold one, the form of heat comes to be contained in the affected object. The only difference between the two cases is that in the vegetative activities, a substantial form is induced in an alien matter, whereas in the natural activity of heat transferrence, an accidental form is induced. In both cases, cause and effect are by nature similar. As a whole, the vegetative part of the soul is “by nature similar to that toward which its action is directed, and this similarity is in it [i.e., the vegetative soul, as form, is in the organism] in the same way in which lifeless things have forms that make them efficacious” (Brentano, 1866, p.44). For what
it is to be a living body is to be ensouled, i.e., to be a matter which is coupled with the substantial form which is the soul. There could be no living body without vegetative strivings to produce more (parts of) living bodies, just as there could be no warm body without a natural propensity to transfer heat to a colder body.

Summing up, the vegetative soul is “thoroughly intermixed with the body [mit dem Leibe vermischt],” and the living body is, by its nature, characterized by the power to carry out vegetative activities (Brentano, 1866, p.47). There is no question of a living body having to do anything further in order to be prepared to carry out vegetative life-functions: if this were so, it would not be a living body at all. Likewise there is no question of a warm body having to do anything further in order to be prepared to transfer heat. The vegetative soul thus provides nothing to matter but an unconscious power to impulsively carry out the activities of nutrition, growth, and procreation. The vegetative soul grants powers of unconscious movements which promote continued life. Things are different, we shall see, with the remaining portions of the human soul.

### 3.3.2 The Sensitive Soul

Some organisms exhibit a more diverse set of life-activities than just the vegetative (nutrition, growth, and procreation), and accordingly are regarded by the Aristotelian as having additional soul-parts. The sensitive soul is understood functionalistically (by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures) as that feature of some bodies which enables them to exhibit the activities of (i) sensory representation, (ii) sensory desire (striving), and (iii) locomotion. Possession of some capacity for each of these life-activities distinguishes
Animals from plants.

Providing an adequate gloss on the sensitive soul is a bit more involved than was the case for the vegetative soul. Thus I split this subsection into further sub-subsections. By way of orientation, I note at the outset a crucial difference between sensory desires and vegetative strivings. As noted in §3.3.1 above, a living organism has by its nature the form which grounds all of its vegetative activities (else it would not be a living body). Nothing further need occur for an organism to strive to impose that form upon inanimate matter in the activities of nutrition, growth, and procreation: it is the nature of a living organism to strive unconsciously to carry out these activities. In contrast, sensory desire presupposes the reception of sensible forms, which are not by nature in a living organism. Unlike vegetative impulses, sensory desires are a form of striving wholly unlike natural impulses. Their operation presupposes a capacity for sensory representation – the reception of sensible forms – which likewise has no analogue in the vegetative soul.

In what follows, I shall first discuss sensory representation in more detail, then turn to sensory desire and locomotion.

**Sensory Representation**

The life-activities of sensory representation are diverse. They include the usual externally-oriented senses which provide awareness of the world (seeing, hearing, touching, etc.) (Brentano, 1866, pp.54-57), an inner sense which provides awareness of externally-oriented sensations (1866, pp.58-65), and imagination (1866, pp.67-69). For
clarity, I focus mainly on the activities of external sensation, showing how each of the five basic Aristotelian principles is deployed to provide an account of them. I shall say a few words about and imagination and inner sense in concluding this subsection.

In external sensation, we are affected (leiden) by some external stimulus. The activity of sensation is what I have called an “activity-under-passivity,” like the “activity” of a glass breaking when struck. In external sensation, we are changed by the affection. By the Principle of Change, this will involve some kind of generation in us; by the Principle of Synonymy, we must thereby become in some sense “like” the agent which affects us, and must thereby share a namesake with it.

It is here that the Brentanian-Aristotelian distinguishes two senses of “affection” (paschein). I have spoken above (§§3.2.2 & 3.3.1) of various instances of natural affection, in which the affected comes to actually possess a form which is in the acting agent. This is affection in the proper sense. For example, when a cold body is heated by a warm body, the form of heat is made real in the matter of the formerly cold body: the formerly cold body is now the subject or substrate of the form of heat. In such cases, the actualization of a form always involves a corruption: the cold body loses the form of cold, and this is replaced by the form of heat (Brentano, 1866, p.54). But there is another, “improper” sense of affection which need not involve any corruption, and it is

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10 There has been a long-lasting dispute in the secondary literature regarding how to handle an Aristotelian theory of perception on this point. Sorabji (1993) articulated a view according to which sensation involves corruption, and the sensing subject literally becomes like what is sensed by taking on its form. Burnyeat responded by declaring that no such corruption can occur in sensation, which is only “what Aquinas calls a ‘spiritual’ change” (1992, p.21). A relatively recent summary of this and later iterations of the debate is presented in Caston (2004); for a general sketch of the dispute see also (Shields, 2014, pp.343-348).
most centrally in this latter sense that we are affected in sensation.\textsuperscript{11} In sensation, the two always co-occur. For example, when we sense cold, we also become cold, and take on the real form of coldness in the matter of our bodies. But sensing cold does not consist in this. Rather:

we sense the cold insofar as the cold exists objectively, i.e., as cognized object within us, hence insofar as we take in the cold without being ourselves its physical subject \([\text{insofern das Kalte objectiv, d.h. als Erkanntes in uns existiert, also insofern wir die Kalte aufnehmen, ohne selbst das physische Subject derselben zu sein}](\text{Brentano, 1866, pp.54-55})\]

Here we see the first beginnings of Brentano’s later doctrine of \textit{intentionality}. I shall return to examine it in chapter 4 below. For now, what is important is only that the (Brentanian-)Aristotelian does not regard the distinctive variety of affection that we undergo in sensory activity as constitutively involving corruption: we do not sense \(X\) in virtue of \textit{actually} taking on the form of \(X\), rather we sense and represent \(X\) by an altogether different reception of the form of \(X\). This is not, strictly speaking, a violation of the Principle of Synonymy or the Principle of Change. In sensing cold, the important effect is that I come to possess a representation \textit{of cold}: the cause and its effect “share a namesake,” as is required, even though the affection is “improper.” The two are not \textit{strictly} synonymous – the synonymy is lessened – but a “namesake” or a “likeness” can be established.

Now by the Teleological Principle of Activities, we must specify the end-object of activities of sensory representation if we are to understand them correctly. In general,\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11}Marmodoro (2012, 2014) calls this kind of affection without corruption “disturbance” rather than “change” – see esp. (2014, pp.33:146). She calls upon such affections mainly to explain how a sensible form’s causal influence is propagated through a medium.
the end-object of any activity of sensation is to produce a sensible form in us as a representation: that is the final cause or purpose of sensation. By the Principle of Striving, we must also specify what sort of “striving” (tendency, propensity) occasions the actualization of the capacity for sensation in an actual sensing. This propensity is itself little differentiated from the strivings of the vegetative soul. Indeed, an animal only has any capacities for sensory representation insofar as “the vegetative soul builds the organs for the sensitive one” through the vegetative activity of growth (Brentano, 1866, p.43). Just as a lower organism would not be living at all if it was not constituted so as to constantly and blindly strive to actualize vegetative capacities, so an animal would not be sensitive at all if it did not constantly and blindly strive to actualize a capacity for sensory representation: “nobody needs to learn to see color and to hear sound: every sense can sense an object as soon as the sensitive object is presented to it” (Brentano, 1866, p.84). What it is to be an animal is (in part) to already have the bodily prerequisites for sensation, and to have a standing propensity to sense. Just as the living body (Leib) dies with the organism, and can be called a body (Körper) only in a different sense after the soul has departed in death, so “the eye dies with the animal, and after the animal’s death it can be called an eye only equivocally” (Brentano, 1866, p.37). Like the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul is entirely intermixed with the body; it is in the nature of an animal body to have a natural tendency towards sensory activity.

That is the general account of end-objects of all sensory activities. But animals have multiple distinct senses. Thus while they all generally share as end-object the production of sensible forms as representations (in virtue of which they all belong to the
genus of activities of sensation) they cannot all share the exact same end-object (else they would be identical activities). In another application of the Teleological Principle of Activities, we individuate each of our sensory activities by reference to their specific end-object, or their proper sensory object (eigenthümlichen Sinnesobjecte), which is “the active principle [das wirkende Princip] of the alteration of the sense, and which we have to use in order to determine the nature of the sense” (Brentano, 1866, p.56). The proper sensory object of vision is color, and the specific end-object of the sense of vision is to produce in us sensible forms of colors as representations. The proper sensory object of hearing is sound, and the specific end-object of the sense of hearing is to produce in us sensible forms of sounds as representations. The proper sensory object of tasting is a taste, and the specific end-object of tasting is to produce in use sensible forms of tastes as representations, and so on (1866, p.56).

In addition to their distinctive proper objects, there are “common objects” of sensory representation, i.e., forms which are produced in us as representation by many distinct senses through the representation their respective proper objects. While these are

12I have altered the translation slightly. George’s English edition omits the adjective “wirkende” in the phrase “das wirkende Princip.” It is initially unclear whether this “active principle” is to be regarded as the efficient cause of sensory activity, or whether it is the final cause. George’s English translation explicitly suggests the former, saying that the principle referred to here is the “origin” (Brentano, 1866, p.56) of the sensory affection. This is misleading however, and in this context the “active principle” must be regarded as the final cause of sensory activity. This is so since the “active principle” is cited to determine the nature of sensory activity, which (by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, combined with the Teleological Principle of Activities) we can only do by attending to its terminus or end-object. An environmental object which occasions or serves as the “origin” of sensory activity cannot (under this description alone) play the role assigned here to proper sensory objects, since it cannot provide a means of distinguishing the nature of the sensory activities in question. (For support of this claim see further Brentano, 1866, p.65, regarding the “proper apodictic proof” that the sensitive soul is mixed with the body). The distinction of the environmental object which serves as the “origin” of sensation and the proper object which serves as “terminus” is related to another distinction Brentano is here trying to draw, and which I shall discuss further in-text: the distinction between proper sensory objects and objects of sensation per accidens.
sensible forms, they thus cannot serve to individuate the senses. Such common objects include motion, rest, number, figure, and magnitude, which can be given to us indirectly through multiple senses (e.g., one can perceive figure by perceiving an expanse of color, or by touching an object to feel its outline) (Brentano, 1866, p.56).

In contradistinction to both proper objects and common objects of sense, which are sensible as such, there are objects which are only sensible per accidens: these are “everything that belongs to a perceived object without determining the sensation in any way” (Brentano, 1866, p.57). Thus for example, when I look at a coffee cup and sense white, I do not sensorily represent it as a coffee cup (i.e., as a member of this general category), but rather sense white. It is true that the white object I see is a coffee cup, and so the coffee cup is an object of sensation per accidens. But the (form of the) coffee cup as such is not produced in me as a representation.

The foregoing displays how all five Aristotelian principles are applied to the activities of external sensation. A few brief remarks suffice to suggest the Aristotelian account of the last two varieties of sensory activity: imagination and inner sense.

Imagination is the capacity to have sensible forms in us as representations without any simultaneous affection from external objects; the representations of imagination are images (phantasmata) which are in themselves completely similar to those which occur in ongoing sensation (Brentano, 1866, p.67). Imagination is in fact difficult to properly distinguish from sensation: it is fully mixed with the body in precisely the same way that sensation is – they even share an organ; the very same powers at work

\[13\] I am foregoing a detailed description of the organs of sensation. Ultimately the Aristotelian claims
in sensory activities are at work in imagination; the division of imaginative activities tracks the division of distinct senses; the exercise of imaginative activities presupposes prior sensation (Brentano, 1866, p.68-69). Only an appeal to the Teleological Principle of Activities could ground a distinction between imaginative activities and activities of sensation, and the best one can suggest at this point is the following: the *end-object* of activities of sensation is to produce in us sensible forms as representations *when those forms occur in the environment*, whereas the *end-object* of activities of imagination is to produce in us sensible forms as representations without this temporal constraint. I shall return to discuss imagination further in §3.4 below; Brentano himself provides nothing further by way of an initial gloss.

The last distinct activity of sensory representation is *inner sense*. By the Teleological Principle of Activities, inner sense is (as a species of sensory activity) akin to externally-oriented sensory activities in that its *end-object* is the production in us of a sensible form as a representation. In virtue of this, it is called a sense. Yet by the same Principle, inner sense is distinguished from other varieties of sensory activity insofar as its *end-object* is the production of a sensible form of our own external-sensory activities. We sense that we see and hear (and that these are different sensory activities) and we cannot do this through vision or through hearing; rather we must posit another, inner-sensory capacity which enables this activity (Brentano, 1866, pp.58-63). Inner

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there is only one central organ (posited by Aristotle to be the heart, but since at least Brentano’s time re-posited to lie in the brain) which is the subject of all sensory powers. In part this is a bid to resolve issues that remain well-known under the titles of the binding problem and multi-modal sensory integration. For the Aristotelian it also resolves the question of how representations from multiple distinct senses can be compared to and distinguished from each other. See Brentano (1866, pp.64-67). See also fn.8 above.
sense also permits us to sense that we have sensory desires (about which more in the next subsection), provides all animals with a basic form of self-consciousness, and enables us to perceive the *unity* of sensory forms that span multiple modalities of external sense (e.g., to perceive that a seen red and a felt warmth form a unity in one perceived thing) (Brentano, 1866, pp.64-65). I shall say more about Brentano’s mature conception of inner perception in chapter 4 below.

A final note before concluding this subsection. There is notably no unique sensory activity of *memory* in the Aristotelian account. Rather, memory arises through a joint operation of the inner-sensory activity and the imagination:

There are also images [*Phantasmen*] that have the peculiarity of that inner sense which is directed towards sensations themselves; in particular, we have images of this kind whenever we remember [*bei jeder Erinnerung*]; for one remembers having heard or seen something at an earlier date, etc.; hence we remember previous seeing or hearing and have their representations within us even though they do not now actually exist and cannot now actually be [externally] sensed (Brentano, 1866, p.68).

This completes my overview of the life-activities of sensory representation. In sum, these activities are actualizations of an animal’s passive capacity for the “improper” reception and later re-presentation of sensible forms. There is no analogous capacity in the vegetative soul, all of whose activities flow directly from the (substantial) form of the living body, which the organism has by nature.

**Sensory Desire and Locomotion**

At the start of the present section (see p.75 above), I stressed a crucial distinction between the “strivings” at work in actualizing vegetative activities and those which are
sensory desires. To repeat, as seen in §3.3.1 above, vegetative strivings are not special life-functions at all: they are no different from the blind impulses by which inanimate objects actualize their activities. In such cases, an actual form (e.g., of heat; of the living body) brings with it a propensity for, or impulse to, activity (e.g., of heat-transference; of nutrition, growth, and procreation). The vegetative activities of nutrition, growth, and procreation are life-activities which no inanimate objects exhibit, but the strivings which are involved in actualizing those life-activities are not unique to living organisms. In all such cases, it is an entity has an actual form which disposes it toward certain its activities. It is in the nature of any living organism to impulsively carry out activities of nutrition, whose end-object is to incorporate foodstuffs into its body, thereby imparting the form of a living organism (i.e., the form which is already actual in this very organism) to the matter of the foodstuff. Similarly, a warm object impulsively carries out the activity of transferring the form of heat (i.e., the form of heat which is already actual in this same body) to nearby cold matter.

In contrast, sensory desire, as a form of striving, is a special life-function which no inanimate entity possesses. The clearest way to make this point is to discuss it in connection with animal locomotion, since the capacities for sensory desire and locomotion are co-determined.

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14 Perhaps it is also worth stressing that for the Aristotelian a desire is not a representation (sensory or otherwise) since many recent accounts in philosophy of action use the term “desire” to refer to a class of representations. An Aristotelian desire is a kind of impulse, tendency, striving, or propensity. It propels an animal to carry out a bodily activity whose end-object is to produce a new, actual, accidental form of the body. The desire is not a representation: rather, we shall see that the desire helps to actualize in the body a form which is already represented in imagination. A desire may be represented in inner sense, but it is not itself a representation: likewise a color in an external object is not itself a representation, though it may be represented in external sense.
Let us consider a case of animal locomotion (Brentano, 1866, p.44). For example, an animal *sees* (senses) food, and thereby has a sensory representation of the food. (More strictly: a representation of the *color* of the food, though this is a representation of the food *per accidens.* ) Whereas a merely vegetative organism will have a blind impulse to consume the food, and has no representation of it, the sensitive animal forms a representation of it, and is capable of consciously pursuing it. The *consciousness* involved here arises from inner sense, from the animals awareness of its own seeing. The *pursuit* occurs as follows. The animal, in sensory imagination, brings forth a sensory representation (*Vorstellung*) of *swallowing* the food, even though it is not currently swallowing food (hence does not *actually* have the form of swallowing, and cannot sense current swallowing). This representation of swallowing then induces a desire (striving) to swallow the food. Note: the desire (striving) is *itself* the result of a kind of affection, even though (once it arises) it drives the organism to activity. A *capacity* for sensory desire is not itself active, but is rather a disposition-for-striving. When this passive capacity is actualized by a sensory representation, the result is a new tendency of the organism towards activity (Brentano, 1866, p.45). This new striving, this newly-actualized tendency, thereby brings it about that the animal moves its body in locomotion to actually swallow.

Here the form of the end-object of the locomotion is *(a)* not *naturally* in the animal (but rather received through sensation) and *(b)* not *real* in the animal (but rather present only in representation). The effect of locomotion is to actualize the form of swallowing, *which is currently not actual at all.* In contrast, when a stone acts to heat
any nearby object, this is because the form of heat *is actual* in the stone. The end-objects of locomotion are thus not tied to any actual form, which is radically different from the end-objects of both the activities of inanimate objects, and the activities of vegetative life. Thus we distinguish animal locomotion from all these activities by the Teleological Principle of Activities.

Now by the Principle of Striving, the activity of locomotion must follow from some striving. A sensory desire is precisely a tendency to actualize locomotion, which is to say that it does *not* proceed from an actual form which is already in the nature of an animal, but rather from a sensible form which is present in the animal only as representation. The animal can have no *natural* propensity to actualize activities of swallowing, since (a) all sensory desires arise from sensory representations, and (b) the animal does not by nature have any sensory representations at all. The *capacity* or *potentiality* for sensory representation in in the nature of the animal, but no representation is. Thus sensory desires, as strivings, are radically distinct from any blind natural impulse, and as such are counted as a special life-function which distinguishes the nature of animals. It is in the nature of animals to be *disposed* (to have a cacity) to *tend* (via a desire) to bring about, through locomotion, the actualization of forms which are not themselves actual in the animal, and which do not themselves belong to the animal by nature. Unlike a blind natural impulse, a sensory desire is an “uncoerced *ungezwungenen* inclination or aversion,” which is induced by contingent sensory representations (Brentano, 1866, p.100).

By the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, since locomotion and sensory desire
are life-functions which no inanimate entity exhibits, they regarded as arising from the soul of an animal. Since they are separable from all vegetative activities (since, e.g., plants do not exhibit them), they are assigned to a different soul-part. They are assigned to the sensitive soul, since they always co-occur with (and presuppose) the receptive activities of sensation.

In characterizing sensory desires and locomotion, the only Principles of Activity we have not yet explicitly applied are those of Change and of Synonymy. These are easily satisfied. As suggested already in §3.2.2, when introducing the Principle of Change, locomotion is an accidental change in an organism’s bodily location or position. The body’s general structure (along with all its potentialities for activity) stay the same, while a new accidental form is generated. Thus the Principle of Change is satisfied. Now the Principle of Synonymy requires that that-which-is-created shares a namesake with that-which-creates. In this case that-which-creates is an articulate complex, but each element shares a namesake with that-which-is-created (a new location or position for the animal). The ultimate ground of the change is the animal’s potentiality for being in many locations or positions. A sensory representation of the animal’s body in a new location or position is causally involved, and it actualizes a desire/striving to bring about a change in location or position, which thereby brings about the actual change in location or position. Thus the Principle of Synonymy is satisfied for all the elements of that-which-creates.

Notably, we see here a certain reciprocity between the vegetative and sensory soul. As noted on p.78 above, an animal’s vegetative soul builds the organs of the sensitive soul (and the whole of the organic body) through its activities of growth. Without this,
the powers of the sensitive soul could never be exercised. But the sensitive soul also
determines the lower parts of the soul: through sensory representation, it grants the
animal an awareness of the external world, and also (through inner sense) of itself; and
through locomotion, it grants the animal the power to move the organic body which the
vegetative soul has produced (Brentano, 1866, p.43). We shall see a similar reciprocity in
between the sensitive and intellectual soul below.

The Sensitive Soul in Sum

This concludes my discussion of the sensitive soul. The main points are that
with the sensitive soul, an animal gains a passive capacity for receiving sensible forms,
another passive capacity to strive (i.e., a disposition to have a tendencies or propensities
which are not actual in it by nature), and finally an active capacity to move the organic
body in locomotion. Thanks to inner sense, the actualization of any of these activities is
conscious.

3.3.3 The Intellectual Soul

There remains one more part of the human soul, which the Aristotelian holds is
unique to humans among terrestrial entities: the intellectual soul. My discussion in this
section will be an incomplete introduction to the intellectual soul. The incompleteness
will be apparent, insofar as it is exceedingly difficult to show how all five Aristotelian
Principles apply to the powers of the intellectual soul. My aim in this section is only to
show how a few intellectual powers are intended to be distinguished from the vegetative
and sensitive. We shall see that this cannot be done adequately without a more detailed discussion of the active intellect (nous poïētichos), as one part of the intellectual soul. Discussion of the active intellect consumes fully half of the text of *The Psychology of Aristotle*, and involves much detailed argumentation. I shall discuss it in greater detail in §3.4 below, and the aim here is mainly just to show why this is necessary.

The foregoing (§3.3.2) discussion of the sensitive soul enables a fairly concise introduction to the intellectual soul. In addition to having the capacity to receive sensible forms as representations, the human has a capacity to receive intelligible forms as representations. This novel capacity for representation brings with it a novel capacity for desiring, and this in turn supports a novel capacity for conscious movement. I shall first provide the rough outlines of each capacity; then I discuss problems for the account.

**Intellectual Representation**

Sensory representations (Sinnesvorstellungen or sinnlichen Vorstellungen) are sensible forms occuring in an animal as “objective,” but not as actual. Representation occurs though an “improper affection,” and does not imply the corruption of the animal, and the received form is not made actual in it by virtue of representation. Through sight, for example, the form of *red* can be produced in an animal as a representation, and this does not consist in the animal becoming red.

In addition to such representations of sensory qualities, humans can also think of concepts, such as *color in general*. These are not regarded as sensory representations, since *color in general* is not sensible. If it were sensible, then it would presumably be
apprehended by sight. But the proper sensory objects (the end-objects) of sight are colors, and color in general is not itself colored, thus it is not perceptible by sight. In addition, we also have mathematical concepts (surface in general, line in general, square in general, circle in general) which do not contain any sensory element. Further, the concepts of number and substance do not even contain any representation of extension, which is presupposed in all sensory representation. (On all these points see Brentano 1866, p.75.)

Humans thus have another capacity of intellectual representation (geistigen Vorstellungen) in addition to sensory representation. This new capacity is called the receptive intellect. By the Teleological Principle of Activities, the activities of these two capacities are similar in that they are both activities whose end-object is to produce some form as representation; yet by the same Principle, they are distinct in that their end-objects (their proper objects; the forms which they represent) differ. By the Functionalistic Principle of Natures (and since these capacities are separable, since animals lack the receptive intellect), the receptive intellect is said to arise from a soul-part which is distinct from the vegetative and sensitive souls.

This new capacity for representation receives intelligible forms, in parallel with the sensory capacity to receive sensible forms. This new capacity is likewise actualized in an “improper affection” which does not presuppose corruption, since we do not, e.g., actually become square in general (whatever that could mean) by thinking the concept of square in general. Indeed, here the “improper affection” is even more striking than in the case of sensory reception. In sensing, although we do not sense in virtue of being corrupted, we always are simultaneously corrupted by some effective stimulus. (We
become cold while also sensing cold; our eyes are altered by light when we see, etc.) Nothing of this sort occurs in intellectual representation (Brentano, 1866, p.79). The Principles of Change and of Synonymy are to be satisfied in the same way as before: even in an improper affection, the affected shares a “namesake” with the active agent (cf. p.76 above). As I discuss in the next subsection, there are problems with this proposal.

Recall that in the sensitive soul, the powers of sensory reception included not only external sensation, but also imagination and inner sense. Notably, the Aristotelian does not maintain that we are conscious of representations in the receptive intellect through inner sense, that capacity of the sensitive soul discussed above (§3.3.2). Rather, it is simply maintained that the receptive intellect is aware of its own operations by thinking about them: since it can receive all intelligible forms, it can likewise receive the intelligible form of its own activities. If the receptive intellect has “recognized [erkannt] anything at all, then it can also recognize itself, for it can make its own thinking its object” (Brentano, 1866, p.85). This is a contrast to Brentano’s mature account of inner perception, as I shall discuss further in chapter 4 below.

I shall discuss the connections between the intellectual soul and sensory imagination more fully in §3.4 below. But recall that in the case of the sensory soul, there was no special power of memory. Instead, this was treated as an ability to imagine past inner sensations. A similar view applies in the case of the intellectual soul. “Recollection” is regarded as a power to willfully control sensory memory, selectively choosing a course of ideas so as to “progress from one thing to another in the manner of one who infers” (Brentano, 1866, 104). As such it is no unique power on its own, but only a unique
exercise of sensory imagination and willing. Willing, or intellectual desire, is the topic of the next section.

**Intellectual Desire and Movement**

Just as sensory representations support new capacities of striving (sensory desire) and movement (locomotion), the same is true of intellectual representation. This new capacity of striving is the will, the capacity for having intellectual strivings or desires. Like the capacity for sensory desire, the capacity for intellectual desire is itself passive: it is a disposition to acquire certain tendencies to act on the basis of certain intellectual representations. Unlike the capacity for sensory strivings, it is regarded as a form of “freedom that excludes any, even inner, necessity” (Brentano, 1866, p.100). Although sensory strivings are “uncoerced [ungezwungenen]” (Brentano, 1866, p.100) and thus differ from blind impulses, they arise as a matter of course from acquired sensory representations: Animal sees food and imagines swallowing? animal thereby has an actualized striving to locomote to swallow the food. The actualization of an intellectual desire, in contrast, occurs in an self-directed thinking, or choice (Brentano, 1866, pp.100-101). In thinking we freely determine the capacity for willing, which is thereby affected, and the result of this is a new tendency to action. Another difference, of course, is that whereas sensory desires follow from representations of sensible forms, intellectual desires (willings) follow from general representations of intellectual forms.

The ability of intellectual representations to affect the capacity for willing, and to thereby actualize intellectual desires, enables the rational control of the body, and
of lower sensory activities. The vegetative life-activities are outside of rational control (Brentano, 1866, p.103). But the intellectual soul can, for example, guide locomotion. It always does this indirectly: a willing alters sensory images, which thereby affect the capacity for sensory desire, whose actualizations (actual sensory strivings) then proceed to their usual effects as discussed in §3.3.2 above.

Problems With This Account

That is the most basic sketch of the intellectual soul. Thus far, it has been claimed that with the intellectual soul, a human gains a passive capacity for consciously thinking by receiving intelligible forms, another passive capacity for consciously willing (i.e., an ability to freely impose a tendency-to-act upon itself), and finally a conscious, active capacity to move the organic body in locomotion.

But deep problems lurk in this account. They all arise from the problem of how to simultaneously distinguish, and relate, the intellectual/intelligible and the sensitive/sensible.

On the one hand, the intellectual life-functions are to be radically distinct from others. The vegetative and sensitive souls, as seen above, are held to be “mixed” with the body. This is because to have vegetative capacities at all, an organism must have a certain actual form, which is the form of a living body. Likewise, to have certain sensitive capacities, an organism must have an actual form: e.g., to see, it must have eyes. Notably, these forms are themselves – when actual – sensible forms: one can perceive a living body or its organs (per accidens) by receiving a sensory representation of the actual
forms they have. And which actual forms a body has determines which capacities of sensory representation it has: if it has no eyes, it cannot see, etc.

This is not the case with the intellectual soul, as can be illustrated through the receptive intellect. The receptive intellect enables humans to think anything which is intelligible. Thus it is capable of receiving all intelligible forms. For this reason the receptive intellect is also called the “intellect which becomes all intelligible things” (*nous dunamei*) (Brentano, 1866, p.74). Now when it receives an intelligible form, the receptive intellect does not actually become that form – like the capacity for sensory reception, it is not *corrupted* during this improper affection. But more than this, unlike the capacity for sensory representation, the receptive intellect is not *itself* conditioned by any actual form of the body. Regardless of the form of one’s body, one is capable – one has the *potentiality* – of thinking anything which is intelligible; the receptive intellect is, *in potentiality*, all intelligible forms. It is thus held that in itself, the receptive intellect has no form at all – for example, it does not have the actual form of an organic body, and is thus in no way mixed with the body.¹⁵ The receptive intellect is “*pure potentiality*,” a receptivity to the intelligible which is in its nature completely unrestricted, and in particular, completely unrestricted by the actual form of the body (Brentano, 1866, p.77). It is, in potentiality, all intelligible forms; it is the form of all intelligible forms. The intellect is entirely spiritual (*geistige*), incorporeal, and incorruptible (Brentano, 1866, p.76). Because of this, the (Brentanian-)Aristotelian maintains that it can in principle

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¹⁵ In this, Brentano remarks, he is agreeing with Anaxagoras and disagreeing with Empedocles (Brentano, 1866, p.76). I note this in passing, but again, my interest here is only in “Brentanian Aristotelianism,” and I am not concerned to work out in detail how this differs from other varieties.
survive the death of the body (Brentano, 1866, p.133). Because it is completely unmixed
and (in its nature) undetermined by the body, the Aristotelian holds that an intellectual
soul is created for each individual human, *de novo*, by a divine intellect (Brentano, 1866,
p.122-131). The soul of humans (in the strict sense – the form of a living human body
which possesses vegetative, sensory, and intellectual capacities), comes to enliven a body
through a divine influence, after blind natural impulses have granted “a disposition of
matter which makes it suitable for the reception of the human soul” (Brentano, 1866,
p.135; see also p.137).

On the other hand, the body does impose constraints on how this capacity is
*actualized*. The Aristotelian holds that all thinking – all exercise of the receptive intellect
– is mediated by sensory representation. Intelligible forms are derived from sensory
representations through “abstraction” (Brentano, 1866, pp.90, 94). This is one of the
most important differences between classically Aristotelian and Platonistic views of
intellectual cognition.

Here we can begin to sketch the basic difficulty of maintaining this view. (I do
not consider the difficulties of the (Brentanian-)Aristotelian’s appeal to a divine intellect
to explain how an intellectual soul occurs at all; I focus here only on difficulties that arise
once it is supposed that there is an intellectual soul which ensouls humans.) For example,
by the Principles of Change and Synonymy, if $X$ is changed under the influence of $Y$,
then something is generated in $X$, and this must share a “namesake” with $Y$. Now the
receptive intellect is said to receive intelligible forms through an “improper” affection
by the intelligible, and yet this is said to be mediated by sensory representations. But it
is entirely unclear how the intellectual and sensitive souls can be said to interact in this way, since they appear to have been so radically distinguished.

To briefly illustrate, the sensitive soul only enables sensory representation, so how could it furnish the intellectual soul with intelligible forms? The account sketched above was that some activity of “abstraction” occurs here to render intelligible forms available. Now if the effect of this activity is the production of something intellectual, then its cause must be intellectual (by the Principles of Change and Synonymy). But then, how could abstraction cause a sensible form to become intellectual, if these are entirely distinct natures? A parallel worry arises concerning the rational control of the body through intellectual desire, which is held to proceed through sensory images. In sum, the Principles of Change and of Synonymy would seem to require either that the sensitive soul is in fact already intellectual (otherwise, how could it support intellectual representation?) or that it must become intellectual (otherwise, how could the intellectual soul influence it?).

Brentano provides an account of the active intellect to overcome all these difficulties. The purpose of the next section is to provide this account, and thereby to clarify the full Aristotelian account of the intellectual soul.

3.4 The Active Intellect

The purpose of this section is to provide the (Brentanian-)Aristotelian account of the active intellect. I begin in §3.4.1 by briefly clarifying two major motivations, internal
to the Aristotelian view, for positing the active intellect. I call these the “Argument from Intellectual Passivity” and the “Argument from Empirical Knowledge.” I then turn in §§3.4.2 – 3.4.3 to provide the positive account itself, showing how it fulfills both of these motivations.

### 3.4.1 Motivation for Positing the Active Intellect

By way of introduction, note where we stand in our tally of special life-functions distinguishing humans from inanimate matter. For purposes of comparison, we lump together the powers of the vegetative and sensitive souls (which are mixed with the body) and contrast them with the powers attributed so far to the intellectual soul. What is striking is that while we have located in the intellectual soul powers which are analogues of many powers of the lower (sensory-vegetative) soul, we have seen no such intellectual analogue of the vegetative, unconscious powers of movement (all those life-activities which are actualized in a blind natural impulse – cf. 3.3.1 above).

The active intellect (nous poiētichos) will turn out to be just such an unconscious

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**Table 3.1:** An interim summary of the Aristotelian soul-parts and their capacities.
intellectual power. There are two major, closely related motivations for positing this unconscious power. I present them as “arguments for” the active intellect which arise from the need to resolve problems lurking in the Aristotelian view.

The first problem, pointed out on p.95 above (see also Brentano 1866, pp.48-50), is that the Aristotelian wants to claim that the intellectual soul exercises control over the lower body, in rational action. This presupposes thinking (the reception of intelligible forms as representation) and willing (intellectual desire) in just the same way that the sensitive soul’s movement on the body in locomotion presupposes sensory representation and sensory desire (see pp.82ff. above). Indeed, the Aristotelian claims that rational control of action always proceeds indirectly. In free choice, intellectual representations affect the passive capacity for willing, and the result is an actual willing; the willing then affects sensory representations in imagination, which proceed as usual to affect the passive capacity for sensory desire, resulting in an actual sensory striving which influences bodily activity as usual (see p.92 above). So ultimately, any influence of the intellectual soul on the body must depend upon and presuppose intellectual representation.

Now the receptive intellect’s capacity for intellectual representation is a *passive* capacity. Thus some further activity must bring it about that the capacity for thinking is actualized if it (and thereby, the capacity for willing) is to be actualized at all. But (by the Principles of Change and Synonymy) if the effect of this influence is to induce an (improper) affection in the intellectual soul (i.e., induce an intelligible form in us as representation) then the cause must itself be intellectual. Thus the cause cannot be anything inanimate, and likewise cannot be anything sensory (*qua* sensory). For example,
the cause cannot be a sensory desire, since as we have seen, sensory desires are propen-
sities to actualize a sensible form which is contained in the subject as representation.
No sensory desire can be a propensity to actualize an intellectual form. Finally, the
cause cannot ultimately be a conscious, intellectual willing, on pain of regress, since an
intellectual willing presupposes an intellectual representation. Thus, the Aristotelian must
post an unconscious, intellectual activity in humans\(^{16}\) which \((a)\) (improperly) affects the
receptive intellect and induces the occurrence of intelligible forms as representation, and
\((b)\) thereby makes possible the influence of the intellectual soul upon the body, through
willing. Call this:

**The Argument From Intellectual Passivity** ("AIP")

1. The receptive intellect is passive.

2. Hence some active principle must affect it to induce an intelligible
   form as representation.

3. By the Principles of Change and Synonymy, this active principle must
   itself be intellectual.

∴ There is an active intellectual principle which affects the receptive
intellect, and makes possible intellectual representation.

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\(^{16}\)Brentano begins *The Psychology of Aristotle* with a survey of more than a dozen rival interpretations of
the active intellect. This includes the views of Aristotle’s own students, writers of the Medieval period, and
contemporary analyses by Trendelenburg and others. His aim is to impose a number of constraints upon an
acceptable account. I refer the interested reader to the text. Two points are worth noting explicitly here to
fill in a potential gap in the argument. First, Aristotle will not permit intelligible forms to simply exist in
some Platonic heaven and affect us from without; the cause of thinking must lie in us. Second, and similarly,
(Brentano’s) Aristotle will not support any view which regards the active intellect as not belonging to the
soul of a human at all, but rather as some divine intellect, or as some anonymous go-between that mediates
between our minds and the divine intellect. Thus he disagrees with Alexander Aphrodisiensis, Averroës,
Ravaission, Zeller, and comes closer to Theophrastus, Aquinas, Trendelenburg, and Brandis on this point.
4. This cannot be (an actualized) willing, since the occurrence of any willing presupposes intellectual representation, whereas the active principle in question must make intellectual representation possible.

5. There is no other conscious, active principle of the intellect aside from actual willings.

∴ There is an unconscious, active, intellectual principle which makes possible all intellectual representation.

With this activity posited, the Aristotelian will proceed, by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, to attribute the capacity for this activity to the nature of the human soul. Since it always co-occurs with the intellectual powers, it will be attributed specifically to the intellectual soul-part.

There are other considerations which motivate positing the active intellect. All of them support another iteration of AIP, but by considering them we can bring out the severity of the problem the Aristotelian faces, and also uncover another important feature of the active intellect.

We have just discussed a problematic interaction between the intellectual soul and the sensitive soul in rational action. A similar problematic interaction lies at the center of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge (Erkenntnis). The Aristotelian wants to claim that “the origin of our knowledge is in the senses” and that “the soul cognizes [erkenne] nothing without images” (Brentano, 1866, p.13). As such, thinking is held to be “always and necessarily accompanied” by sensory images (Brentano, 1866, p.93). These images
are generally permitted to be images of the imagination, not the representations given to us in ongoing sensation, since we often think of things which are not spatiotemporally present (Brentano, 1866, p.98). But now there are three broad worries for the Aristotelian.

First, the dependence of thinking upon images may seem to make the thinking of any single thought, employing a general concept, impossible (Brentano, 1866, p.100). Again, nothing sensible or corporeal can impel the intellect to think a general concept, since (by the Principle of Change and Synonymy) the causal agent at work here must itself be intellectual. And so we are back again to AIP.

Second, it would also appear that self-directed thought, which progresses along a chosen path, is impossible. The intellect may appear to be “tied to the imagination at every movement, a plaything of the images” (Brentano, 1866, p.99). The Aristotelian intends to handle this objection by appeal to willings (intellectual desires) (Brentano, 1866, pp.104-106), claiming that we can consciously will a certain course of images to occur, and constrain them to occur along the lines we choose. This was, recall, the Aristotelian account of how recollection occurs (see p.90 above). But if the Aristotelian appeals to a willing here, we are right back to the foregoing problem: that of explaining how intellectual representation is actualized in the first place, and can then actualize a willing, which can influence imagination. So we run into another iteration of AIP.

But a distinct and important worry is also raised here. If the intellectual soul acts upon sensory images (e.g., in willing them to proceed in a particular manner, as occurs in recollection) then (by the Principles of Change and Synonymy) something in the images must be made to share a namesake with the intellectual soul. That is to say (a)
that at least some sensory images must be in some sense intellectual, and \((b)\) that some intellectual activity must act on them so as to make them intellectual. Now the claim is that this occurs through a willing. But before any willing can do this, the willing must be actualized by an intellectual representation. As we have seen, this leads to AIP. But further, the Aristotelian claims that all our knowledge – all our intellectual representation – is to arise from sensory images in the first place. But then (by the Principles of Change and Synonymy) if sensory images are to induce intellectual representation, then the images must have already been actually intellectual. But they are not actually intellectual by nature, so some activity must make them intellectual. This cannot be a willing, on pain of regress: for a willing presupposes intellectual representation, and what we need here is an activity which makes sensory images capable of serving as the source of intellectual representation (Brentano, 1866, p.90). The activity here has instead been called by the name of “abstraction.” We may now specify this activity further, and summarize this result, as follows:

**The Argument From Empirical Knowledge (AEK)**

1. All thinking arises from and is necessarily accompanied by sensory images.
2. But there is, in their nature, nothing actually intelligible in sensory images.
3. Instead images are made intelligible, through “abstraction.”
4. If abstraction has the effect of making sensible images intelligible, then (by the Principles of Change and Synonymy) abstraction must itself be
intellectual.

5. The activity of abstraction cannot arise from conscious willing, since willing presupposes intellectual representation, whereas abstraction is what makes intellectual representation possible.

6. There is no other conscious, active principle in the intellect aside from actual willings.

∴ Abstraction is an unconscious activity of the intellect which makes possible all intellectual representation by affecting sensory images.

With this activity posited, the Aristotelian will proceed, by the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, to attribute the capacity for this activity to the nature of the human soul, and specifically to the intellectual soul-part.

The unconscious intellectual activities posited by AIP and AEK share an end-object: the (improper) affection of the receptive intellect to produce in us intelligible forms as representation. Thus by the Teleological Principle of Activities, they will not be distinguished: they are the same activity. AEK only helps to bring out some details of how this activity operates to attain its end. If the activity did not influence the receptive intellect via an influence on sensory images, then Aristotle’s entire theory of knowledge would collapse (Brentano, 1866, see pp.107-108)

With these two parallel arguments, we have a sketch of what the active intellect must be and do if it is to provide the resources required for an Aristotelian psychology. I turn now to discuss the details of the positive view. Since this is where Brentano’s own most novel insights occur, and also the place where “Brentano’s Aristotle” is most
tenuously interpreted as Aristotle himself, I shall cease to suppress mention of Brentano’s name, giving credit for the interpretation where it is due. I shall first discuss the active intellect in basic outline, showing how it meets the demands encoded in AIP. Then I shall turn to AEK.

3.4.2  Positive Account of the Active Intellect: Pt. 1: AIP

Thinking occurs when the receptive intellect is (improperly) affected, and an intelligible form occurs in us as representation. The receptive intellect never actually takes on any intelligible form (or any accidental form), since it is incorruptible and incorporeal, but is capable of containing all intelligible forms as representation. This has been summarized above (p.93) in the claim that the receptive intellect is pure potentiality, the form of all intelligible forms.

Reciprocally, the active intellect must be capable of inducing every intelligible form (as representation) in the receptive intellect. Now only an actuality can serve as such an active principle which affects (even if only improperly) anything else. Thus the active intellect must be regarded as, in some sense, an actuality. Aristotle says in the beginning of De Anima’s Book III, chapter 5 that the active intellect is a hexis or “state” (Brentano’s German is Habitus) (Brentano, 1866, p.112). The term hexis can be used to mean a skill or disposition, but Aristotle elsewhere employs it to mean “any form that is actual within a subject” (Brentano, 1866, p.112). Now the subject of the entire intellectual soul-part (of all the intellectual powers), as we have seen, is not the living body, but only the soul itself (cf. p.93 above). The intellect is entirely unmixed
with the body. The active intellect is thus regarded as a unique kind of actuality, not an accidental form of a human body, but rather “an accidental form of the intellectual soul [eine accidentelle Form der intellectiven Seele]”\(^{17}\) or “a property of our own soul [eine Eigenschaft der eigenen Seele]” (Brentano, 1866, p.112). The active intellect is a property of the soul, where the soul itself (in its non-derivative sense) is nothing but the form of a living organism.

Aristotle also says in the beginning of De Anima’s Bk.III, Ch.5 that the active intellect is “unmixed.” Now in In §3.3.3 above, this claim was put forth regarding the receptive intellect on the grounds that no actual form is in the receptive intellect. As pure potentiality it could take on all intelligible forms; as incorruptible it never actually takes on any form, but only takes them in as representation. It is thus “unmixed” with the actual body as a matter of course, insofar as it is “unmixed” with all actual being, and is (again) pure potentiality. The receptive intellect is pure form, in its nature unmixed with any matter. But the active intellect is not unmixed with actuality in this sense. For it is not a potentiality at all, but rather, as we have just noted, it is already itself an actuality. And yet Aristotle remarks that it is generally “unmixed.” Brentano’s resolution is to claim that the active intellect is pure actuality: it is unmixed with any mere potentiality, just as the receptive intellect is unmixed with any actuality (Brentano, 1866, 117-119). It is, as Aristotle says, unmixed “in that it is by nature actuality [indem er seindem Wesen nach

\(^{17}\)I have revised George’s translation, which renders this as “spiritual soul.” Google ngrams shows that “intellectiven” was in circulation in German texts 1860-1890 (esp. in discussion of Aquinas’ work), and experienced a small revival 1960-1970, but neither seems to have been sufficient to win it a place in German dictionaries. In the McAllister translation of Brentano’s Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint, his use of the term “intellectiven” to refer to an Aristotelian soul-part or capacity is translated as “intellectual” (see McAllister’s p.4) or as “rational” (see p. 179).
Wirklichkeit sei] “têi ousia ὅν energeia”’ In sum, the active intellect is:

...unmixed with all potential being, as the receptive intellect is unmixed with all actual being. Neither is composed of form and matter, and neither is internally constituted through two principles; but each of them is one of two principles without admixture of the other; one of them is pure potentiality, while the other, i.e., the active intellect, is pure actuality [reine Wirklichkeit]” (Brentano, 1866, p.119).  

The active intellect has no mere form: it has no unactualized potentialities. Its nature is rather to be nothing but actual activity. Since it is unmixed with form, there is also in its nature no restriction on how it can be actualized. It is thus capable of acting to induce every intelligible form in the receptive intellect. The receptive intellect is the form of all intelligible forms (but has none of them actually); the active intellect is an actual property of the soul, but it has no form of its own which (a) restricts its potentiality, or (b) restricts its actualization.

By the Teleological Principle of Activities, the active intellect (as pure activity) is distinguished from all other activities, since it has as its unique end-object the (improper) affection of the receptive intellect. By the Functionalistic Principle of Natures, the active intellect is assigned to the intellectual soul, insofar as it always co-occurs with the other intellectual powers, and is separable from all lower parts of the soul. It is thereby called intellectual (nous); thus what-is-created through its activities (the presence in the receptive intellect – nous dynamêi – of intelligible forms as representation) shares a “namesake” with what-creates (active intellect: nous poiētichos). Thus, the Principles of

18Brentano walks more slowly though a number of features Aristotle ascribes to the active intellect: it is “separable [χωρίστοι], impassible [ἀπαθῆς], unmixed [ἀμίγες], activity [ἐνεργεία]” (1866, p.117ff). I have covered each of these, but have relied more directly on claims already made in previous sections of this chapter, rather then painstakingly proceeding through the source materials in Aristotle.
Change and Synonymy are schematically satisfied. (More cautiously: what is ultimately created through the activity of the active intellect shares a namesake with it. In §3.4.3 below we will inquire into how sensory images, which serve as intermediary in this causal chain, fit into this picture.)

It is perhaps not entirely clear how the The Principle of Striving is to be satisfied. This Principle requires that every activity follow from a striving – every actual activity implies some tendency, impulse, propensity, or desire towards activity. The same must be true of the activities of the active intellect. Let us begin with some specific contrasts between the active intellect’s strivings and other strivings. Above (see §3.3.2, p.85 and §3.3.3, p.91) I articulated two central features of both sensory and intellectual desires which distinguish them from blind natural impulses (and from each other): (a) both of the former are conscious, the latter unconscious, and (b) the former are both actualizations of a capacity for striving wherein the actualization is brought about by (distinct varieties of) representation. In both of these respects, the strivings of the active intellect are more akin to a blind natural impulse: the active intellect is unconscious, and it cannot involve affection by a representation (since a sensory representation, qua sensory, could not have this effect, and since the active intellect is to be what generates all intellectual representations in the receptive intellect, hence it cannot ultimately be triggered by one such representation).

But the strivings of the active intellect are distinct from blind natural impulses as well. In both vegetative strivings and in the natural impulses which characterize inanimate matter, an actual form naturally gives rise to a tendency (striving) to produce
some activity. The striving of, e.g., an object to dissipate heat arises from its having the *accidental* form of heat; the striving of a living organism to actualize the activities of nutrition, growth, and procreation arise from its having the *substantial* form of a living body (see p.72 above). Because of this difference, an organism is *constitutively* and *constantly* striving to actualize its vegetative activities, and does so whenever possible, whereas a warm object strives to actualize its activities of heat-dissipation only until the heat is dissipated, whereupon the accidental form of heat is lost, and the striving thereby ceases. Neither of these can be the correct analysis of the striving which gives rise to the activities of the active intellect if it is *unmixed* with form, and is rather pure energy. Like vegetative impulses, the Aristotelian must regard the active intellect as *constitutively* and *constantly* striving to bring about activity; but unlike vegetative impulses, it is not apt to regard this striving as arising from any actual form which could cease to be actual. The active intellect is constitutively and constantly striving, *without any possible cessation*.

If the view seems outlandish, perhaps it is worth pointing out that it is built to support the Brentanian-Aristotelian reading of the intellectual soul as indestructible. Even an organism’s vegetative strivings eventually cease when the organism dies, and when the (formerly living) body loses the form which is its soul. The striving of the active intellect need not ever cease, since it arises from no actual form at all, and hence is not dependent upon any actualized form. The formlessness of the active intellect is a way of capturing this unending activity. Although the active intellect is an “actuality” in the sense of being a state (*Hexis*) of the intellectual soul, it itself has no form or any mere potentiality.

This first pass at the active intellect shows how it is to meet the theoretical
demands encoded in AIP (see §3.4.1, p.98 above) in a way consistent with the five Aristotelian Principles. But we have not yet addressed AEK: we have not shown how the active intellect carries out its activities by way of affecting sensory images.

**3.4.3 Positive Account of the Active Intellect: Pt. 2: AEK**

The remaining issue concerns how to understand the role of sensory images in mediating between the active and receptive intellect. By the Principles of Change and Synonymy, if the reception of an intelligible form is to arise ultimately from the active intellect, but is to be mediated by sensory images, it would seem that the active intellect must make sensory images intelligible, otherwise the “synonymy” could not be propagated from cause to effect. But this would seem to imply that the images could no longer be sensory, and the Aristotelian theory of knowledge would collapse. Meanwhile, if it is genuinely sensory images which act upon the receptive intellect, it would seem that (by the same Principles) the receptive intellect must be made in some sense sensory. But this would contradict the claim that the receptive intellect is incorruptible.

In short, the Aristotelian claims that all sensory-corporeal (Sinnlich-Körperliches) objects are by nature potentially intelligible from the beginning, and that the same is true of sensory images (which faithfully replicate the form of sensory-corporeal objects in us, as representation: Brentano 1866, p.87). Sensory-corporeal objects are by nature both actually sensible, and potentially intelligible. For example, one can sensorily perceive a crystalline body, or one can intellectually think about its geometric shape. If we distinguished here two objects (one which is sensed, and another which is thought) then
we should be forced to say that when, e.g., a scientist sets about trying to gain knowledge of earthly crystals, they should instead go think of geometric shapes (Brentano, 1866, pp.87-88). But then it would be impossible for the scientist to ever fulfill their aim of thinking about crystals. Since that is absurd, the Aristotelian holds that the forms which occur (as representations) in the receptive intellect are already present, in potentiality, in sensible objects. When we sense those objects, their forms are present in us (as representations) in concrete particularity; when we think about those same objects, their form is present in us (as representation) in a more “abstract” manner:

Quite aptly, [Aristotle] compares the relation between what is perceived by sense and what is thought in the intellect with the relation between a bent line and that same line after it has been straightened out. It is still the same line as it was before, but it has become different, more simple; in the same way, the corporeal object that was in the sense is still the same when it is in the intellect, but its state is not the same in both cases. Like the line, it has become more simple; the individual difference has been compensated; and so it comes about that even though something material is in the intellect, it is in it like something immaterial... The individual straight line, which is in sense, and what it is to be a straight line, which is in the intellect, are identical in essence... what is in the intellect can be free from matter only insofar as the things outside of intellectual knowledge are [already] free from it (Brentano, 1866, p.88).

Here again there is the appeal to “abstraction” which lies at the center of AEK.

It may seem that the major difficulty for the Aristotelian has just been removed. The sensible is by nature potentially intelligible, although it does not actually exist as intelligible. Thus (one might claim) there is, in a sense, no serious issue in satisfying the Principles of Change and Synonymy when it is said that the active intellect (in its activities of “abstraction”) makes sensory images intelligible: the active intellect converts potential intelligibility into actual intelligibility (in the sensory form which
is in us as representation) (Brentano, 1866, p.114). That-which-creates (the active principle: the active intellect) and that-which-is-created (the actuality, in representation, of intelligibility) thus share a “namesake” (both are in a sense intellectual). But the distinction between the sensible and intelligible is still upheld, as one instance of the distinction between potentiality and actuality. Since (as seen in §3.4.2 above), the ensuing changes in the receptive intellect share a namesake with the active intellect which causes them, we have sketched how the Principles of Change and Synonymy are upheld at every point along the causal chain.

This is not the route that Brentano takes. He claims that the Principle of Synonymy has not yet been properly satisfied. I shall briefly sketch his own line of reasoning here.

The Principle of Synonymy can be fulfilled to a greater or lesser extent in different cases. In cases of “natural becoming (natürlichen Entstehen)” the Principle is fully-satisfied (Brentano, 1866, p.125; 126). To use an example discussed above, in the changes induced in foodstuff by the vegetative activity of procreation, the “namesake” is fully-shared: an organism with name \( N \) generates an organism of name \( N \).

In “works of art” (die Werke der Kunst), in contrast, the synonymy is lessened. For example, an architect produces a house, and ultimately (though there may be many mediating causes) the active principle is the architect’s concept (Begriffe) of a house, which is called by a similar name, but does not share precisely the same name. Likewise a physician may produce health in a patient, and ultimately (though there may be many mediating causes, such as warming up the patient, etc.) the active principle is the
physician’s concept of health.\textsuperscript{19} Here the synonymy is lessened, by still present.

Thus far all our cases have appeared to be of the foregoing sorts, where the synonymy is (even if a bit thin) always present. But there is another form of change, in which the synonymy is exceptionally weak: cases of “spontaneous generation \textit{[zufälliges Entstehen]}” (Brentano, 1866, p.125). For example, suppose a sick person regains their health as a result of an increase in bodily warmth (owing to a seasonal increase of warmth in the atmosphere). Then what causes the change in health, in this case, is not the concept of health, as in the case of the physician; nor is it just “health” as in the case of natural becoming. It appears to share no namesake with its effect. The Aristotelian holds, however, that in such cases, the cause (warmth) is always a \textit{part of} the effect (health), and so the cause is synonymous with a part of the effect (Brentano, 1866, pp.125).\textsuperscript{20} Thus a synonymy is present but is not a full synonymy between cause and effect. Further, unlike the other cases, the synonymy may not be generally apparent; one must have in-hand an analysis of, e.g., health as something which contains warmth as a part before one will be in a position to uphold the Principle of Synonymy even in this weakened sense, by claiming that the cause is synonymous with part of the effect.

Now where there is no \textit{single} cause of an effect, but rather a number of partial causes acting in concert, then the foregoing accounts may need to iterate. For example, in a case of multiple rational agents acting cooperatively towards the same aim and

\textsuperscript{19}In each case, the ultimate cause is not an intellectual desire because any such desire always comes about through the affection of the capacity for willing by an intellectual representation - see §3.3.3, p.91 above.

\textsuperscript{20}The example of warmth/health is due to Aristotle. If one finds this conception of health as including warmth as a part objectionable, suppose instead that health includes something like “normal heart function,” and that this is induced by freak electrical activity.
successfully bringing it about, we will find in each agent’s contribution a desire for the intended outcome. Each agent’s desire, as partial cause, will be synonymous with the collective effect in its entirety, along the lines of a work of art, and each of the desires will also be synonymous with each other.

But suppose we have a case where there are multiple partial causes in the style of a spontaneous generation. For example, suppose that one part of health is warmth, and another part is a certain rigidity in muscle tone. Now suppose that a sick person is brought back to health through the dual operations of (a) a random increase in ambient temperature, co-occurring with (b) a full-body electric shock, induced by a lightning-strike, which produces the requisite muscle-tone. In his case, we will have two very different causes which are each synonymous with disparate parts of the effect; neither will be synonymous with each other, nor with the whole effect. The Principle of Synonymy will only be satisfied in an extremely weak and piecemeal manner.

In Brentano’s view, the only way to coordinate multiple causes and achieve a greater synonymy would be if an intelligent agent coordinates the causes. For example, a physician might have the concept of health, assess what parts of health are lacking in a patient, and then bring it about that those parts are put in place – the physician might then increase ambient temperature and simultaneously apply a shock, all as part of one unified plan to induce health. In that case, there would be one ultimate cause (the concept of health) which was synonymous with the effect (inducing health), and the disparate, partial synonymy of each isolated cause would be overcome.

Brentano holds that the relationship between the active intellect, the sensory
images, and the receptive intellect is a strange mixed case (Brentano, 1866, p.126). The active intellect ultimately brings about the reception of an intelligible form (as representation) in the receptive intellect. But this is not like the case of natural becoming, since the active intellect is not itself any kind of representation – indeed, it is not mixed with any kind of form, being pure activity. Likewise it is not like the case of a work of art, since the active intellect does not think or contain any representations: thus it does not contain a concept of its effect, in the way the physician contains a concept of health.21 Despite that, the sensory images do stand as a middle-term, as a kind of “instrument” for the work of the active intellect. The active intellect and the sensory image “supplement each other, as it were, in their causality” (Brentano, 1866, p.126). Or as he also puts it:

The active intellect without images would be like a bow without an arrow; the images without the active intellect, like an arrow without the propelling force of the bow; it would be impossible for either of them alone to reach the target, for they would be incapable of generating thought (Brentano, 1866, p.142)

The case is thus regarded as most akin to a complex case of spontaneous generation, in which a number of disparate partial causes bring about an effect. As before, neither cause alone will be synonymous with each other, nor with the entirety of the cause. Very roughly: one partial cause is the formality of a sensory representation, which is by nature only potentially intelligible; another partial cause is the intellectuality of the active intellect. Only both operating together can produce an intelligible form (as representation) in the receptive intellect, which is by nature devoid of all actual form. The active intellect

21If the active intellect did contain a concept of its effect, it would appear to be useless: for the effect of the active intellect is to induce intellectual representations (concepts) in the first place. Compare Strawson’s argument on the impossibility of “thinking” occurring as an intentional action – see §1.3 above.
is not at all synonymous with the form of a sensory representation, since it is entirely unmixed with form. And the sensory representation is not at all actually intellectual, and so is not strictly synonymous with the active intellect. In the same way, each is only synonymous with a “part” of the ensuing intelligible form.

As before, Brentano holds that only an appeal to an intellect which coordinates these causes can serve to impose greater synonymy. And he holds that we ought to provide an account which grounds a further synonymy, saying that it would be a “ridiculous supposition to consider the origination of our thoughts to be the work of a mere accident” (Brentano, 1866, p.126). He thus appeals to a divine intellect to supply the missing plan that unifies these two causes, in the same manner in which the plan of a physician unifies the partial causes of promoting health in disparate ways (Brentano, 1866, p.126-127, 136). Without being “coordinated by a higher principle,” Brentano remarks, thinking would have to “appear to be spontaneously generated [wie etwas zufällig Entstandenes erscheinen]” (1866, p.126).

3.5 Sum: Mental Acts in an Aristotelian Psychology

This concludes my presentation of “Brentano’s Aristotle,” and provides the core commitments of a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology. My main concern in working through all this has been to clarify in what sense(s) an Aristotelian could speak substantively of intentional mental phenomena as “mental acts.” The foregoing exegesis has in

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22George’s translation is: “an incoherent, even ridiculous supposition,” but the German is “eine inconveniente, ja lächerliche Annahme.”
fact provided the resources to distinguish a number of broadly Aristotelian conceptions
of mental acts. There are three key concepts we need to pin down in order to clarify
an Aristotelian Act Conception of intentionality. These are the concept of activity, the
concept of mentality (or, of the psychological), and the concept of intentionality itself. I
take each in turn.

3.5.1 Aristotelian Acts

A Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology highlights the distinction between five
varieties of activity. These are:

(A1) Activities-under-passivity: wherein a capacity is triggered and ex-
ercised; this always involves a striving (propensity) to exercise that
capacity.

(A2) Animal Locomotion: wherein:

(i) a sensible-corporeal object triggers the capacity for sensory repre-
    sentation (on the model of (A1) above),

(ii) the resulting sensory representation triggers the capacity for sensory
desiring (on the model of (A1) above), resulting in the occurrence
    of a novel kind of striving (namely a sensory desire), and

(iii) the resulting sensory desire triggers the capacity for bodily move-
     ment (on the model of (A1) above.)

(A3) Rational action: wherein:
(i) the active intellect triggers the capacity for intellectual representation (on the model of (A1) above, and mediated by sensory representations),

(ii) the resulting intellectual representation triggers the capacity for intellectual desiring or willing (on the model of (A1) above), resulting in the occurrence of a novel kind of striving (namely a willing),

(iii) the resulting willing affects the capacity for sensory representation (on the model of (A1) above), and

(iv) the resulting sensory representation leads to locomotion (on the model of (A2) above).

(A4) **Rational thought:** (e.g., recollection) wherein:

(i) the active intellect triggers the capacity for intellectual representation (on the model of (A1) above, and mediated by sensory representations),

(ii) the resulting intellectual representation triggers the capacity for intellectual desiring or willing (on the model of (A1) above), resulting in the occurrence of a novel kind of striving (namely a willing),

(iii) the resulting willing affects the capacity for sensory representation, and especially the imagination (on the model of (A1) above), and

(iv) the resulting sensory representations thereby occur in a self-directed manner, and enable the thinking of a chain of connected thoughts as
intellectual representations (with the help of the active intellect).

(A5) **Pure activity:** activity which is not the momentary exercise of any standing (previously latent) capacity, and which is not triggered by any acting agent, but rather *constitutive, constant, ceaseless* activity which is by nature actualized.

Note that (A2) is only a special, complex instance of (A1). In particular, the occurrence of any sensory mental representation is an act of the type (A1). Likewise (A3) is a complex instance of (A1) and (A2) – intellectual representations are also acts of type (A1) – and also involves further the active intellect. Likewise (A4) is only a complex instance of (A1), though in this case the active intellect is also involved. The active intellect, in a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology, is the only example (in humans) of an activity of the type (A5). Despite its anomalies, (A5) can be regarded as a limit-case of (A1): a case where, *by nature*, the actualization of a capacity constitutively and ceaseless occurs, and where the capacity never goes unactualized.

The Aristotelian conception thus involves a *far more expansive* conception of acts than is recognized in the philosophy of action today. Generally, as noted in Ch.1, §1.2, it is presupposed that “actions, in the strict sense” are “personally normative.” In contemporary views, this conception of action leads many to invoke a representationalist analysis of action (RAA), and actions “in the strict sense” are defined as those acts which are susceptible to analysis by (RAA). This would exclude (A1) and (A5) from counting as acts since (on the Aristotelian view) they cannot ultimately presuppose representation. Instances of (A2) and (A3) might still plausibly count as *bodily* actions, by the lights of
many philosophers of action. Instances of (A4) might count as a mental actions, by the lights of contemporary philosophy of action.

### 3.5.2 Aristotelian Mentality

Consider next the Aristotelian conception of mentality, or of the psychological. On the basic Aristotelian conception, any living organism is en-souled, or has a soul \((\text{psuchê})\) and in a correspondingly broad sense, any activities which are unique to living systems are psychological or mental activities. As such, many of the instances of (A1) centrally under discussion throughout this chapter, and all of (A2)-(A5), will count as Aristotelian “mental acts,” quite apart from any appeal to \((\text{RAA})\). (A1)-(A5) are mental acts simply because they are characteristic of living systems: this is a stark contrast to many present-day conceptions of mentality, which take mental representation as a touchstone to paradigmatic mental phenomena. (It is also, as we shall see in the next chapter, a contrast to the mature Brentano’s empirical psychology). Meanwhile (A1-A5) are mental acts owing to the broad Aristotelian conception of acts.

There is a contrast here to the present-day literature on mental acts, which has carried over representationalist analyses of action from bodily cases, applying them to mental events as well (cf. Ch.1, §1.2). On such a representationalist analysis of mental actions, (A4) – rational thought – could count as a mental act. In such cases, a mental representation is presupposed in the execution of a mental event, and the mental event (e.g., thinking or recollecting) thus occurs so as to fulfill a prior represented aim of thinking. In the service of fulfilling this aim, a number of sensory representations
(images) are called up so as to facilitate completion of the thinking which is aimed at.

All this coheres with (RAA), and so the Aristotelian view provides the resources to
countenance “intentional mental acts” (e.g., thinking) and “preintentional mental acts”
(e.g., calling up sensory representation so as to facilitate thinking) in the senses discussed
in Ch.1, §1.2 above.

Note however, that (RAA) will not generally permit the occurrence of any Aristotelian intellectual representation to count as a mental act, outside the context of rational thought. This is so even though, on the Aristotelian conception of empirical knowledge, intellectual representation always presupposes sensory representation. The dependence relation here is not of the correct form to invoke a representational analysis, claiming that the occurrence of an intellectual representation is a mental act “in the strict sense.” This is because on the Aristotelian view, no sensory representation can (qua sensory) actually represent the intelligible, and hence there can be no sensorily-represented aim of thinking anything intelligible. The Aristotelian account of sensory representation precludes them from representing the kinds of aims which (RAA) would require them to represent if they were to give rise to thought in a “strict action.”

But the Aristotelian herself, operating with a broader conception of acts, will count the occurrence of any sensory or intellectual representation, even outside the context of rational thought, as a mental act: they are acts of type (A1) (hence they are acts) which are unique to living systems (hence they are mental). Likewise, the Aristotelian will count the activity of the active intellect (A5) as a mental act: it is pure activity (hence it is an act) which is unique to living systems (hence it is mental). Since acts of these types –
(A1) and (A5) – need not (and, for the active intellect cannot) presuppose representation, they offer candidate cases of what could be called subintentional mental acts – those acts which are not widely countenanced in present-day philosophy of action.

### 3.5.3 Intentionality in an Aristotelian Psychology

The final issue to pin down concerns where, in the Aristotelian account, we might locate intentionality. This is a difficult task. There are at least three different notions one might associate with “intentionality,” all of which have distinct locations in an Aristotelian psychology. These are (i) the notion of intentional phenomena as representational, (ii) the notion of intentional phenomena as exhibiting directedness towards an object, and (iii) the notion of an intentional phenomenon containing its object within itself. I shall briefly discuss each in turn.

**Intentionality as Representationality**

Many present-day authors read “intentional mental phenomenon” and “mental representation” as synonyms.\(^{23}\) We might then suppose that we can find only two loci for intentionality in a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology: (a) token actualizations of the capacity for sensory representation, and (b) token actualizations of the capacity for intellectual representation. These are, after all, the only places in which the Aristotelian

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\(^{23}\)This is not my view, as I had hoped to discuss further in the intended Part III of this dissertation. I regard present-day representationalism as a family of naturalistic theories of the phenomenon of intentionality. One can recognize this phenomenon without endorsing a substantive conception of representationalism. If the Act Conception of intentionality is ill at ease with many of the main doctrines of representationalism, it may be aptly regarded as an anti-representationalist view of intentionality.
speaks of mental representations.

How best to understand the Aristotelian doctrine of representation, as an “improper affection,” is decidedly unclear. I shall return to it briefly below. But however we understand it, the Aristotelian conception of representation is notably far more narrow than the contemporary conception of “representation.” This can be highlighted in two ways. First, consider the case of sensory and intellectual desires. On the Aristotelian conception, these are not counted as representations (though they presuppose representations for their actualization). Sensory and intellectual representations are actualizations of capacities of a wholly distinct nature from (though they co-occur with) capacities for sensory or intellectual striving. In contrast, most philosophers of mind today cite beliefs and desires as paradigmatic species of mental representations – for example, these are widely cited in representationalist analyses of action. In the following chapter, we shall examine Brentano’s own discussion of this point: there we shall see that Brentano’s own conception of “intentionality” is broader than the Aristotelian conception of representation (Vorstellung) – and broader than his own mature conception of representation – in just this way. So that is one way in which the Aristotelian’s conception of representation is more narrow than the contemporary view. Another way in which it is more narrow is that, for the Aristotelian, all representations are conscious, whereas in present-day views, it is quite popular to posit unconscious representations.
Intentionality as Directedness

Consider next the gloss of intentional phenomena as directed at some object. Direction-to-an-object is perhaps the most popular way of glossing intentionality today, and perhaps lies closest to the etymological roots of the term in Latin. Unless we add further qualifications, every Aristotelian activity can be said to be intentional, insofar as they all exhibit a form of directedness toward an end-object or telos. This is encoded in the Teleological Principle of Activities: directedness is pervasive in any active Aristotelian universe.

Several qualifications are available. If we adopt the qualification that the directedness must be mental, then instances from all activity-types (A1)-(A5) will still make the cut: even the vegetative activities of growth, nutrition, and procreation will make the cut, since these too are psychical in the Aristotelian scheme. If we instead adopt the qualification that the directedness must be conscious, then we will still find instances from all of (A1)-(A4) – the occurrence of any conscious representation is an act of type (A1), and all of (A2)-(A4) are conscious – although we will have excluded (A5), the pure activity of the active intellect, which is unconscious. We could of course adopt the qualification that the directedness must be “representational” in character – but then we would be back to the foregoing issues concerning the gloss of intentionality in terms of representation.
Intentionality as Immanence

Consider finally the idea that intentional phenomena must “contain an object within themselves” – or have an object “immanently,” as it is sometimes put. This way of speaking used to be quite common as a gloss on intentionality.\(^{24}\) Nowadays the metaphor is generally foreshortened (we merely hear that intentional phenomena “have a content”) and this is generally not intended to convey the claim that intentional phenomena have anything “within” themselves.\(^{25}\)

Victor Caston (1998) has addressed several ways in which this gloss of intentionality may find its place in the Aristotelian view. Like the foregoing gloss, it may be taken to follow from basic principles of the Aristotelian theory of causation, and in that case it has very broad scope:

A version of this doctrine applies to every case of causal interaction, whether it be the perception of an object, the digestion of a biscuit, or the warming of a kettle... in every causal interaction the functioning of the [active] agent is “one and the same” as the function of the [affected] patient and [so] is present in the patient... If this doctrine entailed the presence of intentionality, it would entail it for every case of causal interaction across the board... (Caston, 1998, p.255)

\(^{24}\)For example, G.E. Moore’s famous “Refutation of Idealism” relies centrally upon this relatively flatfooted conception of content: “…‘blue’ is rightly and properly said to be part of the content of a blue flower. If, therefore, we also assert that it is part of the content of the sensation of blue, we assert that it has to the other parts (if any) of this whole the same relation which it has to the other parts of a blue flower” (1903, p.447). Other uses of “content” in this sense, occurring around the same time, are too numerous to count.

\(^{25}\)For example: “When one speaks of the contents of a bucket, one is talking about what is spatially inside the bucket. An analogous use of “the contents of perception” would pick out what is ‘in the mind’ when one has a perceptual experience. In contrast, when one speaks of the contents of a newspaper, one is talking about what information the newspaper stories convey. Most contemporary uses of “the contents of perception” take such contents to be analogous to the contents of a newspaper story, rather than the contents of a bucket” (Siegal, 2010, §2.0). This used to be distinguished as the “object” of an intentional mental phenomenon. It would be an interesting historical project to work out how this shift in terminology occurred during the 20th century. Such a shift is, for example, presupposed in giving the title of “externalistic theories of content” to the views of Putnam and Burge.
We have seen this claim borne out in the Principle of Synonymy, according to which every effect must “share a namesake” with its cause; it is amply illustrated in the case of heat-transference. In an occurrence of heating, the actual, heat is first contained in a hot object, and the activity of heating acts to induce heat in a formerly cold object: the affected patient (the formerly cold object) comes to contain heat. Here we have a proper affection, involving corruption; the same basic schema will apply to an improper affection, as occurs in representation. But the special case of mental intentionality arises as just that – only a special case. And so if this is how we plan to understand intentionality as “containing an object within itself,” it will be far weaker than the standard conception of “intentionality” at issue in philosophy of mind today. In particular, if we ground intentionality, in this way, in Aristotle’s basic conception of causation, then we will have no ready account of cases of illusion or hallucination, dreams, wishes, etc.\(^{26}\)

I have just mentioned again the Aristotelian view that, e.g., sensation involves an “improper affection,” in which we receive a form “as representation” but do not take it on actually or become corrupted by it (or at least, do not sense it in virtue of being corrupted by it). Caston also considers and discards the possibility of grounding intentionality in this admittedly obscure doctrine; I treat it here as another way of understanding the gloss of intentionality as “immanence.” On this view, an intentional phenomenon need only contain the form of an object within itself.

Caston locates this view in Aristotle’s discussion of a piece of wax, which inherits

\(^{26}\)Marmodoro (2014) seems not to recognize this point; her account of Aristotle’s theory of perception grounds it directly in his basic account of causation, and she provides no treatment of hallucination and the like. Presumably this is to be handled by an account of judgment.
the form of a signet ring without inheriting its matter (Caston, 1998, pp.256-257). Caston raises two difficulties for locating “intentionality” here. First, he does not take Aristotle to be offering merely a metaphor, but rather to be providing the example of the signet ring as a genuine instance of a form being received without matter. If that were sufficient for intentionality, then the wax should exhibit intentionality: this is (again) much more permissive than many contemporary conceptions of intentionality. Second, like the foregoing method of grounding “directedness” in Aristotle’s conception of causation, the comparison with the wax and the ring would again suggest a basically causal analysis of “intentionality,” and would not cover many of the cases of mental phenomena which are taken to be paradigmatically intentional.

In short, we seem to have two broad options for locating “intentionality” in the Aristotelian account, and these mirror the options for “activity” and for “mentality.” We can take an extremely broad and permissive view (according to which, all of (A1)-(A5) are intentional, are mental, and are acts) or we can try to narrow this down by adding qualifications.

3.5.4 Two Aristotelian Act Conceptions of Intentionality

That is a large number of moving parts. I want to simplify things by highlighting just two ways in which an Aristotelian Psychology could be taken to support a substantive

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27 Caston raises a third, but I am setting it aside: he complains that it is interpreters and commentators who import intentionality here, not any of Aristotle’s own remarks. “How does being ‘received without matter’ signal the notion of being about something?? Why would one instantiation of the form be about another, and not vice versa?” (Caston, 1998, p.256). I set this aside because I take such “aboutness” to have been already discussed in connection with “directedness” above. I cannot make out any distinct positive content for it as an alternative gloss of intentionality.
Act Conception of Intentionality.

First, in a permissive Aristotelian conception, we regard both “mentality” and “activity” in an expansive sense. Under mentality, we include everything which arises from a soul (psuchê). Under activity, we include every “activity-under-passivity” (all acts of type (A1)). Then we shall have a substantive (albeit quite permissive or expansive) Act Conception of Intentionality so long as intentionality is regarded as arising through “mental acts,” so-construed. I do not settle here how, precisely, one regards “intentionality” – e.g., in terms of representationality, directedness, immanence, or in terms of some other gloss. But however one goes, this permissive Aristotelian conception, by its own lights, will likely regard all instances of (mental) intentionality as arising through mental acts, so-defined. All mental representations, all rational thought, and (even) all vegetative activities will arise through mental acts of this sort.

Second, in a more restrictive Aristotelian conception, we only count as “mental acts” cases in which a life-function is inherently active: that is, we restrict the notion of activity to all an only activities of the type (A5). Then we shall have a substantive Act Conception of Intentionality so long as intentionality arises through the activity of the active intellect – for among the mental activities, only those of the active intellect are of the type (A5). Depending upon how one understands mentality and intentionality, there is room here for four classes of intentionality. First, non-mental intentionality (if one countenances it) will not arise through a mental act of the active intellect, since the active intellect affects nothing but the mind. Second, some forms of mental intentionality may also arise independently of the active intellect: e.g., the vegetative life-activities
or sensory representations may still count as mental, and may still count as intentional, but do not (according to the Aristotelian) arise through the active intellect. Third, some forms of mental intentionality may be realized in the activities of the active intellect: this activity might itself count as intentional, on, e.g., a non-representational conception of intentionality. Fourth, some forms of mental intentionality may be realized through, but distinct from the activities of the active intellect: all intellectual representations would be of this sort.

Neither the permissive nor the restrictive Aristotelian conception of mental acts is fully-consonant with contemporary philosophy of mind and action, as has been demonstrated in this section. But then, no Act Conception of intentionality is intended to be a notational variant of more well-known conceptions of intentionality. And seeing the possibility of a coherent Act Conception relies upon seeing mainstream philosophy of action as inadequate, as I argued in Ch.1.

With the foregoing exegesis of Brentano’s Aristotle in place, it ought to be apparent that the whole edifice of a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology, along with all its myriad ways of conceiving of mental acts, depends upon a thoroughgoing adoption of Aristotelian metaphysics. In remainder of Part I of this dissertation, I show that only a severely restricted version of the permissive Aristotelian conception of mental acts could possibly be consistent with methodological constraints which Brentano imposes upon his empirical psychology, and that he does not commit to the restrictive Aristotelian view. Both points follow, I show, from Brentano’s unwillingness to endorse the requisite Aristotelian metaphysics, and his restriction of the domain of empirical psychology to the
phenomena of consciousness only (leaving aside, e.g., all vegetative life-functions). In short, if Brentano endorses a substantive Act Conception, it is *not* robustly Aristotelian.

Meanwhile, I shall argue (in Part II) that something like *both* conceptions re-appear in Husserl’s mature phenomenology, even though that project cannot (by its own lights) presuppose any Aristotelian *metaphysics*. An analogue of the *permissive Aristotelian conception* appears in Husserl’s account of basic intentional mental phenomena. An analogue of the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* surprisingly appears in Husserl’s conception of the *pure ego*, which similarly serves, after a fashion, as the active origin of all intentional mental phenomena. Meanwhile, a number of other possible conceptions of mental acts can be located in Husserl, which have no clear Aristotelian precedent.
Chapter 4

Brentano’s Mature Psychology

4.1 Introduction

Thanks to the efforts of Ch.3, we now have a robust understanding of how one might root a substantive Act Conception of Intentionality in a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology. I have detailed two distinctively Aristotelain Act Conceptions which will serve as useful points of reference in what follows. The first is the *permissive Aristotelian conception*, according to which all activities-under-passivity count as acts, all life-functions count as mental, and so (plausibly) all instances of mental intentionality (however one defines it) arise through a mental act. The second is the *restrictive Aristotelian conception*, according to which only the pure activity of the active intellect counts as a mental act, and so (plausibly) only a few special cases of mental intentionality can be said to arise through a mental act. The tasks of this chapter are (*a*) to show that the mature Brentano can endorse neither view as it stands, and (*b*) to work out whether
he offers an alternative Act Conception of his own.

When discussing the views of other authors in his *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint* (hereafter “PFES” - see esp. Book I), Brentano freely adopted their terminology, speaking of “mental states,” “mental events,” and “mental processes.” But when expressing his own views (see esp. *PFES* Book II and also his other works) he demonstrated clear preference for speaking of mental “acts” (*Acten*) or “activities” (*Tätigkeiten*). Indeed, he declared he would use the term “consciousness” as “synonymous with ‘mental phenomenon,’ or ‘mental act [*psychischem Acte*]’” signaling also the interchangeability of these latter terms (*PFES*, 102/78).\(^1\) Despite this, in the 1874 text of *PFES*, Brentano never explicitly and concisely addressed what he meant by calling intentional mental phenomena “acts.”

However, scattered throughout *PFES* and in other writings, Brentano made suggestive remarks regarding the nature of mental acts. My aim in this chapter is to pull these claims together while reviewing some of the main commitments of Brentano’s mature psychology. The source materials I draw upon are mainly *PFES* itself, Brentano’s additions in the 1911 re-issue, and two collections of posthumous texts, available as *Sensory and Noetic Consciousness* and *Descriptive Psychology*. In the remainder of this introduction I provide a brief overview (§4.1.1) of Brentano’s aims in *PFES*, and follow this up (§4.1.2) with a sketch of where this chapter is going and how it proceeds.

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\(^1\)In this chapter, *PFES* will be continuously under discussion. All citations will specify (i) the pagination of the 1973 McAlister translation, and (ii) that of the 1995/2009 re-issue. These were unfortunately not made to match, and there is no simple rule for moving between the two versions. Since scholarship over several decades has cited the McAlister translation, whereas future scholarship may likely rely on the re-issue, it is apt to include both.
4.1.1 An Empirical Psychology

Brentano begins *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint* with a chapter delineating the concept and purpose of psychology. He begins with an important narrowing-down of its domain, presented as a restriction of Aristotle’s own approach. The effect is to rule out any clear route to either the *permissive* or the *restrictive Aristotelian Conception* of mental acts.

Aristotle, as we have seen in chapter 3, first set out psychology as the science of the soul (*Wissenschaft von der Seele*; *peri psuchês*), and considered all living beings to be ensouled; hence an Aristotelian psychology studies all living things. Brentano, however, agrees with others in endorsing a narrowing ("Beschränkung") of the field of psychology: *consciousness* (*Bewußtsein*) is to be the key feature of psychological phenomena, and this means excluding from the domain of psychology proper not only all vegetative life, but also many details concerning “the nervous system and muscles” – these topics are ceded to the physiologist (*PFES*, pp.4/3).\(^2\) This narrowing-down of psychology causes some difficulties regarding how we understand its nominal promise of being a “science of the soul.” Brentano remarks that the meaning of the term “soul” has *also* been narrowed. For Aristotle, as we have seen, the soul was “the nature, or, as he preferred to express it, the form [*die Form*], the first activity [*die erste Wirklichkeit*] , the first actuality [*die erste Vollendung*] of a living being” (*PFES*, p.4/2).\(^3\) Brentano remarks that he will use the

\(^2\)This is not an idiosyncratic view of Brentano’s. The distinction between physiology and psychology, as an autonomous discipline, was widely endorsed at this time, even by those who defended or assumed a certain reciprocity between them. Compare Wundt (1904, p.4) and James (1892, pp.6-8).

\(^3\)Brentano’s own footnote here reads: “The Greek expressions are: *phusis, morphê, prótê energeia, prótê entelecheia.*”
word “soul” in what he thinks is a common meaning at the time of writing, to refer to:

the substantial bearer of presentations and other properties which are based on presentations [den substantiellen Träger von Vorstellungen und anderen Eigenschaften... für welche Vorstellungen die Grundlage bilden] and which, like presentations, are only perceivable through inner perception. Thus we usually call soul the substantial bearer [den substantiellen Träger] of sensations such as fantasy images, acts of memory [Gedächtnissactes], acts [Actes] of hope or fear, desire or aversion (PFES, p.5/4).

(Note: Brentano appeals to inner perception as our mode of access to conscious mental phenomena – more on this below.) If we revise the meaning of the term “soul” in this way, then we might retain the classical conception of psychology as the “science of the soul,” despite the restriction of psychology’s domain. That is: psychology could be a science of the substantial bearers of conscious presentations – this would exclude study of vegetative life, which lacks consciousness.

Brentano himself does not proceed, in Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint, with such a conception of psychology. Rather, he takes into consideration the objection that the “‘soul,” as re-defined above, remains a metaphysical posit for which we have no direct, experiential evidence. According to this objection, we should rather pursue psychology as a phenomenalistic science – as a science of mental phenomena, without positing any metaphysical substance as their bearer. This view was promoted by John Stuart Mill in his System of Logic (cf. PFES, pp.12-14/9-10). And it is summarized in Albert Lange’s suggestion that we should pursue a “psychology without a soul” (quoted in

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4Translation slightly amended: McAllister switches to using the noun-form “the substance” rather than using the adjectival “substantial bearer” in both places, and also translates “Eigenschaften” as “activities.”

5As Brentano’s editor, Oskar Kraus, suggests in a footnote (PFES, p.10-11/8), Brentano himself seemed to adopt the view that we do directly experience substances in perception, and experience ourselves as a “thinking thing” in inner perception. This is one mature Brentanian doctrine which George & Koehn (2004) have sourced in Aristotle (see Ch.2, p.43 above). I am presuming that Brentano is capable of setting this doctrine aside when he says explicitly that he will do so, and that it thus forms no essential part of PFES.
On this view, the psychologist simply seeks to formulate laws (simple and complex, special and general) which capture the actual progression of mental phenomena. This sidelining of speculative metaphysics in psychology was part of a more general Zeitgeist at the close of the 19th century. Likewise Wundt and James attempted to divest psychology of any metaphysical orientation.

Brentano points out that even one who is inclined to posit a substantial soul will not deny that there are such mental phenomena, or that we should formulate laws of their progression. In this respect, psychology loses nothing by reinventing itself as a phenomenalistic science of mental phenomena. Brentano raises only one possible complaint against this view: that it might be taken to close the question of continued existence after death, which he locates in Plato as the “first impetus to psychological research” (PFES, p.14/11). But he quickly dispenses with this worry, and preserves the possibility of continued existence after death even for a psychology without a soul:

...with or without a substantial soul you cannot deny that there is a certain continuity [Fortbestand] of our mental life here on earth. If someone rejects the existence of a substance, he must assume that such a continuity does not require a substantial bearer. And the question whether our mental life somehow continues even after the destruction of the body will be no more meaningless for him than for anyone else. It is wholly inconsistent for thinkers of this persuasion to reject, for the reasons mentioned, the question of immortality even in this, its essential sense, though it certainly would be more appropriate to call it immortality of life [Lebens] than immortality of the soul (PFES, p.17/12-13).

Having reassured himself and his reader that a “psychology without soul” does not seriously deform or constrain the traditional aims of psychology, Brentano proceeds, throughout the remainder of PFES, to pursue a less metaphysically-loaded psychology of
mental phenomena. It may still be that “both are correct” – i.e., that there may yet be a substantial bearer of mental phenomena – but “the old definition contains metaphysical presuppositions from which the modern one is free,” and adopting the latter simplifies the work of psychology and makes it acceptable to a broader audience (PFES, p.18/13-14). As we shall see, Brentano’s empirical psychology is not entirely divested of metaphysical commitments, but commitment to the soul, as a substantial bearer of mental phenomena, is not among them.

I stress all this in advance to underscore three points. First, prior to any discussion of whether or not psychology studies a “soul,” Brentano endorses a restriction of psychology’s domain to the conscious. Second, in pursuing an empirical psychology, Brentano avoids a priori metaphysical presuppositions, relying on experience as the mode of access to mental phenomena. (The method of experiential access is what Brentano calls “inner perception” – about which more in §4.2 below). Third, this requires selectively setting aside the vast majority of the metaphysical substructure which supports a Brentanian-Aristotelian psychology. I illustrate this selectivity in Figure 4.1 below.

It ought to be clear how difficult it would be to read to Brentano’s work in empirical psychology as simply a re-telling of a Brentanian-Aristotelian Psychology – at least, so long as Brentano works within the constraints he sets himself in the introduction, pursuing only a science of mental phenomena. Brentano’s famous appeal to intentionality is meant to provide a means of positively characterizing the distinctive features of mental phenomena, so that such a phenomenalistic or descriptive psychology of mental phenomena can proceed. And it is in this context that I seek to understand what Brentano
**The Aristotelian’s Metaphysical Substructure**

**Brentano’s Psychological Phenomena (=" ●")**

*Consciously available in Inner Perception*

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**Figure 4.1**: Brentanian psychology does not include the Aristotelian’s metaphysical substructure. This graphic may be read in a top-down fashion. For example, take the rightmost blue dot. This is a phenomenon Brentano will treat, since it is consciously accessible in inner perception. The black line shows that this corresponds, in the Aristotelian scheme, to a token actualization (red dot on the red plane). This is an actualization of a capacity for representation (the red dot is located above the blue circle labeled “Representation” on the blue plane). The capacity belongs to the sensory soul-part (it falls within the black circle labeled “Sensory” on the green plane). Like the vegetative soul-part, this soul-part is mixed with the body (see the black bar on the bottom plane). The details get a bit hazy in the case of the intellectual soul.
means in calling intentionality a distinctive feature of mental acts. From the outset, it is unlikely that Brentano means to invoke any Aristotelian Act-Conception with this turn of phrase. It is thus up to us to work out what he may have meant by it; that is my task here.

4.1.2 The Plan for this Chapter

I will show in this chapter that while Brentano positively advocates a conception of intentionality which attributes unique features to “mental acts,” he does not ultimately provide a very clear or satisfying view of the active character of mental acts. Despite this shortcoming, the exegesis which follows is of value for four main reasons.

First, (see Ch.1 above) any historically adequate explication of Act Psychology must examine its roots in Brentano’s mature conception of intentionality. Brentano remains widely credited with introducing the concept of intentionality to the philosophy of mind, and it is worthwhile to examine what he had in mind in treating “intentional mental phenomenon” as synonymous with “mental act.” I shall ultimately conclude that I can locate only one line of argument – what I call the Argument from Unity – which Brentano can try to advance to secure a substantive Act Conception.

Second, since many have attempted to ground Brentano’s mature psychology in his earlier work on Aristotle, but have not thematized the question of whether his locution “mental acts” means anything substantive, it is worthwhile to investigate whether this is the case at all, and if so, whether or not the mature Brentano’s “mental acts” fit any Aristotelian conception. As suggested in the previous section, it is not immediately clear that this is the case. I shall ultimately conclude that it is not the case in any deep sense:
Brentano could, but does not, endorse a restricted version of the permissive Aristotelian conception of mental acts, and he does not because his empirical psychology does not invoke the requisite metaphysics.

Third, I will later (Part II) argue that Husserl provides a more clear and robust conception of mental acts and intentionality, even while subjecting Brentano’s account to deep revisions. That is: I will largely relocate the substantive core of “Act Psychology” from Brentano to Husserl. It is of historical and conceptual value to trace Brentano’s account so as to frame these later developments.

The fourth point will serve as the organizing thread of this chapter. It is important to work against a “null hypothesis” to the effect that Brentano’s use of the term “mental act” is simply a misnomer. Oskar Kraus, the editor of the 1924 German edition of *PFES*, explicitly resisted the suggestion that Brentano understood mental phenomena substantively as acts, and his numerous footnotes still haunt available versions of the text. For example, in one passage where Brentano barely emphasizes the active character of presentation – “By presentation I do not mean that which is presented, but rather the act of presentation [den Act des Vorstellens]” (*PFES* 79/60) – Kraus dutifully appends a footnote, asserting that “every such [mental] activity, at least in men and animals, is a passio, an affection in the Aristotelian sense... what we are concerned with is the sheer ‘having of an object’ [Es handelt sich also um das schlichte ‘Etwas zum Objekte haben’]...” (*PFES*, 79/60 fn.1).

Similarly, in his “Supplementary Remarks” added to the 1911 edition, Brentano begins by saying: “What is characteristic of every mental activity [psychische Tätigkeit]
is, as I believe I have shown, the reference [Beziehung] to something as an object. In this respect, every mental activity [psychische Tätigkeit] seems to be something relational” (PFES, 271/211). Kraus urges that this notion of mental “‘Activity’ is to be understood simply in the sense of an event, not in the sense of action [‘Tätigkeit' ist einfach im Sinne von Vorgang, nicht von Aktivität zu verstehen]” (PFES, 271/211 fn.1).

Kraus thus cautions against any active construal of mental acts. In doing so, Kraus makes three claims which are worth distinguishing:

(K1) For Brentano, all mental “acts” have the character of an Aristotelian passio or affection.

(K2) For Brentano, all mental “acts” are events, not activities (Aktivität).

(K3) For Brentano, all mental “acts” are the sheer having-of-an-object.

It is in fact difficult to see how these claims would hang together on an Aristotelian view. Even if mental acts were Aristotelian affections, and (K1) were true, they might be “activities-under-passivity” as were explicited in chapter 3 above. So even if (K1) were true, this need not entail (K2). (Note also, Kraus’s reading does not specify the kind of affection which is involved in a mental act: on the Brentanian-Aristotelian view, any such case would be an improper affection.) Note also that much more must be said regarding (K3): for the Aristotelian has a conception of end-objects such that (by the Teleological Principle of Activities) it would not be at all contradictory, but rather a conceptual requirement, to say that activities have objects. If this were the manner in which (K3) were true, it would entail the rejection of (K2).

It is thus of central importance to examine Brentano’s own remarks, and to
determine whether he might (a) maintain an Aristotelian conception of intentional mental phenomena as “activities-under-passivity,” (b) maintain some other substantive conception of mental acts, or (c) simply use “mental act” as a misleading term of art, as Kraus’s remarks suggest. The aim of this chapter is just this: to work out Brentano’s mature conception of mental acts on its own terms. I show that Brentano clearly rejects the Krausian reading suggested above: (K1)-(K3) are either not endorsed at all in Brentano’s mature psychology, or else they are not endorsed in a way which significantly undermines the possibility that Brentano may endorse a substantive Act Conception. Kraus’s reasons are not good reasons for thinking that “mental act” is a misnomer here. Despite this, it will prove unclear whether we can credit Brentano with a substantive Act Conception of activity. The chapter proceeds as follows.

The first task (§4.2) is to evaluate (K1) above. I show that for the mature Brentano, a mental phenomenon’s status as a “passio” means only that it has some cause. But Brentano does not invoke the Aristotelian metaphysics of capacities and powers which would license a reading of this claim as the claim that a mental act is an actualization of a capacity. Even if this claim were attributed to Brentano, it would not distinguish between mental acts being a proper affection, and their being an improper affection. Thus Brentano does not clearly commit to a strictly Aristotelian reading of (K1). This also does not settle at all whether mental phenomena are acts in any broader sense. Paradigmatic bodily acts also have causes; this does not undermine their status as doings as opposed to mere happenings.

The second task (§4.3) is to evaluate (K2) above. To address this point fully, I
first spend some time introducing Brentano’s conception of intentionality, and especially some particular ways in which he departs from a strict Aristotelian conception of the mind. The upshot is that there is one clear sense in which mental phenomena are not acts: Brentano explicitly remarks that not every intentional mental phenomenon is a paradigmatic action which involves a willful or volitional pursuit of a desired goal. If this is what Kraus means by claim (K2), then Brentano does endorse (K2). But this is not sufficient to show that Brentano does not regard mental acts in any sense. Likewise, it is not plausible that all of our bodily acts follow the paradigm of full-fledged volitional action (cf. Ch.1, §§1.2-1.3).

The third task (§4.4) is to evaluate (K3) above. I show that Brentano clearly rejects the claim that a mental act is a sheer having-of-an-object, since this is inadequate to capture what he means by intentionality. In fact, any mental act is the having of many objects, and, more than this, any mental act is a unitary having of many objects as a kind of unity. This, I suggest, provides Brentano with one way of arguing that mental acts are genuine acts. I call this the Argument from Unity, and it is essentially the claim that the unity of intentional relations which occurs in any mental act cannot be captured by any passive construal of mental acts: it is the claim that only genuinely performative act can impose such unity.

But the Argument from Unity faces difficulties. In particular, Brentano is driven far away from any commonsense conception of acts since, in his view, there does not exist any mental subject who can be said to perform mental acts in any meaningful sense. So if the Argument from Unity succeeds in convincing us that mental acts are genuine
acts, then they must be regarded as acts without an actor. My exegesis ends (§4.5) with the claim that Brentano does not provide suitable resources to clarify any such view.

The result is an overview of Brentano’s mature vision of Act Psychology. I summarize its main commitments in (§4.6). It is, I claim, ultimately incomplete as a means of understanding mental acts as acts. This is itself an important “negative result” of the dissertation, which challenges the historians’ conception of Act Psychology.

### 4.2 Inner Perception, *Evidenz* & Kraus’s (K1)

My aim in this section is to address, head-on, Kraus’s suggestion (K1): that mental acts have the character of a “*passio*.” In order to assess (K1), I provide here a basic sketch of Brentano’s conception of intentionality. This first pass at intentionality is admittedly an oversimplification, and will have to be fleshed out more fully as the chapter proceeds. But even a crude introduction to intentionality is sufficient to put (K1) into question, and to justify a more extended investigation of Brentano’s conception of mental acts.

I have searched extensively throughout *PFES*, and I find not a single passage wherein Brentano himself explicitly asserts (K1): that every mental act is an Aristotelian “*passio*.” In fact Brentano does not anywhere use the Latinate “*passio*,” neither in the main text of 1874, nor in his addenda of 1911. Likewise it is not used in his 1890-91 lectures (published as *Descriptive Psychology*). In these works, at best, Brentano maintains that *some* mental acts are affections (*Affektionen*) in the sense of emotions...
(Gemütsbewegungen) (see, e.g., PFES, p.181-182/140). But not every mental act is an emotion. Likewise Brentano does occasionally – though very rarely – use the closer German equivalent of “passio,” which is “Leiden,” but typically only in specialized contexts, where he is discussing the passions. Nowhere does he say that every mental act is a passion and not an act.⁶

So far as the (posthumously published) record of Brentano’s work shows, Kraus’s insistence on the passivity of mental phenomena might best be located in remarks Brentano made in a 1916 manuscript, reprinted in Sensory and Noetic Consciousness (“SNC”).⁷ There Brentano does say that ”It is certainly true of all our acts of thinking

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⁶The term Leiden or a variant appears, for example, at PFES pp.35/26 (a memory cannot “interfere” with a past mental event); 107/82 (Hartmann’s view “weakens” his own argument for unconscious mental phenomena); 178/137 (a discussion of Plato on the passions); 186/44 (in a long quote from Lotze’s Microkosmus, discussing the passions); 245/190 (a footnote to Herbart’s and others’ work on the passions); and 248/193 (a reference to Descartes’ Treatise on the Passions).

There is only one place in which Brentano deploys the term Leiden in direct discussion of or citation to Aristotle in PFES, and this is at pp.130-131/100-101. He considers Aristotle’s own remarks which suggest regarding every (re-)presentation (Vorstellung – e.g., my auditory awareness of a tone, or what Brentano calls the tone’s “sounding”) as also the cause of our consciousness of that mental act (e.g., as the cause of my consciousness of the sounding of the tone, which Brentano calls hearing). In this view, the consciousness of hearing would be an affection, caused by sounding of the tone: “They are related to each other as an action and a passion [Sie verhalten sich zu einander wie Wirken und Leiden]” (PFES, pp.130-131/101). Now even if Brentano endorsed this claim, this would only be to assert a relation of cause (a mental act) and effect (consciousness of it); it would not undermine the claim that a mental act, qua act, could be such a cause. Acts are permitted to cause things. But Brentano explicitly rejects this account, saying: “calling the pair of concepts, hearing and sounding, instances of action and passion is completely mistaken” (PFES, pp.131-132/101). And he argues that this is not, actually, a clear statement of Aristotle’s own view either.

The fine details here will be addressed more fully below, in connection with “secondary intentionality” and its role in enabling inner perception (see esp. §4.3.5). For now it suffices to note that we have here no ringing endorsement of (K1).

⁷The text of SNC is a bewildering mongrel, heavily influenced by Kraus. The most extensive manuscript from Brentano’s Nachlass to be included, which forms the conceptual spine for the whole collection, is a 1915 manuscript. This is artificially divided in SNC to appear as Pt.I ch.I, and Pt. II ch.I. In-between and after, Kraus inserts selections from 10 other manuscripts. Where the dates of manuscripts and dictations are known, they cluster around 1914-1916. Kraus presents all this as giving a vision of Brentano’s intended Book III of PFES. I shall be trying my best to make use of this text in a responsible manner. I cite the McAlister translation of 1981.
that their very nature is that of a *passio* [Leiden]” (*SNC*, p.11). The question is how to understand this claim. The claim in question occurs in a late discussion of Brentano’s conception of *Evidenz*. Thus I turn first to discuss *Evidenz*.

In previous work Brentano had clarified *Evidenz* as a distinctive feature which “characterizes judgments that are immediately certain” (*SNC*, p.4). Brentano held the broadly Cartesian view that such *Evidenz* accompanies exclusively cognitions relating to our awareness of our own mental phenomena: “Aside from our knowledge of ourselves as mentally active beings [*psychisch Tätige*], we have no directly evident knowledge of facts” (*SNC*, p.5). This is so because a judgment with *Evidenz* is a judgment such that “no external change can make it true [if it is false] or false [if it is true].” and this means, for Brentano, that “when I affirm an object with evidence I must be conscious of the fact that there is a relatively if not an absolutely necessary connection between the object and me as an affirming being” (*SNC*, p.10). This is precisely what does not hold in the case of our (purported) knowledge of external objects since, as Descartes noted, it is always thinkable that an omnipotent being could intervene to induce my wrongful affirmation of a non-mental object which does not exist, and to which I thus stand in no connection at all. In contrast, just such a necessary connection holds between me

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8This is a late manuscript called “Kategorienlehre,” dated March 29th, 1916. Kraus included it as Pt.I, Ch.II of *SNC*.

9Here I mainly consider claims about *Evidenz* as they are made in Pt.I, Ch.1, of *SNC*, which is part of a dictation dated November 16th, 1915. I do this so as to locate these views as clearly contemporaneous with Brentano’s remark that every mental acts is a “passio,” which occurs in a manuscript of 29 March 1916. (See again the concerns about the text of *SNC* raised in fn.7 above). However the same doctrine of *Evidenz* is also at work in *PFES* (see, e.g., pp.36/27, 85/65, 91/70). It is also clearly stated in what has been published posthumously as *The True and the Evident* - see, e.g., p.88, another fragment from 1915. Thus there is little doubt that Brentano’s view of *Evidenz* was constant throughout his mature work.

10Brentano held that appeal to a divine being was not required to inspire doubt about the experienced external world: on his view external perceptions are one and all *demonstrably* false or inaccurate - see
as a thinking being and my inner awareness of my thinking; it holds likewise between me as an externally-perceiving being and my inner awareness of my external-perceiving. I cannot be deceived that I seem to be seeing X, and I minimally cannot doubt that I am doubting. Brentano held that Evidenz accompanies mental activity exhaustively: “mental activity always includes the evident consciousness of that activity... [although] our knowledge of ourselves as mentally active beings [psychisch Tätigen] is sometimes clearer and sometimes more confused” (SNC, p.4).

This conception of Evidenz has some similarities with the Aristotelian conception of inner sense, as discussed in chapter 3 above. In the original Aristotelian view, we (and all animals) have conscious awareness of our own outer-sensory representations through a sensory capacity of inner sense (see p.82 above). Further, we have conscious awareness of our own thinking insofar as the form of our own thinking is itself intelligible, and thereby apprehensible in the receptive intellect (see p.90 above). In PFES, Brentano does not sharply distinguish between these two capacities for awareness of our own mental phenomena. He calls all awareness of our own mental phenomena by the title of inner perception (innere Wahrnehmung), distinguishing it sharply from attentive inner observation (innere Beobachtung) or introspection (PFES, p.29/22). In inner perception we are aware of our own mental phenomena only “incidentally” (nebenbei) while we are focally attending to some other object of presentation; Brentano holds that it is impossible for us to turn our attention focally upon any mental act as it occurs (PFES, p.30/22).

Brentano’s analysis of inner perception will be discussed further in §4.4 below. A

PFES p.9/7.
full account presupposes his conception of intentionality, about which I shall say more in §4.3 below. For present purposes, we may make do with the following gloss. Brentano held that every single intentional mental phenomenon has (at least) two intentional objects. If I have a sensory presentation of red (i.e., a mental act which makes me aware of a particular shade of red as its object) then, in Brentano’s view, I also have, in the very same act, an awareness of this very sensory presentation of red. Likewise, if I have a thought which is directed at the genus of color in general, then, in Brentano’s view, I also have, in the very same act, an awareness which is directed at this very thought of color in general. We may depict this schematically as follows:

![Diagram of intentionality](image)

**Figure 4.2:** A preliminary pass at intentionality. Important revisions will appear in Figs. 4.11, 4.15 & 4.16 below.

We shall see in §4.3.1 below that this schema is an oversimplification of Brentano’s view. For now, it suffices to provide an introduction to Brentano’s intentional analysis of Evidenz. Evidenz accrues to our awareness of mental phenomena because, just in virtue of having a mental phenomenon (which has its own, distinct, ‘primary’ intentional object), I also already have an awareness of that very mental phenomenon (since it is ‘secondarily’ directed at itself).

This dual-directedness\(^\text{11}\) of any mental phenomenon secures the broadly Carte-\(^\text{11}\)In *Descriptive Psychology*, Brentano refers to this double-directedness using the term “di-energy” [Dienergie] (1911, p.51). While this is incredibly suggestive of the energetic or active character of mental acts, I can find little in Brentano’s work to substantiate such an “easy route” to a conception of mental acts as acts. Barry Smith’s (1990; 1992) remarks on di-energy, though suggestive, do not clearly substantiate
sian claim that we cannot doubt the occurrence of our own mental phenomena: they always occur with *Evidenz*. But Brentano also maintained an extension of the Cartesian view, according to which *Evidenz* sometimes accrues to our awareness of the *causes* of mental phenomena. This claim does not follow immediately from the basic sketch of intentionality provided above. My aim here is not to clarify how Brentano aims to support this extension of the Cartesian view – I shall only take that up in §4.3.5 below. At present I am only concerned to emphasize that Brentano endorses this extension of the Cartesian view. There are “certain cases” where “not even a divine cause could be substituted as a direct determinant” of a mental phenomenon (*SNC*, p. 10). He writes:

...when, for example, we draw a conclusion and we realize that thinking the conclusion is motivated by thinking the premises, or when we are conscious of deciding on the choice of a means for the sake of a certain end... there never seems to be a case where we do not simultaneously comprehend, *in modo recto*, through evident perception that which appears to us *in modo obliquo* in the evident comprehension of the effect. Thus we see that the conclusion also involves the act of thinking the premises, and that the choice of the means also involves the desire for the end, and that the knowledge of the causal connection between means and end constitutes part of our inner perception (*SNC*, pp.10-11; my italics, excepting the Latin).

In Cartesian terms, the thought is this. An evil demon might successively induce three distinct, deceptive thoughts in me:

(i) “All red things are desirable”

(ii) “I am now seeing a red thing”

(iii) “I will now walk to attain *that* seen red thing.”

Such a reading. Such a reading would, however, potentially cohere with Brentano’s Aristotelian pedigree, since “*energeia*” is frequently read as meaning “actualization,” in the sense of an exercise of a capacity, which is the root of the permissive Aristotelian conception of mental acts. More than this kind of passing, merely possible reference is required to show Brentano’s commitment to such a view.
We may even suppose that an evil demon might deceive me into thinking the three distinct thoughts (i-iii) simultaneously. What an evil demon cannot do is to induce in me the unitary thought

(iv) “I will now walk to attain that seen red thing because I desire it (or, so as to fulfill my desire for it)”

while simultaneously deceiving be about any of the following:

(a) that it is because of my desire that I will to walk; or

(b) that I have such a desire; or

(c) that it is this red thing which I seem to see, desire, and will to attain.

The unitary thought (iv) does not permit deception regarding (a-c). Compare: if the demon deceived me into experiencing a perception of a red thing, then I only seem to see a red thing, and fail to actually see one. But I still have a red thing presented to me as phenomenon: it is part of my mental act that it purports to present me with a red thing; I cannot doubt that I seem to see a red thing. What is expressed in the unitary, reflective thought (iv), and what cannot be doubted in any case, is that some phenomenon is what I seem to see, and that very phenomenon is what I desire, and that it is what I thus strive to attain. If I have the unitary thought (iv), I am thereby aware of all these mental phenomena: the presentation of a phenomenon, the desiring of it, and the willing to attain it on the basis of that desire. What is involved in the unitary thought (iv) is an articulate, co-consciousness of such mental phenomena which also involves a consciousness of the connection between them. I will-thus because I desire-thus, and what I desire is that presented thing. Each mental phenomenon in this complex makes essential reference to
some other, such that they form a unity. I thereby have Evidenz about all of these items such that nothing could deceive me about their existence or their relations. If I have the thought expressed in (iv) then I cannot doubt that I will to walk to attain a red thing which I seem to see and which I desire: I cannot doubt the causal relation between all these mental phenomena.

Note: the claim is not that an evil demon cannot induce in me the unitary thought (iv) by means of deception. The claim is rather that in order to induce (iv) at all, and not some other thought, the demon must ensure (as is evident in (iv)) that the direct cause of my willing really is my desiring of that seen phenomenon. The demon can only induce (iv) by indirectly inducing the willing, as an effect of the desiring. The demon must thereby bring about the causal relation between mental phenomena which is expressed in (iv). The deception cannot concern the causal connection between mental phenomena, or else the deception would fail to induce (iv).

In Brentano’s view, Cartesian doubt may be mobilized against our external perceptions precisely because external perceptions do not have evident causes of the sort that I have just described. Brentano makes this claim not only in the November 1915 manuscript which I have been citing at length (cf. SNC, p.7). He also repeats it at the start of a March 1916 manuscript (cf. SNC, p.10). It is in this 1916 manuscript that Brentano makes a claim which may seem to support the Krausian claim (K1), that “mental acts” have the character of a “passio.” He writes:

*It is certainly true* of all our acts of thinking that their very nature is that of a passio *[Gewiß gilt es von allem unseren Denken, dass es seiner Natur nach ein Leiden ist]*, and we might even say that this is universally
characteristic of them. Since this would also hold true, for example, for seeing and hearing, which [unlike the foregoing case] do not seem to stem from the mental [nicht von etwas Psychischem hervorgebracht scheint]; we could say [wrongly] that here, because a cause appears it seems to be certain that an external thing can be a cause [daß hier, indem eine Ursache, ein Außending als Ursache gesichert erscheint]. Yet, since this cause is presented with such a lack of certainty we can surmise only that it is a thing, but not that it is this thing or that thing, and thus we cannot say that it is some [particular] external thing nor that the cause might not lie within ourselves. Even if this were the case, it still would not demonstrate that something external exists, and thus it becomes clear that the existence of an external thing cannot be said to be guaranteed [with Evidenz, i.e.,] by direct perception. We might, however, say that the consciousness that our sensation is continuously caused by something [daß unser Empfinden fort und fort von etwas bewirkt wird] is one of the contributing factors to our general tendency to believe that sensations are caused by the objects sensed and [to believe] that we consequently have certain knowledge of their existence, although careful deliberation will prove that this opinion is incorrect” (SNC, p.11; my emph.).

What we have here in Brentano’s claim that all our mental phenomena have the nature of a passio (Leiden) is merely the claim that all of our mental phenomena are in fact the causal effects of something. Note that Brentano suggests that we know this claim with Evidenz – it is “certainly true.” Mental phenomena may seem to “stem from the mental,” or they may not. As we have just seen, in Brentano’s extended-Cartesian view, there are some cases where one mental phenomenon is evidently the effect of another mental phenomenon, in such a way that we cannot doubt the existence of either phenomenon, nor the causal relation between them. The flipside of this extended-Cartesian view, which Brentano is reiterating in this passage, is that we only have Evidenz regarding the determinate cause of a mental phenomenon in cases like these. In other cases (such

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12At the end of this chapter, Brentano again says that acts of sensation have the character of a passio (SNC, p.16). The context there is more involved, and deals with Brentano’s analysis of pleasure and pain. In the interests of brevity and clarity, I set it aside. The same points made here suffice to handle that case.
as outer-sensory presentation) we have *Evidenz* regarding the existence of the mental phenomenon (the presentation), and it is also “certainly true” that it has some cause – but we have no certainty as to what the cause might be. Because we know with *Evidenz* that every mental act has *some* cause, and because there is no *mental* phenomenon which is evidently the proximal cause of a sensory presentation, we have a general tendency\(^{13}\) to believe that the causes of sensations are external objects (e.g., an actual red thing). This claim may be correct, and might receive inductive support through a variety of means - but it cannot attain *Evidenz*.

As just demonstrated, when put into context, there is nothing more attached to Brentano’s claim than that mental phenomena all have the character of a *passio* (*Leiden*) than the claim that they always have a cause. This is not tantamount to the Kraus’s (K1), that mental acts are never to be understood as actions. Similarly, recognizing some bodily events as acts is in no way precluded by recognizing them as having a cause. We also do not clearly see here either an acceptance or a rejection of a robust Aristotelian view, according to which intentional mental phenomena are a form of “activity-under-passivity.” *If* the mature Brentano retained commitment to an Aristotelian metaphysics of activities, *then* the claim that mental acts have a cause could be sufficient to claim that they are “activities-under-passivity” (rather than an instance of pure activity). But to support such an Aristotelian view of activities, one would need to endorse the requisite Aristotelian metaphysics, e.g., by applying the Teleological Principle of Activities and the Principle

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\(^{13}\)Brentano calls this a “natural urge [*ein natürlich Drang]*,” a “mere urge [*bloße Drang]*” and “an instinctive, blind urge [*einen instinktiven blinden Drang]*” (*SNC*, pp.3-5).
Of Striving (cf. §3.2.2 above). In the passage above (and elsewhere throughout his mature corpus), Brentano does not explicitly invoke any such metaphysical presuppositions in framing his conception of mental acts. And he cannot do so, so long as he abides by the restrictions he himself puts in place on an empirical psychology (cf. §4.1.1 above).

Thus far we have no clear endorsement on Brentano’s behalf of (K1). We also have neither positive evidence for, nor negative evidence against, any clear construal of mental acts as “acts” in Brentano’s mature psychology: we have only the claim that all mental acts have some cause. The issue is left wide open, and we must look elsewhere to settle it.

### 4.3 Intentionality & Kraus’s (K2)

Other of Brentano’s remarks are relevant for assessing his view of mental acts. Of particular note is a remark regarding how his notion of intentionality had been misunderstood. Even today, some literatures employ the term “intentionality” in close connection with the notion of an agent intending to do something. This is not what Brentano had in mind in speaking of the intentional character of mental acts, and it offers us our first clear claim regarding a sense in which “mental acts” (intentional mental phenomena) are not to be understood in light of a commonsense conception of actions. In this respect, Brentano does endorse at least one reading of Kraus’s (K2): there is at least one sense in which mental acts are not to be understood as activity, if by this one means volitional action.
In order to reach this claim, and to state it clearly, I must first say a bit more about Brentano’s notion of intentionality. Here there arise a number of interesting points of comparison and contrast to Brentano’s Aristotle which are worth spelling out, and many opportunities to sharpen and clarify the initial sketch of intentionality provided above. This section proceeds as follows. I begin (§4.3.1) by introducing Brentano’s conception of intentionality and its Aristotelian inspiration. I then (§4.3.2) show how Brentano’s notion of intentionality does not cohere with the Aristotelian view: Brentano explicitly wields intentionality to revise and cross-cut any Aristotelian division of mental phenomena, and proposes his own division of three fundamental classes (presentation, judgment, and phenomena of love and hate). I then discuss Brentano’s taxonomy in more detail, addressing his division between presentations and judgments as two classes of mental phenomena (§4.3.3) and his unification of feeling and willing into a single class of mental phenomena (§4.3.4). With this overview of intentionality in place, I at last (§4.3.5) discuss the sense in which Brentano may be read as endorsing (K2).

4.3.1 Intentionality and its Aristotelian Roots

As noted in chapter 3 above (§3.3.2, p.77), Brentano’s mature conception of intentionality might plausibly be traced back to the Aristotelian conception of representation. In the Aristotelian conception of sensory representation, for example:

we sense the cold insofar as the cold exists objectively, i.e., as cognized object within us, hence insofar as we take in the cold without being ourselves its physical subject [insofern das Kalte objectiv, d.h. als Erkanntes in uns existiert, also insofern wir die Kalte aufnehmen, ohne selbst das physische Subject derselben zu sein] (Brentano, 1866, pp.54-55)
Likewise, an intelligible form is a cognized “object within us” in cases of intellectual representation. In all such cases, in the Aristotelian view, we undergo an “improper affection” which involves no corruption - we do not actually become that which we sense or think. Brentano uses much the same language of an “object within us” when introducing his mature conception of intentional in-existence, in that (one) oft-cited passage. But he does not explicitly invoke any clear conception of an improper affection:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object \[\text{die Intentionale (auch wohl mentale) Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes}\], and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content \[\text{die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt}\], direction towards an object \[\text{die Richtung auf ein Object}\] (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing \[\text{eine Realität}\]) or immanent objectivity \[\text{immanente Gegenständlichkeit}\]. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself \[\text{enthält etwas als Objekt in sich}\], although they do not do so in the same way (PFES, p.88/67).

Yet Brentano appends a footnote, signaling explicitly that he wishes to source the concept of intentionality in Aristotle’s work:

Aristotle himself spoke of this mental in-existence. In his books on the soul he says that the sensed object, as such, is in the sensing subject; that the sense contains the sensed object without its matter; that the object which is thought is in the thinking intellect... (PFES, p.88/67, fn.‡).

The view on offer is that an intentional “object” is “objective within us” in roughly the same way in which the Aristotelian maintains that in representation, a form is “in us,” not actually, but only as representation. Indeed, that which is “immanently” an object for us in a mental act need not really exist at all. (Again, a demon might deceive me about there

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14Note that the 1995/2009 re-issue’s typesetting is particularly irresponsible here. The footnote is mis-located on p.67, a full page before it ought to appear in connection with the main text on p.68. This is presumably done so that the footnote fits on a single page, yet the 1973 edition’s bracketed comment that the footnote is continued “on p.89” is retained verbatim in the re-issue.
being a red thing before me; it does not deceive me that I am presented with a red thing, or that my experience purports to be about a red thing.)

Now the Aristotelian holds that in virtue of having representations of intelligible forms, we are able to think of worldly individuals.\(^{15}\) Likewise, as Brentano expressed in a 1905 letter to Anton Marty, having an “immanent object” is to enable us to think of worldly individuals, provided that the object exist at all. But the existence of such worldly objects is not secured simply by a mental phenomenon itself. A mental phenomenon can at best only purport be about an external object.

When I spoke of the immanent object \([\text{immanentem Objekt}]\), I added the phrase “immanent” to avoid a misunderstanding, because some call what is outside the mind by the name “object.” I on the other hand spoke of an object of presentation \([\text{einem Objekt der Vorstellung}]\), which belongs to it just as well, even if it corresponds to nothing outside the mind.

It has not been my opinion that the immanent Object \([\text{immanente Objekt}]\) = the object which is presented \([\text{vorgestelltes Objekt}]\). The presentation has no “presented thing,” but only “the thing,” so, e.g., the presentation of a horse has not “presented horse” as object, but only “horse” for its (immanent) object (which is actually the only object so-called).

However, this object need not exist. The presenter \([\text{der Vorstellende}]\) has something as object, without it therefore being.

\((\text{Letter to Anton Marty}, \text{dated 17 March, 1905, reproduced in Brentano (2009, p.52))}\).\(^{16}\)

This is the notion of intentionality at work in Brentano’s mature psychology. As many have noted, it is difficult to work out precisely what Brentano had in mind. But the view clearly owes much to the Aristotelian conception of represented forms, and Brentano explicitly attributes the basic view to Aristotle. Despite that, note that Brentano himself

\(^{15}\)In the Aristotelian view, this required positing that all sensory-corporeal objects are potentially intelligible - see p.108 above.

\(^{16}\)Translation slightly amended.
does not offer up intentionality by appealing to the Aristotelian metaphysics of form and matter. The idea is rather that “intentionality” captures a basic feature of mental phenomena, regardless of one’s preferred metaphysics: it is to be at home in an empirical psychology which describes mental phenomena.

4.3.2 Intentionality and its Non-Aristotelian Deployment

Having put forth this conception of intentionality, Brentano aimed to show how it underwrites the division of mental phenomena into three basic classes: (re-)presentations (Vorstellungen), judgments (Urteile) and phenomena of love and hate (Phänomene der Liebe und des Hasses).\(^{17}\) As a starting point, Brentano sought to show that an Aristotelian division of mental phenomena had implicitly been widely endorsed by authors such as Wolff, Hume, Reid, and Kant. (PFES, pp.181-193/140-149). He then sought to correct this view. It will be worthwhile to follow through Brentano’s discussion of the Aristotelian scheme, and his departures from it, since the result is a large-scale reorganization of mental phenomena with no clear Aristotelian precedent.

Brentano in fact considered three Aristotelian divisions of mental phenomena (PFES, pp.179-181/138-140). The first two divisions are said to be equivalent. One Aristotelian division separates mental phenomena which are “activities of the central organ [Tätigkeiten des Zentralorgans],” from those which are “incorporeal [immateriell],” or put another way, distinguishes the “phenomena of the mortal and immortal parts of the soul” (PFES, p.179/139). This is said to be equivalent to a second Aristotelian

\(^{17}\) The third class is also sometimes simply called emotion (Gemütsbewegung) or interest (Interesse).
division, which separates activities which are common to all animals from those which are peculiarly human (ibid.).

Looking back to the complete Aristotelian view in chapter 3 above, the foregoing divisions mirror the distinction between sensory and intellectual soul-parts. Missing are the vegetative life-activities, which are also regarded as mental acts in the *permissive Aristotelian conception* (see §3.5 above). Brentano excludes vegetative activities from consideration in *PFES*, but not without comment, as I have already noted in §4.1.1 above. In Brentano’s view, the domain of psychology has come to be legitimately narrowed since Aristotle’s time, and vegetative activities, in particular, are excluded and left for the physiologist. Brentano regards this as “an obvious correction necessitated by the nature of the subject matter itself” – the unity of psychology as a field of study is said to rest on narrowing its focus to only the limited domain of phenomena of consciousness (*PFES*, p.4/3). If psychology is a regarded as a “science of the soul” – in the narrowed-down, modern sense of a *substantial bearer* of conscious presentations (*Vorstellungen*) – then Brentano and his contemporaries deny that plants have souls, insofar as they lack consciousness. If psychology is regarded – as Brentano regards it in *PFES* – as a science of *conscious mental phenomena* themselves (and not any metaphysical posits lying “behind” them) then plants will likewise be excluded, for the same reason. And so Brentano remarks that if we appeal to these first two Aristotelian taxonomies to sort mental phenomena “in the modern sense of the term... [then] Aristotle divides mental activities into only two groups” (*PFES*, p.180/139) – since the taxonomies provide us with only two groups of *conscious* mental phenomena, the sensory and the intellectual.
Even with the restriction to conscious mental phenomena in place, however, Aristotle also provided another way of dividing mental phenomena. He divided them into two broad classes: (1) thoughts (Denken) - including "not only the highest activities of the intellect [Verstandesbetätigungen], such as abstraction, making universal judgments, and scientific inference, but also sense perception, imagination, memory, and expectation based on experience" - and (2) desires (Begehren) - including "high aspirations and strivings [Verlangen und Streben] as well as the lowest drives [Trieb], and along with them all feelings and affective states [Gefühle und Affekte] - in short, all mental phenomena which are not included in the first group" (PFES, 180/139).

Brentano notes that this Aristotelian classification (thought vs desire) cross-cuts the foregoing classification (sensory vs. intellectual). This new classification would seem to be the basic distinction between (a) (what the Aristotelian would call) token actualizations of the capacities for form-apprehension in representation (all of which are now lumped under “thinking”) and (b) token strivings which are sensory desires and intellectual willings (all of which are now lumped under “desire”). It is this Aristotelian division which Brentano shows has been widely endorsed by many authors. Wolff upheld it in the distinction between faculties of knowledge and those of appetite (Erkenntniss- und Bergehrungs-vermögen); Reid distinguished the intellectual faculty from the active faculty of striving (intellektive und aktive Sellenvermögen) (PFES, p.181-2/140).

Later, the Aristotelian division between thought and desire was further articulated, as some proposed to distinguish between feelings and a third category of mental phenomena, “the power to act (will) [Thätigskeikraft (Willen)]” (PFES, p.182/141). Kant,
for example, is said to have upheld this view, and Lotze defended it against criticism. Brentano’s classification is quite different. He does endorse a division between explicit, rational thinking or judgment, on the one hand, and desiring, on the other. And he does not follow others in their extensions, but rather upholds the Aristotelian claim that all feeling (Gefühl) and willing (Willen; Streben) fall into a single class of mental phenomena (PFES, Bk.II Ch.VIII). However, Brentano divides the broad Aristotelian class of “thinking” into two parts: mere presentation, and judgment. We may summarize these disagreements regarding the proper classification of mental phenomena as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brentano:</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Judgment</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aristotle:</td>
<td>Thought</td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kant/Lotze:</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Willing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3: Comparison of the Brentanian and Kantian revisions of the Aristotelian taxonomy of mental phenomena.

What is striking is that Brentano deploys his notion of intentionality to (a) argue (against Aristotle and many others) that “thought” must be divided into two classes of mental phenomena, and to (b) argue (against Kant & Lotze) that feeling and willing collapse into a single class of mental phenomena. In this sense, despite its Aristotelian inspiration, Brentano’s notion of intentionality is to be broader than the Aristotelian notion of representation: desires are not themselves representations in the Aristotelian view, but Brentano will regard them as intentionally directed at some object. It is also the case that Brenano’s notion of intentionality is to be more fine-grained than the Aristotelian
conception of representation: Brentano will distinguish presentation and judgment, which is not done in the Aristotelian division between thought and desire. In the following two subsections, I will discuss each point in turn: first (§4.3.3) the division between presentation and judgment, and second (§4.3.4) the unification of feeling and willing into a single class. All this is on the road to showing the manner in which Brentano adopts a version of (K2): that mental acts are not volitional acts.

4.3.3 Intentionality: Presentation vs. Judgment

One might think that in distinguishing presentation from judgment, Brentano is simply seeking to re-assert the Aristotelian division between sensory and intellectual mental phenomena. Brentano does support an Aristotelian division between the sensory and the intellectual, but this is not synonymous with his distinction between presentation and judgment. Not all presentations are sensory, and not all judgments are intellectual. It will be worthwhile to discuss each point in turn.

(1) Not all presentations are sensory. Brentano’s basic conception of presentation runs as follows:

...we speak of presentation whenever something appears to us. When we see something, a color is presented; when we hear something, a sound; when we imagine something, a fantasy image. In view of the generality with which we use this term it is impossible for conscious activity to refer in any way to something [es sei unmöglich, dass die Seelenthätigkeit in irgend einer Weise sich auf etwas beziehe] which is not presented. When

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Note that “thought” is being read extremely broadly here. Brentano suggests that one reason for why a distinction between presentation and judgment had not been drawn is that “we call both presentations and judgments thoughts equally well [Wir nennen Vorstellen und Urteilen mit gleicher Ungezwungheit ein Denken]” (PFES, p.227/177). Here “thought” means, roughly, any stative or descriptive intentional mental phenomenon.
I hear and understand a word that names something, I have a presentation of what the word designates... (PFES, p.198/153)

The majority of examples here are indeed sensory presentations. But even here, with the example of understanding a word, there is a hint that Brentano also seeks to countenance intellectual presentations. This is in any case clearly his considered view, as demonstrated in a late manuscript:

[There are] differences which the mental activities that we perceive with inner perception exhibit with regard to their objects. They are divided into sensible and intelligible (noetic) differences. A person who sees, hears, or otherwise senses something has as primary object a sensory object. A person who thinks of something coloured, warm, or spatial in general, however, has a noetic object, and his secondary object, too, counts as a noetic one (SNC, pp.44-45).

Here we can deploy Brentano’s distinction between primary and secondary objects to make two claims. The first is that we can be sensorily, primarily presented with sensory objects (e.g., we can hear a tone) and are also thereby sensorily, secondarily presented with a mental object (i.e., a sensing: we sense that we hear). This coheres with the Aristotelian conception of inner sense. Label this type of intentional complex “S-S” (a sensory awareness of a sensing of a sensory object). Brentano does not here spell out this view explicitly, but he does spell out, and declare to be analogous, a second claim: we can be presented, intellectually, primarily with intellectual objects (e.g., we can think of the spatial in general) and are then also thereby intellectually, secondarily presented with a mental object, i.e., our own thinking. This coheres with the Aristotelian conception of the intelligibility of thinking itself, and Brentano calls it again by the name inner

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19 This passage comes from a manuscript dated November 16th, 1915. This is the second half of the same 1915 manuscript which I drew upon in discussing Evidenz in §4.2 above, though the present text appears as Pt. II. Ch.I of SNC. (See again fn.7 above.)
perception. Label this type of intentional complex “N-N” (a noetic awareness of a noetic act which has a noetic object). Note that in the foregoing passage, the grounds for calling the act noetic is that its primary object is noetic. We may visualize these two forms of inner perception as follows:\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{diagram}
\caption{The intentional structure of sensory (top) and noetic (bottom) presentation, modeled after the preliminary sketch of intentionality provided in Fig. 4.2 above.}
\end{figure}

This is sufficient to show that not all presentations are sensory, in Brentano’s view, which was the first claim I aimed to make clear.\textsuperscript{21} In intentional complexes with a structure like \textit{N-N}, we are presented in thought with noetic primary objects, and we are also presented with noetic secondary objects. Thinking just is an intellectual presentation, in Brentano’s mature view. We might do best to capture his conception of presentation by keeping in mind that it is \textit{mere} presentation, or the mere “entertaining” of an object in sensory or intellectual apprehension. It is not yet judgment. As he puts it: “as we use the verb ‘to present’ [\textit{vorsellen}],' ‘to be presented [\textit{vorgestellt werden}]]’ means the same as ‘to appear [\textit{erscheinen]}’” (PFES, p.81/62). Mere presentation is presupposed by all judgment, and

\textsuperscript{20}I shall later (§4.4 below) recommend alternative visualizations; for present purposes these suffice.
\textsuperscript{21}In passing, Brentano suggests that intentional structures with the form \textit{S-S} have sometimes been called “intuitions,” while those with the form \textit{N-N} have sometimes been called “conceptual thinking, thinking of concepts” (SNC, p.45).
it is what is left over when we withhold from all judgment. Mere presentation is what one has when one merely *understands* a question, without yet offering any answer to it (*PFES*, p.205/159).

(2) *Not all judgments are intellectual.* Brentano’s basic conception of judgment runs: “By ‘judgement’ we mean, in accordance with common philosophical usage, acceptance (as true) or rejection (as false)” (*PFES*, pp.198-199/153). However, Brentano maintains that judgment occurs in any perception (*Wahrnehmung*) (which is to be distinguished from mere presentation).

“All perceptions are judgments [*jede Wahrnehmung zu den Urteilen zählt*]” even though a “perception is not a conjunction of a concept of the subject and a concept of a predicate, nor does it refer to such a conjunction” (*PFES*, p.209/162). The mere claim that judgment involves some combination of presentations is insufficient to require that all judgments are conceptual or intellectual, since I can be presented with many objects at once: for example, I might merely entertain the thought that some trees are red (*PFES*, p.205/159). I might do this by sensorily imagining red trees (invoking an intentional complex with structure *S*-S) and asking “are there any of those?” Or I might do this by thinking the general concepts “red” and “tree” (thereby invoking an intentional complex with structure *N*-N) and asking “does anything fall under both concepts?” In merely entertaining the question, I have not yet committed to judging whether it is true or false. Conversely, I may be fully convinced of some truth (perhaps on bad grounds) without being able to articulate a determinate conceptual content for the judgment (*PFES*, p.205/159). For example, if I am sensorily presented with apparent motion, I might
simply reflect that I have had this presentation. That is indubitable, and I know it with *Evidenz*. But I might go further and perceptually judge (take to be true) *something moving there*, or conceptually judge (take to be true) *that something is moving there*. “Perception” as Brentano uses the term, involves this kind of *commitment* which goes beyond mere sensory presentation.\(^{22}\)

That is sufficient to show that not all judgments (in Brentano’s sense) are intellectual (in Brentano’s sense). And so, putting (1) and (2) together, Brentano’s division between presentation and judgment is *not* meant to be a way of invoking the Aristotelian division between the sensory and the intellectual. Instead, Brentano’s division “presentation vs. judgment” cross-cuts the Aristotelian division “sensory vs. intellectual.”

In explaining the sense in which such diverse phenomena can be grouped under these two broad classes (presentation vs. judgment), Brentano invokes his conception of intentionality. What matters for distinguishing presentation from judgment is the *way in which* an object is presented to consciousness, or *how* we consciously orient towards the object. In *mere* presentation (both sensory presentation and intellectual presentation), an object merely appears, and is there for our consideration. In judgment (both perceptual judgment and conceptual judgment), the very same object which is presented is also (further) either taken-true or taken-false. In judging some presented object to be true or false, we are not made conscious of the same object a *second* time; rather, the act of judging forms a unity with the act of presentation, and they are co-directed at the same

\(^{22}\)Similarly, Michael Martin holds that ordinary perception is “*stative*” – it states something or makes an assertion or takes a stand – insofar as it involves “*taking the world to be*” the way it (perhaps merely) appears to be (2002, p.387).
object – the *mere* presentation of the object is supplemented and surpassed by another orientation to the object, and this new orientation is called judgment. More than being merely presented with some conjunction of contents, we *commit* to its being true or false. *How* the object is given in consciousness is thereby altered. The distinction between these two ways of orienting towards objects is one which Brentnao takes to be *Evident* in inner perception. To provide a visible contrast between such a judging-of-an-object and any intentional complex with structure $S$-$S$ or $N$-$N$, we may visualize the intentional complex of judging-a-presented-object as follows:

![Figure 4.5: The intentionality of judgment. Both sensory and noetic presentations are permitted to lie at the foundation here (see again Fig. 4.4 above). Important supplements will appear in Figs. 4.7 & 4.12 below.](image)

In such a complex act, the primary, foundational relation between presentation and object is permitted to be of the form $S$-$S$ or $N$-$N$: that is, the presented-and-judged object is permitted to be either sensory or noetic. I may perceptually judge that a tree is green, or I may intellectually judge that 2 is even. The same basic schema is to apply in each case.

In sum, Brentano’s mature psychology employs the notion of “intentionality” in a way that cross-cuts the Aristotelian division between sensory and intellectual representation (that is: intentional structures of the form $S$-$S$ and of the form $N$-$N$ are equally well presentations) and also is broad enough to capture his distinction between presentation
and judgment. This a point worth noting, and to which I shall return. Many present-day authors regard “representation” and “intentionality” to be synonymous. In his early work on Aristotle, the term Brentano used to denote Aristotelian representations was “Vorstellungen,” and it applied to both sensory representation (sinnlichen Vorstellungen) and intellectual representation (geistigen Vorstellungen) alike. In his mature psychology, the notion of (re-)presentation (Vorstellungen) is used to denote only presentation, which is the basic form of intentional orientation towards an object. Other forms of intentional orientation (e.g., judgment - Urteil) are countenanced in Brentano’s mature psychology, but are not counted as mere (re-)presentation. Judgments are not a kind of (re-)presentation, in this scheme; they are a fundamentally distinct kind of intentional mental phenomenon, a fundamentally distinct way of orienting consciously towards an object.

4.3.4 Intentionality: Feelings & Willings

We are now ready to deal with the third Brentanian category of mental phenomena (phenomena of love and hate). This will at last enable us, in §4.3.5 below, to properly engage with the Krausian claim (K2): that all mental “acts” are events, not activities (Aktivität).

In due course, I shall address Brentano’s claim that feelings and willings are not to be distinguished. For now, I begin with the mental phenomena of feelings. It is useful to compare and contrast feelings with judgments. Just as a presentation of an object is always presupposed by any judging of it, likewise a presentation of an object is always
presupposed by any feeling towards it. Just as we distinguished intentional complexes of the form S-S and N-N from any judging of a presented object, we could employ the following visualization to distinguish, further, a feeling towards a presented object:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.6:** A first pass at the intentional structure of feeling, modeled after Fig. 4.5 above. Both sensory and noetic presentations are permitted to lie at the foundation here (see again Fig. 4.4 above). An important correction will appear in Fig. 4.7 below.

The primary foundational relation between presentation and object is permitted to be of the form S-S or N-N: that is, the object with-which I am presented and towards-which I have a feeling is permitted to be either sensory or noetic. What distinguishes feelings from mere presentations is *how* we are consciously oriented towards a presented object, not what sort of object it is. We may have a feeling towards a sensory object (e.g., approval towards a cup of coffee) or towards a noetic object (e.g., disapproval towards some thesis).

This orientation of loving or hating is not equivalent to the orientation which is characteristic of judgment. What is essential to judging an object is that we evaluate it for truth or falsity: we take-it-true or take-it-false, rather than merely entertaining it. In having a feeling towards some object, we regard it, in an analogous but distinct manner, in terms of “goodness or badness, value and disvalue” (*PFES*, p.240/187). This does not mean that “goodness is ascribed [as a property] to something which is agreeable as
good, or badness to something which is agreeable as bad. Rather, they, too, denote a distinctive way in which the mental act refers to a content” (PFES, p.240/187). These claims are captured in the graphic above. When we consciously orient ourselves towards a presented object as good or as bad, we go beyond entertaining the mere presentation of the object. But we do not take-it-true or take-it-false. Rather we “take-it-good” or “take-it-bad;” we love-at-it, or hate-at-it. It would be a highly articulate judgment to assert of some object “it is true that this is a good thing.” In having a feeling towards an object, we merely take-it-good or take-it-bad.

The graphic above is misleading, however, since it suggests that feelings rely only upon presentations, and do not involve judgments. This is not Brentano’s view. Brentano maintains that a feeling towards $X$ always, in fact, presupposes some judgment about $X$. His remarks are as follows:

...every act of love is loving the existence of something [ist jeden Lieben ein Lieben, dass etwas sei]. And one love would never arouse [erzeugt] another, one thing would never be loved for the sake of another [Eines um des Anderen willen geliebt wird,], unless there were a belief in certain connections between the one and the other which played some part. An act of love will be one of joy [Freude] on some occasions, sorrow [Trauer] on others, or hope [Hoffnung] or fear [Furcht] or any number of other forms, depending upon what judgement is made concerning the existence or non-existence. In fact, then, it seems inconceivable that a being should be endowed with the capacity [dem Vermögen] - for love and hate without possessing that of judgement (PFES,p.267/207).

This passage may seem to display an unregimented or wildly disjunctive conception of “love,” according to which virtually any emotion – joy, sorrow, hope, fear, etc. – is to count as “love.” To understand the passage properly, we must read “love” as nothing more

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23Such claims are the source of Chisholm’s well known “adverbial” account of perception, which was strongly inspired by Brentano.
than taking-good. Love is not a particular episode of conscious feeling or an affective state as we usually think of them. It is rather a conscious orientation towards an object which can give rise to many different specific affective states (_mutatis mutandis_ for “hate” or taking-bad). Suppose I seem to see a cup of coffee, and I orient towards it in this distinct manner: I take it to be good or worthy of pursuit. It is this intentional orientation towards a presented object which Brentano calls “love.” This same orientation may be accompanied by a variety of felt experiences, but each will involve this basic orientation of taking-good or loving. I may experience that specific feeling which we call joy if I judge that the loved-at-object is present and available: I rejoice in the availability of what I regard as good. I may experience sorrow if I judge that the loved-at-object is absent: I wallow in the absence of what I regard as good. I may experience hope if I judge that the loved-at-object is possibly forthcoming soon: I eagerly anticipate the availability of what I regard as good. And finally I may experience fear if I judge that I am to be perpetually deprived of what I regard as good. The concept of “loving” is to capture the common intentional orientation in all these cases, just as “presentation” captures what is common in both sensory and noetic cases, and just as “judgment” captures what is common in perceptual and conceptual cases. With this in mind, Brentano’s remarks here are not wildly disjunctive, so long as we understand him aright. The main claim here is that in all the foregoing cases, I not only have a _feeling_ towards some presented object, I also make some _judgment_ about the object in addition to regarding it as good: I take it to be truly existing, or absent, or forthcoming, or perpetually withheld. The “what-its-like” of joy, sorrow, etc is not itself intrinsic to the feeling of love, but arises as a byproduct of
loving and judging.

In sum, feelings (taking-good or taking-bad) are typically accompanied by judgments, which presuppose presentation, and all three types of acts share a single object (sensory or noetic) though they relate to it in different ways. Where all three forms of orientation towards an object co-occur, we may visualize the fully-articulated intentional structure, or the many-layered intentional act-complex, as follows:

As noted above, which felt experience we have (sorrow, joy, hope, fear) will be a byproduct of a coordinated judgment and feeling-towards the presented object.

With this we have illustrated Brentano’s distinctions between presentations, feelings and judgments. It remains to clarify why he lumps “strivings” or “the power to act” into the same class as feelings. His brief remarks suggest a kind of Sorites argument, which runs as follows:

There are other phenomena which have an intermediate position between feelings of pleasure and pain, and what is usually called willing or striving [Wollen oder Streben]. The distance between the two extremes may appear great, but if you take the intermediate states into consideration, if you always compare the phenomena which are adjacent to one another, there
is no gap to be found in the entire series - the transitions take place very gradually. Consider the following series, for example:

[1] sadness [Traurigkeit]-
[2] yearning for the absent good [Sehnsucht nach dem vermissten Gute]-
[3] hope that it will be ours [Hoffnung, dass es uns zu Theil werde]-
[4] the desire to bring it about [Verlangen, es uns zu verschaffen]-
[5] the courage to make the attempt [Muth, den Versuch zu unternehmen]-

...if we attend to the intermediate members and compare only the adjacent ones, we find the closest connections and almost imperceptible transitions throughout –If we wished to classify them as feelings [Gefühle] or strivings [Strebungen], to which of the two basic classes should we assign each case? (PFES,p.236-7/183-4).

Since inner perception reveals no striking disparity between these cases, Brentano urges that we have no empirical (experiential) grounds to draw a distinction between them. There is, for example, no great disparity like the one observed between presentation and judgment (ibid., p.237/184). In all of cases [1]-[6], we are loving-at an object. At best, one might say that the tendency to act is stronger in cases of striving than it is in mere feeling. But this is not, in Brentano’s view, a difference of intentionality, or a difference in how we are conscious of the object. Throughout the series above, we are always conscious of the object as something which we take-good, and should like to have if we could. There is a “germ of striving [ein Keim des Strebens]” from the beginning (PFES, p.37/184).

Two points are worth noting here when we compare Brentano’s mature psychology to his earlier conception of Aristotelian psychology. On the one hand, Brentano may be read as upholding the Aristotelian view that representation precedes any sensory or intellectual striving. In Brentano’s mature view, any feeling/striving presupposes not only
the presentation of an object (whether it is sensory, on the model of S-S, or noetic, on the model of N-N), but also presupposes a judgment regarding the presented object. Brentano cites Aristotle approvingly for the claim that an intentional object must first be received or taken in in thinking, and only then can we be moved to desire the presented object “[daselbe Gegenstand des Denkens und Begehrens sei und, zuerst im Denkvermögen aufgenommen, da das Begehren bewege]” (PFES, p.181/140).

However, the second and related point is, again, that the Brentanian conception of intentionality is not synonymous with an Aristotelian conception of representation. Both judgments and feelings-toward are characterized by a type of intentionality; neither is called by the title of (re-)presentation (Vorstellungen).

4.3.5 Intentionality vs. Volition & Kraus’s (K2)

We are at last in a position to evaluate Kraus’s (K2): that for Brentano, all mental “acts” are events, not activities (Aktivität). There is at least one sense in which mental acts are clearly not to be understood as activity. In the 1911 edition, Brentano added a footnote to clarify his notion of “intentional inexistence”:

This expression has been misunderstood in that some people have thought it had to do with intention and the pursuit of a goal [Absicht und Verfolgung eines Zieles]. In view of this, I might have done better to avoid it altogether. Instead of the term “intentional” the Scholastics very frequently used the expression “objective.” This has to do with the fact that something is an object for the mentally active subject [für das psychisch tätige], and, as such, is present in some manner in his consciousness, whether it is merely thought of or also desired, shunned, etc. I preferred the expression “intentional” because I thought there would be an even greater danger of being misunderstood if I had described the object of thought as “objectively existing,” for modern-day thinkers use this expression to refer
to what really exists as opposed to “mere subjective appearances” (ibid., 180-181/140, fn.‡).

Allow me to set aside, for now, one important issue which is raised here. Brentano suggests he might have done better to speak of mental phenomena not as “intentional” (for fear that this might be conflated with a volitional conception of intentional inexistence) but rather as “objective,” where this “has to do with the fact that something is an object for the mentally active subject” (ibid., p.181/140). Brentano made several such appeals to “the mentally active subject” in his 1911 addenda to *PFES*, though he had made no clear use of the notion in 1874. Such appeals occur in only a handful of contexts, all involving (i) the intentionality of mental phenomena, and/or (ii) our knowledge with *Evidenz* of our own mental phenomena. I shall return to address this topic in §4.5 below.

With this set aside, there remains an important point in the passage above. If our *only* understanding of an “activity” is one that regards it as “intentional” in the (not uncommon) “volitional” sense of pursuing an explicit goal, then Brentano here rules out generally understanding intentionality in terms of acts. There are two ways to understand this claim, and each is worth spelling out in some detail.

First, there is a *straightforward* way of understanding why not all mental acts (intentional mental phenomena) are volitional. A volitional conception of acts is too elaborate to serve as Brentano’s general account of mental acts and intentionality, since

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24 The last sentence has been truncated in English translations. Taken in full it suggests more clearly Brentano’s dissatisfaction with the phrase “mere subjective appearance.” He seemed to wish to avoid the contrast between appearance and reality in this case: “Wenn ich dem Ausdruck “intentional” den Vorzug gab, so tat ich es, weil ich die Gefahr eines Missverständnisses für noch größer hielt, wenn ich das Gedachte als gedacht “objective seien” genannt hätte, wo die Modernen, im Gegensatz zu “bloß subjektiven Erscheinungen”, denen keine Wirklichkeit entspricht, das wirklich Seiende so zu nennen pflegen.”
intentionality is presupposed in the volitional account. A desire or a willing is intentionally directed at a desired end, and what makes any bodily act volitional is its involving some such instances of intentionality. (This is still the default conception of “acting intentionally” in popular representationalist analyses of action – see again Ch.1). One cannot then turn around and seek to understand all intentionality in light of volitional actions – this would lead to a regress, as shown in ch 1, §1.2. Likewise, as we have seen, on Brentano’s account, any feeling will presuppose the more basic intentionality of presentations and judgments. So it cannot generally be true that the basic conception of intentionality is to be understood in this volitional way, since there are forms of intentionality which are more basic than, and presupposed by, any such volitional act.

This allows us to specify a clear sense in which Brentano endorses (K2): that all mental “acts” are events, not activities (Aktivität). If one restricts the notion of “activity” to volitional action, then Brentano endorses (K2). But this does not appear to be sufficient to conclude that mental acts are not acts in any sense – that depends upon whether all acts are volitional in this rich sense. I began this dissertation by arguing against the presumption that all acts are volitional in this sense (cf. §1.2 above); and Brentano does not at all abandon the locution “mental act” after he clarifies that it is not meant to suggest that all intentional mental phenomena are volitional actions. It is not yet settled whether or not there might be some other, substantive sense in which mental acts are genuinely acts, in Brentano’s view.

There is also a more complicated way of understanding why the volitional account is insufficient. Spelling this out will help to provide an integrated understanding
of Brentano’s conception of mental phenomena, and will enable another important clarification of intentionality and Evidenz.

Above (§4.2) I reviewed Brentano’s extension of the Cartesian view, and his claim that we have evident knowledge of the mental causes of some mental phenomena. I did not explain there how Brentano supported this view, but must now take this up. On the basic sketch, Evidenz is to accrue though inner perception, which relies upon the “secondary” intentionality of any mental act. Brentano’s flagship example of a case in which we know a mental cause with Evidenz concerned willing an action in pursuit of a desired object. Here desire and willing stand not just in (evident) causal relations, but also in (evident) means-end relations. We know with Evidenz that the mental phenomenon of willing has precisely to do with “intention and the pursuit of a goal” when are conscious of willing-thus because we desire-thus, or willing-thus as a means of fulfilling that very desire. That is, we know with Evidenz when we are performing a volitional action of this sort.

As we saw in §4.3.4, a mere desire-for an object and a willing-towards its attainment are not radically distinct types of mental phenomena, but are rather both “feelings” toward the object. Still, they are distinct tokens of mental phenomena. So Brentano’s full account must be that one feeling (the mere desire for a loved-object) evidently causes another feeling (the willing to act to attain the loved-object). The question is how to secure this Evidenz.

Begin with a depiction of my desire for coffee, shown in figure 4.8 below. Let us suppose that I see coffee which is not in-hand (and so have a presentation of the
structure S-S). I also judge that the coffee is not in-hand (I take-true – either perceptually, or noetically – that the coffee is not in-hand). I also feel love towards coffee (I should like to have some). Whether or not an evil demon has induced the presentation by deception is irrelevant: I see to see coffee, I judge that it is not in-hand, and I desire it.

**Figure 4.8**: Example of the intentional structure of a desire for coffee. The same schema applies to a willing to attain coffee, since desires and willings have identical forms of intentionality. As always, both sensory and noetic presentations are permitted to lie at the foundation here (see again Fig. 4.4 above).

On Brentano’s account, a volitional striving to attain coffee has the same basic intentional structure as this desiring. In willing to attain coffee, I undertake bodily action which, if all goes well, eventuates in a new presentation which provides me with grounds for judging that I now have the coffee in-hand. When the willing occurs to initiate the action, however, I still judge that I do not have it in hand (else why would I strive to attain it?) and I love it (else why would I strive to attain it?). So (shortening a few terms) a case in which my desire for coffee causes my willing to attain it could be depicted in the manner of Fig 4.9 below.

The problem is that in this scheme, Evidenz appears to be split between the desiring at $t_1$ and the willing at $t_2$. Thanks to inner perception, at both $t_1$ and $t_2$ one has a secondary awareness of each intentional complex. And these do in fact have a causal
Figure 4.9: A problematic attempt to show causal relations between mental phenomena, which fails to explain how the causal relation can be evident. As always, the presentations lying at the foundation are permitted to be sensory or noetic (see again Fig. 4.4 above). A more apt depiction, explaining the Evidenz of mental causes, will be provided in Fig 4.12 below.

relation between them. But this is not sufficient for Brentano’s claim that we know the mental causes of some mental phenomena with Evidenz – and in particular, that we know in cases like this one that a willing is caused by a desiring. Somehow at $t_2$, one must know with Evidenz that the prior desiring was the cause of the willing.

One might seek to appeal to a memory at $t_2$ of the earlier desiring. But this will not do, since it cannot provide us with Evidenz of the earlier cause. An evil demon could deceive me into mistakenly remembering an earlier mental event which did not occur. Brentano’s solution requires adding an additional layer of complexity to our basic conception of intentionality. In §4.2 above, I depicted the basic structure of intentionality using the following schema:

Figure 4.10: A replication of Fig. 4.2 above.
This builds in the supposition that every mental act involves a conscious orientation towards only one primary object, and it is this supposition which causes problems for understanding the Evidenz with which we know that a willing was caused by a desiring. For if I am, in a willing at \( t_2 \), oriented towards only coffee as my primary object, then it seems I cannot simultaneously be oriented towards a prior desiring which occurred at \( t_1 \), and thus cannot recognize it as the cause of my willing.

Now Brentano does allow that one may be conscious of two primary objects at once – for example, one may simultaneously see and hear (PFES, p.157/122). But the possibility of simultaneous mental acts seems not to be of help in the case at hand: I am to know with Evidenz that a past desire was the cause of my striving. And again, an appeal to memory will not secure Evidenz. There is another way, however, in which Brentano’s mature conception of intentionality is more articulate, and permits multiple primary objects to be presented in a way that resolves this puzzle. Brentano distinguishes between two main “modes of presentation.” An object may be presented to us “in modo recto” (roughly, from the front) or “in modo obliquo” (roughly, on a slant). In all such cases, what is key is that we are presented with a relation or with something relational.

Brentano provides some examples:

...if I think of someone who loves, I think not only of the one who loves but also of something else which is loved by him, and I think of this second thing in obliquo. The same thing occurs with regard to sensing in so far as we sense ourselves as sensing being; for when we do this, we sense ourselves in recto and something else sensed by us in obliquo” (SNC, p.28).

I would like to remind the reader that there are modes of presentation
which, because of the fact that the act of presenting is the basis for a judgment, modify the judgments based upon them.

Such differences in the modes of presentation appear in cases where something is thought of in modo recto and in modo obliquo. The person who thinks of someone who believes in the devil thinks of the devil in obliquo, and, if he is convinced [i.e., judges] that someone does believe in the devil, he affirms this person who believes in modo recto; he affirms the devil, however, only as something believed in by that person, and hence in modo obliquo (SNC, p.31).25

The first passage shows that modes of presentation are to be distinguished both in intentional structures of the form S-S, and those of the form N-N. The second indicates how distinct modes of presentation result in a propagation of intentional variations when one goes on to make a judgment (to take-true or take-false an object which is presented in some mode) or to have a feeling (to love or hate an object presented in some mode).

To account for modes of presentation, our basic schema for intentionality ought to be restricted to apply only in those cases in which an object is presented, but is not presented as participating in any relationality. Where we are presented with anything relational – where anything seems to us to be relational – the schema is:

![Diagram of modes of presentation](image)

**Figure 4.11**: A second pass at intentionality, correcting Fig. 4.2 above by incorporating distinct modes of presentation. Further revision is still forthcoming, in Figs. 4.15 & 4.16 below.

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25 These passages are from a December 26th, 1914 text, originally entitled “Zur Lehre von der Empfindung”, and included as SNC’s Pt.I, Ch.V.
In cases where the relationship in question is symmetrical (e.g., equality), we may alternate between having either relatum – here, (a) or (b) – presented in modo recto or in modo recto (SNC, pp.31-32). In cases where the relation is not symmetrical (e.g., “is the mother of”), the presentation of one object (the mother) is always in modo recto, and the other (the child) can only ever be presented in modo obliquo (so long as they appear in this relationship).

Distinguishing these modes of presentation enables the primary object of any mental act to be a more articulate and relational complex. It is this conception which enables Brentano to promote his extension of the Cartesian view. If I now have a willing to attain some coffee, the coffee is presented to me in modo recto; but if I also recognize this coffee as the object which I previously desired, then I am understanding it in relation to my past desiring, and so my desire is presented in modo obliquo as past. And if I recognize that I am willing now to attain some coffee because of this desire, there is a specific relation – a causal relation – between my present willing and my previous desiring. All of these objects, and their relations, are presented to me in a single intentional act. If I have this unitary intentional complex, then I have Evidenz regarding the causal relation, such that I cannot be deceived about the mental cause of my willing. We may depict this intentional complex as shown in Figure 4.12 below. Here “my desiring” is presented in obliquo, but it is itself another intentional complex of presenting, loving and judging.

With that (complicated) account in place, we may state another, more strongly Brentanian reason why we cannot analyze intentionality in general as involving a volition:
Figure 4.12: A more apt depiction of the intentional structures which secure the *Evidenz* of our knowledge of some causal relations between mental phenomena. The key is to incorporate modes of presentation (Fig. 4.11 above), offering a corrective to Fig. 4.9 above.

we know with *Evidenz* that some, but not all mental acts are involved with “actions” in a rich, volitional sense. Thanks to inner perception, if I have an intentional complex involving volition like the one shown above, I know with *Evidenz* that that is the experience I have. If I have a different sort of experience, then I know with *Evidenz* that it is of a different sort. And not all intentional complexes are of the foregoing sort. If I withhold from judgment, and entertain a mere presentation, then I have a mental act which is intentional, but I have nothing like the articulate intentional complex shown above; I have nothing like a mental act which is involved in any way in volitional action.

In sum, there is one clear sense in which Brentano may endorse (K2): it is evident that not all mental acts are, or are at all involved in, strict volitional acts.

4.4 The Argument From Unity: Kraus’s (K3)

Allow me to take stock of the chapter thus far. I first (§4.2) argued that there is no clear support for Kraus’s (K1): Brentano does not clearly adopt the requisite
Aristotelian metaphysics to claim that every mental act has the character of a “passio” in any substantive sense. I then (§4.3) clarified one sense in which Brentano does endorse Kraus’s (K2): mental acts should not generally be understood as being or involving volitional acts. In handling Kraus’s claims in this way, I have preserved the possibility that Brentano’s locution “mental act” might invoke a substantive conception of acts; but I have not yet shown, in positive terms, what this conception might be.

The purpose of this section is to assess Kraus’s (K3): that all mental “acts” are the sheer having-of-an-object. I argue that there is a substantive sense in which Brentano denies this. And I argue that by understanding Brentano’s rejection of (K3), we can locate one positive argument that Brentano could put forth in defense of mental acts’ status as “acts” in a substantive sense.

If (K3) were correct, we ought to see Brentano treating “mental act” and “having of an object” as interchangeable. We do not see this. Thus, in Supplementary Remark II of the 1911 edition, Brentano declares that although reference to something as object is that which is most characteristic of mental activity [psychische Tätigkeit], this should not be interpreted as though ‘mental activity’ [psychischer Tätigkeit] and ‘reference to something as object’ [Beziehung zu etwas als Objekt] mean exactly the same thing. Just the opposite is already clearly apparent from what we have said about every mental activity relating to itself as object... In a single mental activity, then, there is always a plurality of references and a plurality of objects... [and] for the secondary object of mental activity one does not have to think of any particular one of these references, as for example the reference to the primary object. It is easy to see that this would lead to an infinite regress, for there would have to be a third reference, which would have the secondary reference as its object, a fourth, which would have the additional third one as object, and so on. The secondary object [of an act] is not a reference [Beziehung] but [rather] a mental activity [die psychische Tätigkeit], or, more strictly, the mentally active subject [das
Here again (as on my p.172 above) we see Brentano making appeal to a “mentally active subject” – a notion that is new to the 1911 edition, and not deployed in the 1874 text. I have been delaying discussion of this topic due to an issue which is raised most clearly in this passage. It is is difficult to work out why Brentano should think that we can swap talking of a particular mental act – however complex – for talking “more strictly” of the

26Here I see Brentano explicitly rejecting the conception of secondary intentionality which Bell attributes to him, and thereby avoiding Bell’s charge of landing in “straightforward contradiction” (Bell, 1990, p.23). The problem, as Bell sees it, is that on Brentano’s account, the intentional object of any act is to be regarded as a literal part of that act. This results in the ridiculous claim that in secondary intentionality, a whole mental act contains itself as only a part of itself. As stated in the passage under discussion in my main text, in secondary intentionality one is conscious of a mental act as a whole unity, not as a part of itself.

Bell offers three passages from McAlister’s translation in attributing the contradictory view to Brentano. The first is that “the presentation which accompanies a mental act and refers to it is part of the object on which it is directed” (PFES, 128/99, my emph.). But the claim Brentano makes in that passage has been translated in a questionable manner: he claims only that the act “belongs with” [gehört mit] the object (Gegenstand) of the act. There is no explicit invocation of a part/whole relation here. There is only the claim that when I have a presentation, I am made aware of that presentation, and in this sense it “belongs with” what is presented to me.

Bell’s second passage is not explicitly provided, but the reader is referred to McAlister’s p.256. I presume it is the following: “…the phenomena of inner consciousness are fused [verschmolzen] with their objects in a characteristic way. The inner perception is included within the act it perceives [ist in dem Acte, den sie wahnimmt, mitbegriffen], and in the same way the inner feeling which accompanies an act is itself a part of its object [Theil seines Gegenstandes]” (PFES, p.256/199). Again, it is not being said that a mental act is a literal part of itself, rather it is said that inner perception is ‘grasped with’ the very act which is innerly perceived – that no new act is required.

Bell’s third passage is translated: “The consciousness of the primary object and the consciousness of the secondary object are not each a distinct phenomenon, but two aspects of the same phenomenon” (PFES, p.155/120). Here Kraus’s footnote is actually useful, as it clarifies that what Brentano is claiming is that the act of being conscious of a primary object is not distinct from the act of being conscious of that same consciousness of the primary object. (It is the consciousness-of primary and secondary objects which is at issue here). There is no claim here whatsoever that the act is a part of its object; rather the claim is that there is no sense in distinguishing a “primary” and a “secondary” act, since it is one and the same act which is doubly-directed upon both the primary object, and upon itself, in its unity, as directed upon the primary object. And Brentano immediately follows this up by saying that in his view we interpret primary and secondary intentionality “as we had to interpret them, as parts of a unified real being” (PFES, p.155/120)

So none of the three passages which Bell cites provide support for his interpretation, and there seems no reason to saddle Brentano with an absurd view. I would also reject Bell’s claim on the grounds that it does not take into account Brentano’s distinction between substantive parts of a whole versus mere “divisives” – roughly, analytically distinguishable “parts” that are not in fact separable – see, e.g., (PFES, p. 157/122). Likewise Brentano speaks of mere “distinctional [distinkionelle] parts” in other work (see DP, pp.15-28).

We saw a similar distinction deployed in the Aristotelian’s “derivative” manner of distinguishing soul-parts which are in fact inseparable (see §3.3 above).
mentally active subject herself. To pose it as a question: what is the secondary object of any given mental act? Brentano seems to provide two distinct kinds of answers. On the one hand, it is that particular mental act itself (however complex, involving however many references). On the other hand, it is (“more strictly”) the actor – I, as mentally active subject. I want to again delay discussion of this issue, which will be the topic of §4.5 below.

Setting that aside, one claim is clear here: (contra Kraus) we should not treat the expression “reference to (or, having of) an object” as fully-synonymous with “mental activity.” These two terms are not even strictly co-extensive, since, as I have discussed at length in §4.3 above, every single mental activity always involves a plurality of references to multiple objects (one of which is its secondary object, i.e., itself). At best, “mental act” might be co-extensive with “having many objects,” where it is crucial that one of the many objects which is had is that very intentional mental phenomenon itself, which is ‘had’ in secondary intentionality.

As we have seen above, a mental act is always a unitary complex. It is not just the sheer having of many diverse objects, but rather a style of consciously orienting to them in a single concerted act. In the remainder of this section, I suggest that such unity cannot be captured in the Krausian view. This in turn suggests an interpretive hypothesis: that an act (a genuinely dynamic doing or performance) is required to impose such unity, and that this is the core of Brentano’s positive and substantive conception of mental acts.

Consider two of Brentano’s further claims in the passage above: (a) that the secondary object of a mental act is not a reference at all but rather a mental activity,
and (b) that in apprehending the secondary object “one does not have to think of any particular one” of the references involved. How shall we understand these claims? I submit that in Brentano’s view, if we are to apprehend one of our own mental phenomena in inner perception, then instead of thinking only about any one intentional reference to an object, what one must do is to think of all those references as they are unified in that particular act. This suggests we make explicit another amendment to our basic schema for understanding mental acts.

We began in §4.2 with the following simple schema:

```
secondary

Act primary Object

Figure 4.13: A replication of Fig. 4.2 above.
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In §4.3.5 above, we unpacked the arrow depicting primary directedness, so as to distinguish the two modes of presentation, and to clarify the presentation of relational objects. This provided us with the more articulate schema:

```
secondary

primary in modo recto

(a) in relation to (b)

primary in modo obliquo

Figure 4.14: A replication of Fig. 4.11 above.
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I am now suggesting that similar revision is required for understanding the arrow depicting secondary intentionality. The amendment only serves to make clear what is already
implicit. Currently, secondary intentionality appears to be directed at only the act itself, and not at all at its (intentional) object(s). But of course, an act is nothing but a way of consciously orienting towards its object(s): no (intentional) object, no act. When a mental act is presented to us as a secondary object, this also includes some awareness of its primary object(s), since the act is in part constituted by an orientation towards its primary object. If I am to be (secondarily) aware of that act, then I must be aware of it as oriented towards its primary object. So for example, when I have a mental act of hearing which is primarily directed at a tone, I am also secondarily conscious, through inner perception, of that very act of hearing. But I am not just made aware of the tone, and also made aware of a hearing. I am made aware of my hearing of that tone. And I am not required to take up a second act in order to be secondarily aware of this. Rather, I am made aware of my hearing of the tone, and of the tone, in a single unitary act. There is no question that it is the presented tone which I hear, and that the hearing I am aware of is a hearing of that presented tone. I cannot “wonder” whether the hearing I am aware of is a hearing of that tone; the hearing I am aware of already includes a reference to that tone. I am secondarily aware of the mental act as directed at its primary object.

The required revision of the basic schema might be drawn thus:

**Figure 4.15**: A correction to Fig. 4.2 above, more aptly depicting the structure of secondary intentionality in cases where the primary intentional object is not relational.
The required revision of the more articulated schema, incorporating modes of presentation, would be drawn thus:

Figure 4.16: A correction to Fig. 4.11 above, more aptly showing the structure of secondary intentionality in cases where the primary intentional object is relational.

Note that in both cases, the secondary object is a complex including not only the primary object, and the act as directed towards that object, but also including the act’s own secondary reference to itself. It is this complex self-directedness which Brentano sometimes calls a “fusion” of logically distinguishable acts into a single act (PFES p.256/199; see also 132/102 fn†, and 144/112).

The motivations for these revisions lie in Brentano’s own claims. Brentano says in the passage above that the secondary object of any act is a mental activity “in which the secondary reference is included along with the primary one.” One can be aware of a mental act without regress to a further, mediating act because (on Brentano’s view) every act refers to itself in its unity. Any presentation presents (i) its primary object(s), (ii) itself as presenting its primary object(s), and (iii) itself as presenting itself as presenting its primary object(s): “Apart from the fact that it presents the physical phenomenon of sound, the mental act of hearing becomes at the same time its own object and content, taken as a whole” (PFES, 129/100, my emph.). I am conscious of my act of hearing as a
conscious hearing of a tone. Likewise (§4.2) I can be conscious of a more complicated
unified act-complex (my willing-thus because I desire-thus) in such a way that I have
Evidenz about all the references involved, as well as (thereby) the objects towards which
it is directed (the willing; the desiring).

With this revision in place, I wish to offer a preliminary proposal that tries
to capture the substance of Brentano’s view of mental acts, and the manner in which
Brentano rejects (K3): that all mental “acts” are the sheer having-of-an-object. For an
initial illustration, consider what is involved in, e.g., the kind of unity which grounds the
Evidenz with which we know that we will-thus because we desire-thus. It is incoherent to
attempt to reduce such a unity to the sheer having of multiple, isolated objects. Suppose
an evil demon simultaneously induced in me three distinct thoughts:

(i) “All red things are desirable”
(ii) “I am now seeing a red thing”
(iii) “I will now walk to attain that seen red thing.”

I would then ”have” (in modo recto) the primary objects of all these acts (the seen red
thing; the desirable red thing; the red thing towards which I will to walk). What is
missing is the identification of all these objects as the very same red thing. Being aware
of the identity of these objects is not being aware of, or simply “having” any new object,
and it cannot be reduced to simply having a seen-red-object, a desired-red-object, and a
red-object-I-will-to-attain. Rather, identification will involve a unique way of orienting
towards each of those presented objects which reveals them to be identical: it will involve
a judgment (perceptual or noetic) in which I take-true the claim that there is only one red
object here. Such unity of identification cannot be captured by any conception of mental acts which endorses (K3). For a judgment of identity is not a sheer having of an object; it is a way of having that object, under many different modes of consciousness, while still apprehending the object as identical through these variations in my conscious orientation towards it.

Such unity is not only involved in cases where multiple distinct act-types (presentation, judging, willing) are coordinated. Suppose the demon only induces in me (ii), the “having” of a single red object, through sight. Still, by Brentano’s account, I also “have” a secondary object: the seeing of an object. And on Brentano’s account, I know with Evidenz that the seeing is a seeing of that red object. This cannot be reduced to simply “having” two objects, a seeing and a red, simultaneously: if that were so, I could wonder whether it is red which I am seeing, and wonder whether my seeing is a seeing of red. That is not Brentano’s account. Rather, he claims that when we are aware in inner perception of our seeing (of red), we are aware of it as a seeing of red. Such unity cannot be captured by any conception of mental acts which endorses (K3).

These two points combine to bring out a third. Suppose I have all of (i - iii). Then, in addition to having the three primary objects (the seen red thing, the desirable red thing, the red thing towards which I will to walk), I also have as secondary objects all these acts (the seeing, the desiring, the willing). Just as the identity of this red object cannot be viewed as just “having” many red objects, likewise the unity of the entire act-complex cannot be regarded as simply “having” all three acts. What would be missing, in any “sheer having” of a seeing, a desiring, and a willing, is the connection between them. If I
“have” these acts in isolation from each other, then I could at best fallibly infer that I have willed-thus because I desire-thus. I would not know with Evidenz that I will-thus because I desire that seen red thing.

In short, any view of mental acts which endorses (K3) cannot clearly support Brentano’s conception of the Evidenz with which we know of the unity of act-complexes, nor the Evidenz with which we know the mental causes of some mental phenomena. Such Evidenz relies on recognizing as identical the intentional objects which are given in various acts, and it relies on recognizing those acts as forming a unity. And such identity and unity is not the mere simultaneous “having” of a set of (primary and secondary) objects.

The failure of (K3) to support Brentano’s claims regarding Evidenz indicates a peculiar feature of mental acts. Nothing non-mental can bring it about that my mental acts form such a unity, and present me with an identical object. For example, an evil demon cannot directly force me to have an experience which one would express in the unitary thought (iv): “I will now walk to attain that seen red thing because I desire it.” At best, an evil demon could induce in me the presentation and the desiring; but if the demon wishes to induce (iv) then it must permit (as is evident in (iv)) that my own desiring is the cause of my willing. The demon can only directly induce part of this unitary intentional complex, and must permit the unity to come about in some other way. In any such case, I (or, my mind) is in some sense the originating source of this unity of mental acts, and nothing can bypass my contribution, subjecting me to the complete, unitary, intentional complex while I stand in pure passivity. The unity mandates an active contribution on
my part which cannot be infringed, in Brentano’s view.

Once we have seen this in the case of a complex act like willing-thus because I desire-thus, we can locate it throughout Brentano’s account. For example, suppose I desire (but do not yet will to attain) a cup of coffee, and I am aware that my desire has stirred because I was presented with the coffee. Then in the same manner, I will have Evidenz regarding this mental cause: inner perception reveals to me that the desiring and the presentation form a unitary act-complex. (I might, of course, be deceived into seeing a cup when there is none, or be deceived into supposing that coffee is desirable when it isn’t, but that is not to the point). If an evil demon wanted to induce such an intentional complex in me (a desiring-in-response-to-a-seeing), then on Brentano’s account, the demon must do so indirectly. The demon can induce the presentation, but must allow this mental phenomenon of mine to cause the desire. Again, nothing can bypass my causal contribution, subjecting me to the complete, unitary, intentional complex while I stand in pure passivity. The line of thought we have just applied to a single feeling can be applied to a judgment as well, whenever I am aware that I judge-thus because I have been presented-thus.

The same line of thought will apply, in a very minimal way, even to a mere presentation. Suppose I am aware, through inner perception, that I am seeing a coffee cup. It is not Brentano’s view that I know, with Evidenz that a coffee cup is present – an evil demon might always deceive me about this. But I cannot be deceived about seeming to see a coffee cup: thanks to inner perception, I am aware of my seeing-of-a-coffee cup with Evidenz. Inner perception reveals my seeing a coffee cup, and the presented
coffee cup, as a tangled complex of intentional references. If an evil demon wanted to induce such an intentional complex in me (bringing it about that I am aware that I seem to see a coffee cup) then the demon must do so indirectly. The demon can induce the presentation of a coffee cup as primary object, but must allow this mental phenomenon of mine to constitute my secondary awareness of seeing-a-coffee-cup. Suppose it were otherwise, and the demon could directly induce both my seeing of the coffee cup, and my awareness that I am seeing a coffee cup. Then the demon ought also to be able to do each separately. But that is absurd: I cannot be deceived into thinking I see a coffee cup without being made aware that I seem to see a coffee cup. If that were possible, I would be able to coherently wonder, in every case, whether I am conscious of seeing because a coffee cup is presented to me, or whether I am conscious of seeing for some other reason (which is absurd). The two come as a pair, and they come as a pair because of facts about how my mind works, not because of any extramental facts. Again, nothing can bypass this contribution on my part, subjecting me to the complete, unitary, intentional complex while I stand in pure passivity.

Insofar as all such unity seems to count against pure mental passivity, or the sheer having-of-objects, (in Brentano’s view) one might suggest that supporting such unity is the specific contribution of the active character of mental acts. Call this:

**The Argument From Unity** ("AFU")

1. Every mental act involves a plurality of intentional references.
2. One such reference is always a self-reference of the act to itself as secondary object.
3. In such self-reference, the act is always apprehended in relation to its primary object.

4. But the primary object is not presented (judged, felt-towards) again when it is apprehended in an act's self-reference.

5. Rather, the secondary object of an act-object complex is that very act-object complex in its unity, it is the act as it presents (judges, feels-towards) its primary object.

6. Such unity cannot be recognized by any account of intentionality which regards it as the “mere having of (an) object(s).”

7. Such unity always involves some contribution of my conscious awareness which cannot be induced from outside while I stand in pure passivity.

∴ Every mental act involves a genuine activity on my part, and no mental act can be enforced upon me without some active contribution on my part.

This is the strongest argument in favor of a substantive conception of mental acts which I can offer on Brentano’s behalf. Following from the fact that (K3) cannot support the intentional unity of any mental act, (AFU) turns the tables, and takes such unity as a sign of genuine mental activity. I do not claim that this argument is clearly endorsed or put forth by Brentano. Nor do I claim that it is any good. I only claim that it is consistent with his remarks, and that it offers some sketch of a positive argument in Brentano for
a substantive conception of mental acts as acts. In any case, I can find no support in
Brentano for the Krausian reading of mental acts in terms of (K1)-(K3): “mental acts”
do not clearly have the status of a *passio* or affection in a rich Aristotelian sense, they are
not clearly to be regarded as mere events and not as activity (*Aktivität*), and they are not
the “sheer having of an object.”

4.5 Brentano’s Mentally Active Subject

It is time to deal with a very loose end. I have put forth the Argument from Unity
(AFU) as the best possible means of locating a substantive conception of “mental acts” in
Brentano. But perhaps (AFU) is misguided. After all, it relies upon Brentano’s notion of
mental acts being “intentional.” And as we have seen on several occasions (see pp.172 &
182 above) Brentano seems to consider disowning this way of talking. Perhaps instead of
adopting Brentano’s language, in 1874, of “intentional objects,” we ought to have been
adopting Brentano’s language in 1911, speaking ”more strictly” of the way in which to
“something is an object for the mentally active subject [*für das psychisch tätige*], and, as
such, is present in some manner in his consciousness” (*PFES*, pp.181/140, *fn.‡*).

As noted (p. 182 above), Brentano makes a puzzling remark in 1911 regarding
this “mentally active subject.” He says that the secondary object of any mental act is “a
mental activity [*die psychische Tätigkeit*], or, more strictly, the mentally active subject
[*das psychisch Tätige*]” (*PFES*, 275-276/214-215, all my emph.). This raises a deep
puzzle: is the secondary object of a mental act a particular mental act (i.e., itself, in its
unity) or is it the mental actor – I, “the mentally active subject?”

The task of this section is to sketch – briefly, and in three very large claims – why Brentano might hold these two answers to be interchangeable.\(^{27}\) I then assess why this renders his conception of mental acts difficult to square with any commonsense conception of acts, according to which the “mentally active subject” might be regarded as a subject who *executes* mental acts. The result is that the Argument From Unity remains the best case for a substantive conception of mental acts in Brentano.

### 4.5.1 We are Never Presented with Ourselves, in Particular

Brentano held that we never have a direct presentation of ourselves as the particular mental beings which we are. As we saw at the start of this chapter (§4.1.1), in *PFES*, the metaphysical question of whether we have a “soul,” (a substantive “bearer” of mental phenomena) was declared irrelevant to empirical psychology. This was part of Brentano’s attempt to put psychology on firm empirical footing, and to remove all metaphysical speculation from the field. He claimed that “in inner perception we encounter manifestations of thinking, feeling, and willing. But we never encounter that something of which these things are properties” (*PFES*, 11/8). For this reason he seemed to agree with Lange, as least methodologically, that psychology was no longer to be the “science

\(^{27}\)Let me say at the outset that perhaps the answer is far less interesting. McAllister inserts terms like “subject” and “someone” in her translation of *das psychisch Tätige*, and this is what opens up a possibility that perhaps there is a mental actor (a “who”) who executes mental acts in Brentano’s account: the thinker herself. In what follows I will close this possibility. But at the outset, a more literal rendering of Brentano’s phrase would be simply “that which is mentally active.” This literal rendering would leave open the possibility that Brentano is simply referring to “a mental activity” as “that which is mentally active.” There would then be no clear need to invoke a conception of a subject, as McAllister does.
of the soul,” but rather the science of mental phenomena. Brentano argued at length that this shift involved no loss of psychology’s significance, nor did it unduly constrain its domain (*PFES*, Book I, Ch.1).

At the start of this chapter, I emphasized only that this entailed a *methodological* break with an Aristotelian psychology. But Brentano is not simply *setting aside* an Aristotelian psychology. His remarks concerning the way in which we are aware of ourselves, as mental subjects, go much further, and constitute an irreconcilable break from Aristotelian epistemology and psychology. In Ch.3 above (see esp. §§3.4 & 3.5), I discussed at length the way in which the Aristotelian theory of knowledge directly supported an appeal to the active intellect, and thereby supported the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts as *acts*. In the Aristotelian view, it is not possible for us to think of any concept (in general) without the necessary accompaniment of a sensory image of an instance of the concept (in particular). A special mental activity of *abstraction*, carried out by the active intellect, is required for us to form a general concept on the basis of particular representations (*Vorstellungen*). The mature Brentano sees himself forced to reject this claim outright:

If we leave the teachings of this great philosopher [i.e., Aristotle] aside, one thing still seems certain, namely, that no one is able to indicate what it is that individuates him as a thinking being. What he sees, hears, tastes, believes, denies, wishes, wants, enjoys, feels sad about, etc., could very well, with no contradiction whatsoever, be the objects of any number of other people. Thus nothing can be regarded as more certain than the fact that in no case is self-knowledge completely determined knowledge which includes the individuating determination. We are, thus, dealing here with a general [i.e., noetic] presentation which is given without reference to
individual [i.e., sensory] intuitions (SNC, p. 66).²⁸

The act of thinking that relates to something coloured in general is different from the act of thinking, whose object is something specific, and the latter is not included in the former.

This becomes even clearer in cases where we think of something universal which we did not acquire by means of abstraction from something less general (or something individual). Inner perception is such a case. If I perceive myself inwardly, I do not perceive anything which could not also be characteristic of many other thinking beings. Everything that I perceive here could also be perceived by another being. That which individuates me does not appear in my inner perception [Das, was ihn individualisiert, erschien nicht in seiner inneren Wahrnehmung]. As far as substance is concerned, I recognize myself only as a thing [Ja, seiner Substanz nach erkennt er sich nur eben als ein Ding] (SNC, p. 82).²⁹

As demonstrated in these passages, the mature Brentano holds that there is at least one case in which the Aristotelian theory of knowledge is simply false. There is no hope of employing abstraction to arrive at a general concept of a self, since one can never have a particular presentation of a self, or of an isolated mental phenomenon, as a specific individual. We rather start from general concepts of all mental phenomena, and we recognize ourselves in inner perception only as something-or-other-which-has-mental-phenomena, not as any individual (let alone an individualized substance). This is the first large claim regarding Brentano’s conception of the “mentally active subject” – no one can ever be presented with themselves as an individual mentally active subject. One can only have general concepts of types of mental activity. One’s own mental activity always appears as something that could have belonged to someone else.

²⁸This is a manuscript of 12 Jan 1915, entitled ‘On Universals,’ included as Pt.II, Ch.II of SNC.
²⁹This is a manuscript of June 1916, included as Pt.II, Ch.IV of SNC.
4.5.2 No Mental Reality beyond the Unity of Mental Acts

Even though Brentano did not think that we could ever apprehend our own mental phenomena as fully particularized, or as belonging to ourselves as an individual, he did not suppose that psychology could rest content with simply studying a diverse collection of types of mental phenomena. A further topic of study was to be the overarching unity of consciousness, to which Brentano dedicated an entire chapter of *PFES* (Book II, Ch.IV).

In *PFES*, Brentano explicated the unity of consciousness as follows:

The unity of consciousness, as we know with evidence through inner perception, consists in the fact that all mental phenomena which occur within us simultaneously such as seeing and hearing, thinking, judging and reasoning, loving and hating, desiring and shunning, etc., no matter how different they may be, all belong to one unitary reality only if they are inwardly perceived as existing together. They constitute phenomenal parts of a mental phenomenon, the elements of which are neither distinct things nor parts of distinct things but belong to a real unity (*PFES*, 163-164/126, my emph.).

We have already seen lesser examples of such unity in the domain of the mental. First, a single mental act is always an evident unity of intentional references, including a reference to itself – inner perception is made possible by just this feature of mental acts. Second, multiple mental acts can form a cohesive and evident complex (e.g., willing-thus because I desire-thus). In every case, the unity depends completely upon the intentional references which make up the act-complex. As seen in the passage above, Brentano holds further that whenever I am co-conscious of any mental phenomena at a present moment, I am also conscious – with *Evidenz*, through inner perception – that they collectively form an over-arching unity. “The totality of mental life, as complex as it may be, always forms a real unity” (*PFES*, 163/126).
Whereas other authors had looked beyond mental phenomena for a further thing - an ego or soul - Brentano’s analysis simply stops with the unity:

Herbart’s great error, and Kant’s before him, was to affirm the phenomena of inner perception and to make them the basis for their investigations in just the same way that they did those phenomena towards which so-called external perception is directed, i.e., to view them as mere appearances which point to real beings [beyond themselves] and not as things which are themselves real... In asserting the real unity of consciousness, therefore, we do not thereby in any way assert that consciousness is an absolutely simple reality. We only assert that the parts which can be distinguished in it are to be regarded as mere divisives of a real unity (PFES, 165/128, my emph.).

Here again, Brentano goes beyond the methodological suspension of metaphysics, and seems to deny that there is any mental “substance” to speak of. That is: there is no further “mental reality” behind the unity of consciousness, of which that unity is simply an appearance or sign. The mental reality is nothing beyond the unity of consciousness, or the intentional unity of mental act-complexes. This is the second large claim regarding Brentano’s conception of the “mentally active subject.”

4.5.3 The Soul, Reconfigured

This brings us to the third point. If the traditional notion of a subject, ego, or soul was meant to serve as a name for the most fundamental mental reality, then for Brentano, one might just as well simply call “the unity of consciousness” by the name of “subject” or “soul.” In 1901, in-between the initial publication of PFES and the Supplementary Remarks of 1911, Brentano seemed to endorse this view, claiming that psychology was, after a fashion, the science of the soul. In doing so, he paints a puzzling picture of the
activity and passivity of the mind:

Each one of us appears to himself in personal unity and particularity; what makes up this unity and particularity we refer to as our soul [Seele]. This soul shows itself in multifarious activity; it begins and ceases to be active in one way, while it remains constantly active in another way. As active, it is being affected, and, as active, it is effective, and hence it is substantial [wesenhaft]. In this regard, we speak of a plurality of activities of the soul. In being active, it has something as an object... one can thus well define psychology as the science of the soul, but equally well as the science of the activities of the soul... The definition as science of the soul has been branded in recent times to be ‘metaphysical’, which is meant to say as not justified by any experience, or even to be ‘scholastic’. Yet with this, one has only expressed one’s incompetence to do justice analytically to actual experience” (Descriptive Psychology Appendix 4: “Outline of Psychognosy” of September 1901, pp.155-156, all my emph.).

Aside from the assertion that the “soul” shows itself in constant mental activity (and again, against Kraus, that it is in being active that the soul has something as object) it is difficult to parse Brentano’s claims here regarding passivity and activity as substantive additions to his account of mental acts. What I wish to highlight is Brentano’s suggestion that the soul is just the unity and particularity of one’s mental life.

This real unity is held to be known with Evidenz through inner perception of mental acts, each of which is itself known with Evidenz to be a unity of intentional references. In the previous section I argued that such unity is irreducible to any mere “havings” of objects. On Brentano’s view (a) no conscious mental act can fail to partake in such a unity, and (b) such unity constitutes the whole reality of the mentally active subject. For this reason, I submit, in 1911 Brentano offered two nominally distinct

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30Müller’s translation of “wesenhaft” as “substantial” is especially questionable here. The editors of the German edition add a verb so that the phrase reads: “also wesenhaft wahrgenommen.” This rather dilutes any sense of ontological commitment to a substance, replacing it with a claim of the essential perceivability of the soul, understood only as something-or-other-which-appears-in-activity-or-passivity, as seems appropriate.
answers to the question: “what is the secondary object of a mental act?” It is a mental act, which is always to be understood as part of the unity of consciousness, which is all there is to the subject. So one may just as well say that the secondary object is an act, or the actor, since “the actor” is nothing beyond the unity of acts. And for this reason, I submit, the Argument From Unity (§4.4) is not challenged by Brentano’s appeal to the mentally active subject, but simply reiterates: the mentally active subject is nothing but such unity as warrants rejection of the Krausian view.

Disappointingly, Brentano’s account of mental acts here comes to an abrupt and unsatisfying halt. In the 1901 passage above, Brentano stresses the unity and the particularity of our selves. I know that I am an individual mental subject. Yet Brentano insists throughout later work that he can offer no account of how we know of our own particularity or individualization. In lecture notes of 1900-1901, he says that “the element which individuates our consciousness” is something which “it can be rigidly proven... never will be noticed” via inner perception (DP, Part I, Ch.3, 35).\(^{31}\)

Roughly, his reasoning seemed to be as follows. Whatever serves to individuate me from other subjects must necessarily accompany all of my mental acts, and must persist through every moment of my mental life – only then can the unities of consciousness which occur at each individual moment be united in the extended unity of my particular ongoing consciousness. But for that very reason, we will never be able to isolate – in

\(^{31}\)This is not a one-off remark, as indicated already in §4.5.1. There the source was a 1915 text. Brentano says more of the same in his lectures of 1900-1901. Although we “understand ourselves as [if we were presented] in a concrete individual intuition... we are incapable of giving an account of the individuating factor” (DP, p.63). The very “existence” of such an individuating factor is something that “we are incapable of noticing” in inner perception, and which must instead be “established purely deductively” (ibid., p.77).
reality or in thought – what this individuating element is, for it will be persistently and
constitutively bound up with one’s mental phenomena in general. As a result, Brentano
seems to think that we know that we are an individual subject through time, and we
know with Evidenz that all our mental phenomena at a moment form a real unity, but we
also know with Evidenz that we cannot know with Evidenz how the former is related
to the latter. For the reasons canvassed in §§4.5.1 – 4.5.3, I cannot see that Brentano’s
appeal to the mentally active subject moves us away from, or beyond, the Argument From
Unity. The Argument From Unity remains the best case one can make for a substantive
conception of mental acts in Brentano.

4.6 Brentano’s Mature Act Psychology in Sum

To summarize, the Brentanian vision of Act Psychology consists (at least) in
adherence to the following collection of positive and negative doctrines:

(B1) We should not (generally) understand “mental acts” in terms of the
pursuit of a goal, in the sense that characterizes strict, volitional actions
(see §4.3.5 above).

(B2) We should not, with Kraus, understand “mental activity” as synony-
mous with passively having something as object (§4.2), since a mental
act is always a unity of multiple intentional references to objects -
including reference to itself (§4.4).

(B3) We might replace talk of mental acts with talk of a “mentally active
subject” (§4.5), since

(B4) the mentally active subject is nothing beyond the real unity of mental acts (§4.5.2).

(B5) We know of this unity with Evidenz at any given moment (§4.5.3), and

(B6) we know of the persistent individuality of ourselves through time (§4.5.3); but

(B7) we cannot say with certainty how an individual subject persists over time, in part since we are not presented with any such individualized subject in inner perception (§4.5.3).

Three conceptions of the act-character of “mental acts” have been ruled out. First, the rich volitional conception of actions may relate to what is involved in some mental acts (willing-thus because I desire-thus), but not all. (Likewise, of course, not every act I bodily do is something I explicitly intend to do). Second, the deflationary Krausian reading of mental “acts” as the sheer “having” of objects must be rejected in any case. This provides the sole glimmer of hope for a substantive conception of mental acts in Brentano, by providing the clue for the Argument From Unity. Third, since Brentano simply defines “the mentally active subject” as the unity of all mental acts, mental acts cannot themselves be substantively characterized as acts in the sense that they are executed by a mental agent: the agent is nothing beyond the unity of such acts. For just this reason, I have argued, Brentano’s appeal to the “mentally active subject” does not move us beyond the Argument From Unity.
In discussing Brentano’s mature view, it has become abundantly clear that he is not explicitly committed to any Aristotelian conception of mental acts. The *permissive Aristotelian conception*, reviewed in Ch.3, §3.5 above, cannot be endorsed by Brentano so long as he upholds his own methodological restrictions on an empirical psychology: the *permissive Aristotelian conception* relies on metaphysical presuppositions regarding capacities and their actualization which have no place in a *phenomenalistic* psychology. Further, Brentano excludes from the domain of the mental all unconscious mental events, and so will not say that, e.g., the life-activities of plants are mental acts. This is not in keeping with the *permissive Aristotelian conception*. At best, Brentano *could* potentially endorse a narrowed-down version of the *permissive Aristotelian conception*, according to which the proper domain of psychological phenomena – those which are consciously accessible to inner perception – in fact are “mental acts” in the very permissive sense of being actualizations of a mental capacity, or activities-under-passivity. But we do not find active assertion of that claim anywhere in Brentano: we do not see this Aristotelian, metaphysical substructure tacked on to his empirical psychology.

Likewise, because unconscious mental activities are cast out of an empirical psychology, the mature Brentano could not possibly countenance the Aristotelian active intellect as a locus of mental activity – it is unconscious, according to the Aristotelian. Further, the mature Brentano rejects the Aristotelian theory of knowledge, according to which all general concepts are rooted in sensory presentations of particulars. This was one of the major motivations in the Aristotelian view, encoded in the *Argument From Empirical Knowledge*, for positing the active intellect in the first place. Brentano rejects
this theory of knowledge. He thus has no clear motivation for positing the active intellect, and thus no clear route to the restrictive Aristotelian conception of mental acts.

The foregoing chapter has been of value in \((a)\) combating Kraus’s mistaken dismissal of mental acts, as well as \((b)\) demonstrating some decisive respects in which Brentano’s mature psychology is not at all to be regarded as Aristotelian, by his own lights. But it has provided only scanty resources for a substantive Act Conception of Intentionality: it has provided only the *Argument from Unity*. Yet the principle shortcoming of the *Argument from Unity* is that, combined with the rest of Brentano’s doctrines, it would commit us to mental acts without an actor or subject who can be said, in any clear sense, to execute them. And Brentano certainly spends little time clarifying how that could be a coherent conception of mental acts.

This suggests that the view, put forth by historians of psychology, that Brentano was the founder of a school informatively titled “Act Psychology,” is mistaken or ill-informed. There is no well-articulated, substantive, clearly coherent conception of mental acts as *acts* put forth in any systematic manner in Brentano’s own writings. What we find instead is only perhaps \((a)\) a terminological holdover of the expression “act” from an Aristotelian metaphysics which has no legitimate place in Brentano’s empirical psychology, or \((b)\) a very under-developed conception of mental activity, stemming from something like the *Argument from Unity*.

The reader has my condolences for being forced to follow me down what has turned out to be an elaborate bunny-trail. (Such are the perils of pursuing afresh an historically-informed philosophy of mind.) I offer a promise that this has not been in
vain. We are well-poised to offer a corrective to the historians of psychology, and to re-locate the historical roots of the Act Conception of intentionality. To the extent that intentionality is to be regarded as historically rooted in a substantive conception of mental acts, its roots, as we shall see, lie with Husserl.
Part II

Husserl on Mental Acts
Chapter 5

Overview of Part II

The purpose of Part II of the dissertation is to examine the status of "mental
acts” in Husserl’s work. I first (ch.6) discuss Husserl’s earlier work, focusing on his
breakthrough into phenomenology in the *Logical Investigations*. I then discuss his mature
phenomenology (ch.s 7 & 8). Before proceeding, I offer some remarks in this introductory
chapter to limit the scope of my claims, and to sketch how Part II proceeds.

5.1 The *Logical Investigations*

The work of Part II begins in Ch.6 with an exploration of the *Logical Investiga-
tions* (hereafter, “LI”). For a variety of reasons, *LI* provides a rich and difficult case study
for examining Husserl’s early conception of mental acts.

First, as Brentano’s student, Husserl drew much inspiration from his mentor’s
work, but departed from him on some major points. In Husserl’s view, (a) not every mental
phenomenon is intentional, (b) single intentional references themselves count as acts (not all acts involve a plurality of references), (c) one can know non-mental phenomena with Evidenz, and (d) many mental acts may not necessarily refer to themselves reflexively. A full analysis of Husserl’s view would require cautious interpretation in bringing these contrasts to full light. These issues recur below, but I do not claim to do justice to them all.

Second, Husserl’s own view of the LI changed radically (compare the 1st & 2nd ed. versions of the Introduction’s §6, “Note 3”; see also the forward to the 2nd ed.). When drafting the Logical Investigations, Husserl declared them a project in phenomenology, and construed phenomenology as akin to Brentano’s descriptive, empirical psychology. After the publication of the Logical Investigations, Husserl (1903) recanted, declaring phenomenology to be a project in transcendental philosophy which was essentially distinct from any empirical method of investigation – e.g., Brentano’s method of inner perception. Husserl abandoned plans to revise LI to make it a true work of phenomenology. As a result, LI records a transitional and formative stage in Husserl’s thought, at best a halfway point between more clearly defined views.

Finally, LI is a sprawling set of Investigations on diverse topics, all in the service of combating psychologism by providing an analysis of mathematical and logical statements as objective and a priori truths. Husserl’s aim is to show that such truths cannot be understood in terms of empirical generalizations concerning how human minds actually operate in thought, but rather follow from a system of ideal laws which govern the very possibility of meaningful thought. Clearly I cannot tackle LI in its entirety, and must deal
selectively with the topic of acts.

In Chapter 6, I will articulate two lines of thought in Husserl’s *LI* which might be called upon to ground a substantive Act Conception of intentionality. The first – *The Argument From Fulfillment* – will prove unsuitable. It can at best provide a sense in which we are licensed to call some complex intentional mental phenomena “actions” But this account presupposes more basic intentional mental phenomena in the first place, and does not countenance them as actions. It thus does not serve to ground all intentionality in acts. The second – *The Argument From Interpretation* – is somewhat more promising, insofar as it can apply to all intentional mental phenomena. And yet we shall see that, as with Brentano, the resulting conception of mental acts would commit us to mental acts which do not logically entail an actor. And we shall see, again as with Brentano, that Husserl himself does not radically clarify such a conception of acts. On the whole, Husserl’s early work does not provide the tools for a suitable Act Conception.

### 5.2 Husserl’s Mature Phenomenology

After discussing Husserl’s early work, I turn to examine his mature phenomenology. This is also a difficult task, due to Husserl’s somewhat erratic publication and research practices.

After the first edition of *LI*, Husserl reconceived phenomenology as a project in transcendental philosophy, not in empirical psychology. His next major work after *LI* was *Ideas I*, first published in 1913. This was intended to be a more adequate introduction
to transcendental phenomenology. But it was also intended to be a larger work, and in 1912 Husserl had written not only the main text of *Ideas I*, but also the so-called “pencil manuscript” that would be posthumously published as *Ideas II & III*. These were never published during Husserl’s life for a variety of reasons. First, he continued to revise the manuscripts until 1928. Second, he never felt that he had adequately addressed certain fundamental issues (most notably regarding transcendental intersubjectivity) and so considered his revisions incomplete. Third, in light of this, he turned his efforts to a number of other projects. After several years of editorship (mainly and first under Edith Stein, and secondly and more minimally under Heidegger) Husserl published a text on the phenomenology of internal time (1928), later translated and published as part of *On The Phenomenology Of The Consciousness of Internal Time*. Plans were also laid in 1928 to draw together notes and manuscripts spanning years of research to compile a book on transcendental logic, under the editorship of Ludwig Landgrebe. Husserl intended to write a new introduction for this work, and instead published the resulting text, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), as a stand-alone book. The initial plan for a book on logic only culminated with the posthumous publication of *Experience and Judgment* in 1938. In 1929, Husserl gave the lectures that would form the basis for another attempt at a book-length introduction to phenomenology, *Cartesian Meditations* – published in French in 1931, but not in German until 1950, posthumously. Meanwhile, from 1934 until his death in 1938, Husserl worked furiously on what would become the posthumous text (and yet another introduction to phenomenology), *The Crisis of the European Sciences*. 
The source materials for all these late publications were piecemeal manuscripts derived from Husserl’s continued lectures and systematic phenomenological investigations. Many such manuscripts which were not initially included in a major work have since been published and translated in the *Husserliana* critical editions. But in short, after 1914, Husserl is constantly zig-zagging between manuscripts and scraps written in different periods, making amendments, reconsidering theses, and attempting to blend them into new coherent wholes. The result is that it is quite difficult to paint a linear, chronological timeline of the development of Husserl’s mature thought. The published text of *Ideas II* provides an example: it is a blend of early insights from the 1912 pencil manuscript, followed by a series of revisions (first in 1915, then three more times between 1925 and 1928) in which more recent insights and investigations are incorporated into the text.

One of the most striking shifts in Husserl’s mature thought, occurring around 1920, was his distinction between “genetic” and “static” phenomenology. The distinction casts new light on his earlier investigations – e.g., those of *Ideas I*, which are now branded as only “static” – and sets out a new series of genetic investigations – that is, phenomenological investigations of the genesis of conscious experience. This development is most carefully explored in a set of lectures (which Husserl presented in 1920/21, again in 1923, and finally in 1925/26) posthumously-published as *Analyses Concerning Passive & Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental logic*. But in keeping with the zig-zag style of drafting discussed above, Husserl updated the 1912 draft of *Ideas II* to include reference to the static/genetic distinction as it had been explored in the 1920’s, and as
recorded in *Passive & Active Synthesis*.

I thus may seem to face an interpretative and organizational difficulty. On the one hand I wish to draw upon *Ideas I & II* as two portions of a single unified work, as they were initially intended. On the other hand, *Ideas II* is supplemented with later insights into the genetic/static distinction, whose full elaboration would require an interruptive foray into *Passive & Active Synthesis*. The strategy I will adopt is essentially to focus only on static phenomenology when discussing *Ideas I & II*. That is the task of Ch.7. I will then turn, in Ch.8, to examine *Passive & Active Synthesis* and to pursue a genetic phenomenology.

This strategy can be seen as adequate for three main reasons. First, Husserl himself proceeded along this path in his investigations: first exploring what he would later call “static” analyses, and then enriching them with a “genetic” viewpoint. The later division between genetic and the static phenomenology does not demolish the prior results, and so we can get some grip – an admittedly incomplete one, but a real one – on the fruits of static phenomenology without clarifying exactly how it contrasts with genetic phenomenology. Second (and for this reason) even after the static/genetic distinction was drawn, Husserl himself employed this method (abstracting from genetic considerations and focusing only on the static) as a pedagogical strategy. In what follows, I will do the same. Third, while *Ideas II* is supplemented with some passing reference to the results of *Passive & Active Synthesis*, the bulk of *Ideas II* is focused on static analyses. We can thus make a first pass over this material, in Ch.7, without much fear that it will be ruined when we discuss *Passive & Active Synthesis* in Ch.8.
All that by way of clarifying how chapters 7&8 will proceed. Let me now say a word about what we will find there.

In Ch.7, I shall draw from the *Ideas* to identify five different lines of argument which clarify how an Act Conception of intentionality is present in Husserl’s mature, static phenomenology. The lynchpin argument is *The Argument From Attention* (§7.3). This argument is not itself sufficient to ground a global Act Conception of intentionality: it provides a sense in which some “mental acts” are genuinely performances of a mentally active subject, but not all intentional phenomena are of this kind. Despite this, some very important mental acts are held by Husserl to be of this sort. In particular, a proper understanding of the methodology of phenomenology involves clear commitment to mental acts as acts. I shall clarify these points by formulating what I call *The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation* (§7.3.1), and *The Argument From Sedimentation* (7.4). Again, on the view which is worked out in these arguments, not all intentionality involves a mental act. The important shift which enables Husserl to provide a global Act Conception – according to which all mental acts are to be properly understood in terms of performances of a mentally active subject – is *The Argument From Potentiality* (§7.3.2). I call this the “egoic,” Husserlian, conception of mental acts, for reasons that will become clear in Ch.7 below. I also argue that we may understand this Act Conception as a transcendentalized version of the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts, as we encountered it initially in Ch.3 above. Husserl’s pure ego is (in some important respects) the transcendental analogue of the Aristotelian active intellect.

In Ch.8, I shall ground a distinct Act Conception of intentionality in Husserl’s
mature, genetic phenomenology. On this view, *all intentionality* can be understood as inhering in a mental act, *quite apart from* any consideration of whether or not an ego or a mentally active subject could execute the act. That is: built into the structure of all intentionality are features which license construing intentionality as *active*, prior to and independent of any consideration of the ego. More than that, we shall see that *these* mental acts (intentional mental phenomena) arise from another, *lower* stratum of mental acts (associative syntheses). I call this whole framework the “non-egoic,” Husserlian, conception of mental acts. I also argue that we may understand it as involving a transcendentalized version of the *permissive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts, as we encountered it initially in Ch.3 above. And once we have this view in place, we shall see that it deepens our understanding of egoic mental acts as well.

In short, then: Part II completes two tasks. First, it re-locates the core of a coherent Act Conception of intentionality from Brentano’s empirical psychology to Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. Second, it re-appropriates the basic shape of the two *Aristotelian* Act Conceptions, and locates these, too, in a Husserlian transcendental phenomenology.
Chapter 6

Act and Intentionality in Early Husserl

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Husserl’s early conception of mental acts in the \textit{Logical Investigations} (hereafter \textit{LI}) and to contrast it with Brentano’s account. We shall see that Husserl goes beyond his mentor in a variety of ways in explicitly problematizing the status of mental acts. However, we shall not find here the resources for an Act Conception. I first (§6.1) sketch the broader context of \textit{LI}, highlighting the central role of mental acts in Husserl’s account, and laying down some terminological distinctions. I will then examine his account of mental acts themselves, in two stages.

I first (§6.2) examine Husserl’s explicit distinction between intentional and non-intentional experiences, and his identification of intentional experiences with mental acts. Here difficulties crop up for a substantive understanding of mental acts as acts. For although Husserl defines “intentional experiences” as acts he also declares that to properly understand mental acts, “all thought of activity [\textit{Betätigung}] must be rigidly excluded.” This hint at a purely “passive” conception threatens to undermine any substan-
tive understanding of intentionality in terms of mental acts as genuine acts. The overall aim of §6.2 is to argue that Husserl’s claims here should be read as an elaboration of (B1) above: in *LI* we should not (generally) understand “mental acts” as involving any kind of *striving*, least of all the pursuit of a goal in the sense that characterizes strict, personal actions. Now at the time of writing, Husserl maintains that this means that mental acts *simply are not* properly to be thought of as “acts.” That is: Husserl has no conception of intentionality as arising through sub-intentional acts (cf. Ch.1 above.) He holds that where there is no personal striving, there simply is no act.

Still, it is worth exploring whether or not the Husserlian view *could* provide us with the resources to work out such an Act Conception, even if Husserl himself seemed not to pursue it. I will clarify and explore two senses in which one might try to regard *LI*’s mental acts as subintentional acts. First, certain unities of intentional experiences can be viewed as actions in an abstract sense which is mirrored by (but in fact more fundamental than) strict, volitional actions. This conclusion can be secured by what I call the *Argument From Fulfillment* (§6.3 below). This construal of mental acts will prove ultimately unsatisfactory for providing an Act Conception of intentionality, not least of all since it does not apply to all intentional mental phenomena. It is of value to clarify this construal, however, since doing so helps to lay out themes that I shall return to in Ch.8 below.

Second, the (more fundamental) sense in which any intentional experience might be considered an act is that they require an active contribution of the mind in going beyond the passive receipt of sensations, by *interpreting* them, *referring* them to an intentional
object which is thereby constituted as an object of experience. This is the conclusion which the Argument From Interpretation seeks to secure (§6.4 below). This is potentially more adequate as a way of pursuing an Act Conception of intentionality insofar as (in Husserl’s view) every intentional mental phenomenon requires such interpretation, and (on this reading) all such interpretation is an act. Despite this, the resulting conception of mental acts is unclear: as we saw for Brentano, early Husserl would then be committed to mental acts without an actor who can be said to perform them. Yet like Brentano, Husserl does not clarify how we could conceive of such acts. Thus early Husserl, like Brentano, provides no fully-satisfactory account of mental acts. This, we shall see in Ch.8, is surpassed in Husserl’s later works.

6.1 Mental Acts at the Center of the LI

My aim here is to briefly survey the centrality of mental acts to the project of LI. I want to give a gloss on the broader context in which mental acts appear, before I highlight some features by taking them out of that context.

In Investigation III, Husserl distinguishes between independent and non-independent objects – “object” being taken in the broadest possible sense (to include, e.g., spatial extensions, colors, everyday objects, numbers, propositions, relations, properties etc.). Briefly, a non-independent object is one which requires some other object for its existence; an independent object is one which does not require another object for its existence.
Some examples he considers (III.1.§4.7-8b)\(^1\) are the independent variability of color and extension/shape ("Specifically the same quality, and nuance of quality, may be stretched out over every extension, and, conversely, the same extension may be covered by every quality") and the non-independent variability of intensity and quality ("The intensity of a tone is not something entirely indifferent or so-to-speak alien to its quality... Eliminate quality and you unavoidably eliminate intensity, and vice versa"). Husserl insists that we are not here dealing with contingent limitations of human thought – this is not a claim about the ways we happen to think of such objects. Rather "They are real differences, grounded in the pure essence of things, which, since they obtain, and since we know of them, prompt us to say that a thought which oversteps them is impossible, i.e., a judgement deviating from them is wrong" (III.1.§6.11b). We know of such essences, and learn of the ideal laws which govern their relations, through mental acts of Categorial Intuition, which present us directly with those essences themselves. Thus, Husserl's final definition of non-independent objects makes no reference to thought:

The inability-to-exist-by-itself of a non-independent part points therefore to a law of essence... Non-independent objects are objects belonging to such pure Species as are governed by a law of essence to the effect that they exist (if at all) as parts of more inclusive wholes of a certain appropriate species" (III.1.§7.12\(^b\), original emph.).

Independent objects are those which do not belong to a Species subject to such a law of essence.

\(^1\)Citations to LI will employ the following ordered set, to the degree of specificity which is needed: <Investigation #. Chapter #. Section #. Page #>. Page numbers refer to the 2001 reprint of the Findlay translation I employ here. The superscript specifies whether it is the first ("a") or second ("b") volume of the 2001 reissue being cited. All citations are to (the translation of) the text of the first German editions, unless explicitly noted otherwise.
In Investigation IV, Husserl applies this distinction to a particular class of objects: meanings (*Bedeutungen*). He has earlier (I&IIa) distinguished meanings from the object(s) meant. A single object (e.g., the number 2) might be meant in many distinct ways (which might be expressed, e.g., as “the sum of 1+1,” or as “the result of 4 ÷ 2”). A meant object, and a single type of meaning, can also be shared in many acts of meaning. You and I can both think of 2 as the sum of 1+1, even though the vehicle of my meaning is my act of thinking, and the vehicle of yours is your act of thinking. As mental events, these acts of thinking are isolated and distinct. What makes them mean “the same” – what it is in virtue of which they are each an instance of meaning 2 as the sum of 1+1 – is that their meanings are both of the same Species.² Considered at the level of a Species, a meaning is an ideal unity, with which both my act of thinking and your act of thinking are involved. As with other kinds of objects, there are independent and non-independent meanings:

A meaning, accordingly, may be called ‘independent’ when it can constitute the full, entire meaning of a concrete act of meaning, ‘non-independent’, when this is not the case. It can then only be realized in a non-independent part-act in a concrete act of meaning, it can only achieve concreteness in a meaningful whole (IV.Intro.§7.59b; original emph.)

As with the essences of other objects, we learn of the essences of meanings through mental acts of Categorial Intuition. As with other objects, the status of a meaning as independent or non-independent is a matter of ideal laws of essences. Non-independent meanings are those which belong to a Species governed by a law of essence such that they cannot exist except in more inclusive wholes; independent meanings are those which

²Some further nuance is add here by Husserl’s distinction between *act-qualities* and the matter of mental acts. I shall address this more fully in §6.3 below. For now it is harmless to leave it out of account.
are not subject to such a law. For example, given the essence of the meaning expressed by “+” in “1+1=2,” a thought of + cannot mean what + means here unless it appears in a complex act of thinking which involves further meanings (of numbers – whether these be left variable or be determined). An ideal law of essences governs the existence of any instance of a meaning of + in this way. In contrast, the meanings expressed by e.g., the words “something” or the demonstrative “that” are not subordinated to any ideal law which necessitates the existence of any other meaning. (Thus we can think “There is something – I wonder what that is” without meaning any further specification of the intended object).

The ideal laws of essence which govern meanings constrain the course of actual meaningful thought as such. When we consider mental acts of meaning in their essence we recognize non-independent acts of meaning as a class of acts such that their existence presupposes the existence of other acts of meaning: ‘one’ (in pure, i.e., unconditioned universality) could not perform [volziehen] the one set of acts [Acte] without being able to perform [nicht anheben] those coordinated with them, and this on account of the specific semantic essence of the acts concerned” (V.4.§35.154^b). Non-independent acts of meaning and independent acts of meaning are also called founded and founding acts, respectively.

Of crucial importance to Husserl’s project is a further distinction between meaning-intentions (Bedeutungsintentionen) and meaning-fulfillments (Bedeutungserfüllungen).

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^3The distinction between independent and non-independent meanings replaces the distinction between categorematic and syncategorematic expressions, in Husserl’s account (III.1.§§4&5, 55-58^b).
also called fulfilling intentions).⁴ In thinking, a series of mental events occurs which are constrained by laws of essence. When one wishes to think authentically of an object – when one wishes, e.g., to know of a given object that it truly has a particular determination – one must do more than mean that object. “A name, e.g., names its object whatever the circumstances, in so far as it means that object. But if the object is not intuitively before one, and so not before one as a named or meant object, mere meaning is all there is to it [Es hat aber bei der bloßen Meinung sein Bewenden]” (I.1.§9.192a). Consider the thought expressed by: “Something must constitute the core of Husserl’s conception of mental acts.” This thought, and particularly the mental act which means “something,” really does mean some thing – but that is all this act does; it is a mere meaning-intention. By thinking this thought, we do not know what, if anything, corresponds to this “something” (we still have some work to do in determining what the core of Husserl’s account might actually be). To know this, we must perform a further act, a fulfilling intention, which directly gives us the object in its specificity, and shows it up as identical with the thing which we meant. In Husserl’s analysis, paradigmatic knowledge consists in such a coordination between meaning-intentions and fulfilling intentions.

These claims are only made clear when Husserl at last articulates his analysis of mental acts of Categorial Intuition in the final chapters of Investigation VI. The point of my brief overview has been to emphasize that mental acts (e.g., of thinking; of meaning; of Categorial Intuition) occupy center-stage in LI. Despite their central importance, it is only at the start of Investigation V that Husserl at last sets himself the task of explicating

⁴Husserl also calls meaning-intentions “acts of signification” (signitiven Acten) (see VI.1.§8.207b fn.5).
“mental acts”:

No term in descriptive psychology is, however, more controversial than the term “act,” [Acten] and doubt, if not quick rejection, may have been aroused by all passages in our previous Investigations where we made use of the notion of ‘act’ to characterize or express our conception. It is therefore important, and a precondition for carrying out all our tasks, that this concept should be clarified before all others. It will appear that the concept of an act, in the sense of an intentional experience, circumscribes an important generic unity in the sphere of experiences (apprehended in its phenomenological purity), and that to put meaning-experiences into this genus enables us to characterize them in a truly worthwhile manner (V.Intro.79-80b; original emph.).

Here Husserl anticipates his definition of mental acts as intentional experiences. In the next section, I begin to explore this account, setting the stage for later discussion.

6.2 Egos, Acts, & Sensations

Husserl distinguished two concepts of experience (Erlebnisbegriff). To experience events in the “popular” sense consists in “perceptions, judgements, and other acts [Acte], in which these events appear as objects, and often as objects of certain assertions which relate them to the ego” (V.1.§3.84b). This invokes far more than Husserl wished to capture with the notion of experience alone – it invokes a coordinated relation between an experiencing ego and an object via some mental act(s). Husserl distinguishes a phenomenological sense of experience. I wish to remind the reader that what Husserl regarded as a “phenomenological” conception of experience would be heavily revised in his Ideas, as I shall discuss further in Ch.7 below. For now, let us try to clarify the phenomenological sense of “experience” as it was put forth in LI. In LI, if we are interested
in experience in the phenomenological sense, we focus directly on what a consciousness

_**has** in experience – what constitutes a _part_ of a particular consciousness as such. :

This ‘having’... merely means that certain contents [_Inhalte_] help to constitute the unity of a consciousness, enter into the phenomenologically unified stream of consciousness of an empirical ego. This itself is a real whole, in reality made up of manifold parts, each of which may be said to be ‘experienced.’ It is in this sense that what the ego or consciousness experiences, are its experience: there is no difference between the experience of mental content and the experience itself. What is sensed is, e.g., no different from the sensation. If, however, an experience ‘directs itself’ [ _Bezieht sich_ ] to an object distinguishable from itself, as, e.g., external perception directs itself to a perceived object... such an object is not experienced or conscious in the sense to be established here... [A consciousness’] content is the sum total of present experiences, and ‘contents’ in the plural means these experiences themselves, i.e., all that as real parts constitute any phenomenological stream of consciousness (V.1.§3.85b). 

There are two key points raised by this passage which we must clarify if we are to have an adequate understanding of Husserl’s early conception of experience. The first is in keeping with Brentano’s views, and the second is a break from Brentano’s views.

The first is that Husserl regards the conscious ego as a unity of experiences (in the “phenomenological” sense of experience). The second is that not all experiences (in the “phenomenological” sense) are regarded as intentional mental phenomena. I shall elaborate each in turn.

### 6.2.1 No Ego Beyond the Unity of Experience

In the passage above, Husserl claims that a conscious ego is composed of the unity of all the experiences (in the phenomenological sense) occurring in it at a given

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5In later works, Husserl would reconsider the import of this “bracketing” of external objects, distinguishing more clearly between _noemata_ and _noeses_. I address this in Ch.7 below.
moment. This is strikingly similar to Brentano’s conception of a “mentally active subject” as a present *unity* of mental phenomena (§4.5 above). In *LI*, Husserl seemed to follow Brentano in refusing to countenance the “pure ego” construed as “the unitary centre of relation, to which all conscious content is as such referred in a wholly peculiar fashion” (V.1.§8.91). In the first edition of *LI*, Husserl declared that he was

...quite unable to find this ego... The only thing I can take note of, and therefore perceive, are the empirical ego and its empirical relations to its own experiences, or to such external objects as are receiving special attention at the moment, while much remains, whether “without” or “within,” which has no such relation to the ego (ibid.92).

While clear in its rejection of the pure ego, this passage’s positive assertions require some unpacking.

In *LI*, Husserl distinguished (quite rapidly) several conceptions of the “ego.” In the passage above, Husserl is positively re-asserting his recognition of:

(a) the “ego in the sense of common discourse” (*im Sinne der gewöhnlichen Rede*)

which he understood as comprising both:

(b) the “ego-body” (*Ichleib*) – an “empirical object... as much as any thing, a house or a tree, etc.”

& (c) the “purely mental ego” (*psychische Ich*) (V.1.§4.85).\(^6\)

As I shall discuss further in a moment, each of these notions of the “ego” can undergo (*LI*’s) phenomenological reduction, and so we can distinguish “reduced” versions of (a),

\(^6\)Husserl also calls (ii) by the title of “Ich-Körper”(V.1.§8.92). From the perspective of his later works (esp. *Ideas II*), the interchangeability of “Ichleib” and “Ich-Körper is an abominable confusion. See §7.2 below.
The only notion of an ego which Husserl explicitly rejected was

(d) the “pure ego” (*reinen Ich*), understood as the Kantian ego of apperception (V.1.§8.91b).

Let us examine a passage where Husserl both distinguishes and countenances (a), (b) and (c). In doing so, Husserl stresses that recognizing these senses of “ego” does not require positing any “ego” lying *behind* experiences. An experiencing consciousness, in the sense of (a), is simply one empirical (i.e, experienced) object among others, partly constituted by bodily phenomena (i.e, (b)), and partly constituted by empirical-psychological phenomena (i.e., (c)). We can abstractly consider the psychological ego in isolation from its bodily concomitants, and thereby submit it to (*LI*’s) phenomenological reduction. What remains after this is *nothing but a real unity of experiences*:

If we cut out [Scheiden wir] the ego-body from the empirical ego, and limit the purely mental ego to its phenomenological content, the latter reduces to a unity of consciousness, to a real experiential complex, which we (i.e., each man for his own ego) find in part evidently present, and for the rest postulate on good grounds. The phenomenologically reduced ego is therefore nothing peculiar, floating above many experiences; it is simply identical with their own interconnected unity. They run in diverse fashions from content to content, from complex of contents to complex of contents, till in the end a unified sum total of content is constituted, which does not differ from the phenomenologically reduced ego itself (V.1.§4.85-86b).

The view expressed here is thus quite strikingly Brentanian, in the sense explored in Ch.4, §4.5 above. The ego is nothing but the unity of experiences. As we shall see, this will cause problems for locating an Act Conception of intentionality in Husserl’s early work, just as it caused problems for a Brentanian Act Psychology. However, the views are not
equivalent, and this is the second key point which we must clarify.

6.2.2 Not All Experiences are “Mental Acts”

In the passage I provided on p.223 above, Husserl claimed that the mental ego is a unity of experiences, considered in the “phenomenological sense.” This is not interchangeable with Brentano’s claim that the mentally active subject is a unity of intentional mental phenomena. That is because in LI, Husserl held that not every experience is intentional. In this Husserl believed Brentano was mistaken – we cannot properly define psychology as a science of mental phenomena if we appeal only to intentionality, since this will miss genuinely mental phenomena (real parts of a consciousness) which are not intentional. Still, Brentano was apt in highlighting the importance of intentionality, since:

A sharply defined class of experiences is here brought before us, comprising all that enjoys mental, conscious existence in a certain pregnant sense of these words. A real being deprived of such experiences, merely having contents inside it such as the experiences of sensation, but unable to interpret these objectively, or otherwise use them to make objects present to itself [während es unfähig wäre, sie gegenständlich zu interpretieren oder sonstwie durch sie Gegenstände vorstellig zu machen], quite incapable, therefore, of referring to objects in further acts [Acten] of judgment, joy, grief, love, hatred, desire and loathing – such a being would not be called ‘psychical’ by anyone... (V.2.§9.94-95b; original emph.).

In a rich sense, a being lacking intentional experiences would not count as psychical.

Yet a certain class of experiences in the phenomenological sense – namely sensations (Empfindungen) – would remain if we subtract intentional experiences from mental life.

Husserl made this claim repeatedly throughout LI. For example:

That not all experiences are intentional [Dass nicht alle Erlebnisse “psychische phänomene” in dieser Wortbedeutung sind] is proved by sensa-
tions and sensational complexes. Any piece of a sensed visual field, full as it is of visual contents, is an experience containing many part-contents, which are neither referred to, nor intentionally objective, in the whole (V.2.§10.97b).

And again:

...the mere having [blosse Haben] of sensations and images [Phantasmen]... as a mere experiencing of an experience, is no intentional experience, directing itself upon an object by way of an interpreting sense... (V.6.§44.174-5b).7

That is: sensations are experiences in the phenomenological sense (they are mental phenomena; we “have” them; they “belong” to a consciousness as a part) but they do not constitutively involve any intentional reference. As Husserl suggests at the end of this last passage, the intentional reference involved in perception is achieved by an interpretation of sensations. To “take” sensations “in this sense is an experienced character through which the ‘being of the [intentional] object for me’ is first constituted;” it is an “act-character which as it were ensouls [beseelt] sense [der Empfindung], and is in essence such as to make us perceive this or that object, see this tree, e.g., hear this ringing, smell this scent of flowers, etc.” (V. 2.§14.104; 105b).8 This notion of interpretation shall come under closer scrutiny in §6.3 below.

When Husserl asserts that sensations are not intentional, he often expresses this by saying that they are not acts. And this is because Husserl defines “mental acts” as intentional experiences. He discusses at length what the notions of “act” and “intention” are to mean here, simultaneously clarifying the distinction between meaning-intentions

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7Mohanty (1995) notes that Husserl reconsidered this split between mere “content” and “apprehension” as early as 1909, but it was a central plank of his view in LI. In addition to the in-text citation I have provided, see further: (I.2.§23.214a); (II.2.§10.252a); (V.1.§14.104b); (V.1.§15.106b); (V.6.§44.note 9, 173b). The same view is also present in Ideas I & II, so far as I can see.

8See again fn.5 above; the distinction between noema and noesa is also relevant here.
and fulfilling-intentions:

The term ‘intention’ hits off the peculiarity of acts [Acte] by imagining them to aim at something [unter dem Bilde des Abzielen vor], and so fits the numerous cases that are naturally and understandably ranked as cases of theoretical aiming. But the metaphor does not fit all acts equally... we cannot avoid distinguishing a narrower and a wider concept of intention... an act of hitting the mark corresponds to that of aiming [der Tätigkeit des Abzielen als Correlat diejenige des Erzielen], and just so certain [fulfilling] acts correspond as ‘achievements [Erzielungen]’ or ‘fulfillments [Erfüllungen]’ to other acts as ‘[meaning] intentions’... The image [of ‘aiming’] therefore fits these latter acts quite perfectly; fulfillments are, however, themselves acts, i.e., ‘intentions’ [auch Akte, also auch “Intentionen”], though they are not intentions – at least not in general – in that narrower sense which points to corresponding fulfillments... (V.2.§13.102b; original emph.).

The narrow sense of “intention” characterizes acts of meaning-intention which aim at some object, but which do not themselves “hit it.” This is precisely what is involved in such meanings expressed by: “something must be the core of Husserl’s account of mental acts.” Such an act means some object (the “something”) but it does not present us with that object. We must wait for the object (the “something”) to be authentically presented in a fulfilling-intention. In contrast, fulfilling acts are not “intentional” in this narrow sense, but are held to be “acts – i.e., ‘intentions’” in another, broader sense. Fulfilling acts are more than simply directed at an object – they “hit the mark,” they access or deliver the object(s) towards which they are directed.

This metaphor of some acts as “aiming” at objects and others as “hitting” offers a fairly clear distinction between meaning-intentions and fulfilling-intentions, while underscoring their similarity as intentional phenomena. Both are directed at an object;

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9 For brevity, I leave aside another sense of “intending” which Husserl sketches and quickly sets aside prior to the start of this passage: the focal direction of attention upon an object. This thought will be revisited below, esp. in §7.3.
one class is *merely* directed, whereas the other presents it. Now the description at
work here clearly invokes certain connotations of activity (aiming, hitting). One might
then think that we have here a sketch of the active character of acts – that is, a clue
to a substantive Act Conception of intentionality. But pursuing this reading faces two
conflicting difficulties.

First, the metaphor of “aiming” and “hitting” threatens to invoke a “volitional”
view of mental acts according to which mental acts are acts because they involve a
“striving” towards some goal. A rich volitional conception surely captures part of our
everyday understanding of, e.g., bodily acts, but surely not every intentionally directed
experience is to be understood as my pursuit or attainment of an explicit goal. As I clarified
at the outset in Ch.1, when discussing the conceptual possibility of “subintentional mental
acts” (§1.3), if there is any sense in which all intentional mental phenomena are acts, it
must be weaker than this. We essentially need a subintentional conception of mental
acts, whereas the metaphor of aiming and hitting rather suggest a conception of mental
acts as *intentional* acts – in the sense that they are done for an intention or goal which is
personally aimed-at. So the foregoing account may seem to invoke too much to serve as
the source for a suitable Act Conception.

Second, Husserl immediately follows the passage above by saying: “In talking of
‘acts’, on the other hand, we must steer clear of the word’s original meaning: *all thought
of activity [Tätigkeit] must be rigidly excluded*” (V.2.§14.102b). But then it is entirely
unclear just what the metaphor of “aiming” and “hitting” amounts to, since the metaphor
explicitly invokes activity: the metaphor *is* a comparison of intentionality to *activities* of
aiming and hitting (“der Tätigkeit des Abzielens als Correlat diejenige des Erzielens”). If all thought of activity must be excluded from our conception of mental acts, then what is left but passively “having” objects? It may seem that Husserl does not intend for his metaphor to invoke connotations of genuine activity at all: and then it would seem that we should not try to ground an Act Conception of intentionality here.

We can partially – but only partially – resolve these two difficulties simultaneously. Husserl adds a footnote to clarify the sense of “activity” which we must exclude if we are to have a proper understanding of mental acts:

We are in complete agreement with Natorp (Einleitung in die Psychologie, 1st edn, p.21) when he objects to fully serious talk about ‘mental activities’, or ‘activities of consciousness’, or ‘activities of the ego’, by saying that ‘consciousness only appears as a doing [Tun], and its subject as a doer [Täter], because it is often or always accompanied by conation [Streben]’. We too reject the ‘mythology of activities’ [die Mythologie von Tätigkeiten]: we define ‘acts’ as intentional experiences, not as mental activities [psychische Betätigungen] (V.2.§13.fn.15.353-354).\(^{10}\)

The sense of activity which Husserl here rejects is closely related to the commonsense conception of actions as the pursuit of an explicit personal goal. Husserl drives a wedge between intentionality as directedness to an object and any invocation of striving towards an object. This distinction is perhaps most difficult to see in the sorts of acts we have just reviewed: meaning-intentions and fulfilling-intentions. We are tempted to think here of a “striving” since a meaning-intention can exist independently of its fulfillment: meaning-intentions are not founded upon their corresponding fulfilling-intentions. Thus,

\(^{10}\)This is a puzzling citation for Husserl to make, since at this point in the text Natorp is arguing at length that we should not distinguish mental acts (in any sense) from mere content at all; but Husserl needs such a distinction in order to distinguish intentional and non-intentional experiences. He explicitly cites Natorp as a foil on this point, just a few sentences after the passages which which I am concerned here: see (V.2.§15.102). Regarding Natorp’s opposition to mental acts, compare the discussion of Russell back in Ch.1, p.7
something further is required in order for fulfillment to occur. Similarly, something must be done in order for our desires to be fulfilled. But whereas a desire typically motivates us to do what needs to be done to attain its fulfillment, it seems a meaning-intention in general need not do any such thing. Indeed, Husserl’s remarks elsewhere suggest that we might treat desires (and much else besides) as instances of meaning-intentions, where the peculiar character of desires is that they do motivate us to strive for their fulfillment:

We have only to think of the opposition between wishful intention and wish-fulfillment [Wunschintention und Wunscherfüllung], between voluntary intention and execution [Willensintention und Willenserfüllung], of the fulfillment of hopes and fears, the resolution of doubts, the confirmation of surmises, etc., to be clear that essentially the same opposition is to be found in very different classes of intentional experiences: the opposition between significant intention and fulfillment of meaning is merely a special case of it. We have dealt with this point previously, and delimited a class of intentional experience under the more pregnant name of ‘intentions’: their peculiarity lies [only] in being able to provide the basis for relations of fulfillment (VI.1.§10.210b, my emph.).

Likewise, that some acts can serve as fulfilling-intentions does not mean they must occur in a personal striving for fulfillment. Should I have a prior meaning-intention, and should a suitable fulfilling-intention come along (e.g., an intuition of the meant object) it will give me the object as “precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought or meant to be” (VI.2.§8.206b). But I can (e.g.) perceive objects without pursuing anything at all. And I can have the very perception which could have served to fulfill a meaning-intention without thinking any such meaning-intention in the first place.

This “striving after some object” is the only sense of activity which Husserl makes explicit in LI, and it is explicitly this sense of activity which must be “rigidly excluded” from our conception of mental acts. On the one hand, this is an important
clarification, for it is notable that the fulfillment of a meaning-intention by a fulfilling-intention, which bears more than passing similarity to the attainment of an explicit goal, need not involve any such personal striving. “Consciousness” is not to be understood as “doing” mental acts, and mental acts are not to be understood as “done” by consciousness, in the sense that consciousness “strives” to carry them out. This takes us a step beyond Brentano’s claim (B1) above (see §4.6, p.201 above). Brentano claimed that we should not (generally) understand “mental acts” in terms of the pursuit of a goal, in the sense that characterizes strict, volitional actions. Husserl insists further that we should not think of any kind of striving for fulfillment when we think generally of acts. (I return to this in the next subsection.)

On the other hand, we should not follow Husserl in limiting ourselves to this restrictive conception of activity – we need not exclude all thought of activity from our conception of mental acts when we exclude this notion of activity. Similarly, not every bodily act need involve a personal striving or a pursuit of an object or explicit goal. Some bodily acts are simply done with no goal in mind, and others done inadvertently – but they are still acts for all that. And Husserl himself repeatedly flouts his own restriction, invoking active construals of mental acts.11 At the outset (cf. Ch.1 above), we know

11Beyond calling intentional experiences acts which are directed to an object, there are such turns of phrase as: “there are great differences in the energy [Activität]... with which acts assert themselves in an act-complex” (V.2. §19.116b); We can be “absorbed in performing [in ihrem Vollzuge ’aufgehen ’]” certain acts (V.2. §19.118b); All thinking takes place [vollzieht] in acts (V.3. §22.129b); “To the judgement corresponds, as ’mere; presentation, the act performed by someone [der Act, den jeman vollzieht] who hears and understands...”(V.3. §28.139-140b); Ideal laws of meaning show that one “could not perform [volziehen] the one set of acts without being able to perform [nicht anheben] those coordinated with them...” (V.4. §35.154b); a meaning-intention “aims at its object, is as it were desirous of it [die Intention auf ihren Gegenstand abzielt, nach ihm gleichsam begehrend langt]” (VI.3. §20.232b); we must closely examine “the achievement [die Leistung] of intuitive presentations” (VI.3. §21.233b); representation is “carried out [vollzogen]” in acts (VI.7. §55.299b); acts of Categorial Intuition can appear in an “actual carrying out [des
that if an Act Conception of intentionality is to be coherent, then it must depart from the standard conceptions of intentional actions, and must instead provide us with some conception of subintentional mental acts. What Husserl’s remarks here suggest is that he himself did not explicitly have such a conception of subintentional acts in view at the time of *LI*. Rather, because mental acts were not “done” by a “striving doer,” he regarded them as not properly activity *at all*.

Still, for my purposes, it is a live possibility that “activity,” *in some other sense(s)* can be called upon to determine the “act-character” of mental acts. It is the task of the next two subsections to explore whether this is so: to examine whether if Husserl’s remarks elsewhere are sufficient to provide us with a conception of activity that is implicitly at work in his conception of intentionality.

### 6.3 The Argument From Fulfillment

In this section I explicate one substantive, positive construal of mental acts as acts which can be located in *LI* (despite Husserl’s claim that all thought of activity-in-the-sense-of-striving-by-a-doer is to be rigidly excluded). As summarized in Ch.4, §4.6 above, the (insufficient) core of Brentano’s account of mental acts was summed up in the *Argument From Unity* (first articulated in §4.5). For Husserl, as for Brentano, *Evidenz* always involves a unity of multiple intentional references. But for Husserl, any intentional

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*actualen Vollzugs*” (VI.8.§62.310b) and can be “really performed *wirklich volgeiebar sind*” (ibid., 310b); authentic act-forms must be “really executed *wirklich vollzogenen*” while merely signitive act-forms are “not authentically executed *eigentlich garnicht volzogenen*” (VI.8.§63.314b).
experience counts as an act, even if it does not partake in such a unity of intentional reference. And a founding (independent) act which is directed solely at a single object is precisely an act which need not partake in such a unity. Thus, a Brentanian Argument From Unity cannot be carried through by the Husserlian account, since not every act must occur in a unity of multiple intentional references. This is no great loss, however, since we have already seen the Argument from Unity requires much supplementation if it is to provide a substantive Act Conception of intentionality. Despite this, a clue for how one might move beyond Brentano in elucidating the act-character of mental acts lies in Husserl’s analysis of how unities of mental acts arise.

For Husserl in *LI*, the central cases of unities of intentional reference are cases of knowledge through the fulfillment of meaning-intentions. A preliminary example is the recognition (*Erkennen*) of an object which is presently perceived (e.g., an inkpot) and which is named (“inkpot”) by a verbal expression of a concept. In such a situation, Husserl remarks that the spoken word and the object stand in a peculiar relationship: “the name ‘my inkpot’ seems to overlay the perceived object, to belong sensibly to it” (VI.1.§6.201b). Approaching the situation phenomenologically, we have in consciousness on the one hand some act(s) in which the word appears to us as a meaningful symbol (i.e., as an expression of a meaning-intention), and on the other hand some act(s) in which the object appears to us. In recognition, these acts are unified in co-direction toward the same object. Husserl offers the following preliminary analysis:

What brings these acts into unity... [are] acts of recognition (*Erkennen*), which are here also acts of classification. The perceived object is recognized for an inkpot, known as one, and in so far as the act of meaning
is most intimately one with an act of classification, and this latter, as recognition of the perceived object, is again intimately one with the act of perception, the expression seems to be *applied* to the thing and to clothe it like a garment... the recognitive experience of this thing as ‘my inkpot’, is nothing but a recognition which, in a definite and direct fashion, fuses an expressive experience, on the one hand, with the relevant percept, on the other (VI.1.§6.201-202⁶; original emph.).¹²

The peculiar apparent relationship between the heard word and the seen inkpot is to be accounted for in terms of a relationship between – *a fusion of* – the acts which are directed towards them (more on this notion of fusion below).¹³

Husserl claims that while the foregoing sorts of cases – what he calls, at this time, *static unities* of acts – are difficult to analyze on their own, we can gain insight into their workings by turning to cases of “dynamic coincidence” between acts, where their fusion is strung out over time:

Where this happens, we experience a descriptively peculiar *consciousness of fulfillment*: the act of pure meaning, like a goal-seeking intention [*in der Weise einer abzielenden Intention*], finds its fulfillment in the act which renders the matter intuitive. In this transitional experience, the *mutual belongingness* of the two acts, the act of meaning, on the one hand, and the intuition which more or less corresponds to it, on the other, reveals its phenomenological roots. We experience how the same objective item which was ‘merely thought of’ in symbol is now presented in intuition, and that it is intuited as being precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought or meant to be (VI.1.§8.206b; original emph.).

Plausibly, Husserl invokes the notion of goal-seeking intention only to sketch an *analogy* (not an identification) between a teleological conception of an act and the fulfillment

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¹²The translation of this final sentence is questionable, and there seems no clear German equivalent of “recognitive experience” as such: “Also ein in bestimmter und schlichter Weise das Ausdruckserlebnis auf der einen mit der betreffenden Wahrnehmung auf der anderen Seite verschmelzendes Erkennen konstituiert das Erlebnis: Erkennen dieses Dinges als mein Tintenfaß.”

¹³We encountered, in passing, a similar conception of fusion in Brentano’s psychology: cf. p.186 above. For Brentano, every intentional mental phenomenon was regarded as exhibiting a form of fusion insofar as all exhibited secondary intentionality.
of a meaning-intention. This should not be taken to invoke any striving towards a goal (see §6.2 above). But, especially in the case of dynamic fulfillment extended over time, the similarities between the fulfillment of a meaning-intention and the attainment of a goal are altogether quite striking. When a unity between a meaning-intention and a fulfilling-intention occurs over time, we are made uniquely aware that the object we had earlier merely “meant” is now delivered to us, and appears just as we had thought it to be. Just such an awareness of fulfillment occurs when we recognize that we have completed a volitional action, and have done something we were striving to do by attaining the desired goal-state.

In fact, we can understand the attainment of a goal of action as a species of fulfillment through unity (one which, paradigmatically, uniquely involves striving to bring about such unity). I submit that we can then make some sense of a broader class of actions, considered in abstraction from the peculiarities of volitional action, in terms of this basic structure of unity through fulfillment. On this view, our central, volitional notion of an action is seen as invoking one kind of unity through fulfillment, and the bare intentional structure of unity through fulfillment is taken as the core feature which distinguishes a broader class of acts. To highlight the centrality of fulfillment in such abstract actions (and to recognize that calling them all “actions” will likely meet with some resistance), I hereby dub them “factions.” A faction can be viewed abstractly as an action, insofar as it has a fulfillment-structure which is characteristic of actions. A faction is not a concrete bodily action, but rather a complex mental event in consciousness. Factions can thus be regarded as specifying a candidate conception of mental acts.
Let us summarize this proposal in the following argument:

**The Argument From Fulfillment (“AFF”)**

1. In any prototypical action (e.g., a volitional bodily action) (*i*) there is a goal which is aimed at, (*ii*) the goal motivates the action, (*iii*) fulfillment of the goal is attained through various bodily means, and (*iv*) the goal is fulfilled when the action is successful.

2. Considered in abstraction from (*ii*) and (*iii*), a similar form of fulfillment occurs any time a meaning-intention “fuses” with a complementary fulfilling intention, forming a unity (e.g., in recognition).

3. In fact, any fulfillment of an intended goal, as described in 1, is an instance falling under the more general species of fulfillment of an intention, as described in 2.

4. To the extent that we take such fulfillment to be characteristic of acts, there is a sense in which any such unity of fulfillment between any meaning intention and fulfilling intention licenses talk of mental acts, considered in abstraction from motivation-to-act, and considered in abstraction from bodily concomitants.

∴ Any unity of fulfillment is a mental act, considered abstractly.

Let me spend a bit more time fleshing out this proposal. I remark at the outset that we shall ultimately find it unsuitable to ground an Act Conception of intentionality. Despite that, clarifying why it fails is important for several reasons. First, it will give us an opportunity to connect with some contemporary discussions of mental acts. Second, we
shall revisit “factions” and unities of fulfillment in chs.7&8 below, and it is worthwhile laying some groundwork here.

To flesh out this proposal, it is worthwhile here to briefly compare some contemporary conceptions of mental actions. These were initially reviewed briefly in §1.3 above. Some have posited mental analogues of strict “Intentional Acts” (IAs – §1.2.2), which are popularly understood in terms of representations of personal goals. In an IA, my intentional representation of a goal motivates me to do what must be done to attain the goal, and the action is individuated with reference to that representation. This account seems problematic when applied to some mental cases, since just in virtue of representing the goal (e.g., to think that \( P \)) I would seem to have already attained it (i.e., I would already have entertained in some way the thought that \( P \), else I could not represent it as my explicit goal). Still, many have posited mental “Pre-intentional Acts” (PAs – §1.2.3). In these cases, some other kind of representation is posited to individuate the PA (e.g., a mental analogue of Searle’s intentions-in-action, or of Pacherie’s motor intentions), although the PA is still done in the service of some overarching, personal goal. Mental PAs do not face the problems of incoherence that some mental IAs do: I might have as my explicit goal “to think of the solution to a puzzle,” in a way that leaves somewhat indeterminate what the solution is, and what the means to the solution are. I then undertake a series of mental PAs in the service of this goal, which culminate in me thinking something which I believe to be the solution to the puzzle. Each PA presupposes its own, additional represented goal – roughly, to do something which is a means to fulfilling my goal of solving the puzzle. In jointly fulfilling a multitude of PAs,
my overarching goal is also fulfilled – and it is not paradoxically fulfilled as soon as I intend it, as in the problematic cases of mental IAs.

Now, how does one recognize that any represented goal has been fulfilled – how does one become conscious of the completion of either an IA or a PA, whether bodily or (when possible) mental? Husserl offers an answer. A meaning-intention (the representation of the goal) fuses with a fulfilling-intention (the representation of the attainment of the goal) in a unity of fulfillment, and we become conscious of the intended end-state of our action as “precisely the determinate so-and-so” that we initially intended to bring about. That is, a particular species of faction constitutes our awareness of the fulfillment of any personally intended goal of action. A faction thus constitutes our awareness of the performance of any traditional action. Considered more generally, a faction constitutes our awareness of the fulfillment of any meaning-intention: a faction need involve neither striving, nor bodily mediation between the meaning-intention and the fulfilling-intention, nor explicit desires, nor personal goals at all. These are only special cases of factions.

How does the Husserlian account handle problematic mental IAs, in which “paradoxically” what I intended to do must already have just “happened” – e.g., my entertaining that $P$ must have already just happened or else I could not form the intention to think that $P$, let alone think that $P$ in an IA, following on that intention? Let us compare Strawson’s own analysis. Strawson (2003) in fact sketches two accounts. In the first sketch, he divides such cases into three stages. First, there is a “comprehending entertaining” of $P$ in which $P$ is “held in mind as an intended object of thought” (ibid.,
In this stage the future occurrence of thinking of $P$ is entertained as a thing that might occur. Strawson does not regard this initial comprehending of $P$ as a mental action, but rather something we passively undergo. After this, there is a second stage which is a proper mental action in Strawson’s view – a setting oneself or resolving to think that $P$. This action, however, is not itself a thinking that $P$, but only involves a kind of “priming” to think that $P$; in Strawson’s sketch, one generates “a silent acoustic image [of $P$] to oneself in some way”\textit{(ibid., p.235)}. Finally, following upon this “catalytic” act of priming, there occurs a third stage, “another event of (particularly emphatic) comprehending entertaining of $P$” – but this third mental event is a mere happening, analogous to “falling... once one has jumped off a wall” \textit{(ibid., p.235)}.

That is Strawson’s first sketch. In this case, the Husserlian conception of a \textit{dynamic coincidence} between meaning-intention and fulfilling intention appears aptly applied. The unity of fulfillment occurs over time. There is first a meaning-intention (in this case an entertaining of the possibility of thinking $P$). There is next a \textit{striving} or priming of some sort (setting oneself to think $P$, or catalyzing oneself to do so). And there is then a fulfilling-intention – a thinking of $P$, wherein $P$ is recognized as precisely the determinate so-and-so one set out to think. In this case, the faction is mediated by a fairly traditional striving – though this is incidental to the basic intentional structure of a unity of fulfillment as such.

Strawson also suggests a second sketch. He remarks that the eventual thinking that $P$ may “perhaps concurrently” occur with (what he regards as) the mental action of “priming” oneself to think that $P$ \textit{(ibid., p.235)}. If that is so, then it would seem that we
can apply both the Husserlian conception of a dynamic fulfillment, and of a static unity of fulfillment. There is, in the first stage, a meaning-intention to think that $P$. There is a second stage which involves a striving or priming to think that $P$, and concurrently in this same stage, there is the thinking that $P$. There is thus a static unity of fulfillment in the second stage – the striving to think that $P$ is simultaneous with the actual thinking that $P$. Yet there is still some temporal distance between the initial meaning-intention (stage 1) and its fulfilling-intention (stage 2). We would have here, in the Husserlian analysis, a dynamic unity of fulfillment, one of whose members is itself a static unity of fulfillment.

The Husserlian account coheres with Strawson’s view in other ways as well. Note that both of Strawson’s sketches seem to require precisely the division which Husserl demanded when distinguishing intentional mental “acts” from “activities” (see §6.2 above). In order to understand either the Husserlian conception of factions or Strawson’s view, we must be able to distinguish an intentional mental phenomenon (e.g., a meaning-intention, or a “comprehending entertaining of $P$ as an intended object of thought”) from any striving (a “setting oneself” to think that $P$).

However, the Husserlian conception of factions does put into question the hard division Strawson wants to draw between mental actions and and passive mental events. In Strawson’s reading, my mental action concerns only priming myself to think that $P$, and “the rest” – the actual, ensuing thinking that $P$ – “is waiting, seeing if anything happens, waiting for content to come to mind” (ibid., p.232). Thus he likens it to a case where I decide to step off a cliff, and then fall – the deciding and stepping are perhaps volitional actions of mine, but the falling is not. But this is, in the Husserlian view, wholly
unsatisfactory as an account of what occurs in thought, or in any recognition of an object, or in any unity of fulfillment. And it seems to me that the Husserlian view is in the right on this score. When I set out to think that $P$ and do so, or when I wonder what an object is and then (perhaps without striving) recognize it as an $F$ or a $G$, the fulfillment of my prior meaning-intention has the character of a kind of culmination or, as Husserl aptly characterizes it, a fulfillment. I get what was previously only meant; I “hit the mark.” The occurrence of self-directed thought does not present itself with the accidental character which ‘falling’ might have when I merely intended “to step off a cliff.” Rather, thinking $P$ is what I meant to do, and doing so it presents itself as such: as a fulfillment.14

Now in the case of self-directed thought, we plausibly do have a personal striving (even if it only eventuates in a “priming”) which is fulfilled. But an intention-to-act is only one species of meaning-intention which can be fulfilled. The central proposal of The Argument From Fulfillment is that quite apart from the question of whether or not a striving is involved, the fulfillment-character of a faction licenses talk of acts. Is this plausibly true? If we “rigidly exclude” all thought of activity (as striving) from our conception of mental acts, can they yet be understood as acts in some other substantive sense?

Strawson thinks not. He treats some kind of personal striving as critical to any mental event’s status as an action. In his view, if we are looking for mental actions, we should be concerned to locate cases of “setting one’s mind to the problem” (ibid., p.231);

14Here one calls to mind Brentano’s suggestion (see Ch.3, p.114) that to think of thought as befalling us would be a “ridiculous supposition” (Brentano, 1866, p.126).
or mental events which involve “effort and focused concentration of will” and which
“one initiates” (ibid., p.232). Strawson’s central focus is the traditional philosopher of
action’s focus in which we treat as interchangeable the personalistic notions of “action
or will... freedom of choice” (ibid., p.233). Where such features are lacking, Strawson
holds that no action is done.

Husserl himself seems to adopt a similar view: when he follows Natorp in rigidly
excluding any connotation of striving from our conception of “mental acts,” he declares
that we have rejected the entire “mythology of activities” regarding consciousness, and
have disabused ourselves of the thought that consciousness is to be regarded “as a doing
[Tun], and its subject as a doer [Täter]” (V.2.§13.fn.15.353-354b – see again p.230 above).
This suggests that for early Husserl, there is nothing worth calling an act without a
genuine, striving actor who does it. (We shall see Husserl reconsider this in Ch.8 below.)

But personal strivings are incidental to the basic intentional structure of a faction.
Thus if the notion of “factions” provides a substantive conception of mental acts, it will
be at odds with an understanding of mental acts as IAs, or as in any other way necessarily
bound up with strivings. But we are here exploring the possibility of an Act Conception
of intentionality. If such a view is to be feasible, I have argued at the outset (cf. §1.2.6
above), it is not to be expected that it will fully-cohere with traditional conceptions of
personal action. So this feature of factions, on its own, does not speak against their utility
in grounding an Act Conception.

There is, however, a crucial limitation on this concept of factions: it only applies
where multiple intentional experiences are unified in fulfillments, and thus it faces two
difficulties.\footnote{LI provides resources for extending the Argument From Fulfillment as follows (call this an argument from potential fulfillment). Since for every meaning-intention there is an ideally possible corresponding fulfilling intuition (and \emph{vice versa}) the sheer possibility of forming factions is enough to define a sense in which mental acts are acts. This claim is either unconvincing (that which is possibly an act is not actually an act) or else its appeal to ideality would be better pursued in Husserl’s mature phenomenology. I shall leave this aside here, but see Ch.7, §7.3.2 below, and Ch.8, §8.2.5.} First, it is conceivable that no fusion of acts in fulfillment should occur: all my meaning-intentions might be left as mere meanings, and the acts which present me directly with objects, and which thus could have served as fulfillments, might find no corresponding meaning-intention to which they are appropriately geared. Thought and intuition might simply never meet. In Husserl’s account, the unity of fulfillment in a faction arises contingently. This kind of fusion and unity is thus importantly distinct from the Brentanian kind of fusion and unity which (as discussed in §4.4) was held to essentially characterize every conscious, intentional mental phenomenon. This poses a problem for an appeal to factions in an Act Conception of intentionality: it would seem that we could have a mental life without factions, and so it is unclear that they are adequate to provide the account we seek. And this leads to the second difficulty: on the Husserlian sketch, it is \textit{intentional mental acts} which are (sometimes) unified in such an “abstract action,” and they are unified \textit{in virtue of} their co-directedness towards an object. The basic sense of an “act” as an intentional experience is presupposed in the account of “factions.” And even if no factions should occur, the mental life which could remain would be robustly \textit{intentional}.

It is for these reasons – and not, for example, due to the disparity with a traditional, volitional conception of acts – that an appeal to factions cannot serve as a basic account of intentionality as arising through mental acts. The foregoing exegesis has been of value
in showing that contemporary conceptions of mental actions might find a natural place in the early Husserlian scheme. But we must look elsewhere to clarify whether any Act Conception has a home in *LI*.

### 6.4 The Argument From Interpretation

With the failure of the Argument from Fulfillment, I turn to consider another option for grounding an Act Conception in Husserl’s early work.

Let us examine more closely the nature of fusion: what makes it the case that an object is “intuited as being precisely the determinate so-and-so that it was at first merely thought or meant to be” (VI.1.§8.206b)? Here we must recall Husserl’s insistence on the role of *interpretation* in distinguishing intentional from non-intentional experience (see 227 above). Returning to the inkpot example:

> ...my inkpot stands before me: I see it... this means no more phenomenologically than that we undergo a certain sequence of experiences of the class of sensations, sensuously unified in a peculiar serial pattern, and informed by a certain act-character of ‘interpretation’ (*Auffassung*), which endows it with an objective sense. This act-character is responsible for the fact that an object, i.e., this inkpot is perceptually apparent... (VI.1.§6.201b).

The unity of fulfillment which (e.g.) gives us an inkpot, recognized as an inkpot, consists in a coordination of such interpretations.\(^{16}\) The word “inkpot” expresses a meaning-

\(^{16}\textbf{NB:} \) Here Husserl’s numerous terminological distinctions (between *epistemic, representational, intentional*, and *semantic* varieties of essences, forms, contents, matters, etc.) make it difficult to cite a passage which clearly states the point. Regarding the coordination of interpretations in recognition of an ink-pot, he says: “the intentional essence of the act of intuition [i.e., of the seeing of the object] gets more or less perfectly fitted into [passe sich (mehr oder minder vollkommen)... an] the semantic essence of the act of expression [i.e., of the naming of the object]” (VI.1.§8.206b). I hope the reader will permit me (once) to say crudely what Husserl says with brutal articulation.
intention (here, a concept) which can only be fulfilled by the presentation of an object of a certain sort (i.e., an inkpot); this fulfillment requires that the presented object be such that it is interpretable as the concept demands. The fulfilling-intention, for its part, interprets a current suite of sensations to present us with an object (i.e., an inkpot) which, happily, can also be interpreted as an inkpot in the way the meaning-intention demands. Because the object (an inkpot) appears, it can be further recognized (categorized) as an inkpot.

This notion of interpretation constitutes Husserl’s core conception of mental acts or intentional experiences. It is the interpretive character of any intentional experience which makes it a “mental act” for early Husserl, and it is this which the Argument From Fulfillment presupposes and fails to clarify. Thus if we could clarify interpretation, and if it could be said substantively that interpretation is active, then we should have worked out an Act Conception of intentionality in Husserl’s early work.

To clarify interpretation, we have to bear in mind a few terminological cautions. Nowadays, the “content” of an intentional phenomenon is often regarded as what it is about or directed at. This is not how Husserl uses the term content. The phenomenological content of an experience consists of every feature and component of it. What distinguishes acts from non-acts, as two kinds of experience, is that acts have the feature of being directed towards an intentional object (see §6.2 above). Nowadays we might say that the difference is that “acts” have a content, whereas non-acts do not. In Husserl’s usage, instead, the difference is that part of the content (features) of acts is that they are intentionally directed, whereas non-acts do not have this peculiar content (feature),
although non-acts do have other content (features). Distinct varieties of mental acts
(wishings, judgings, desirings, perceivings, imaginings, etc.) are distinguished by further
contents (features) which determine the way in which they are directed at an object (as
imagined, as desired, etc.). This Husserl calls the act-quality of a mental act. Crucially,
mental acts of distinct qualities can be directed at the same object (a “something”) and
can also each specify that object as having the same determinate features (I can wish for,
desire, perceive, imagine the same determinate so-and-so). The content (feature) of an
act which determines what it is directed towards, and as-what that object appears is what
Husserl calls the “matter” of the act.

With this terminology in place, we can follow Husserl in clarifying this distinction
between act-quality and matter, as part of the content of acts which distinguishes them
from non-acts. He writes:

Quality only determines whether what is already presented in definite fashion is intentionally present as wished, asked, posited in judgement, etc. The matter, therefore, must be that element in an act which first gives it reference to an object, and reference so wholly definite that it not merely fixes the object meant in a general way, but also the precise way in which it is meant. The matter – to carry clearness a little further – is that peculiar side of an act’s phenomenological content that not only determines that it grasps an object but also as what it grasps it, the properties, relations, categorical forms, that it itself attributes to it. It is the act’s matter that makes its object count as this object and no other, it is the objective, the interpretative sense (Sinn der gegenständlichen Auffassung, Aufassungssinn) which serves as basis for the act’s quality (while indifferent to such qualitative differences). Identical matters can never yield distinct objective references... (V.2.§20.121-122b; original emph.).

What distinguishes the class of all acts from non-acts is that the former have as part of
their content (i.e., have as a feature) a matter – an interpretive sense, through which they
are directed to an object. What distinguishes one class of acts from another is a distinct aspect of their content (i.e., another feature they have) called their act-character, though they may share a matter. It is this basic notion of interpretation which corresponds to the directedness to an object which characterizes any mental act (intentional experience). The route to an Act Conception is clear: if “matter” or interpretive sense is required for intentionality, and if “matter” is in any substantive sense a mental act qua act (or is itself brought about through a mental act qua act), then intentionality will be grounded in a mental act qua act.

There is some prima facie plausibility to this line of thought when we consider the cases that contrast with intentional mental acts. In mere sensation, for example, we have a paradigmatic example of pure mental passivity – we simply “have” these phenomenological contents imposed upon us. Sensations “happen” in our mind. It is conceivable that no interpretation should occur such that we are presented with objects at all. A being’s “mental” life might consist solely in the mere having of sensations. For example, suppose I am sensing yellow. It seems that something more is required for the sensed yellow to be referred to some object – for me to have a perception of a yellow object, as opposed to merely sensing yellow. In order for us to perceive an object (or for us to mean or intend an object in any other act-character) it might be said that something must be done with sensory contents to refer them to an object which we thereby apprehend (e.g., in perception, an object we apprehend as having sensory

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17 Such a being might also have the images or “phantasmen” which would normally be interpreted in imaginative presentation (V.6.§45.175b).
qualities corresponding to the sensations we undergo).

Why would one suppose that this “referring” of sensations to an object is a doing, rather than a mere happening? One questionable line of thought appeals to the fact that the same sensory contents can frequently be interpreted in a multitude of ways, and the determinant of which way they are interpreted seems to be endogenous to the mind. For example, if I push on my eyeballs, or stand up quickly after sitting for too long, I might ‘see’ yellow specks floating around. In such cases I do not usually attribute yellowness to any external object – but I could, even though I would reflectively regard this as an error. Likewise I may experience a yellow afterimage. If I know it is an afterimage, then I do not attribute yellowness to any worldly object, but rather regard it as a ‘merely’ subjective state. But I could experience such yellowness as accruing to a perceived object. And color is not the only example. When viewing a bistable figure (e.g., a “duckrabbit”) and faced with the same set of sensations, I can be presented with distinct objects (now a duck; now a rabbit). The determinant of what I perceive seems to lie within the workings of my mind. Or I can misperceive depth relations and size relations even when undergoing stable sensation (thereby leading to mistaken judgements of such relations). Or I can (as Husserl stresses elsewhere) fail to interpret a heard word as a meaningful expression, apprehending the very same sensations only as a perceptible event. These are not things which we usually intend to do (though we can, e.g., try to see a bistable figure in one way or the other), but they are specific contributions of the mind in going beyond the passive reception of sensations and making objects apparent to us – i.e., moving from non-acts to intentional mental acts. One could suggest that such interpretation involves a kind of act
(not, of course, in the sense of a strict volitional action) which constitutes intentionality.

Call this:

The Argument From Interpretation (“AFI”)

1. In paradigmatic cases of sheer mental passivity (e.g., sensation), I have experience, but I do not have have an intentional experience of some object.

2. In order to have an intentional experience of some object, sensations must be “interpreted” and referred (perhaps incorrectly) to some apparent object – that is, every intentional experience requires a “matter” or “interpretive sense.”

3. Insofar as the same sensations can give rise to a variety of intentional experiences (e.g., in cases of bistable figures) the mere passive reception of sensation does not determine which intentional experience I have.

4. Rather, the determinants of my intentional experience (i.e., the interpretive sense) appear to arise, at least in part, from the workings of my mind.

5. Insofar as intentional experiences are, in this way, endogenously-determined, they can be regarded as arising through a kind of mental act.

∴ All intentional experiences arise through a mental act.

In accordance with Husserl’s remarks, it need not be supposed that such activity
involves any kind of personal *striving*. Typically we do not need to “try” or be personally “motivated” to be presented with an apparent world of objects. In this sense, all thought of volitional action can be radically excluded from our understanding of mental acts, and yet the *Argument From Interpretation* provides some plausibility to the idea that an endogenously-determined act of interpretation is required to have any intentional experience. In keeping with this, and also bearing in mind Husserl’s rejection at this time of the pure ego, we ought not regard such “interpretation” as in any sense a *personal* action. The view on offer is that sensation is *merely happening*; interpretation is *being done*; yet ‘I’ am not in any clear sense the one who is doing the interpreting.

Thus the conception of an “act” on offer here is somewhat under-determined. It is not clear that Husserl himself means to offer a substantive Act Conception of intentionality. Instead (as noted in §6.3 in connection with Strawson) Husserl appears to operate with a fairly restrictive conception of acts, doings and doers, according to which consciousness is not a doing, and the conscious subject is not a doer, *since* we do not *strive to perform* intentional mental acts. So it is unclear that the LI’s *Argument From Interpretation* provides the resources to ground an *Husserlian* Act Conception of intentionality. Further, it does not appear sufficient to ground *any* Act Conception. This *Argument* points out that the determinant of interpretation is internal to the mind, but it is unclear why this alone should license substantive talk of acts. Further, suppose the *Argument From Interpretation* did go though, and we had some license for speaking of intentional mental phenomena as really arising through *acts*. Then we appear to be back where we ended up with Brentano: if there is an Act Conception lurking here, then
it relies on a conception of mental acts which do not logically imply a distinct acting subject. Husserl himself does not clarify such an account in LI. (We shall eventually see it clarified in Ch.8 below).

### 6.5 Early Husserl in Sum, and Brentano Revisited

The Husserlian vision of “Act Psychology” in LI consists in adherence to (at least) the following positive and negative doctrines. Many of these can be meaningfully compared to the doctrines of Brentano’s AP (see p.201 above).

(H1) (extends (B1)) We should not (generally) understand “mental acts” as involving active striving, in the sense that characterizes strict, volitional actions (see §6.2), rather, (H2) Any such “strict action” involves a specific instantiation of the generic intentional structure of factions, or a unity of fulfillment between a meaning-intention and a fulfilling-intention (see §6.3);

But, (H3) (replaces (B2)) Any singular instance of intentional directedness towards an object is itself an act, and this conception of mental acts is presupposed in (H2) (see §6.3).

(H4) Every intentional mental phenomenon is characterized by an interpretive sense or matter, which is required to go from the passive receipt of sensations to the presentation of an object (see §6.4).

(H5) (rejects (B3)) We cannot swap talk of mental acts with talk of a “mentally active subject,” since mental acts (intentional experiences) are only one class of experience
and \((H6)\) (replaces (B4)) An empirically real ego is nothing beyond the real unity of experiences (intentional and non-intentional alike) (see §6.2),

and so \((H7)\) There is no sense in which mental acts are “done” by a conscious subject, since the subject is nothing but a unity of acts, and since it is a confusion to think of the mental subject as an “actor” at all (see p.230)

With this we have failed to radically clarify a sense in which mental acts might be considered acts. Pairing the results here with those of Ch.4, we have thus fully-failed to substantiate the claims of historians of psychology that Brentano and Husserl are, in any significant sense, proponents of a doctrine informatively called “act psychology.” For Brentano, we could only find and discard the Argument From Unity as an option for grounding an Act Conception. For early Husserl, we found and discarded two options. The Argument From Fulfillment attempts to wield (H2) to offer a construal of mental acts according to which unities of fulfillment constitute factions – actions in an abstract sense reminiscent of (but more fundamental than) strict volitional actions. But (see H3) this conception of factions is not sufficiently general to cover every case of intentional experience (not every intentional experience does occur in such a unity) and for Husserl, factions must ultimately be understood as coordinations of interpretive senses or matter, since these are what constitute the intentional directedness of any single mental act.

The Argument from Interpretation thus emerged as the best case for grounding an Act Conception in Husserl’s early work. On this view, we take the interpretation involved
in (H4) as a genuine mental *doing*, in virtue of which we mean any object. The difficulty for this proposal is that, like Brentano, Husserl simply defines the mental subject (what he calls the empirically real ego) as the unity of all mental phenomena (acts and non-acts alike – see H5 - H7). And so once again, there is here no mentally active subject – an agent, a thinker – in relation to which we could characterize mental acts as active in the sense of being a subject’s performance. Rather, our conception of the subject as active (as a “doer”) is held to be a confusion: it arises because within the unity of experience which makes up the subject, there are some strivings. So if the Argument From Interpretation goes through, it can at best deliver us an under-explored account of mental acts as acts without an actor.

At this point, it is beginning to look as if the historians of psychology may have simply misled us in declaring Brentano and Husserl to be proponents of a view informatively called “act psychology.” For early Husserl, “mental act” appears to be a technical term which *(a)* is not to invoke any connotation of active striving, and *(b)* cannot be understood as implying a distinct mental subject who actively “does” consciousness. If mental acts are really to be understood as acts, neither Brentano’s empirical psychology, nor Husserl’s early and immature work, provides any clarification on how this can be so.

It seems I must still beg the reader to keep reading. In the remainder of this dissertation, we shall see the mature Husserl change his mind on all these points. We shall find a mentally active subject which can, in a way, substantiate an Act Conception of intentionality. And we shall also find a conception of mental acts which do not imply an actor who carries them out.
To presage what follows, it is perhaps worth pointing out how often Husserl fails to follow his own strictures in *LI*. We are told, as noted above, that in our conception of mental acts, “we must steer clear of the word’s original meaning: *all thought of activity* [Tätigkeit] must *be rigidly excluded*” (V.2.§14.102b). Notable, from this vantage, is the frequency with which Husserl employs a metaphor of activity in *LI*. The metaphor not only confronts us in his decision – ultimately misleading, in the official view – to call intentional mental phenomena by the title of “acts.” The metaphor is far more than a passing propadeutic: it is *pervasive* in *LI*. In his initial breakthrough into phenomenological description, Husserl returns again and again to descriptions of intentionality which invoke connotations of activity. I provide a shortlist:

Husserl says that “there are great differences in the energy [Aktivität]... with which acts assert themselves in an act-complex” (V.2.§19.116b).

We can be “absorbed in performing [in ihrem Vollzuge ‘aufgehen’]” certain mental acts (v.2.§19.118b).

All thinking “takes place [vollzieht] in acts” (V.3.22.129b).

“To the judgement... corresponds, as ‘mere’ presentation, the act performed by someone [der Act, den jeman vollzieht] who hears and understands” (V.3.28.139-140b).

Ideal laws of meaning show that in the case od founded acts, one “could not perform [volziehen] the one set of acts without being able to perform [nicht anheben] those coordinated with them...” (V.4.35.154b).

A meaning-intention “aims at its object, is as it were desirous of it [die Intention auf ihren Gegenstant abzielt, nach ihm gleichsam begehrend langt]” (VI.3.20.232b).

We must closely examine “the achievement [die Leistung] of intuitive presentations” (VI.3.21.233b).

Representation is “carried out [vollzogen]” in acts (VI.7.55.299b).

Acts of categorial Intuition can appear in an “actual carrying out [des actuallen Vollzugs]” and can be “really performed [wirklich volziebar sind]” (VI.8.62.310b).
We must distinguish “really executed... act-forms \([\text{wirklich vollzogenen... Aktegebilde}]\)” from signitive act-forms which are “not authentically executed \([\text{eigentlich gar nicht vollzogenen}]\)” (VI.8.§63.314\(^b\)).

So much for the “rigid exclusion” of all thought of activity in our conception of mental acts. In what follows, I show that Husserl came to see these connotations of action as more than coincidental to a proper conception of “mental acts.” Instead, they underscore essential features of mental acts which ground several legitimate Act Conceptions of intentionality.
Chapter 7

Act & Intentionality in Husserl’s *Ideas*

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the status of mental acts in Husserl’s *Ideas* (books I & II). In these texts Husserl sets out the domain and method of transcendental phenomenology, and lays down foundations for phenomenological analysis of our experience of the surrounding world.

Given my aim of addressing the nature of mental acts in the *Ideas*, I must again be selective in my engagement with the text. One large topic I shall not discuss at all in this chapter concerns Husserl’s mature distinction between “static” and “genetic” phenomenology (see again p.212 above). I shall revisit this in Ch.8 below. However, even setting this aside, there is much to discuss. Husserl’s conception of mental acts (and mental phenomena in general) gained much nuance through his clarification of phenomenology as a project in transcendental philosophy, rather than in empirical psychology. And so appreciating his later view requires some elaborate stage-setting. This stage-setting will occur in the first two sections of this chapter, wherein I shall
clarify a number of contrasts between the *Ideas* and the *Logical Investigations*. I begin (§7.1) with a sketch of the method of phenomenological ἐποχή and the domain of pure phenomenology. I then (§7.2) focus on the various conceptions of an ego which Husserl explores throughout the *Ideas*. Whereas in the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl spoke only briefly of the “empirical ego,” and quickly rejected the “pure ego” – construed as the Kantian “Ego of apperception” – in the *Ideas* (especially book II), he provides and endorses a detailed articulation of a three-fold distinction between the real psychological ego, the personal ego, and the pure ego.

Once this background is in place, we will be in a position to assess a number of new candidate conceptions of “mental acts” which might underlie an Act Conception of intentionality. All of them stem from Husserl's recognition of the pure ego, and the way in which it can be called upon as the *actor who executes* mental acts, in some sense or other. I shall examine several such conceptions throughout this chapter. Husserl’s new concept of the pure ego is central to his mature (static) phenomenology, and it is essentially related to nearly every aspect of his view. It is also, as we shall see, difficult to master. I shall explore how the pure ego informs Husserl’s mature Act Conception of intentionality in two large stages – §§7.3&7.4.

In §7.3, I focus on the pure ego’s role as the active executor of an important class of mental acts - those with the character of *cogito* or “I-think....” The initial result of what I call *The Argument From Attention* is a limited grounding of an Act Conception of intentionality, according to which *some* acts are the performance of the pure ego. I spend a moment in §7.3.1 explicating the importance of such acts for understanding
transcendental phenomenology, clarifying what I call *The Arguments From ἐποχή* and *Ideation*. But the most important result of this chapter arises through *The Argument From Potentiality* (§7.3.2). This argument provides a proper Act Conception of intentionality, according to which *all* intentional mental phenomena are to be understood (in a sense) as acts of the pure ego. We shall see that Husserl’s mature view puts a transcendental spin on our everyday conception of ourselves as the agents who carry out strict, volitional actions.

In §7.4 I examine another variety of acts which are productions of the active pure Ego, and which are also intimately involved in understanding ourselves as human agents in the natural world. As we shall see, the pure ego is called upon as an active agent whose acts *constitute* our human selves as stable, empirical realities which persist through time. This is the result of *The Argument From Sedimentation*. This argument secures the status of egoic mental acts as subintentional.

I conclude the chapter in §7.5 by summarizing Husserl’s conception of mental acts during the period of *Ideas*, and highlighting its potential impact upon our conception of intentionality. This will conclude my discussion of Husserl’s “static” phenomenology. I will turn in Ch. 8 to discuss his “genetic” phenomenology.

### 7.1 Intro to Phenomenology I: Essence & ἐποχή

Husserl’s task in the *Ideas* was to lay out the domain, method, and main lines of inquiry for a purely phenomenological philosophy. The domain of phenomenology
is (roughly) characterized by two features: first, phenomenology investigates pure consciousness; secondly, phenomenology investigates pure consciousness considered in its essence. Husserl’s first task (and mine) is to aid the reader in distinguishing this domain.

Let us begin with the second characterization of the domain of phenomenology, and the distinction between fact and essence. The domain of facts is characterized by individuality, spatiotemporal locality and by contingency – every “matter of fact” consists in the world’s being a certain way in a certain place (e.g., the existence and the arrangement of items on my desk at the moment is a matter of fact; my existence as a psychological being with my particular history in the world is a matter of fact) when the world could have been some other way (the items on my desk might not have existed, might have had different properties, or might not have been here in this particular arrangement; I might not have existed, or might have been psychologically different than I am) (I.1.1.§2) \(^1\)

The contingency of “matter-of-factness” (Tatsächlichkeit), however, does not fully divorce facts from essences, since every object always has its properties which make it just the object it is: “An individual object is not merely in general an individual one, a This here! a ‘once and only’ object. Fashioned as such and such ‘in its very self,’ it has its own kind of being, its complement of essential predicables that must pertain to it...” (I.1.1.§2.11, original emph.). For example, the sound emanating from my desk fan (that sound) is distinguished from other objects by a variety of features – it is an

\(^{1}\)Citations to Ideas I & II will follow the following ordered set to the degree of specificity which is required: <Book #; Part#; Chapter #; Section #; Page # in the English translation>. I cite the 2014 Dahlstrom translation of Ideas I, and the 1989 Rojcewicz & Schuwer translation of Ideas II.
acoustic object; it is an audible object; it has its particular volume, its audible character, its location in time and space. As suggested by the case, there is a kind of hierarchy of properties which characterize any individual, some of which are so general (e.g., acoustic object) as to delineate an entire domain of objects, and others of which (in accordance with or as a specification of the more general features) distinguish one individual from every other. Thus, “an essential component is inherent in each individual as its essence, just as, vice versa, corresponding to each essence are possible individuals that would be its factual individual instances [Vereinzelungen]” (I.1.1.§7.18).

Because fact and essence are inseparable in these ways, we can always move from an empirical intuition of individual factum to an apprehension of what the individual essentially is as such, an apprehension of its essential properties. Following on his work in *Logical Investigations*, Husserl holds that in a further act of *Ideation*, we move from an apprehension of what an individual is in itself to a direct apprehension of the essences themselves, e.g., acoustic object *in general*, tone *in general*, spatiotemporal event *in general*, psychological being *in general*, and so on. Husserl argues that the apprehension of an essence is a form of intuition, insofar as the thing apprehended (the essence) is a determinate object in the broadest possible sense: it is a possible subject of predications. “The essence (eidos) is an object of a new kind. Just as the given in the individual or experiential intuition is an individual object, so the given in the intuition of the essence is a pure essence” (I.1.1.§3.12, all original emph.) An eidetic science (such as phenomenology) is concerned with analyzing essences as such, leaving aside the contingent individuals in which they happen to be factually instanced.
Now we return to the first characterization of the domain of phenomenology: it is the study of pure consciousness considered in its essence. Husserl provides the “phenomenological reduction” or ἐποχή as a method for distinguishing pure consciousness from other phenomena. In normal conscious life, we live in what Husserl calls “the Natural Attitude” (des natürlichen Einstellung): we take for granted that the surrounding world exists, that the appearances of things are (better or worse) indicators of a persisting transcendent reality. It is in virtue of the orderliness of our experience that we posit such a reality: “The course that our human experiences [Erfahrungen] in fact takes is such that it forces our reason [es unsere Vernunft zwingt] to go beyond intuitively given things... and to posit a ‘physical truth’ underlying them” (I.1.3.§47.85). The implicit thesis that there is such a transcendent reality is the Natural Attitude. The phenomenological ἐποχή is to be understood as a radically different attitude that we may take up. It can be sketched by considering a series of possibilities.

First, it is possible that human consciousness “had never ventured and would never have ventured beyond the pre-scientific level (in which case the physical world would, to be sure, have its truth, only we would have known nothing of it)” (I.1.3.§47.85). This possibility serves to distinguish two broad varieties of human consciousness. On the one hand, we have pre-scientific experience, whose orderliness is such that we are presented with a surrounding world of facts – the whole variety of worldly objects (including other people). This is the Natural attitude. On the other hand, we have those forms of rational, theoretical thinking which are (e.g.) involved in scientific explanations of the physical reality of the apparent world. The apparent surrounding world as such
- the one whose reality we might try to explain – is constituted for us in and through naïve experience, and posited in the Natural Attitude, prior to any scientific explanation of it. We may then take up a Naturalistic Attitude – a scientific-explanatory attitude – seeking to understand the transcendent reality which we have already posited in the Natural Attitude:

I find the “actuality” [Wirklichkeit] (the word already says as much) to be there in advance... As an actuality “the” world is always there... To know it more comprehensively, more reliably, and more perfectly in every respect than the naïve experiential information can, to solve all the tasks of scientific knowledge that present themselves on its basis, that is the goal of the sciences of the natural attitude. (I.1.1.§30.52)

These sciences presuppose the Natural Attitude as their starting point. As it happens, we do pursue such sciences. But we might not have done so: we might have been left only with the Natural Attitude, and might never have taken up a Naturalistic Attitude towards the world.

Second, even where we do take up the Naturalistic Attitude, it is possible that “the physical world would be a different one, with orders of law other than those which factually hold” (I.1.3.§47.85). That is, in our scientific investigation, we might have explained and understood the posited, transcendent reality of the world differently than we did. Even more strongly, it is possible (as Descartes considered) that there could in fact be no external physicalistic world at all, despite our rational urge to posit one. Despite this, it is quite possible (as in Descartes’ scenario) that there is still an apparently factual world for the subject – we could still have an orderly course of experience such that our reason is compelled to posit a transcendent physical reality behind it. In short, these
possibilities are meant to suggest that we could have an apparent world regardless of how its transcendent nature might be Naturalistically explained – indeed, regardless of whether it exists at all. Husserl takes this possibility to show that the being of consciousness is absolute – that “no real thing... is necessary for the being of consciousness itself” (I.1.3.§49.89).

There is a third crucial possibility to consider: that our experience might not have been orderly in the ways that it is, and in virtue of which we have an apparent world. We might have had a form of consciousness that “in a fit of obstinacy shows itself all at once to be opposed to the [Natural] presumption that it coherently sustains its positing of things. In sum, it is conceivable that the connectedness [Zusammenhang] of experience loses the fixed, regulated order of profiles, construals, appearances – that there is no longer a world [Welt]” (I.1.3.§49.88). We experience an apparent world of objects only because our experience exhibits certain characteristic forms of orderliness (which it is in part the task of phenomenology to explore and articulate) such that stable apparent objects can appear, can be naively posited as factual, and can then become targets for scientific explanation.

Following on these observations, the key to the phenomenological ἐποχή is to recognize that – stepping back from our rational urge to Naturalistically explain the apparent world, and stepping back from the Natural urge to posit the transcendent reality of the apparent world – we can characterize every apparent object of consciousness as the experiential correlate of appropriately orderly forms of consciousness.² From this

²As I prefer to think of it, every apparent object (noema) is a position co-defined with the articulate
perspective: **“What things are** – the only things that we make assertions about, the only things whose being or nonbeing, whose being in a certain way or being otherwise we dispute and can rationally decide – **they are as things of experience**” (I.1.1.§47.85).

The phenomenological ἐποχή is Husserl’s title for this change of perspective (away from the Natural Attitude) in which we cease to take the factual world for granted as a starting point for Naturalistic inquiry:

*We put out of action the general thesis belonging to the essence of the natural attitude; we put in brackets anything and everything that it encompasses in an ontic respect; thus this entire natural world that is constantly “there for us,” “on hand,” and that will ever after remain there as an “actuality” in keeping in consciousness, even if it pleases us to bracket it. If I do this [Tai ἧ], as I am completely free to do, then I do not negate this “world” as though I were a sophist; I do not doubt its existence [Dasein], as though I were a skeptic. But I exercise [ich übe] the “phenomenological ἐποχή” that utterly closes off for me every judgment about spatiotemporal existence [räumlich-zeitliches Dasein]. As a result, I suspend all sciences related to this natural world, regardless of how firm a standing they have for me, how much they amaze me, or how little I think of raising even the slightest objection to them. I make absolutely no use of their valid results [Geltungen]. I refrain from adopting a single proposition that belongs to them, even if the evidence for it is perfect; no such proposition is taken up by me, none provides me a foundation... I am permitted to assume it only after I have bracketed it... in the modifying consciousness that suspends judgment...”*

(I.2.1.§32.55-56; all original emph.)

*After the ἐποχή, what survives is not any object of the natural world posited as factual and independently existing, but rather, simply consciousness itself, along with the apparent object, and the apparent world as it appears to us in experience – as it is “in the bracket.” The whole apparent world – the world which is presupposed as explanandum in the Naturalistic Attitude – is a correlate of orderly experience. From intentional structure of experience (noesa).
With the ἐποχή completed, we are free to study consciousness on its own terms; through a further act of Ideation, we can study the essences that are instantiated in any instance of consciousness. One preliminary distinction we can draw, to illustrate the results of phenomenology, is the distinction between intentional experiences and unintentional experiences. We have already examined this distinction as it was drawn in LI (see §6.2 above). In Ideas, Husserl retains the same division, distinguishing again “acts [Akte], in the widest sense of the Logical Investigations” from the “data of sensation [Empfingunsdaten]” (I.2.2.§36.63; see also I.3.3.§85). But he employs a new set of terms to describe the essential difference between these two classes of experiences (Erlebnissen). Husserl gives us the term noema (plural: noemata; adjective: noematic) as a name for any intentional object of a mental act (I.3.3.§88.174). Such “objects” survive the phenomenological reduction precisely because we do not “bracket” the articulate and orderly forms of experience which constitute noema as objects of our experience; we bracket only the positing of these objects’ factual reality. These orderly progressions of experience are called noesis (plural: noeses; adjective: noetic) (I.1.3.2.§85.167). As we saw in Ch.6, §6.2 above, this is just what in LI Husserl called the matter or interpretive sense of an act, which takes us (e.g.) from mere sensation to a presented object. Husserl now calls the basic “stuff” of pre-intentional experience by the name “hyletic or material data, also simply materials [Stoffe]”(I.3.2.§85.166) . The essential difference between an
intentional experience (i.e., an act) and a nonintentional experience is that the former, but not the latter, has a *noetic* aspect, and a corresponding *noema* – in virtue of this, it is *directed at* its intentional object.

In light of this distinction between acts and non-acts, *The Argument From Interpretation* (cf. Ch.6, §6.4 above) can still be pursued on the basis of the *Ideas*. As seen above, this would seem to require a conception of mental acts without an actor who carries them out. I will not pursue this line of thought here – though it will come back into focus in Ch.8 below. For the remainder of this chapter I shall pursue another line of thought: Husserl’s mature phenomenology in the *Ideas* will bear fruit in working out a plausible conception of who *does* perform some mental acts (though not the basic “act” of interpretation or *noesis*).

With the threefold distinction between hyletic material, *noesa*, and *noema*, we have Husserl’s basic articulation in the *Ideas* of the structure of intentionality. All of experience, acts and non-acts alike, lie within the domain of pure phenomenology after the phenomenological *ἐποχή*. One main line of phenomenological inquiry, which Husserl pursues in *Ideas II* and which we shall examine below, concerns a descriptive analysis of how distinct *noesa* constitute distinct *noemata*, and how these interact to form complex objects - in short, how we are presented with an experiential world. But crucially, in suspending the entire factual world through the *ἐποχή*, we bar ourselves from examining instances of conscious experience considered as facts: the phenomenologist does not approach consciousness in the manner of an empirical psychologist (whose whole theoretical endeavor presupposes the Natural Attitude). Rather, a pure phenomenology
(i.e., purified of factual presuppositions) proceeds entirely by analyzing the essences of consciousness *in general*, as well as the more specific essences of perception, thought, judgment, etc. *in general*. We “bracket” the fact that all such mental phenomena are instanced in factual beings (e.g., in me, as a psychological human being).

This feature of pure phenomenology is the greatest stumbling block in the way to understanding Husserl’s conception of transcendental subjectivity as it is revealed through the ἐποχή, and as we shall see, it is at the center of his revised conception of mental acts in *Ideas*. We can gain some clarity by following Husserl in distinguishing three distinct egos. This is the task of the next subsection.

### 7.2 Intro to Phenomenology II:

#### Three Egos & Two Psychologies

As we saw in §6.2 above, In *LI* Husserl distinguished four ego-concepts. He recognized:

(a) the “ego in the sense of common discourse” (*im Sinne der gewöhnlichen Rede*), as comprising both

(b) the “ego-body” (*Ichleib* or *Ich-Körper*) - an “empirical object” among others

& (c) the “purely mental ego” (*psychische Ich*),

while he rejected

(d) the “pure ego” (*reinen Ich*) (the Kantian ego of pure apperception).
As discussed in §6.2 above, Husserl claimed that he could not recognize the pure ego at the time of the first edition of *LI*. After writing *Ideas*, he amended the second edition of *LI*, declaring that he had “managed to find it” (*LI*, V.1.§4.92*fn.8, printed on 353*fn.). Accordingly, in *Ideas* (and esp. in Book II) Husserl gives us a radically revised taxonomy of ego-concepts, and countenances all of the following:

(d) the pure ego,  
(e) the real psychic ego or soul (*Seele*),  
& (f) the personal ego or spirit (*Geist*).

We apprehend (e) through a Naturalistic Attitude, (f) through a Personalistic Attitude, and (d) via the ἐποχή.

My aim in this section is to complete an introduction to the requisite background for *Ideas* by providing as brief as possible an introduction to each ego-concept. I discuss the real psychological ego first (§7.2.1). I then turn to the personal ego (§7.2.2). I then introduce the pure ego (§7.2.3). A more extended discussion of the pure ego is the task of §7.3, and the personal ego will also receive further elaboration in §7.4. I stress in advance that these are distinctions between concepts whose extensions are intended to overlap: I can regard myself or others Naturalistically (as real psychic ego), or Personalistically (as personal ego), or purely.

### 7.2.1 The Real Psychic Ego (*Seele*)

The real psychic ego or soul (*Seele*) is Husserl’s title for the explanatory target of Naturalistic psychology. We should not read any speculative metaphysics into this claim.
Rather “soul” is the term Husserl uses to delineate a peculiar class of phenomena which we are presented with in everyday, philosophically naive experience. The phenomena in question are living, animate organisms. In the Natural Attitude, we will rationally posit a transcendent reality behind these phenomena – what used to be called a “soul,” but which is more commonly understood today as a “mind” or as “cognition.” In a Naturalistic Attitude, we pursue psychology as an empirical science which seeks to explain these phenomena in physicalistic terms. For Husserl’s pure phenomenology, the crucial task here consists in distinguishing what is involved in apprehending a worldly object as a merely material thing - an inanimate object, a corporeal “body” (Körper) – versus apprehending a worldly object as a psychical being - an animated or living “Body” (Leib - note the use of the capitalized “B” to mark the distinction in English). What are the essential features of some of our conscious experiences which motivates us to think of any item in the apparent world as living, or as minded, at all?

Husserl grounds the distinction in our apprehension of a particular class of psychical phenomena: sensations. To understand this phenomenological claim, we can begin from a first-person case of everyday experience. Our preliminary task is to understand the distinct experience of our own Body, contrasted with any inanimate object. When I, e.g., touch my left hand with my right hand, I experience two broad sets of sensations: those which occur in the touching right hand, and those which occur in the touched left hand. When I touch an external object (e.g., a table) I have only the one set, the set in the hand which touches the table. What grounds my distinct apprehension of

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3See my fn.6 on p.224 above.
my Body as intimately involved with my psyche is my awareness of my own sensations (themselves psychological phenomena) as localized in this particular corporeal thing I call my Body. I experience nothing similar regarding the merely material objects around me, and I must set aside any apprehension of my own sensation in order to regard my body as a mere material thing:

The indicational sensations of movement and the representational sensations of touch, which are Objectified [objektiviert] as features of the thing “left hand,” belong in fact to my right hand. But when I touch the left hand I also find in it, too, series of touch-sensations, which are “localized” in it, though these are not constitutive of [material] properties (such as roughness or smoothness of the hand, of this physical thing). If I speak of the physical thing, “left hand,” then I am abstracting from these sensations (a ball of lead has nothing like them and likewise for every “merely” physical thing, every thing that is not my Body). If I do include them [in my understanding of my hand], then it is not that the physical thing is now richer [e.g., has more material properties], but instead it becomes Body, it senses (II.2.3.§36.152, all original emph.).

Further, I know in experience (and especially via kinesthetic sensation) that my Body is something I can freely and directly move in certain ways (e.g., I can move my body so as to touch or see other things). Thus my freedom to pursue sensings via my Bodily movements is a further distinction between it and the other objects I experience, which I can move only mediately - i.e., via bodily manipulation (II.2.3.§38.159).

Because sensations are constantly changing, the manner in which distinct modalities or fields of sensations persistently “belong to” or are “localized in” the Body can only be fully understood with reference to the surrounding world of experience. The Body’s persistent sensibility or capacity for sensing is a kind of “conditional,” psychophysical property which belongs to the Body as a real (though not merely material) object
embedded in the world we experience. The sensation-fields are
given as belonging [zugehörig], in the mode of localization, to the appearing Corporeal body [zum erscheinenden Leibkörper].

“Belonging;” phenomenologically, this term expresses relations of the phenomenal “if-then”: if my hand is touched or struck, then I sense it. We do not have here the hand as a physical body and, connected with it, an extra-physical consequence. From the very outset it is apperceptively characterized as a hand with its field of sensation, with its constantly co-apprehended state of sensation which changes in consequence of the external actions on it... In the abstract, I can separate out the physical and aesthesiological [or sensitive] strata but can do so precisely only in the abstract. In the concrete perception, the Body is there as a new sort of unity of apprehension (II.2.3.§40.163).

The Body is naturally apprehended in the first-person view as a Bodily-psychic unity – a kind of noema unlike the merely material things that surround me, yet apparently (and factually – though we bracket this) there among them in the world. As a result of this psychophysical dependence upon the rest of the experienced world, the psychical itself falls under Husserl’s broad formal concept of reality: it is a “unity of lasting properties in relation to pertinent circumstances” (II.2.2.§33.144). There is here (in experience, regarded after the ἐποχή) no radical split between the psychical “soul” and the material world: “Psychic reality is constituted as reality only through psychophysical dependencies... the unity of the soul is a real unity in that, as unity of psychic life, it is joined with the Body... what we have to oppose to material nature as a second kind of reality is not the ‘soul’ but the concrete unity of Body and soul, the human (or animal) subject” (II.2.2.§33.146, original emph.).

Note that it is primarily only sensibility which has such a straightforward localization in the Body in our experience. The psychophysical link between sensibility and
the material body does not allow us to robustly localize all psychical features with the same degree of determinacy, and this poses a difficulty for a naturalistic psychology, insofar as it is difficult to apprehend the entire psychological subject’s localization in the natural world. An example concerns the noetic processes which constitute intentionality. Recall that mere sensations (as one kind of hyletic material) are not themselves inherently intentional: it requires noesis ("interpretative senes" in the sense of LI) for an object (a noema, after the ἐποχή) to appear to us in experience. We do not “sense” noetic processes in anything like the foregoing way, such that they have an immediate Bodily localization. Their relation to hyle initially permits only tenuous, indirect localization:

The intentional functions [i.e., noesa], however, are bound to this stratum: the matter [die Stoffe - the hyle] receives a spiritual [geistige] forming, just as, discussed above, the primary sensations undergo apprehension [Auffassung], are taken up in perceptions, upon which, then, perceptual judgments are built, etc. Hence in this way a human being’s total consciousness is in a certain sense, by means of its hyletic substrate, bound to the body, though, to be sure, the intentional lived experiences themselves are no longer directly and properly localized... The co-interwined contents of sensation have a localization which is actually intuitively given, but the intentionalties [die Intentionalitäten] do not, and only metaphorically are they said to be related to the Body or to be in the Body (II.2.3.§39.160-161, original emph.).

A naturalistic psychology can begin to bridge this gap in virtue of the apparent psychophysical dependence of even noetic processes upon the Body. Through scientific investigation, we learn that “If a process in the brain alters, then there occurs an alteration of the corresponding set of lived experiences” – but this dependency is not presented to us initially in conscious experience, and we do not originally have any sensation in (or of) the brain; it is rather “an empirical coordination... worked out theoretically” in
the usual manner of the natural sciences (II.2.4.§45.173). (Note that noesa – which, as Husserl says in the passage above, give hyletic materials a spiritual (geistige) forming – are also directly relevant to understanding the personal ego or spirit (Geist), and we will shortly return to them from that perspective).

One limitation of the foregoing sketch of the real psychic ego is that it is largely limited to a ‘solipsistic’ consideration of one’s own apprehension of one’s own body as a Bodily-psychic unity. This does not cover the intersubjective case of my apprehension of other humans as living, nor does it cover my apprehension of other living beings as animated. Thus far, only my own Bodily-psychic unity has been accounted for; we need a further phenomenological account of how I experience other bodily-psychic unities in the same sense. Husserl’s primary analysis is quite brief, and it invokes his notions of empathy and transfer:

In my physical surrounding world I encounter Bodies, i.e., material things of the same type as the material thing constituted in solipsistc experience, ‘my Body,’ and I apprehend them as Bodies, that is, I feel by empathy that in them there is an Ego-subject, along with everything that pertains to it and with the particular content demanded from case to case. Transferred over to the other Bodies is first of all [Hierbei überträgt sich vor allem] that “localization” I accomplish in various sense-fields (fields of touch, warmth, coldness, smell, taste, pain, sensuous pleasure) and sense-regions (sensations of movement), and then in a similar way there is a transfer of my indirect localization of spiritual activities [geistiger Tätigkeiten - i.e., noeses] (II.2.4.§45.172).

“Empathy” is the title of a unique kind of mental act whose essence is to enable me to experience others (as noemata) in the apparent world as others – as bodily-psychic unities. In Ideas II, these notions of empathy and transfer only receive further elaboration in Husserl’s discussion of the personal ego.
that I will turn next. However, the problem of empathy and intersubjectivity was one that Husserl did not feel he had resolved while drafting *Ideas II*, and this was in part why he abandoned revision of the manuscript in 1928 (as noted on p.210 above). A full discussion of the problem of empathy (cf. Stein 1917) lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

### 7.2.2 The Personal Ego (*Geist*)

Before even providing the foregoing “solipsistic sketch” of the real psychic ego, Husserl cautions the reader to note that when we reflect on our normal experience of other persons, “the apprehension in which the human being [*der Mensch*] is given to us... as a real person who behaves under the circumstances of his personal life now in this way and now in that way, *seems to contain a surplus*” beyond what can be assigned as the content of the real psychic ego (II.2.2.§34.147, original emph.). What we are missing is an apprehension of “the *Ego* [*ich*] as person or as member of a social world” (II.3.1.§49.184). The issue is that in our experience, we do not typically apprehend persons as “psychophysically conditioned” in the manner discussed above - we do not apprehend persons as responding to stimuli construed as mere material things (or their properties). We do not, generally, experience the apparent natural world from a *Naturalistic* perspective at all. Rather,

if we place ourselves on the terrain of the intentional relation between subject and Object [*den Boden der intentionalen Subjekt-Objekt-Beziehung*], the relation between person and surrounding world, then the concept of stimulus [*der Reizes*] acquires a fundamentally new sense. Instead of the causal relation [*Kausalverhältnisses*] between things and men as
natural realities, there is substituted the relation of motivation \([\text{Motivation-}
beziehung}\) between persons and things, and these things are not the things
of nature, existing in themselves – i.e., the things of exact natural science
with the determinations claimed there to be the only Objectively true ones
- but are the experienced, thought, or in some other way intended and
posited things as such, intentional objects of personal consciousness....
The Ego exercises on \(\text{es übt}\) these things explicating, conceiving, theo-
retically judging, evaluating, and practical activities \([\text{Tätigkeiten}\). They
now engage its [i.e., the Ego’s] interest in their being and their attributes,
in their beauty, agreeableness, and usefulness; they stimulate its desire
to delight in them, play with them, use them as a means, transform them
according to its purposes \([\text{Zweckgedanken}\), etc. (II.3.1.§50.199).

The objects to which whole persons respond in their surrounding world – the objects
which, as the \textit{noema} of experience, motivate persons – are all broadly construed as “spirit-
tual objects” \((\text{geistige Objekte})\) (II.3.2.§56h.251). All these objects have a “spiritual
sense \([\text{geistige Sinn}\) fused \([\text{verschmolzen}\) with them” in virtue of which they “mean
something \([\text{bedeutet etwas}\)” for the subject (ibid., 250). These are a class of noema
whose content includes more than simply that of the mere material thing, understood
from the Naturalistic Attitude. They also involve more than a mere sensitive Body, as
described in §7.2.1 above. They (along with persons themselves) can be thematically
approached only in a “Personalistic Attitude,” and Husserl, following Dilthey, considers
them to be the specific domain of inquiry for the human sciences \((\text{Geisteswissenschaften})
\) (II.2.2.§34.150). Such noema include “all unities of Body and sense \([\text{Lieb und Sinn}\),
hence not only all individual humans \([\text{Mensche}\) but also human communities, all cultural
formations, all individual and social works, institutions, etc.” (II.3.2.§56h.255). Impor-
tantly then, a unique class of spiritual objects consists of other persons, and our relations
of motivation between each other are in fact the foundation for the constitution of the
surrounding social world:

...human beings [Menschen]... have “motivating” power for each other... in their spiritual activity [geistigen Tun] they direct themselves [sie richten sich] toward one another (the Ego toward the other and vice versa), they perform acts with the intention [Absicht] of being understood by the other and of determining the other, in his understanding grasp of these acts (insofar as they are externalized in this intention) to certain possible modes of behavior... In this way relations of mutual understanding are formed: speaking elicits response; the theoretical, valuing, or practical appeal, addressed by the one to the other, elicits, as it were, a response coming back, assent (agreement) or refusal (disagreement) and perhaps a counter-proposal, etc.... The surrounding world constituted in experiencing others, in mutual understanding and mutual agreement, is designated as the communicative one. It is, by essence, relative to persons (II.3.1.§51.202-3, all original emph.)

The possibility of such mutual understanding - the possibility of a social and communicative surrounding world - lies in empathy (Einfühlung): one’s ability to “posit an analagon of my Ego and of my surrounding world, thus [to posit] a second ego with its ‘subjectivities,’ its sense data, changing appearances, and things appearing therein” (II.2.4.§46.177). In Husserl’s analysis (briefly) we naturally posit such an alter-Ego when confronted with the various embodied behaviors of others, positing that their mental lives are relevantly like our own. We do not concern ourselves with localizing those spiritual features in any fine-grained way within the Body as in the style of naturalistic psychology – we do not consider “where” someone’s sense of humor, or their thoughts and interests, are located. We rather view our Bodies as something which belong to us, the media through which we interact with the meaningful world: “The spirit in its freedom moves the Body and thereby can perform a work [vollzieht dadurch ein

\footnote{In (relatively) casual conversations, it has been suggested to me that this is a curious use of what has become the everyday sense of the English term “empathy.” It is worth noting, then, that the term “empathy” was introduced to the English language by Titchener precisely as a translation of Einfühlung.}
Wirken] in the spiritual world... My Body is not only an appearance for me but it is ‘animated’ [beseelt] for me: in terms of consciousness, it is the organ of my original free movements” (II.3.3.§62.295). In empathy, we experience other living Bodies as animated by a similarly free, personal subject.

Here is the place to partially tie up one loose end from §7.2.1’s “solipsistic sketch” of the real psychological ego. In one aspect of empathy (as noted on p.274 above), we attribute to other material bodies psychical properties: we apprehend them as Bodies with localized fields of sensation similar to our own. But we also apprehend some such Bodies as full-blown persons, attributing to them the noetic processes which grant them a more full mental life than just sensation. On the Husserlian scheme, *to the extent that* Naturalistic psychology seeks to explain these noetic processes, Naturalistic psychology *implicitly presupposes a personalistic attitude* which makes those noetic processes apprehensible as phenomena in the first place. We can of course be mistaken in our empathy – I can misunderstand someone’s character, their beliefs, their motives, or I might mis-attribute to them a sense modality which they lack or which is different from mine (e.g., “impaired”). Husserl’s insight is that such misunderstandings can only be overcome by *further attempts to empathize*. It may at times require complex and explicit social interchanges for us to reach agreement regarding (e.g.) theoretical issues such as which objects are ultimately materially real and which are merely regarded as “subjective” (mere appearances). In everyday life, it typically requires nothing so explicit to reach agreement regarding, e.g., which objects are useful for certain purposes: this is made manifest to us in people’s actual practices in the world. It is the task of a personalistic psychology
(working in parallel with, but also autonomously from a naturalistic psychology of the real psychic ego) to provide a complete scientific understanding of persons in their social commerce with each other and with all value-objects. If Naturalistic psychology only sometimes dips into a personalistic attitude – say, to lay hold of certain personalistic phenomena as targets of explanation – and then treats them in abstraction from the personal ego, then it cannot provide a full explanation of these phenomena.

In closing this subsection, I should address the other lingering issue raised by the “solipsistic sketch” of the real psychic ego (considered as a Bodily-psychic unity). This was the importance in the Personalistic Attitude of noesa - those mental phenomena which give sense (a “spiritual forming”) to mere hyletic materials, which thereby bring intentionality into view, and which constitute as noema (among other things) those meaningful objects which motivate persons. Understanding motivation presupposes understanding a person’s experience of a world of meaningful objects – objects which are constituted in experience as meaningful for the subject. For this reason, Husserl declares that “when we speak of the spiritual [geistigen] or personal Ego, that is to be understood as the subject of intentionality [das Subjekt der Intentionalität], and... motivation is the lawfulness of the life of the spirit” (II.3.2.§56.231). We have in fact already encountered the basic structure of motivation in our discussion of factions, as they emerged from the Argument From Fulfillment (§6.3 above), and in Ideas, Husserl says explicitly what we there had to clarify for ourselves: that the relationship of fulfillment between acts involves a general structure of which strict, volitional actions provide only one example. One experience (e.g., a “meaning-intention”) can motivate another (e.g., is suitable for
fulfillment by them) in a variety of ways, but this need not always involve a *striving* in the manner of the willful pursuit of a goal:

This basic phenomenological concept of motivation resulted for me right away with the specification of the purely phenomenological sphere in the *Logical Investigations* (and as a contrast to the concept of causality related to the transcendent sphere of reality). It should be noted that this concept is a *universalization* of the very concept of motivation, in keeping with which we are able, for example, to say that “wanting some purpose” [Wollen des Zweckes] motivates “wanting the means” [Wollen der Mittel]. Moreover, while the concept of motivation undergoes various shifts for essential reasons, the respective equivocations become anything but dangerous and even appear as necessary depending upon how the phenomenological states of the matter [Sachlagen] is clarified (I.2.3.§47.86, fn.8).

In this broader sense of motivation, for example, a meaning-intention motivates its fulfillment. The task of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) is to do what naturalistic psychology characteristically fails to do, by explicitly researching the subject’s relation to its surrounding world as intentional and as motivated, rather than treating it in terms of natural causality (e.g., between “stimulus” and sensation). This requires making sense of “factions” in the mental lives of others, insofar as it is factions which serve to unify intentional experiences of, e.g., recognition of something as a valuable so-and-so, as a meaningful so-and-so, etc.:

The “because-so” of motivation has a totally different sense than causality in the sense of nature… The unity of motivation is a nexus founded in the relevant acts [i.e., intentional experiences] themselves, and when we inquire into the ‘because,’ into the grounds of personal behavior, we seek to know nothing but precisely this nexus… In the sphere of the human sciences… to say that historians, sociologists, or cultural anthropologists ‘explain’ human-scientific facts means that they want to clarify motivations, to make intelligible how the people in question “came to do it,” came to behave in such and such a way, which influences they underwent and which ones they themselves exercised, what it was that determined them in and toward the community of action [Gemeinsamkeit
A naturalistic psychology might of course take up the tasks of (i) trying to localize (in the body or brain) all the intentional experiences which personalistic psychology examines, or (ii) trying to formulate causal laws, regarding physical stimuli, which hold in the “right place at the right time” so as to run parallel to intentional laws of motivation. But to do these things (on Husserl’s view) is precisely to abstract from their meaning and significance for the subject in question. Someone who “sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, and as it were, through the eyes of, natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences... Properly speaking, he sees no person at all...” (II.3.3.§51.201).

Notably, in their limited purviews, each of these forms of psychology makes a mystery of their interrelations: the Naturalistic view abstracts from intentionality’s significance for the subject, and the Personalistic view abstracts from the issue of spatiotemporal localization. In contrast, in pretheoretic experience, it is presupposed that the subject which “has” a soul in the naturalistically explicable sense – e.g., a standing capacity for stimulation and the corresponding sensations – is in fact identical with the person in question – the “subject of intentionality”, who is open to motivation in virtue of having intentional experiences of meaningful objects. The living Body as we experience it is at once a Bodily-psychic unity and a Bodily-spiritual unity. The conceptual distinction between the real psychic ego (soul) and the personal ego (spirit) is thus best viewed as a way of labelling two distinct abstractions from Natural experience,

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5For the difficult passages in which Husserl deals with these issues, see esp. Ideas II §§56, 59 & 61-64.
two distinct themes of research which we pursue by taking up one attitude or the other. The distinction should not then be taken prevent the domains of these two empirical sciences from overlapping, even if neither science can account for this. But despite the deep methodological differences between naturalistic and personalistic psychology, they both stand upon the ground of the Natural Attitude: the factual reality of souls and spirits is presupposed in these sciences. Both egos go “into the bracket” in the ἐποχή (cf. I.2.3.§53.100-101 and I.3.2.§80.154.)

7.2.3 The Pure Ego

With the foregoing overview complete, we are positioned to examine Husserl’s conception of the pure ego (das reine Ich). In doing so, I shall argue, we shall find a number of lines of thought which enable grounding an Act Conception of intentionality in Husserl’s mature (static) phenomenology. Following out each of these lines of thought will be my concern for the remainder of this chapter. (I shall turn to address genetic phenomenology in Ch. 8.) All the lines of thought which I shall explore in this chapter originate with a proper understanding of aspects the pure ego, but from there they branch out into a number of diverse topics. Thus I shall pursue them piecemeal, and a full account of the pure ego will only arise through this extended exegesis. In this section, I aim only to provide a preliminary characterization of the pure ego, and to map out how the rest of the chapter proceeds.

The pure ego is not to be conceived of as an experience: it is not hyletic material, nor is it noesis. Nor is it “a really obtaining piece [reelles Stück oder Moment] of...
experiences themselves” (I.2.3.§57.105). The pure ego is not “something factually passing” in consciousness, rather it is “something intrinsically necessary and something absolutely identical in the course of every actual and possible change of experiences” (I.3.2.§57.105). It is what Husserl sometimes calls an *essential posit* (I.4.2.§140.280).

The pure ego is not generally recognized and posited as factually real in the Natural Attitude, in which we are concerned mainly with the apparent surrounding world. Thus on the one hand, the pure ego may appear alien to Natural consciousness. But on the other hand, since it is not posited in the Natural Attitude, *it is not “bracketed” in the phenomenological ἐποχή*. It is essentially impossible to bracket the pure ego:

...If I carry out [Vollziehe ich] the phenomenological ἐποχή, if the “ego, the human being,” along with the entire world as it is naturally supposed, is suspended, then the unadulterated experience of the act [Akterlebnis] with its own essence still remains. But I also see that, while the construal of it as a human experience, apart from the supposition [Thesis] of its existence, introduces all sorts of things that need not be there along with it, no suspending can cancel out the form of the cogito and eliminate the “pure” subject of the act [Subjekt des Aktes]. “Being-directed-at [Gerichtetsin auf],” “being pre-occupied with [Beschäftigtsein mit],” “taking a position toward [Stellungnehmen zu],” “undergoing, suffering from [Erfahren, Leiden von]”—each of these *necessarily* contains, as part of its essence, that it just proceeds “from the ego toward [something]” or, in the reverse direction “toward the ego”—and this ego is the *pure* ego. No reduction can do anything to it. (I.3.2.§80.154)

Put crudely, suppose we perform the ἐποχή. We can then coherently ask: “*who* is performing the ἐποχή?” We cannot coherently respond “I, the human” – if I have successfully performed the ἐποχή, then I have bracketed the factual reality of myself as a human being in the world. Yet the one who is performing the ἐποχή can be no other than I myself: It is I, *qua* pure ego. In this way I cannot ever “get behind” the pure ego and
bracket it – I shall always be bringing I myself along with me.

Along these lines, Husserl articulates the pure ego in terms of an essential polarity in the structure of intentionality:

Insofar as every cogito calls for a cогитatum and insofar as this latter is related to the pure Ego in the accomplishment of this act [Aktvollzug], we find a remarkable polarity [Поларитá] in every act: on the one side, the Ego-pole; on the other, the Object as counter-pole... The ego is the identical subject functioning [das identische Subjekt der Funktion] in all acts of the same stream of consciousness... (II.2.1.§25.111-112, all original emph.)

A large issue is presaged in these passages, and will determine the thematic division of the remainder of this chapter. The question is how we are to distinguish between (a) those “various features” of experience which are characteristically human (i.e., factual) and which “do not need to be there” in pure experience, considered after the ἐποχή — versus (b) those essential features of the pure ego which remain after the ἐποχή. As we shall see, Husserl alternates between two broadly distinct ways of talking about the pure ego. In one (hinted at in the previous paragraph, and examined throughout §7.3) the pure ego is radically distinguished from the notions of the soul and spirit. In the other (examined in §7.4 below) the pure ego is closely related to the personal ego or spirit. In discussing each set of issues, and working out a rich conception of the pure ego, I shall argue that we are led to a number of different claims which can support an Act Conception of intentionality.
7.3 Pure Ego & Cogito: The Argument From Attention

As discussed in §6.2 above, Husserl claimed that he could not recognize the pure ego at the time of the first edition of *LI*. After writing *Ideas*, he amended the second edition of *LI*, declaring that he had “managed to find it” (*LI*, V.1.§4.92*fn.*8, printed on 353b). In the passage on p.283 above, the pure ego is defined as the subject of any *cogito*. To understand this claim we must follow Husserl in distinguishing two classes of intentional experiences: those with the character of *cogito*, and those which are merely *cogitationes*.

The domain of *cogitationes* is the domain of all intentional experiences whatsoever – all *noeses* – and Husserl remarks explicitly that the term is to be synonymous with “acts in the *widest* sense of the *Logical Investigations*” (I.2.2.§36.63). This is simply a novel name for intentional mental phenomena. What we need to get clear on are the distinguishing features of a special subset of intentional phenomena which have, further, the character of *cogito*. Husserl initially characterizes a *cogito* as involving our “mental focus” on an intentional object (*des geistigen Blickes* – I.2.2.§35.61); as the pure ego being “awake” (*ein ’waches’ Ich*) and as a *cogitatione*’s being in the mode of actuality (*in den modus der Aktualität*) versus inactuality (*Inaktualität* – I.2.2.§36.61). Elsewhere he describes it as the pure ego *stepping forth* or *arising into* an act (*es tritt auf* - II.2.1.§23.110). Or again, he reserves “the precise sense of the expression ‘cogito’” for acts involving the pure ego – the I – in such a way that the proper phenomenological description of the essence of these acts emphatically involves a first-person indexical:
“‘I have consciousness of something [ich habe ein Bewußtsein von etwas],’ ‘I carry out an act of consciousness [ich vollziehe einen Bewußtseinsakt]’” (I.2.2.§35.62). As he renders it “in Kantian language: ‘The ’I think’ must be able to accompany all my presentations” (I.2.4.§57.105)

These are some of Husserl’s more colorful ways of describing the pure ego’s role in cogitos. His fully-elaborated conception of a cogito treats the pure ego as actively involved in explicit attention to an intentional object. Attention is regarded as a unique modulation of noesis (intentionality) which brings with it a corresponding modulation of the attended noema (intentional object). Husserl uses a common intuitive metaphor to help characterize this point:

We tend to compare attention to the light that illuminates things. What one specifically pays attention to is situated in the more or less bright sphere of light, but it can also move into half-shadows and into complete darkness. As inadequate as this image is for the sake of distinctly marking out [auszuprägen] all the modes that are to be fastened on phenomenologically, it is still significant to the extent that it indicates alterations in what is appearing as such. This change in illumination does not alter what appears (in terms of the composition of its own sense [seinem eigenen Sinnesbestand]), but brightness and darkness modify its manner of appearance (I.3.3.§92.183).

To paraphrase briefly: when I attend to any intentional object which is presented in experience, my attending to it does not turn it into a different object, but it does modify its appearance insofar as the object is now ‘lit up’ and is more ‘lively,’ more centrally and more emphatically present in consciousness. In Husserl’s terminology an attentional modification of experience via a ‘turn’ of attention is “a sui generis modification of correlative noetic and noematic modifications” – the very same “noematic core” appears,
even though it appears altered by our attending to it (I.3.3.§92.183-184). This noetic-noematic modification through attention is thus apprehensible in phenomenological reflection, after the ἐποχή. And it is the presence of such a noetic-noematic modification which distinguishes all acts with the character of cogito from any mere intentional mental phenomena – i.e., any mental act in the sense of the Logical Investigations, i.e., any cogitatione.

The pure ego is directly and immediately involved in all such acts of attention:

In their modes of actualization [Aktualitätsmoden], the configurations of attention have the character of subjectivity in a pre-eminent manner... The ray of attention⁶ affords itself as radiating from the pure ego and terminating in something objective [Gegenständlichen], directed at it or deviating from it. The ray is not separated from the ego but instead itself is and remains the ego-ray.⁷ Contact is made with the “object” [Objekt], the target point [Zielpunkt], posited solely in relation to the ego (and posited by the latter itself), but not itself “subjectively.” A position-taking, [Stellungnahme], that bears the ego-ray within itself,⁸ is accordingly an act of the ego itself [Akt des Ich selbst], [as] the ego acts [tut] and suffers, is free or conditioned. The ego (as we have also put it) “lives” [lebt] in such acts. This leaving means, not the existence [Sein] of any sorts of “content” [Inhalten] in a stream of content, but instead a manifold of describable manners in which the pure ego, as the “free entity” [freie Wesen] that it is, lives in certain intentional experiences that universally have the mode of the cogito.

(I.3.3.§92.184, all original emph.; translation amended, see footnotes.)

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⁶Here is one of few passages wherein I deviate from Dahlstrom’s translation. Husserl’s phrasing here (“Der aufmerkende Strahl”), along with his others like it, demands a nominalization of the “ray” or “radiation” of attention throughout this passage, as Gibson and Kersten have each provided in their translations. Dahlstrom’s translation (“Attention radiates”) resists this. I part ways with Gibson, who treats the Ich here as “personal” – this is infelicitous given that the personal ego has been bracketed in the ἐποχή.

⁷Husserl: “Der Strahl trennt sich nicht vom Ich, sondern ist selbst und bleibt Ichstrahl.” I follow Kersten in employing the term “ego-ray” for Ichstrahl. Dahlstrom’s rendering is: “The radiating is not separated from the ego but instead itself is and remains the ego radiating.”

⁸Husserl: “Eine Stellungnahme, die den Ichstrahl in sich trägt...” Dahlstrom: “A stance taken, that bears the radiating of the ego itself.” With this phrase I cease any alteration of Dahlstrom’s translation in this passage.
ter of *cogito* – are here said to be *acts of the pure ego itself*. This is a radical revision of Husserl’s account in the *Logical Investigations*, as it was reviewed in Ch.6 above. There, we saw (in §6.2 especially) that Husserl rejected any suggestion that there was an active subject who could be said to perform any mental act. All thought of activity, we were told, was to be rigidly excluded from our conception of “mental acts,” and we would be mistaken to think of a conscious subject as a “doer” of any kind. Here, in *Ideas*, we appear to have located a mentally active subject who is said to really, actively execute certain mental acts.

It is worth contrasting a pair of statements to bring this revision into sharper focus.

The first is Husserl, in *Ideas*, stating clearly the motivation for positing the pure ego:

As what is absolutely given... it [i.e the pure ego] is by no means whatsoever something mysterious or mystical. I take myself as the pure ego insofar as I take myself purely as that which, [e.g.] in perception, is directed to the perceived, in knowing to the known, in phantasizing to the phantasized, in logical thinking to the thought, in valuing to the valued, in willing to the willed. In the accomplishment of each act [in jedem Aktvollzuge] there lies a ray of directedness [ein Strahl des Gerichtetseins] which I cannot describe otherwise than by saying that it takes its point of departure in the ‘Ego,’ which evidently thereby remains undivided and numerically identical while it lives in these manifold acts... (II.2.2.§22.103-104, all my emph.).

The second statement is Husserl, in *LI*, resisting this very line of thought:

[T]he sentence “the ego judges about the object” means the same as “such and such an experience of judging is present in the ego” etc. etc. In our *description* relation to an experiencing ego is inescapable, but the experience described is not itself an experiential complex having the ego-presentation as its part... We must therefore avoid the misunderstanding... of treating relation to an ego as of the essence of an intentional experience itself” (*LU*.V.2.§12.101, original emph.).

Precisely this kind of *essentially unavoidable* reference to an ego (an “I”) in our phe-
nomenologically pure descriptions of intentional experience, after the ἐποχή, are now understood by Husserl as indicating a fundamental phenomenological datum. Taking our description of experience at face value (as the phenomenologist must always do), the pure ego must be recognized as a necessary moment in the polarity of any cogito — quite apart from whether or not that experience contains an explicit “ego-presentation.” How shall we understand this ego?

The ego in question cannot be the real psychic ego or soul (cf. §7.2.1), or the personalistic ego or spirit (cf. §7.2.2), precisely because the factual reality of these egos can be bracketed in the ἐποχή, and yet the ego-polarity of any cogito remains (I.3.2.§80). We thus find in the pure Ego precisely what was lacking in the earlier works of Husserl and in Brentano: a concept of a mentally active subject which genuinely performs mental acts. Insofar as our intuitive notion of an act regards it as a thing we do, we have here an important clarification of the sense in which some mental acts can be said to have a status as acts.

We can now summarize what I call:

**The Argument From Attention** ("AFAtt")

1. Every *cogito* essentially involves a “ray” of attention.

2. Every such “ray” cannot be described except as emanating from the pure ego, regarded as a moment in the “polarity” of such an act.

3. In this sense the “ray” of attention is essentially subjective, and every *cogito* must be described as an act of the pure ego.
Every *cogito* is to be regarded phenomenologically as an act of the pure ego.

(AFAtt) specifies a clear sense in which some mental acts – those with the character of *cogito* – are to be regarded as performances of the pure ego, who is to be understood as actively executing them. I am not here concerned to evaluate this argument – one might regard premises 2 and 3 as questionable. My concern at present has been only in locating this view in Husserl’s work, as a way of grounding his own Act Conception of intentionality.

(AFAtt) has its limits, however. It does not ground *all* intentionality in an act of the pure ego. This is made quite clear by Husserl, who goes so far as to distinguish two *species* of intentionality. This has already been hinted at in Husserl’s most explicit claims regarding the motivation for positing the pure ego (see p.288 above). Husserl says that “I take myself as the pure ego insofar as I take myself purely as that which, [e.g.] in perception, *is directed* to the perceived,” and so on for other acts (II.2.2.§22.103, my emph.). It is not only the mental act – the noesis, the *perception* – which is said to be directed at its object. The pure ego *itself* is said to exhibit a directedness to the object, through this act. We may distinguish these as “ego-intentionality” and “act-intentionality.” Husserl draws the division as follows (again distinguishing act-intentionality into those forms which involve ego-intentionality, i.e, *cogito*, and those which do not, i.e., mere *cogitationes*):

We have to distinguish intentionality [*Intentionalität*] 1. as that according to which we become conscious of objects, i.e., mere consciousness, repre-
senting [Vorstellen], and 2. as that which makes up the comportment of the acts toward the representing [das Verhalten der Akte zu dem Vogestellten], “position-taking” [Stellungnehmnen]. Therefore we distinguish between consciousness of objects [Gegenstandbewuβtsein] and position-taking, comportment toward the objects. Subjectivity manifests its individual character [ihrer Eigenart] in its way of being conscious of objects as well as in its way of taking positions. As to the former [i.e., regarding 1. above], we have to distinguish:

1.1. the object is there, it is an object of attention (with the various levels of attention) [– i.e., cogito, in which both 1 and 2 above are present]

1.2. the object is there, one is conscious of it “for oneself,” it stands out, it is delimited and apperceived, but is not attended to [–i.e., cogitationes, in which only 1 above is present].

The turning of attention is also a “comportment,” but it is not a position-taking; instead it is a presupposition for position-taking

(II.3.2.§61.291, original emph.).

What I have called ego-intentionality is the ego’s comportment towards an experienced object. This comportment is inherently involved in any act of attention, and thus in any cogito and in any position-taking. But it is not actually involved in any mere cogitatione.

As a result, the pure ego can only be said to actually “carry-out” a subset of mental acts. And so (AFAtt) does not succeed in grounding all intentionality in an actual act of the pure ego.

In §7.3.2 below, I shall follow Husserl in supplementing (AFAtt) to provide a more radical phenomenological grounding of all mental acts – all cogitationes – in acts of the pure ego. Before doing so, however, it is important to underscore the importance of even this more limited form of ego-intentionality to Husserl’s phenomenological project.

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Rojcewicz & Schuwer drop the initial in-text numbering that Husserl includes in the German edition. This is presumably because what is initially labeled “1” is the whole category of act-intentionality, which is then subdivided into two sub-categories, which in the bullet points are numbered “1” & “2.” The bullet-points are not a re-statement of the initial division. I have here re-inserted the initial numbering, re-specified the bullet-points as “1.1” and “1.2,” and provided some elaboration for further clarity.

Note that this basic conception of the ego’s comportment will be supplemented in Ch.8 below, especially through what I call The Argument From Affection in §8.4.2.
The task of the next section is elaborate on this point. The results are to raise the stakes regarding what hangs on our assessment of (AFAtt), and to clarify how the entire method of phenomenology hinges upon some important applications of (AFAtt).

### 7.3.1 The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation

*The Argument From Attention* (AFAtt) licenses talk of all *cogitos* as acts of the pure ego itself. It does not ground an Act Conception of all intentionality, since some “mental acts” (intentional mental phenomena) are not *cogitos*, and are rather *cognitiones*. Despite this, (AFAtt) is central to a proper understanding of phenomenology: recognition of ego-intentionality is not only intended to be an important *result* of phenomenology, it is also intended to be built into the *method* of phenomenology, as it was introduced in §7.1 above. This is so for two main reasons.

First, accomplishing the ἐποχή is itself a twofold act of the pure ego. What we aim to do in the ἐποχή is to *cease* performing one egoic act, and to perform another. The egoic act which we are constantly naïvely performing, and which the phenomenologist intends to interrupt, has already been titled the Natural Attitude (*der natürlichen Einstellung*). With (AFAtt) spelled out precisely, it is abundantly clear that this attitude is to be regarded as shot-through with egoic acts of position-taking – the Natural *positing* of a transcendent reality is a tangle of acts with the character of *cogito*, in which the ego “lives.” This includes the Personalistic attitude (*die personalistische Einstellung*), in which we posit other human subjects. All these egoic acts are already presupposed when we perform another egoic act by taking up a Naturalistic Attitude (*der Naturalistischen Einstellung*),
seeking to scientifically explain and understand the very world whose reality we have already posited. Instead of performing any of these egoic acts, we are to perform another: we are to focus our attention on the domain of pure consciousness itself:

It is clear now that, in contrast to the natural theoretical attitude [der natürlichen theoretischen Einstellung], the correlate of which is the world, a new attitude [ein neue Einstellung] must in fact be possible, a new attitude that, with the suspension of this psychophysical universe of nature, nonetheless retains something – the entire field of absolute consciousness. Hence, instead of living naively in experience [in der Erfahrung naiv zu leben] and theoretically investigating what is experienced (transcendent nature), we carry out [vollziehen wir] the “phenomenological reduction.” In other words, instead of naively carrying out the acts pertaining to the consciousness constituting nature, with their transcendent theses [Anstatt die zum naturkonstituierenden Bewußtsein gehörigen Akte mit ihren transzendenten Thesen in naiver Weise zu vollziehen], and letting ourselves be determined in the motivation inherent in them... we put all these theses “out of action” [außer Aktion], we do not go along with them [wir machen sie nicht mit]... In the natural attitude we straightforwardly carry out all the acts [v o l l z i e h e n wir schlechten all die Akte] through which the world is there for us. We live [leben] in perceiving and experiencing, we live in these thetic acts [in diesen thetischen Akten]... pursuing natural science, we carry out acts of thinking that are ordered in an experiential-logical way [v o l l z i e h e n wir erfahrungslogische geordnete Denkakte]... In the phenomenological attitude, we forbid ourselves from carrying out any such cognitive thesis, and we do so universally as a principle[un t e r b i n d e n wir in prinzipieller Allgemeinheit den V o l l z u g aller solcher kognitativen Thesen]... Instead of living in them, we carry out acts of reflection directed at them [v o l l z i e h e n wir auf sie gerichtete Akte der Reflexion]... We live completely in such acts of the second level...

(I.2.3.§50.91, all original emph.)

All this talk of activity, of our performances of acts, is not mere window-dressing or a convenient turn of phrase. (AFAtt) reveals the Natural Attitude, and the ἐποχή, as genuine acts of the pure ego, in Husserl’s view. The “phenomenological method moves entirely in acts of reflection” upon the domain of pure consciousness (I.3.2.§77.139), and an act of reflection is precisely the pure ego’s attentive apprehension of its own mental
acts as its own mental acts: as cogito (see further I.2.2.§38, 65-66).

With the ἐποχή, we have carried out a novel egoic act that interrupts and suspends the egoic acts we naïvely perform in the Natural Attitude. But we have not yet fully adopted the method of transcendental phenomenology. Pure phenomenology, as a science of essences, requires eidetic intuition, or Ideation – we aim to study the essence of consciousness itself. And this plausibly involves another set of egoic acts. In the first place, a shift of attention is plausibly involved in moving from an apprehension of facts (e.g., my experiences posited Naturally as events in the natural world) to instead apprehending essences (e.g., the essence of perception, judgment, and all other mental acts in general and as such). In Ideas, Husserl does not make this link between eidetic intuition and attention explicitly, but his remarks are suggestive, e.g.:

...one cannot have an intuition of an essence without being able to shift one’s focus freely [die freie Möglichkeit der Blickwendung] toward a “corresponding” individual and form a consciousness of an example – just as, conversely, one cannot have an intuition of something individual without freely being able to form an idea of it and to focus within the idea [die freie Möglichkeit des Vollzugs einer Ideation und in ihr der Blickrichtung] on the corresponding essence that is exemplified in what is individually visible (I.1.1.§3.13-14).

This reference to one’s “focus” reads neatly and plausibly as an appeal to attention, and thus plausibly presents eidetic intuition as an attentive, hence egoic, act with the character of cogito.

Whether or not the intuition of an essence itself is an egoic act, making judgments about essences – taking a position regarding their characteristics and relations – is a central part of the method of phenomenology. And explicit judgment is a paradigmatic
instance of *cogito* (cf. I.2.2.§34; I.3.2.§84.162; I.3.4.§114-115)

In sum, the entire methodology of phenomenology is precisely designed to provide (as Husserl remarked in his preface to the first English edition of *Ideas*, in 1931) “a specifically philosophical groundwork acquired through original self-activity [*der ursprünglich selbsttätig erworbene und eigentümlich philosophische Boden*]” (1931, p.28). The self in question is precisely the pure ego; the self-activity is precisely its genuine activity in carrying out those egoic acts; and it is in this that the method of phenomenology consists.

What I shall call *The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation* are the specific applications of the *Argument From Attention* which I have just reviewed. They do not help to move beyond (AFAtt) in grounding an Act Conception of all intentionality – that is the task of the next section. However, they are worth distinguishing insofar as they clarify the special importance which (AFAtt) has for understanding the method of phenomenology.

### 7.3.2 The Argument From Potentiality

The pure ego’s role in acts with the character of *cogito* grounds *The Argument From Attention*, and licenses treating some acts as actual performances of the pure ego. But not every “mental act” (i.e., every intentional mental phenomenon) is an active accomplishment of the pure ego, in the relevant sense. Some are mere *cogitationes*.

In order to move beyond this limited Act Conception of intentionality, it is

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11 Husserl’s English introduction was included in neither Dahlstrom’s 2014 edition, nor in Kersten’s 1983 edition, and so I cite the Gibson translation. The original German is reproduced as *Nachwort* in *Husserliana V*.
necessary to bear in mind the importance of phenomenology’s focus on the essence of consciousness. Phenomenology is not primarily concerned with the actuality of anything – not even of consciousness, and not even of the pure ego. Instead, we are concerned to discover, by recognition of ideal possibilities, the essences which govern any possibility of consciousness whatsoever.

With this in mind, Husserl can extend the foregoing conception of the pure ego as a moment in the polarity of a cogito’s intentionality (first mentioned on p.284 above). Thus far, a mere cogitatione has been distinguished from a cogito via the claims that in a cogito, the pure ego “lives” in the intentional act as the “free entity” which it is (I.3.3.§92.184), and appears in the mode of “actuality” (I.2.2.§36.61). That is: the essential distinction between cogito and cogitatione has been drawn with regard to the actuality of the pure ego as acting subject. But it is not as if cogitationes have nothing to do with the pure ego, and whether or not the pure ego “freely” steps into a mental act to execute it in the mode of cogito, we must still make reference to the pure ego in understanding any cogitatione:

The expression “as the free entity” [als freie Wesen] means, however, nothing other than modes of living, such as freely-going-outside-itself or going-back-into-itself, spontaneously acting [des spontanen Tuns], experiencing [Erfahren] something of the objects, suffering [Leidens], and so forth. What goes on in the stream of experiences outside the ego-ray [des Ichstrahls] or the cogito, that is characterized essentially otherwise; it lies outside the actualization of the ego [es liegt außerhalb der Ichaktualität], and yet as we have already suggested earlier, belongs to the ego [hat doch... Ichzugehörigkeit], insofar as it is the field of potentiality for the ego’s free acts [insofern, als es das Feld der Potentialität für freie Akte des Ich ist] (I.3.3.§92.184-185; translation amended, see footnote).12

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12See again fn.6 above; I have again replaced Dahlstrom’s translation (“what radiates from the ego” with
What is at issue here is not just the phenomenological datum that any *cognitione* incurs a reference to the pure ego as the subject to whom they “belong.” It is not just that all experiences are someone’s experiences: Husserl’s claim is stronger than this. The claim is that *every cognitione can potentially be converted into a cogito*. (Compare *Ideas II*.1.1.§4.10). This is what it means to speak of *cognitiones* as part of the ego’s field of freedom: the ego is free to live in any experience, to emphatically appropriate any experience and to proclaim “I think...,” to turn attention to any object of which we are conscious, and to reflectively apprehend it in its own egoic act.

Up to now we have spoken of experiences of a particular type, those of the “cogito.” The remaining experiences [i.e., *cognitiones*] are those that form the general milieu for the actuality of the ego [*Ichactualität*], and they dispense, of course, with the pre-eminent relatedness to the ego that we have just discussed. And yet, even they have some share in the pure ego and this pure ego has a share in them. They “belong” to it as “its own,” they are *its* background of consciousness, *its* field of freedom (I.3.2.§80.154).

In short, each act into which the ego has not yet “stepped” is ideally available to the pure ego as one into which it *could* step. This is important for our understanding of mental acts as *acts* of the pure ego, so long as we bear in mind phenomenology’s focus on ideal possibilities and essences, and not on facts. *Considered actually*, only some mental acts are in fact acts of the pure ego, and *The Argument From Attention* covers only these cases. But *considered ideally and in their essence*, every single mental act is to be understood with essential reference to the pure ego, who *could* carry them out in the mode of *cogito*.

Every *cognitione* is to be understood, phenomenologically, as a correlate of the latent – Kersten’s term, ego-ray. I have also re-arranged some English phrases in the last sentence to make clearer where the term “Ichzugehörigkeit” actually appears in the German.
but still present – pure ego’s potentiality. I summarize this as:

**The Argument From Potentiality (“AFP”)**

1. Every *cogitatione* can essentially become a *cogito*.

2. In this way every *cogitatione* bears an essential relation to the pure ego’s *potentiality*.

3. In this sense, every *cogitatione* must essentially be understood in relation to the pure ego, which is thus part of the “polarity” of all intentional mental phenomena.

∴ Every “mental act” is to be understood phenomenologically as *essentially a potential* act of the pure ego.

This conception of mental acts is, it ought to be clear, not one which is at home in any empirical psychology. An empirical psychology, focused on *actualities*, might at best adopt the (AFAtt), and could perhaps recognize *some* mental acts as acts of the pure ego. Husserl’s phenomenology, in contrast, is concerned with idealities. The historians of psychology, as we have seen (cf. §1.1 above), sought to treat both Brentano and Husserl as “Act Psychologists.” We can now conclude that any such conception of Act Psychology is a mongrel. Brentano’s empirical psychology can offer no clear Act Conception, as I argued in Ch.4. Nor can Husserl’s early work, in which phenomenology is conflated with empirical psychology, as I argued in Ch.6. Only in Husserl’s mature phenomenology, which abandons any Naturalistic focus on empirical reality and traffics in ideality, have we located a substantive Act Conception of intentionality which applies to all intentional mental phenomena.
For this same reason, the resulting Act Conception of intentionality is at odds with most contemporary conceptions of action. In contemporary philosophy of action, the focus is typically on what actual features of an event give it the character of a doing as opposed to a mere happening. (E.g., popular representationalist analyses posit actual representations as constitutive requirement for any actual event’s status as an action – cf. §1.2.1 above). In short, then, Husserl’s mature phenomenology provides us with an Act Conception of intentionality which represents a wholly novel position.

This completes the first phase of my extended exegesis concerning the pure ego. Thus far, I have followed Husserl in radically distinguishing the pure ego from both the real psychological ego and the personalistic ego. I must now follow-up on the other line of thought which I sketched on p.284: I must deal with a very different way of understanding the pure ego, in close connection to the personal ego.

7.4 Pure Egos & Persons:

The Argument From Sedimentation

Despite their apparently radical distinction, Husserl makes a number of claims which make it difficult to distinguish the pure ego from the personal ego. The question (as I raised it on p.284 above) is: how are we to distinguish between (a) those “various features” of experience which are characteristically human and which “do not need to be there” in pure experience, considered after the ἐποχή, versus (b) those features of the pure ego which remain after the ἐποχή? In this section I consider some of Husserl’s remarks
that make the distinction problematic, but show how to uphold the distinction. In doing so, I show how a unique class of activities of the pure ego are involved in constituting the traits of the personal ego. This, we shall see, secures the status of all mental acts as essentially subintentional acts of the pure ego (whether they are actually carried out by the pure ego in a cogito, or whether they are cogitationes which are potentially acts of the pure ego).

At the end of §7.2.2 above, we saw Husserl characterize the personalistic ego as the “subject of intentionalities” – the subject who is presented, through noesa, with noema, and in particular, the subject who is presented with meaningful, “spiritual objects.” When we apprehend each other as persons, we regard our Bodies as “belonging” to our personal selves, as the media through which we have effects in the surrounding world. We apprehend ourselves as Bodily-spiritual unities in the world. Now we can (in a modified ἐποχή) set aside the reality of the surrounding social and communicative world, that is, cease our naïve positing of the transcendent reality of every noematic feature of the personal ego which depends upon that social world. Thus I can bracket, e.g., my awareness that my Body is a Bodily-spiritual unity. I can only constitute this Bodily-spiritual object in experience intersubjectively, by relying on a “transfer” of empathy (cf. p.274 above). So if I bracket the positing of all other human subjects, I thereby cut off the experiential grounds for positing my own Body in this way. We can then examine what is left over after this modified bracketing. (Husserl calls this the inspectio sui – see Ideas II.Supplements VI&X. pp. 329ff & 333ff).

Some aspects of my experienced Body remain after this modified bracketing – I
continue to have my Body as an organ of my ego. Not every aspect of my experience of myself as a person, or of my body as a Body, relies on the experience of other persons. It is here that difficulties begin to arise for distinguishing the pure ego and the personal ego.

Husserl remarks:

If we take the personal Ego just as we encountered it in the inspectio (thus without regard to its unity with the expressing Body, the Body given to us in empathy), then it does not at first seem to be distinct from the pure Ego. The Body is in that case something I have, hence in the broadest sense something over against me just like everything pregiven, foreign to the Ego, in analogy with the things of my environment [which do not survive the ἐποχή]. To be sure, the Body has here (as we already saw earlier) a particular subjectivity; it is proper to me in a special sense: it is the organ and system of organs of the Ego... I myself, however [as I remain in the inspectio] am the subject of the actual “I live”: I undergo and I do, I am affected, I have my own “over and against” and am affected by it, attracted, repulsed, and motivated in various ways (II.3.2.§57.259, first emph. is mine).

On the one hand, such “living” in mental acts was to be the act of the pure ego, as established by the ἐποχή: all phenomenological research proceeds via the pure ego’s reflection upon mental acts (along with Ideation of the essences of those acts), such that we “live” in these acts of reflection, instead of naively following out the impulse to posit the transcendent reality of the world. On the other hand, after we have carried out the modified bracketing of others (the inspectio sui), there remains a sense in which we still appear in our living subjectivity as a person, an empirically real human being. The subject of intentionality – the “I that thinks,” and which is motivated in various ways – thus appears to be both the personal ego, and the pure ego. The task of this section is to clarify how mental acts can “belong” to both egos, and how we are to distinguish these two egos. We shall see that this leads us to another conception of mental acts in
Husserl’s mature phenomenology – via another important application of the Argument From Attention.

Husserl himself tries to resolve this issue by distinguishing two varieties of self-awareness:

Now while I move thus in the fields of reflection (in the Objectivated subjectivities), in living, unreflected acts of reflection, I experience thereby how I “comport” myself [wie ich mich... “verhalte”] under different subjective circumstances, i.e., in relation to my sphere of current pregivennesses (my surrounding world in a very broad sense). And if I enter into the intertwining of the motivations of my cogito, into the patent and latent intentionalities of motivation, then I experience how I am motivated by them, how I am wont to be motivated by them, and what sort of general character I possess, in terms of experience, as the motivational subject [als Motivationssubjekt] of these motivating circumstances. i.e., what sort of personal subject [persönliches Subject] I am. I experience all of this first without an accompanying conceptual fixation and without thinking about it... So we distinguish between pure-Ego-reflection, i.e., reflection on the pure Ego that belongs essentially to every cogito, and reflective thematic experience built on the basis of the accrued experiential apperception, the intentional object of which is this empirical Ego, the Ego of empirical intentionality, as self-experience of the personal Ego in relation to the experiential nexuses in which this personal ego (hence in relation to the acts it carries out [die Akte, die es... vollzieht] under the pertinent motivating circumstances) shows itself according to its “personal features” or properties of character (II.3.2.§57.260-1, all original emph.).

Here Husserl defines reflective thematic experience as our self-awareness of the personal ego. What we discover in reflective thematic experience is our own personal character – we become aware of (e.g.) our tendencies to be motivated in certain ways by certain topics, and in general, of our tendencies of thought and of experience. We reflect upon multiple experiences over time to arrive at an empirical apprehension of our human ego (sans Body) which still presupposes the Natural Attitude: I take myself as an existing and persisting subject of intentional experience, a person whose real traits have been
contingently shaped by real circumstances. I know myself better or worse depending on 
how frequently, how thoroughly, and how well I perform this sort of reflection, “taking 
stock” of my character. I only have a clear-cut personal ego insofar as my mental life and 
motivations have proved stable over time.

This is intended to be radically different from our reflective awareness of the pure 
Ego as the subject of the cogito. As Husserl says elsewhere, the pure Ego “is not the 
kind of identical something that would first have to manifest and prove itself as identical 
by means of properties determined by the changing circumstances... It has no innate or 
acquired traits of character, no dispositions, etc... in order to know that the pure Ego is 
and what it is, no ever so great accumulation of self-experiences can profit me more than 
the single experience of one sole and simple cogito” (II.2.1.§24.110-1).

Let us take this claim – that a single instance of pure-ego-reflection suffices for 
knowledge of the pure ego – as a starting point for working out what is involved in pure-
ego-reflection. In any act with the character of cogito the pure Ego attentively directs 
itself to an object. As we saw in §7.3 above, attention has characteristic effects which we 
experience, such that the pure ego’s “stepping forth” in any such actual cogito is readily 
apprehensible in phenomenological reflection. In the special case of pure-ego-reflection, 
the pure ego is attentively directed to itself as the subject who was mentally active in a 
prior cogito. Apprehending the pure ego in this way – as one end of the ‘polarity’ of a 
cogito, as the source of the attentive glance – does not seem to involve the apprehension of 
contingent, real personal character traits and the like. This is so since pure-ego-reflection, 
as sketched here, requires only awareness of a single earlier experience. It is thinkable
that such an act of pure-ego-reflection could occur in a consciousness which was unstable and disorderly, such that no personal ego was in fact constituted as an empirical reality which persisted through earlier experiences, with a contingent character shaped over time. Thus the distinction between reflective thematic experience of the personal ego and pure ego reflection would seem to suffice for distinguishing the pure and personal egos.

Yet other of Husserl’s remarks raise difficulties. Just a few pages after introducing the distinction between reflective thematic experience and pure-ego-reflection, he writes:

Self-perception as personal self-perception and the nexus of reflexive self-experiences “teaches” me that my pure Ego-acts [meine reinen Ichakte] unfold in a regulated way under their subjective circumstances. I recognize eidetically, or can recognize, that according to these regulated processes the “representation,” Ego-person [Ich-person], the empirical Ego-apperception, must necessarily develop and must incessantly develop further, and that hence, if I reflect on a series of lived experiences, a course of various cogitationes, I must encounter myself constituted as personal ego. The course of the lived experience of pure consciousness is necessarily a process of development in which the pure Ego must assume the apperceptive form of the personal Ego, hence must become the nucleus of all sorts of intentions which would find their demonstration of fulfillment in series of experience... (II.3.2.§57.262-3).

Here Husserl makes several important claims. First, he says that in personal self-perception, I am taught about my pure ego-acts. This is another expression of the problem we are trying to resolve: how are we to distinguish pure-ego reflection from reflective thematic experience? Second, Husserl seems to claim that mental acts cannot be “disorderly” in such a way that a personal ego fails to be constituted, and thus, that should we ever reflect upon more than one experience, we will necessarily be forced to apprehend ourselves as a personal, rather than pure ego. This does not entirely dissolve the distinction between reflective thematic experience and pure-ego-reflection
as defined above, since pure-ego-reflection still requires only reflection upon a single
cogito, whereas the apprehension of the pure ego involves reflection upon whole series of
past experiences. However, it does raise a set of questions. (i) Why is it that the pure ego
proceeds in its acts in such a way that a personal ego must be constituted? (ii) How is
this constitution accomplished by the pure ego? And (iii) how do we know that the pure
ego accomplishes this, since it does not, at first glance, appear to be something we know
though pure-ego-reflection as defined above?

Husserl’s answers lie in his account of the sedimentation of precipitation (Nieder-
schläge) of a broad class of mental phenomena called “convictions” (Überzeugungen
— including opinions, grudges, standing interests in pursuing certain motivations, posi-
tions I have committed myself to, beliefs, etc.). These are just the kinds of persisting
“character traits” through which we apprehend the empirical, personal ego. These mental
phenomena are forms of unity unlike any we have discussed thus far in connection with
Husserl. I will use the example of a conviction through judgment. Suppose at time $t_1$
I make a judgment $J$, committing myself to the truth of some claim $P$. Considered as
an experience, $J$ is a unique event in the stream of consciousness which cannot, strictly
speaking, recur again at a later time. But while the experience passes away, I can some-
how retain commitment to $P$. This is different from simply remembering at a later time,
$t_2$, that I had endorsed $P$ in $J$ at $t_1$.

In Husserl’s analysis, the difference is somehow to be traced to the motivations
which led me to endorse $P$. Here is Husserl’s preliminary sketch:

I arrive at the conviction on the basis of a deliberation and through certain
motives; here it is instaurated as my lasting conviction. Later, I return to it as to a familiar conviction of mine; a memory arises, clearly or unclearly, the motives, the reasons for the judgment [die Motive, die Uteilsgründe], perhaps completely obscure; my old conviction, established I no longer know when, has its reasons, and perhaps I am seeking them, which is not the same as seeking new reasons for it. It is not a question here of the conviction’s content [e.g., P] everywhere identical, but of the content as identical for the subject, as proper to the subject, as acquired by him in earlier acts [als ihm Eigenes, von ihm in früheren Akten gewonnen – e.g., in an act of judgement J], and which does not pass away along with the acts [Akten] but instead belongs to the enduring subject as something which remains lastingly his. The conviction remains the same if the testimony remains the same (II.2.1.§29.123).

At first pass then, what it is for a conviction (e.g., an endorsement of P) to “endure” throughout time is for me to me retain my commitment in light of the same motivations as before (e.g., to be prepared now, at t₂, to perform a new judgment J₂ which endorses P on precisely the same grounds I had for endorsing P at t₁ in J).

As noted in §7.2.2 above, the human sciences, in taking up the Personalistic Attitude, seek to “clarify motivations, to make intelligible how the people in question ‘came to do it,’ came to behave in such and such a way” (II.3.2.§56.241). One type of task for a personalistic psychology would include clarifying, for example, the motivations which lead persons to adopt particular convictions, and how a person’s lasting character traits (e.g., standing beliefs, desires, interests, etc.) lead them to further action. This task is difficult since, of course, different people might behave similarly, but do so on different grounds (e.g., they might have judged P in light of different motivations, or might have pursued the fulfilling of different desires). It is made even more difficult, however, by the fact that this preliminary sketch of conviction is insufficient: the motivations which support a conviction (e.g., a standing endorsement of P, or a standing desire) can change
over time, even while the conviction remains in some sense the same.

In the course of time, however, the reasons [Gründe] can change. Possibly new reasons become attached; or, by repetition, reinforcement can increase: ‘For a long time I have had the conviction, and in the course of time it has always been reinforced or confirmed...’ The relation [of the new motives] to the motives of the [original] judgment can thereby be very unclear, and so can the relation to the various cases of renewal and reinforcement of the conviction (II.2.1.§29.123).

And here we come back to the crux of the problem: we must determine just what is involved in any conviction’s coming to be stable over some period of time as a person’s character trait (however short-lived it might turn out to be). And it seems not to be sufficient to appeal to the motivations which initially led to the conviction, since these can change over time while the conviction can remain stable.

In addressing this issue further, Husserl implicates a novel activity of the pure ego – in fact, Ideas II, §29 which I have been quoting at length is sub-titled “Persistent opinions as sedimentations in the pure Ego [Die bleibenden Meinungen als Niederschläge im reinen Ich].” As such, Husserl appears to place the “sedimentation” of convictions entirely outside of the domain of empirical psychology, locating it instead in the transcendental sphere:

If I acquire a conviction [Gewinne ich eine Überzeugung]... then I am representing myself immediately as “taking up” or “taking part in” [mitmachend] the conviction and not merely as remembering again the lived experience of it. In order to relinquish the old conviction, annulling reasons [aufhebender Gründe] are needed. To be sure, one will ask what is included in this “are needed.” What we have here is no empirical-psychological factum; instead it is indeed a matter of pure consciousness prior to the constitution of the real psychic subject. The earlier conviction (experience, etc.) remains valid for me, and this says nothing other than that I “assume” [übernehme] it; by reproducing it, I participate in the belief [mache ich den Glauben mit]... I have to do something like
give approval \([muss ich so etwas wie zustimmen]\), insofar as we can indeed distinguish the two strata: [first] the memory connected with the earlier subject, the earlier belief, conviction, experience, etc., with the present subject not taking part in them \([nicht mitmacht]\). And, [second] on the other hand, the same things, but now with participation \([mit dem Mitmachen]\).... The same applies to acts \([Akte]\) of every class, to lived experiences \([Erlebnissen]\) qualified in all sorts of ways (II.2.1.§29.124, all my emph.).

The activity of the pure ego which Husserl describes here does not initially appear to be the same as its “stepping forth” attentively into an experience with the form of \(cogito\) (or the egoic act or “comportment” of ego-intentionality, as we examined it in §7.3 above). That kind of act seems to always be performed at a moment, in a current intentional experience which we “live in.” But as Husserl’s analysis proceeds, it becomes apparent that what he has in mind with our re-affirmation of a past judgment or belief is precisely a complicated case of such an egoic act. In the case sketched above, the question was how I can be said to retain the same conviction that \(P\), even when I myself know that my motives for judging \(P\) have varied over time. Husserl’s proposal is that when we do know this, we execute a complicated experience of the form of \(cogito\), e.g.: “I had judged that \(P\) at \(t_1\) in \(J\) in light of such-and-such motives; I then found further motives for \(P\) at \(t_2\); yet I was compelled to abandon some of these as properly motivating \(P\) at \(t_3\); I now still maintain \(P\) in light of all the motives that remain in full force” and so on.

In order to perform such an egoic act, I must rely on memories of my past experiences. These memories are themselves experiences which I have \(now\): they are \(noetic\) acts which constitute as \(noema\) the past experiences in question – “pastness” is thereby constituted as a noematic aspect of those experiences. Should I fail to remember
the details of my experiences on these past occasions (should no noesa constitute these noemata), then the relevant cogito will be less articulate, and perhaps more obscure, e.g.:

“At some point I became convinced that $P$, on some grounds or other which I do not recall; I now endorse $P$ in light of such-and-such motives,” and so on. Retaining any conviction, to the extent that we are able, essentially requires directing the glance of the ego progressively back through the available chain of memories of experiences as they appear in immanent time (II.2.1§29.126-127). We attentively re-posit some object or thesis via a re-endorsement of the motives we find now in retrospective reflection. In this way, a conviction survives despite fluctuating motives as a unity of duration through immanent time, in much the same way that the pure ego itself persists through time:

That which is posited by an act of the cogito, the theme [Das, was ein Akt des cogito setzt, das Thema], is, with reference to repeated reproductions and repositings, which extend “throughout” the chain of reproductions, of the original theme reproduced in them, something lasting, as least as long as the reproduction is precisely not merely just any reproduction but is a “repositing,” or, better, and actual taking part in the positing [aktuelle Mitsetzung], an assumption of what was posited ‘earlier.’

All the unities we have discussed are unities in reference to a pure Ego, whose stream of consciousness they belong to [zugehören] and as whose “possessions” [Habe] they are constituted. And the stream of consciousness, as a totality, builds itself up as a phenomenal unity [Und der bewustseinsstrom als Ganzes baut sich als eiene phänomenale Einheit auf]. All my lived experiences, the successive and the co-existing, on which I focus, have the unity of a flux in time [die Einheit eines Zeitflusses]. That which belongs immanently to a flux of time possesses a perceivable, adequately graspable, unity. The unity of immanence is the unity of a constant flux, in the nexus of which all immanent duration and change are constituted. All unities of duration which are built up in the continuous flux of immanent time merge into the unity of the monadic stream of

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13Husserl barely discusses immanent time in the Ideas, explicitly setting it aside in his attempt to provide a broader overview of the domain of phenomenology. This is one of the few topics which bring him to break his silence. I shall also not go into the phenomenology of time-consciousness here, to the extent that I can avoid it. But some of these issues will be examined again in Ch.8 below.
consciousness which is constantly becoming and changing, together with the concomitant pure Ego. Thereby, this pure Ego is established by means of a cogito determined in any way whatsoever. (II.2.1§29.126-127)

By way of this articulate, retrospective form of egoic act, convictions of all sorts are constituted as durations of unity in pure consciousness. As this occurs, they are constituted as phenomenal unities – the very kinds of persistent phenomenal unities which, in our naive experience, lead us to (rationally) posit a worldly reality. The worldly reality we posit is ourselves, as a human subject persisting through worldly time. As we saw at the beginning of this subsection, it is precisely such convictions (broadly construed) which can, from another perspective, be considered as persistent character traits belonging to a personal ego, which is thereby apprehended as having characteristic styles of motivation and behavior as it goes about its business in the surrounding, social world. It is acts of the pure ego (re-positing) which gives rise to the unities of experience which support the positing of a personal ego.

In this way, (i) convictions “belong” to both the pure ego, and to the personal ego, and (ii) the domain of pure consciousness (especially the activities of the pure ego, and thus, the pure ego itself) is implicitly presupposed in any personalistic analysis. As a result, these two ego concepts overlap somewhat in their extension, and we can switch from apprehending mental acts from the personalistic attitude, to apprehending them in their purity, after the ἐποχή. Husserl gives expression to these relations in a number of ways, explicating the manner in which human beings are, in fact, a Bodily-transcendental unity:

...notwithstanding the circumstance that the pure Ego is the center of
all intentionality whatsoever [da reine Ich Zentrum aller Intentionalität überhaupt ist], the empirical Ego in the form, I as man, functions as the phenomenal-real central member [das empirische Ich in der Form des Ich-Mensch als phänomen-reales Zentralglied] for the constitution, in appearances, of the entire spatio-temporal world (II.2.1.§27.116-117).

...the pure Ego encounters itself again as pure Ego in the human being and in the person [findet es sich als reines Ich im Menschen un der Persönlichkeit wieder], insofar as these objects are posited with an apprehension-sense according to which the real Ego includes the pure Ego as its apperceptive nuclear content [das reale Ich das reine Ich einschließt in der Art eines apperzeptiven Kerngehaltes] (II.2.1.§27.117).

Below is perhaps the most striking passage in this connection, which warrants a full reproduction of the German as well:

...each pure Ego, as identical subject of its pure consciousness, can be apprehended as something which has its determinately specific modes of relating to its surrounding world, its determinate way of letting itself be motivated by it in active and passive kinds of comportment; and everyone who has developed to maturity apprehends himself in that way, is aware of himself as a person14

[jedes reine Ich als identisches Subjekt seines reinen Bewußtsein ist auf-faßbar als ein Etwas, das seine bestimmt gearteten Weisen hat, sich zu seiner Umwelt zu verhalten, seine bestimmte Art, sich durch sie motivieren zu lassen in aktiven und passiven Verhaltungsweisen; jeder reif Entwickelte faßt sich selbst so auf, findet sich als Person vor] (II. Supplement X.339).

With this we have clarified the intimate relationship between the pure ego and the personal ego, but have also re-asserted the phenomenological priority of the pure ego: it is through acts of the pure ego that the personal ego (as noema) can be constituted at all.

The acts through which the pure ego constitutes personal convictions are not in principle distinct from any cogito, as these appeared in the Argument From Attention.

14I shall address further this distinction between “active” and “passive” kinds of egoic comportment in Ch.8 below.
However, the case here depends in unique ways upon the properties of a *cogito* which is directed through intervals of immanent time, and it has special relevance insofar as it is involved in the constitution of all traits of the personal ego. To underscore these points, we can distinguish the foregoing argument as *the Argument From Sedimentation*.

### 7.5 The Husserlian Account of Mental Acts, in Sum

The lynchpin argument of this chapter has been *The Argument From Attention*. On the view sketched out by this argument, the pure ego is an active subject who executes any act with the character of *cogito* — including some very important acts of this sort, which I have clarified in three important applications of this argument: *The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation*, and *The Argument From Sedimentation*.

*The Argument From Sedimentation* is especially significant for our purposes. According to this argument, egoic acts which actually possess the character of *cogito* are regarded as transcendentally prior to any personal act — that is, any act of an empirically real human agent. As a result, the egoic acts in question cannot be coherently understood on the traditional conception of either Intentional Acts (IAs) or Preintentional Acts (PAs), as these were reviewed in §1.2.1 above. This is because on the standard representationalist analyses of IAs and PAs, *we presuppose* the reality of beliefs, desires, and other representations, understood as “convictions” (*Überzeugungen*) — as empirically real features of an acting human agent. In contrast, on the Husserlian view, egoic acts are already presupposed in order to *constitute* any such representations, in experience,
as an enduring character trait of a person. The egoic acts we have reviewed throughout this chapter thus fit my negative characterization of subintentional mental acts (§1.3). They are doings or performances, but they cannot be analyzed by appeal to any personal representations, since these acts are what constitute the enduring empirical reality of any such personal representations. Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology opens up a domain of egoic acts which are not personal. They are best understood as pre-personal (not, as an empirical psychologist might say, “sub-”personal.)

Still, this account of subintentional mental acts does not apply to all intentional mental phenomena. Not all intentional mental phenomena actually involve ego-intentionality. The transcendental phenomenologist can appeal, however, to The Argument From Potentiality to extend this conception. Setting aside the question of whether any intentional mental phenomenon is actually carried out in an egoic act, the phenomenologist maintains that in their essence, every intentional mental phenomenon is to be understood as ideally convertible into such an egoic act. It is for this reason that any non-egoic act “belongs” to a particular pure ego.

Let us pull together the foregoing and summarize the doctrines which characterize the complete Husserlian conception of mental acts (at the time of Ideas). First, there are the claims which are retained (either intact or with small modification) from the Logical Investigations (see §6.5, p.252 above):

(H1) (extended (B1)) We should not (generally) understand “mental acts” as involving active striving, in the sense that characterizes strict, volitional actions (see §7.2.2,
rather, (H2) Any such “strict action” involves a specific instantiation of the generic intentional structure of factions, or a unity of fulfillment between a meaning-intention and a fulfilling-intention (see again §7.2.2, p.279 above);

But, (H3) (replaced (B2)) Any singular instance of intentional directedness towards an object (i.e., any cognitione) is itself an “act,” and this conception of mental acts is presupposed in (H2) (see §7.3, p.285).

(H4) Every intentional mental phenomenon is characterized by noesis, which is required to go from the passive receipt of sensations to the presentation of an object (see again §7.3, p.285).

But a number of claims from LI require revision. For example, in §6.5, I summarized part of Husserl’s view with the statement:

(H5) (rejected (B3)) We cannot swap talk of mental acts with talk of a “mentally active subject,” since mental acts (intentional experiences) are only one class of experience (see §6.2)

This is true, so far as it goes, but in light of the Ideas’ recognition of the pure ego as the active subject who carries out acts with the character of cogito, (H5) is a bit inarticulate. We would do well to replace it with:

(H5*) (replaces (H5)) The class of experiences includes both “acts” (intentional experiences or noeses) and non-acts (hyletic material – cf. §7.1, p.267 above). The class
of “acts” includes some egoic acts of cogito, involving ego-intentionality, but also some acts in which the pure ego is not active (cf. §7.3.1). We cannot swap talk of mental acts with talk of a “mentally active subject,” since egoic acts are only one class of mental acts.

Likewise, the following claims from LI will require revision:

(H6) (replaced (B4)) An empirically real ego is nothing beyond the real unity of experiences (intentional and non-intentional alike),

and so (H7) There is no sense in which mental acts are “done” by a conscious subject, since the subject is nothing but a unity of acts, and since it is a confusion to think of the mental subject as an “actor” at all (see §6.2.2, p.230).

The claim (H6) is inadequate to track Husserl’s mature distinction between the real psychic ego, the personal ego, and the pure ego (cf. §7.2 above). Meanwhile (H7) is fully-rejected by Husserl in his endorsement of the pure ego. So we would do better to replace these with:

(H6*) (partially replaces (H6)) the naturalistic-psychological concept of the ego as soul (Seele) applies to mental phenomena just insofar as they can be localized in a Bodily-psychic unity, and thus best fits non-intentional experiences such as sensations (see §7.2.1 above).

(H7*) (partially replaces (H6)) the personalistic concept of the ego applies to mental phenomena which are “unities of duration” (e.g., convictions) just insofar as they
“belong” to a *person* (a stable Bodily-spiritual unity in the apparent natural world) and thus enter into an explanation of her behavior as motivated. The personalistic concept of the ego thus best fits *noetic* experience. Empathic apprehension of these same personalistic traits is presupposed by naturalistic psychology, but is not there grasped as a theme of research (see §7.2.2 above).

(H8*) (*The Argument From Attention* – partially replaces (H6) and rejects (H7)) the pure ego is an essential posit incurred by the “polarity” of every attentive experience with the form of *cogito*, who “lives” in such acts as the active subject who carries them out (see §7.3 above).

A number of important points follow from (H8*) which are worth adding explicitly to the list of Husserlian theses:

(H9*) (*The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation* – extends (H8*)) the pure ego is active in freely performing every variety of phenomenological research (see §7.3 above);

(H10*) (*The Argument From Sedimentation* – extends (H8*)) the pure ego actively constitutes those unities of duration (convictions) which, from the natural (but not naturalistic) “Personalistic Attitude” of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) serve as the appearances of the personal ego (see §7.4).

With this, we have a *nearly* complete sketch of Husserl’s mature conception of mental acts in the *Ideas*. However, bearing in mind *The Argument From Potentiality* (cf§7.3.2), we cannot rest content with (H9*–H11*) as providing a full statement of Husserl’s concept
of egoic acts, and likewise we cannot rest content with \((H5^*)\) as a gloss on egoic acts.

All these claims are true, so far as they go. But we ought to include also the following important claim:

\(\textbf{(H11*)} \) \(\text{(The Argument From Potentiality – transcendentalizes (H5* & H8*–H10*))}\) It belongs to the essence of all mental acts which are not egoic acts that it is ideally possible for the pure ego to “step into” them, in the mode of actuality, converting them into a \textit{cogito} (cf. §7.3.2 above). Thus all non-egoic mental acts are in essence \textit{potentially} acts of the pure ego – they constitute the pure ego’s field of freedom, and the pure ego is an eidetic posit (a pole in the polarity of act-intentionality) incurred in their case as well.

With this we have Husserl’s complete conception of mental acts at the time of the \textit{Ideas}. The conceptions of mental acts which we encountered in \textit{LI} (via the Arguments From Fulfillment and From Interpretation) are still available here (see H2, H4). Generally, the basic issue of how act-intentionality or \textit{noeses} arises has not yet been addressed here – we have not made sense of mental acts without an actor, as \textit{The Argument From Interpretation} would seem to require. But our view of all intentional mental phenomena has been reorganized in light of our a newfound conception of the activities of the pure ego.

The importance of these claims for our conception of intentionality could not be greater. First, Husserl would have us distinguish act-intentionality from ego-intentionality, dividing the class of actual intentional mental phenomena into two radically distinct
classes. Second, Husserl would have us transcendentalize the conception of ego-intentionality, recognizing the ideal and essential importance of the pure ego as the active subject who either does actually, or can potentially carry out all “mental acts” – all intentional mental phenomena.

Whatever we ourselves think of these claims, I hope to have shown that they are non-negotiable if we seek a coherent reading of Husserl’s phenomenological conception of mental acts. And the result is, in fact, the only Act Conception of intentionality that I have managed to locate thus far. We found no suitable Act Conception in Brentano – at best, there was the possibility of understanding mental acts as genuine acts which do not logically imply an actor, but there was no elaboration of such a view (cf. Ch.4). The same was true of Husserl’s early conception of mental acts in LI (cf. Ch.6). Thus, the view of “Act Psychology” promoted by historians of psychology has been revealed as a mongrel. Neither Brentano’s empirical psychology, nor Husserl’s incipient “phenomenology” of LI, provides the resources for a coherent Act Conception of intentionality. Only Husserl’s mature phenomenology does this, and it is to be radically distinguished from any empirical psychology. To the extent that any good sense can be made of mental acts as acts, it is Husserl who offers a coherent Act “Psychology,” and only as a transcendental phenomenology.

Once we have Husserl’s account spelled out, in the manner of (H1–H11*) above, we can make a meaningful comparison to the Aristotelian conception of mental acts which I articulated way back in Ch.3. In short: Husserl’s active pure ego may be regarded as a transcendental analogue of the Aristotelian’s metaphysical posit of the
Active Intellect. That is: Husserl can be read as radicalizing the restrictive Aristotelian conception of mental acts. “Behind” every intentional mental phenomenon, there lies the pure ego, to whom every intentional mental phenomenon “belongs” as the ego’s field of freedom, and who, it is ideally possible, could “execute” every intentional mental phenomenon in the mode of cogito. The Active Intellect was held to be metaphysically more fundamental than any intellectual representation (belief, intellectual desire, judging, etc., since the Active Intellect was held to ultimately be the cause of the occurrence of any such mental phenomenon – cf. The Argument From Intellectual Passivity, §3.4.2). Correspondingly, the pure ego is held to be (transcendentally) prior to all willings, desires, and beliefs which we might regard as lasting convictions of the personal ego, since its acts are required to constitute all those phenomena as stable experienced objects - as unities of duration in experience (cf.7.4). The Active Intellect was held to be metaphysically more fundamental than any intellectual representation, further, since it was regarded as the causal agent of all “abstraction” from sensory representation to any intellectual representation (cf. The Argument From Empirical Knowledge, §3.4.3). Correspondingly (but more radically) the pure ego is regarded as transcendentally prior to every intentional mental phenomenon: there are no intentional mental phenomena whose occurrence must be presupposed in order for it to be ideally possible for the pure ego to “step in” to the act, converting it to a cogito; rather, the pure ego (as “ego-pole”) is presupposed in the occurrence of any intentional mental phenomenon, since all of these “belong” to a pure ego as its field of freedom. This holds equally for (a) any perception of objects through a noesis which refers hyletic materials to an object, and for (b) any eidetic ideation of
essences (or at least, any judgment about essences – cf. §7.3.1).

Despite these formal similarities, the Aristotelian’s metaphysical view must be sharply distinguished from the Husserlian, transcendental view. Strictly speaking, a transcendental phenomenology is (if carried out properly) incapable of speculative metaphysics. It is not in any way concerned to posit actual beings behind apparent reality – it brackets all reality, through the ἐποχή. All that remains for analysis are noemata (the objects-as-meant-in-conscious-experience) and noeses (the intentional acts in which those noemata are constituted). And these are to be subjected to Ideation – we are to study their essences. Transcendental phenomenology is not in any way concerned with speculation – it is concerned with essential insight into the most immediate data of intentional experience.

This completes my overview of Husserl’s static phenomenology. It provides one broad Husserlian conception of mental acts, as (ideally and essentially possible) performances of the pure ego. But we still have to deal with genetic phenomenology. And this, we shall see, will have three main payoffs.

First, doing so will offer a transcendental analogue of another Aristotelian conception of mental acts: the permissive Aristotelian conception. This will allow us to finally provide an Act Conception of intentionality which picks up the threads left behind by Brentano and by the early Husserl. We shall finally receive clarification of a sense in which we might conceive of mental events as acts, even if they do not logically imply an actor. We shall locate a non-egoic conception of mental acts as acts.

Second, an examination of Husserl’s genetic phenomenology will also deepen
our understanding of egoic activity. We shall come to understand how the non-egoic mental acts I have just hinted at exercise an affect upon the ego’s comportment, and thus how act-intentionality actively regulates the course of ego-intentionality.

Third, one of the crucial results of this chapter has been The Argument From Sedimentation, which ensures that egoic acts (and the ideal possibility thereof) are pre-personal – and thus, that they qualify as subintentional mental acts. As we shall see in examining genetic phenomenology, The Argument From Sedimentation comes close to the basic themes of genetic phenomenology – and thus, it is most likely to be disturbed by Husserl’s later reconception of phenomenology in terms of the static/genetic distinction. In this way, an examination of genetic phenomenology is required to ensure that the results of this chapter are secure.
Chapter 8

Husserl’s *Passive and Active Synthesis*

We now have a robust understanding of one way in which Husserl’s *Ideas* can support an (egoic, but pre-personal and “subintentional”) Act Conception of intentionality. But nearly everything we have discussed in Ch.7 above would be categorized by Husserl, later, as only an exercise in static phenomenology. In this chapter I must deepen my exegesis of Husserl’s mature view, by investigating his genetic phenomenology. By doing so, I will clarify a second (non-egoic) sense in which all intentional mental phenomena can be regarded as arising through mental acts. Further, we shall deepen our understanding of egoic mental acts, by gaining a better understanding of how ego-intentionality, or the “comportment” of the pure ego, proceeds. In this introductory section I sketch the plan for the chapter.

As always, discussing a new chunk of Husserl’s corpus requires some stage-setting, and this cannot always be done in one go. I shall try to localize much of the required background to §8.1. There I will provide a preliminary overview to the

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main themes and major lines of development which occurred in the 1920’s in Husserl’s conception of phenomenology, as these are elucidated in *Passive & Active Synthesis* (hereafter, *PAS*). This overview will occur in three stages. First (§8.1.1) I will offer a basic sketch of Husserl’s conception of a “Transcendental Logic,” and will review how *PAS* was intended to fit into this project. I will then (§8.1.2) turn to clarify his mature distinction between genetic and static phenomenology, and specifically how a genetic phenomenology is pursued in *PAS*. Finally (§8.1.3), I will provide a general outline of how the text of *PAS* actually proceeds dialectically. I will only be drawing selectively from the text in this chapter, with an eye for clarifying an Act Conception of intentionality. I owe the reader a sketch of the broader context of claims in *PAS*, before I begin to highlight some claims by taking them somewhat out of that context.

With this initial stage-setting complete, I then turn to discuss some central aspects of the analyses of passivity which are offered in *PAS*. This will consume the bulk of the chapter, and is divided into two parts. First, in §8.2, I shall examine Husserl’s mature conception of “passive intention.” I argue that the concept of passive intention provides us with a novel conception of mental acts which, in a sense, plausibly count as genuine acts even though they do not logically imply an actor (*not even* the pure ego) who need ever execute them. That is: prior to and independent of even the possibility of the pure ego “stepping into” an intentional mental phenomenon, all intentional mental phenomena are to be understood as non-egoic, subintentional mental acts. This is the result of *The Argument From Passive Intention*. The argument can be regarded as a revisiting and deepening of *The Argument From Interpretation*, which we initially located in the *Logical
Investigations (see §6.4 above) and which we revisited briefly in discussing the Ideas (see §7.1, p.267 above). It also provides a novel understanding of “factions,” or the abstract act-structure occurring in any unity of fulfillment. We initially encountered factions in the Argument From Fulfillment, grounded in the Logical Investigations (see §6.3). We also re-examined factions briefly in connection with the Ideas (see §7.2.2, pp.279ff above). Just as we saw Husserl re-examine his rejection of the pure ego in Ideas, in PAS we shall see Husserl re-examine his claim that all thought of activity must be “rigidly excluded” in our consideration of basic intentionality.

Even §8.2’s exegesis of “passive intention” is an insufficient engagement with genetic phenomenology. We shall see there that all intentional mental phenomena must essentially be regarded as acts, but we shall not yet have clarified how such intentionality arises. Clarifying the origins of intentionality requires an exploration of Husserl’s genetic phenomenology of associative synthesis. As always, some stage-setting is required. In §8.3 I simply provide the outlines of a phenomenology of association. I then assess how these claims relate to the status of mental acts as acts in §8.4. Here we shall find another, lower stratum of non-egoic, subintentional mental acts. On this view, intentional mental phenomena are themselves subintentional mental acts, and further they arise from lower-level subintentional mental acts. This is the result of The Argument From Intention-Formation (§8.4.1). Further, once we understand Husserl’s full account of associative synthesis, we shall be able to deepen our understanding of how egoic mental acts and non-egoic mental acts interact. The result of The Argument From Affection (§8.4.2) is that subintentional mental acts must be understood as actively exercising an
affect on the ego, and thereby influencing egoic acts.

In short, this chapter will supplement and deepen the first, egoic, Husserlian Act Conception of intentionality with a robust and many-layered non-egoic Act Conception. I summarize this novel view in §8.5. There I suggest that the resulting view may be understood as a transcendentalization of the permissive Aristotelian Conception of mental acts, as it was reviewed in Ch.3. With this, I will have relocated all the main lines of an Aristotelian “Act Psychology” – in the early 20th century, at least – to the work of Husserl, rather than Brentano. That is: I will have located an elaborate Act Conception of intentionality which falls squarely within the domain of transcendental phenomenology, rather than the domain of empirical psychology.

Throughout this chapter, I shall also make some remarks regarding where similar topics appear elsewhere in Husserl’s corpus. I shall offer references to the Ideas to ensure that the results of Ch.7 are not undermined by the claims made here – to ensure that Husserl’s genetic phenomenology does not undermine his static phenomenology. I shall also provide citations to Husserl’s posthumous text Experience and Judgment, to indicate that the reading of passive syntheses I work out here is retained by Husserl later on. For the most part, these comments will appear in footnotes. But I shall explicitly revisit the Argument From Sedimentation of the Ideas, in §8.4 below.
8.1 A First Pass at PAS

My aim in this section is to provide an overview of Husserl’s aims in PAS. The text of PAS as we have it consists of notes from a lecture series which Husserl first offered in the Fall of 1920/21, along with some supplementary texts composed in the same period.¹ By way of introduction, I’ll first sketch (§8.1.1) how PAS fits into Husserl’s conception of a “Transcendental Logic.” I will then follow this (§8.1.2) with an overview of his distinction between static and genetic phenomenology. Lastly (§8.1.3), I’ll give an overview of the organization and progression of the text of PAS itself.

8.1.1 “Transcendental” “Logic”

As a step toward understanding Husserl’s conception of “Transcendental Logic,” I follow him in hearkening back to the Platonic conception of logic. In the Platonic conception, logic is to be “a universal theory of science, and at the same time, a theory of science in principle... a science of the a priori of all sciences as such” (PAS 1.2.1).²

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¹It is only in Steinbock’s English edition that these texts have all been published in the original order of the lecture series, drawing from the 1925 iteration of the lecture notes. “Part 1” of PAS had previously been published as supplementary text in Husserliana XVII. “Part 2” had previously been published as the main text of Husserliana XI. And “Part 3” had previously been published as the main text of Husserliana XXXI.

²Citations to the text of PAS will follow an odd format. Where I am citing the main texts (parts 2 and 3), I will follow the following format, to the degree of specificity which is required: <Part# . §# . pg.#>. Pagination refers to Steinbock’s 2001 translation, which is the only English edition available.

These main texts are also separated into numbered “Chapters” and “Divisions,” but these are quite erratic. For example, Part 1, the “Preliminary Considerations,” has neither Chapters nor Divisions, and Part 3 has no Divisions. To try to keep citations uniform even while the text is not, I shall simply omit references to Chapters and Divisions – the §# would generally suffice for locating passages.

Meanwhile, although Part 1 contains 10 differently numbered subsections, they are not prefaced with a “§” – §1 of PAS is the first section of Part 2. So where I am citing the “Preliminary considerations,” I shall cite: <1 . topic # with no prefaceing § . pg.#>.

Finally, I shall also cite several texts that are included as “Supplementary Texts” in Steinbock’s translation. The two texts I cite are included in section 4 of the Supplementary Texts, and are labeled “A” and “B.” I shall cite these using <S . A or B . pg#>.
Logic, so-conceived, is not one discipline of thought, one style of scientific investigation, which is on equal footing with others. It is rather an enterprise which seeks to clarify normative constraints on what counts as any genuine science. Logic seeks these norms as essential norms which govern the possibility of scientific knowledge, and it does so through “radical and critical reflection on essence and eidetic exigencies of genuine knowledge” (PAS 1.2.2-3). Such a conception of logic – and the corresponding conception of sciences as justified by logic – arises in the Platonic scheme as a response to skepticism about the possibility of attaining knowledge through the empirical sciences:

If skepticism denied what is in principle the possibility of something like science in general then Plato had to consider precisely what is in principle a possibility of science... If science was called into question, then of course one could not presuppose the fact of science [in responding to the skeptic]. In this way Plato was led down the path of the pure idea. (PAS 1.1.3).

The task for logic, in this traditional view, is to clarify how scientific knowledge is essentially possible, and to provide a clarification of the structures of meaningful thought which are capable of securing such knowledge.

So much is a fairly plausible sketch of a traditional conception of logic. Husserl notes, however, that this Platonic conception of logic has not been maintained. “In modern times” the relationship has become “curiously inverted,” and the particular sciences which (on the Platonic view) would require logical justification, have instead “made themselves autonomous” of logic (PAS 1.1.3). The natural sciences took note of the clear fact of their methods’ practical success in attaining knowledge. Thus, they no longer sought an a priori justification of method, through logic. Indeed, a psychologistic
tendency even arose, which sought to ground logic itself, as a science of right-thinking, in empirical psychology. Meanwhile “formal logic” ceased to pursue the task which had historically, in the Platonic scheme, been assigned to it. Instead it became one special science among others, and sought only to study the form of reasoning as such. The result is that we have not got a logic in the Platonic sense – we are lacking “a systematic fundamental science that would provide an ultimate understanding of all theory arising from the originally sense-giving sources of the subjectivity that accomplishes knowledge [den ursprünglich sinngebenden Quellen der Erkenntnis leistenden Subjektivität letztes Verständnis aller Theorie verschaffte]” (PAS 1.1.5).

One might think that this “inversion” is unproblematic – that we have simply discarded a task which we need not fulfill. This is not Husserl’s view. Instead, he holds that the full clarification of scientific knowledge requires a return to the Platonic ideal of “Logic.” But it is not modern formal logic, as one scientific discipline among others, which can provide us with the clarification of essential norms of knowledge. Rather, it is transcendental phenomenology alone which can fulfill this task:

If the highest task of knowledge is not only calculating the course of the world, but understanding it [den Weltlauf nich nur zu berechnen, sondern ihm zu verstehen] – as Lotze characterized this task in a well-known dictum – then we have to take this dictum in the sense that we rest content neither with the way in which the positive sciences methodologically shape objective theories, nor with the way in which a theoretical logic directs the forms of a possible genuine theory to principles and norms. We must raise ourselves above the self-forgetfulness [Selbstvergessenheit] of the theoretician who in his theoretical accomplishments devotes himself to the matters, to the theories and methods, and who knows nothing of the interiority of his accomplishment [der Innerlichkeit seines Leistens]

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3These themes are also elaborated in Husserl’s Crisis, especially Parts I & II.
and of the motivations compelling them – who lives in them, but does not have a thematic view of this accomplishing life itself [aber dieses leistende Leben selbst nicht im thematischen Blick hat].

We will understand what is accomplished as genuine theory and genuine science only through a clarification of principles that descends into the depths of the interiority that accomplishes knowledge and theory [in die Tiefen der Erkenntniss und Theorie leistenden Innerlichkeit], i.e., into the depths of transcendental-phenomenological interiority... only a transcendental science... can be the ultimate science; only a transcendally-phenomenologically clarified world can be a world that is ultimately intelligible (PAS 1.1.5-6).

There are four complementary theses to be clarified here, which will give an overall picture of Husserl’s conception of “Transcendental Logic.”

The first two theses have already been sketched. First, Husserl maintains the Platonic view that what we need is a scientific clarification of the possibility of science as such. Second, “science” is understood as the accomplishment of scientific knowledge through theory – it is regarded as an accomplishment of human minds. So what we need is scientific clarification of what this mental achievement consists in: a clarification of what subjectively goes on when we attain scientific knowledge. We need an in-principle clarification of the possibility of such knowledge: a clarification of what is essentially required for the attainment of scientific knowledge for subjects like ourselves. Any more limited clarification of how in fact some isolated, concrete instance of scientific knowledge has been wrought will be insufficient.

4This and all other citations I make in this subsection are to the “Preliminary Considerations” of PAS. Steinbock notes (p.xix) that the German version had not been published alongside the portion of the lectures on passive synthesis in Husserliana XI, nor alongside the portion of the lectures on active syntheses in Husserliana XXXI. The “Preliminary Considerations” were published as a supplementary text “Ergänzender Text IV” in Husserliana XVII, Formale und Transcendentale Logik. This is where I look for providing the original German where appropriate. (Though it does appear that some small portions of the Preliminary Considerations were also incorporated directly into Formale und Transcendentale Logik, especially in its Einleitung.)
This leads to a third important point. Husserl thus holds that it would be incoherent to attempt to justify or clarify one positive science by appeal to another. This approach is not of the right form to appease the sophistical skeptic. The skeptic doubts whether any genuine scientific knowledge is possible; one cannot offer a non-question-begging response by presuming some one positive science has succeeded in attaining knowledge. Thus we cannot, for example, appeal to an empirical psychology in order to clarify the mental achievement of scientific knowledge – if we did so, we would simply presuppose the successful attainment of scientific knowledge in psychology, begging the question against the skeptic. As a result, a psychologistic logic cannot provide us with a logic in the Platonic sense: we cannot clarify the possibility of scientific knowledge by wielding a scientific psychology to examine the actual course of human thinking in the accomplishment of knowledge. Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* were his first large-scale clarification of this point – and a repudiation of his own earlier psychologistic views as he expressed them in his first book, *The Philosophy of Arithmetic.*

This leads finally to the fourth point: that a transcendental phenomenology looks to be a theoretical enterprise of the right form to provide what a Platonic logic demands: a science of all possible sciences, or a theory of all possible theories. Through the ἐποχή, phenomenology secures access to the domain of pure consciousness, and simultaneously ensures that no results of the positive sciences can be presupposed in its analyses of that

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5Compare *Experience and Judgment*, §11. (In some footnotes I cite more specifically the pagination of *Experience and Judgment*, referring always to the translation of Churchill & Ameriks).

6An exchange of letters between Husserl and Frege was integral in convincing Husserl that a psychologistic approach was untenable. Frege’s criticisms are summarised in his (1894) review of Husserl’s *Philosophy of Arithmetic.*
domain. Through eidetic intuition, phenomenology investigates pure consciousness *in its essence*. It is thus capable of providing a rigorous analysis of the essential properties of the (conscious) mental acts involved in attaining scientific knowledge. And phenomenology – if carried out correctly – appeals only to what is directly evident in (pure, eidetic) experience: thus it claims an ultimate and primordial source of justification which cannot coherently be called into question, even by the skeptic.

It is this clarification of “Logic,” in the traditional, Platonic sense, *via* a transcendental phenomenology, which Husserl calls by the title of a “Transcendental Logic.” And it is the major task of *PAS* to lay the groundwork for such a Transcendental Logic.

A phenomenological clarification of the possibility of scientific knowledge will of course concern the linguistic expressions (written or spoken) which serve as the public vehicles of expressing our knowledge. This includes theories, statements of laws of generalizations, etc. But Husserl aims to treat scientific knowledge as “linguistic” in an extremely broad sense. For example, much of scientific knowledge is highly mathematized, and mathematical claims are expressed in a formal “language.” The broad sense of “language” which must be investigated concerns *all conceptual thinking as such* (*PAS* 1.2.9). In Husserl’s analysis, before any thought can be *expressed* “linguistically,” it must be *formed* as a meaningful whole. This occurs in “sense-giving acts” (*sinngebende Akten*). So all expression of conceptual thinking presupposes sense-giving acts in which a conceptually-articulated thought is formed. Thus, it falls to phenomenology to clarify the essential nature of such sense-giving acts – the acts that establish the meaningful, conceptually-structured thoughts which we may (or may not) then express linguistically.
The formation of such a unity of meaning – a conceptually articulated thought – is a paradigmatic example of active synthesis. It is active in precisely the sense we have explored in discussing acts with the character of cogito in Ch.7 above (esp. §7.3). All the sense-giving lived experiences which might be expressed linguistically are “not only modes of consciousness in general, but egoic acts [Ichakte]” (PAS 1.5.16). The ego is “everywhere living in these acts as the one carrying them out [das Ich ist hier überall dabei als in diesen Akten lebendes, als sie vollziendes]” (PAS 1.5.17). All conceptual thinking involves an attentive turning of the ego towards an object as its “cognitive theme” [zum Themen eiener Erkenntnis] (PAS 1.5.16). The sense-giving egoic acts which are involved here are also called “acts in the mode of thematic acts, acts of interest in a specific sense [Akte im Modus der thematischen Akte, Akte des Interesses in einem bestimmten Sinn]” or acts having the character of “thematic intending [thematischen Meinung]” (1.7.24).

But there is also a deeper project for Transcendental Logic to pursue. Hearkening back to Ch.7 again (esp. §7.3), we know that not all mental acts – not all intentional phenomena – actually have the character of an egoic act. Further (see esp. §7.3.2), we know that any non-egoic act is held to be available for the pure ego to step into and to carry out attentively in the mode of cogito. These background acts are available as the pure ego’s field of freedom, and any actualized cogito is just the pure ego “stepping into” such an act. But this means that intentional mental phenomena, each with their own “sense,” are presupposed in any cogito, and thus presupposed by all conceptual

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7 Compare Husserl’s remarks in Ideas II regarding the natural-scientific attitude as a “theoretical” attitude involving egoic, “theoretical acts” (II.1.1§3.5).
thinking. They were there for the ego to step into; the ego then stepped into them, and explicitly articulated them in a conceptual manner. Prior to any such egoic, thematic act of conceptual thinking, there are accomplishments of consciousness which have already been carried out: act-intentionality has arisen, in virtue of which conceptualizing ego-intentionality can occur.\(^8\) This brings us back to the topics which were raised in LI by the *The Argument From Interpretation* (cf.§6.4). Something must occur in order for intentional conscious experience to arise at all – prior to the ego’s stepping into an intentional mental phenomenon.

The phenomenological account of how any basic intentional mental phenomenon arises concerns *passive synthesis*. This is a central theme of *PAS* which I shall take up in §8.2 below. And it is a central theme of *PAS* because a complete clarification of the possibility of scientific knowledge must trace the accomplishment of such knowledge to its transcendental roots: first to ego-intentionality and the thematic acts which provide a *sense* to theoretical cognition; then further, back to the establishment of pre-conceptualized act-intentionality at all, prior to the pure ego’s “stepping-in.” What is required is a clarification of *all sense-giving acts*. And in its broadest meaning, what is essential to a sense-giving act as such is already present prior to conceptual thought: what is essential is only an experience’s having “immanently, within itself, an intentional object as inseparable sense” (*PAS* 1.10.36).

Note, a point that will be central below: to say that certain syntheses are *passive*...
is to say that they are not actively carried out by the ego. They are not egoic acts. It remains to be seen whether they are active in some other sense – i.e., whether they might be regarded as subintentional mental acts, despite their “passivity” when considered in relation to the ego.

With this we have a sketch of the goal of PAS: to provide an entree to a Transcendental Logic, through a radical clarification of all sense-giving acts. We have also laid out some tools to clarify Husserl’s mature distinction between static and genetic phenomenology. In the next subsection, I shall spend a moment clarifying the static-genetic distinction.

8.1.2 Static vs. Genetic Phenomenology

In manuscripts dating around 1920/21, Husserl began to draw a distinction between two forms of phenomenology: static and genetic phenomenology. The purpose of this subsection is to provide a gloss on what the distinction amounts to, and the role it plays in PAS.

The nominal distinction between “static” and “genetic” phenomenology is not in fact often deployed in the main texts of PAS. There are only a handful of relevant references one can offer. Regarding the “genetic” side, Husserl occasionally speaks of “genetic analysis [genetischen Analysen]” (see, e.g., PAS 2.§4.62; 2.§20.127; 2.§25.161). He speaks of the essential properties of certain mental phenomena as they are discerned in a “genetic perspective [Genetisch sagen wir...]” (2.§18.118). He seeks a “genetic elucidation [einer genetischen Aufklärung]” of certain mental phenomena (2.§22.142).
He speaks only once, explicitly, of a “phenomenology of genesis [einer Phänomenologie der Genesis]” (2.§29.184). Explicit and relevant discussion of the “static” side of the distinction is even more sparse in PAS. Husserl makes claims about what appears to us when we take up a “static view” (in der sozusagen statischen Betrachtung) on the coexistence of two or more objects that share features (2.§28.176).

Meanwhile, little explicit discussion of the contrast between static and genetic phenomenology is offered in PAS. The contrast is explicitly discussed most centrally quite late in the text/lecture, in §48. Even here, many remarks not not entirely enlightening. For example, Husserl offers a gloss on phenomenological-transcendental analyses, saying that they are analyses which “treat, statically and genetically [behandeln statisch und genetisch]” a set of problems (2.§48.272).\footnote{See again fn.2 on p.326 above regarding citations to PAS. Throughout this paragraph I have cited the main text, and so I include the § numbers provided there.} This doesn’t offer much to clarify what the distinction amounts to, though it does indicate that phenomenology is to address both sides of the distinction – whatever it amounts to.

Husserl does draw the distinction a bit more clearly in §48. The main task of phenomenology, he says, is to “trace the storied structure of constitution” – i.e., the constitution of objects as objects of experience (2.§48.271). One arm of the investigation proceeds by “tak[ing] its departure from the objective world as it presents itself immediately and naively” – that is, we begin from precisely those noemata which are constituted in noeses; we take the phenomena we are presented with as “ready-made” – as already there, without inquiring into their origins – and inquire into how experiences must be
orderly for a world to appear (2.§48.271). When we take up this arm of phenomenological investigation, we have only “so to speak, a static understanding [ein sozusagen statisches Verständnis] of the noematic contents of external perception” (2.§48.271). We presuppose the occurrence of experiences that give us objects, and only inquire into these experiences’ organization and interrelations.

But phenomenological investigation must also follow up another aspect of constitution:

The entire network of possible concordant and discordant modes of givenness of nature... must be integrated into the history of constituting consciousness, and it must be made intelligible genetically how, and according to which essential laws, something can be prepared in consciousness [i.e., as ready-made] (2.§48.272, all my emph.).

In this genetic line of inquiry, phenomenology must clarify how constitution comes about – how any experiences of objects come to occur.

This is about all that is said explicitly in PAS to draw the static-genetic distinction. Still, scholars have generally interpreted PAS as having the distinction implicitly at work, and it is indicated that this is so in the foregoing passages. In other writings from the same period, Husserl speaks more clearly of the static-genetic distinction, seeking to clarify what it amounts to. Many of these texts have been included in Steinbock’s translation as “Supplementary Texts.”

There are two texts I shall briefly examine, both dating from 1921. In these notes we find Husserl struggling to fix the sense of the static/genetic distinction, and making several attempts to clarify it.

In the first text, Husserl claims that “In a certain way [In gewisser Weise]” we
can:

distinguish “explanatory” phenomenology as a phenomenology of regulated genesis [“erklärende” Phänomenologie als Phänomenologie der gesetzmäßigen Genesis] and “descriptive” [“beschreibende”] phenomenology as phenomenology of possible, essential shapes [of experience] (no matter how they have come to pass) in pure consciousness and their teleological ordering [teleologischen Ordnung] in the realm of possible reason under the headings, “object” and “sense.” In my lectures I did not say “descriptive” but rather “static” phenomenology (S.A.629).¹⁰

Here the static-genetic distinction is mapped onto a descriptive-explanatory distinction. In the text that follows we are given a clearer discussion of what is meant here. In the passage I provide below, from the same text, Husserl first divides phenomenological analysis into two subtasks of (i) describing the noetic-noematic structure of all intentionality, and (ii) describing the conditions for the fulfillment of all mental acts. These are themes we are familiar with from chapters 6&7 above. But we are told that all such analyses do not approach the question of genesis. And so Husserl ends this passage by dividing the task of phenomenology into three subtasks:

Every apperception exhibits the structure of noesis and noema. We have to undertake a unique form of analysis in order to elucidate the intentionality of an apperception, in order to describe, according to their noetic and noematic structures, the possible types of fulfillment... With these descriptions [Beschreibungen], namely the constitutive ones, we are in no way inquiring into explanatory genesis [erklärenden Genesis]... A universal doctrine of consciousness is... a universal doctrine of apperceptions, correlative to a universal doctrine of the highest categories of possible objects and their categorial modifications – a universal constitutive phenomenology. This is preceded by a universal phenomenology of the most general structures and modalities that encompass all categories of apperceptions. To this one must add a universal theory of genesis [eine

¹⁰See yet again fn.2 above regarding citations to PAS. In the remainder of this subsection I am citing the supplementary texts. This first text, “A: Static and Genetic Phenomenological Method,” was first published as the final entry in the Abhandlung of Husserliana XI, and is indeterminately dated to only sometime in 1921.
Here an order of operations is clearly sketched for one branch of phenomenology. Static or “constitutive” phenomenology begins with an analysis of the most general structures and modalities of consciousness. That is: it begins with a descriptive analysis, after the ἐποχή, of the categories of mental acts: perceptions, memories, expectations, beliefs, judgments, etc. It analyzes the difference between fulfilled and unfulfilled acts; between the mode of cogito and mere cogitatione; between judgments of possibility vs. those of actuality, etc. Here already one is involved in ideation – intuiting the essential distinctions between these act-types. Once this has been done, static or “constitutive” phenomenology proceeds to pure ideality: to a thoroughgoing clarification of all possible types of acts (noeses), and correspondingly, all possible objects of experience (noemata).

Again, we are familiar with all this from chapters 6&7 above. But none of this, we are told, directly addresses the genesis of all these acts. In this “‘static’ regard [‘statischer’ Betrachtung]” we find only “‘finished’ apperceptions [‘fertige’ Apperzeptionen]” – they are simply there for our consideration, and we know nothing and ask nothing about their “‘history’ reaching way back [weit zurückliegende ‘Gesichte’]” (S.A.634). We must still “add” a theory of genesis. This historical focus, then – the focus on the origins of intentional experience – is central to the “genetic” side of the static-genetic distinction.

We can gain a little further clarity on this distinction by noting how Husserl, in another manuscript, distinguishes two kinds of laws of consciousness. First, there are “general laws of compossibility in simultaneity and succession [allgemeine Gesetze des
A law of this form might, for example, imply “that if an \( a \) exists, then a \( b \) cannot exist” at that same time – or likewise, it might imply that if an \( a \) exists, this does not rule out that a \( b \) could exist at this time (S.B.642). For example, the occurrence of a perception of an object in one sense modality does not in general make impossible the occurrence of a perception of a different object in a different sense modality. In contrast, if I am now executing a cogito of the form: “I judge that a coffee cup is truly present here now,” this does generally rule out the simultaneous possibility of executing a cogito of the form: “I judge that a coffee cup is not truly present here now.” (I might of course make one judgment, and then at a different time make the other – this possibility of different, successive judgments is not ruled out. We shall revisit similar themes at the level of perception, rather than judging, in §8.2 below.).

These kinds of laws can be apprehended and formulated from a static perspective. We need only a stock of ready-made apperceptions to consider. We perform the \( \varepsilon \pi \omega \chi \eta \) so as to consider these noetic-noematic structures in themselves; we employ ideation to apprehend their essences; we see that it is or is not essential to one act that it precludes compossibility of another.

Another set of laws of consciousness are quite different. These are “laws that do not merely concern compossibilities, but necessities of succession [\textit{Notwendigkeiten der Folge}]” (S.B.642). A law of this form might imply, for example, that “if an \( a \) exists,
then a b must exist, in temporal simultaneity or in succession” (S.B.642). A central type of case, which I shall examine further below, concerns all unities of fulfillment. If I now properly execute a cogito of the form: “I am visually perceiving something here now,” and if this egoic-ly enacted meaning-intention is fulfilled, this necessitates the co-occurrence of some visual perception or other. I cannot properly execute the egoic act without the co-occurrence of the visual experience. What is crucial here is that laws of this second form govern the occurrence of all apperceptions as such. That is: there are essential laws which govern the occurrence and co-occurrence – the origins – of precisely those apperceptions whose occurrence is simply presupposed in a merely static or “constitutive” phenomenology.

We shall examine instances of such laws in §8.2 below. For now, what matters is that this distinction gives us a grip on the basic division between static and genetic phenomenology. After he distinguishes these sets of laws, Husserl declares that where they are at issue, he “will always speak of static and genetic phenomenology” (S.B.643). Investigation of constitution as such thus cannot ever clarify genesis, since what is at issue is “precisely the genesis of constitution” (S.B.644).

This helps to clarify the path for Transcendental Logic that Husserl sketches out, as well as why in PAS, he winds up spending most of his time discussing passive syntheses. An account of passive synthesis, we shall see, is at the root of a genetic-phenomenological explanation of all intentional mental phenomena – a fortiori, of all intentional mental phenomena involved in scientific knowledge. In part, this is because all empirical

12Compare LI’s conception of founded and founding intentional acts – cf. §6.1 above.
scientific knowledge relies, ultimately, upon sensory experience, and passive synthesis is involved in generating all our intentional sensory experiences of objects. Passive synthesis must therefore be clarified in order to provide a complete, phenomenological elucidation of the possibility of scientific knowledge: a “Transcendental Aesthetic” (an analysis of the genesis of sensory intentional experience) must be pursued as a preliminary task for Transcendental Logic.\(^{13}\)

The background we now have in place enables us to sketch the three broad types of genetic explanation which Husserl provides for a variety of intentional mental phenomena. All three rely on “laws of necessity of succession” (or coexistence) of mental phenomena, in the sense defined just above. These are:

(1) **Spontaneous, Self-directed, Egoic Generation**: “[A]cts of pure act genesis [\textit{Akte als reinen Aktgenesis}] in such a form that I, who executes acts, am determined by the fact that I have executed other acts” – i.e., genesis through egoic activity. (S.A.630); this is also described as genesis through “formations of pure activity [\textit{Bildungen reiner Aktivität}]; genesis as an active accomplishment of ideal objects and as accomplishments of real generation [\textit{Leistungen von realen Erzeugnissen}]” (S.A.631).

(2) **Non-spontaneous Egoic Generation, Motivated by Non-egoic Phenomena**: “[A]cts that are motivated through affections [\textit{Akte, motiviert durch Affektionen}] and that stand in genetic relations to spheres that fall outside the sphere of [egoic] activity”

\(^{13}\)For discussion of this term, “transcendental aesthetic,” see Steinbock’s introduction to \textit{PAS}, esp. pp.xviii & xxiii.
(S.A.630); this is also described as “the participation of the ego and relationships between activity and passivity [Die Ich-Beteiligung und Verhältnisse zwischen Aktivität und Passivität]” (S.A.631).

(3) **Passive Generation**: “[G]enesis in the sphere of pure passivity” (S.A.630); also described as “a general lawful regularity of genetic becoming in passivity that is always there [allgemeine Geszmäßigkeit genetischen Werdens in der Passivität, die immer da ist]” (S.A.631).

The task of PAS is to clarify all these types of generation. My focus in this chapter will mainly be on passive generation. But the distinction between spontaneous and non-spontaneous egoic acts will re-appear in §8.4 below, and will help clarify the understanding of the egoic Act Conception which we won in Ch.7. Before dipping into select portions of PAS to pursue all this, I shall fulfill a responsibility to the reader by giving a broader sketch of how it proceeds, to clarify what shall be left out of account in what follows.

### 8.1.3 The Text of PAS

We now have an overview of PAS as pursuing a genetic phenomenology which will lay the groundwork for a Transcendental Logic. For my purposes here, only a portion of the work Husserl accomplishes in PAS is of direct relevance for assessing the status of all mental acts – all intentional phenomena – as acts. Before turning to the relevant portions of PAS, I will provide a brief sketch of the overall context in which they appear,
and the dialectical progression of PAS as a whole.

PAS is divided into three Parts. As I have discussed in §8.1.1 above, the task of the introductory “Part 1” is to clarify the aims of a Transcendental Logic. “Part 2” is the Analyses Concerning Passive Synthesis. This is the largest portion of the text, covering §§1-48. Part 3 rather briefly covers the Analyses Concerning Active Synthesis, in §§49-65. Here follows a relatively brief overview of Parts 2 and 3 of the text.

Husserl begins (PAS 2. §§1-4) with a brief phenomenological analysis of perception. There is a puzzle involved in perception. On the one hand, perception purports to present us with a transcendent object. There is a naïve certainty which characterizes every normal perception: built into it is something like the mode of belief (of which one might come to be disabused upon reflection). In the natural attitude, we take it that perception delivers the world to us. On the other hand, no perception actually presents us with the entirety of a perceptible object – for example, in vision, the frontside of an opaque object always hides its backside, so that there is always more to the object that what is seen at a moment. (Husserl calls this the objects’ internal horizon). Likewise seeing an object in one situation may not show us all that it has to offer: perhaps it would look different if placed in different lighting, or if put next to another object. (Husserl calls this the objects’ external horizon).

When we are directly presented with one aspect of an object, we are not at all genuinely presented with another aspect of the same object – and yet normal perception

\[14\] See again fn. 1 above. The German text of “Part 2” had previously been published independently as the main text of Husserliana XI.
purports to present us with the object itself, as it is. Working here within perception is
a set of empty presentations, in the form of implicit expectations: perception involves
*anticipations* of what an object will look like on its backside, and it presents the full object
as *having* a backside, even though we are not given the backside now; likewise perception
*anticipates* what an object will look like in different conditions, even though we are not
experiencing that now. We have to actually look at the backside to be given it genuinely.
We have to go look and see what happens in different circumstances. And yet despite
that, normal perception purports to deliver the world to us as it is, and purports to deliver
whole objects to us – not just object façades.\(^{15}\) Normal perception engenders a native,
naïve certainty that things are as they seem, and this naïve certainty reaches beyond
what is actually given.\(^ {16}\) In short, “every perceptual givenness is a constant mixture of
familiarity and unfamiliarity, a givenness that points to new possible perceptions that
would issue in familiarity” (*PAS* 2.§4.48).\(^ {17}\)

This basic phenomenology of perception is not at all the complete story. First
and foremost, the naïve certainty of perception is not constant: it can be put into doubt,
and this doubt can arise within perception itself. When we do explore an object further,
expectations might be confirmed our flouted. If they are confirmed, then a synthesis
occurs between the old perception (along with its horizon of expectation) and the new
perception. The object appears as *identical* (and as expected) across these two perceptions,
and we continue to live in naïve certainty of the presented object. If the expectations

\(^{15}\) Compare Noë (2005) on the “problem of perceptual presence.”

\(^{16}\) Compare Martin (2002) on the “stativity” of perception.

\(^{17}\) Compare *Experience and Judgment*’s claim regarding the structure of the known and the unknown as
the structure of world-consciousness (§8, p.37).
are flouted, then our previous perception is (to some extent) put into doubt: two rival perceptions each purport to present the world to us, and yet they do not cohere. The two perceptions cannot be synthesized: the object cannot be both as we expected it to be, and (as it now appears) otherwise. One or both perceptions now has character of “questionable” perception: it is perception in the mode of doubt, instead of the normal mode of naïve certainty (PAS 2.§8.75). Such doubt can be resolved: one perception must be further modalized and negated: it must be crossed out, must lose all pretense of presenting the object as it is, and we must come to the conviction (Überzeugung) that the other perception gives the object itself. Husserl provides an elaborate analysis of how all this occurs in passivity (PAS 2.§§5-13).

One central upshot of this analysis is that we must recognize a dual sense or ambiguity in all talk of decision (“der Doppelsinn von Entscheidung”) (PAS 2.§14.92).\(^\text{18}\) In passivity – that is, occurring (e.g.) in perception without the involvement of the ego – decision occurs as follows. First, passive doubt arises when two rival experiences emerge which purport to present the same object, but which cannot be coherently synthesized to form a unitary experience in which a single coherent object is given. One perception presents the object as thus-and-so; another presents it as otherwise. This doubt is passively resolved when one of the conflicting perceptions is simply left out of the syntheses (effectively, “crossed out” or negated) and a new synthesis of identity occurs which gives us the object in the mode of naïve certainty again (PAS 2.§14, 92). The object simply appears thus-and-so (whether this is what was initially expected, or whether it is

\(^{18}\)On the double sense of “decision,” compare Experience and Judgment §21d p.100 & §66, p.272.
otherwise). All this can occur without the ego’s involvement. If the ego does step in at all, the ego is “undergoing a decision that just arises [als erfahrener, sich einstellenden Entscheidung]” (PAS 2.§14, 92). Or alternatively: “‘What is there’ is decided upon from the standpoint of the matter [Sache], by itself, and the ego follows the decision on the part of the matter [das Ich mit seinem Sich-entscheiden folgt der sachlichen Entscheidung)” (PAS 2.§13.91).\textsuperscript{19}

Active decision-making, involving the ego, is a more complicated affair. Here we perform an egoic act of “judicative position-taking [urteilen Stellungnahme]” (PAS 2.§14, 92-93). It is essential to such an egoic position-taking that we be faced with a number of distinct possibilities, all of which remain open possibilities – they have not been passively crossed out. The ego must step in, and must itself actively “make a decision [es entscheidet s ich] for or against” one of them (PAS 2.§14, 93). Such an egoic act of decision-making presupposes “passive doxa” – e.g., it presupposes perceptions which are already there, offering conflicting reports of the world, for the ego to decide between (PAS 2.§14, 93). In deciding between them, the ego is actively under-valuing a standing validity which has been constituted in passivity; the ego is actively deciding against one perception which still, for its own sake, purports to present an object as it is. Judicative decision-making is an act of “striking down validity [Außer-Geltung-Setzen]” (PAS 2.§14.96).\textsuperscript{20}

This initial contrast (and similarity) between passivity and activity does not derail

\textsuperscript{19}Compare Experience and Judgment’s distinction between passive and active belief – see esp. §66; “passive decision” is similarly discussed as arising from the “standpoint of the thing” in §67a, p.276.

\textsuperscript{20}Compare Experience and Judgment §71.
Husserl’s ongoing analysis of passivity. After sketching the contrast, he then proceeds (§§15-22) to a more detailed analysis of what occurs in passivity when an expectation is fulfilled – when an expectation goes off with out a hitch. This is an important re-analysis of unities of fulfillment, which we first encountered back in my Ch.6, §6.3 above. I shall discuss this re-analysis in detail in §8.2.5 below. The novel contribution of PAS consists precisely in a clarification of the passive syntheses which are involved in (a) the most basic forms of intentionality which are presupposed in any fulfillment – the presentations which are synthesized to form a fulfillment, and (b) fulfillment itself, as a synthetic unity of intentional experiences.

The upshot of these investigations of fulfillment in passivity is striking: passive synthesis is said to accomplish a kind of “striving after intuition” of a meant object; there is a passive tendency to determine the object more closely as it actually is; passivity accomplishes a “continual – we couldn’t help thinking of the term – confirmation [Be-wahrheitung]” of objects’ features (2.§23, 146). And yet this is “exactly what active cognition, at the highest level, predicative and theoretical cognition accomplishes” (2.§23, 146). That is: Husserl’s initial analysis of passivity leads to a puzzle. It seems to demolish the distinction between passivity and activity, and seems to suggest that all the work of the most complicated forms of human cognition are actually done without any egoic involvement at all. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall refer back to this claim several times, and it will be handy to have a label for it. I will call it The Problem of the Parallels of Passive and Active Syntheses, and shall abbreviate this as: (P||A).

In order to resolve (P||A), Husserl undertakes (2.§23) a clarification of the distinc-
tion between passive and active syntheses, to ensure that the domain of egoic activity has not been collapsed into passivity. In his view, the crucial distinction lies in the following line of thought: the kind of “truth” which can be “verified” in passive synthesis is not to be confused with a rational ideal of truth. Only active syntheses can lead to an experience which is verified as presenting us with the world *in-itself*. The synthetic coherence of experience, as it is attained passively, does not suffice to verify the truth of objects in themselves. In particular, it does not suffice to constitute objects as stable *through* long intervals of time. The passive syntheses – and the passive “decisions” – come and go. Something further is required to explain how the objects constituted come to have a lasting durability, a persistence in transcendent reality. Husserl calls this “*The Problem of the In-itself of the Transcendent World*.”

Now Husserl says quickly that the idea of truth in-itself is not attained in, nor does it provide regulation upon, passive syntheses: thus that the distinction between passive and active syntheses can be upheld. But *saying* this does not amount to *showing* it. The manner in which Husserl undertakes to show it, and to solve the *Problem of the In-Itself of the Transcendent World*, is somewhat convoluted. Corresponding to the foregoing problem, there is also what Husserl calls the *Problem of the In-itself of Consciousness* (*PAS* 2.§23). Husserl’s analyses of perception and passive modalization have focused on “the living present” – a short temporal window of experience surrounding the experienced Now. In the living present, all experiences are directly available either as occurring Now, or as occurring just-now (in “fresh” retention), or as projecting an immediate future (in protention). As a result, the foregoing analyses have not made clear how any single
experience can be constituted as stable through a prolonged span of time – as something “that could be given in arbitrarily iterated rememberings... a temporal datum that is identically one” (PAS 2.§24.155). Thus the passive syntheses which have been clarified so far do not suffice to explain how the conscious ego can be given its own evident past, in-itself, as a stable, immanent reality.\textsuperscript{21}

Husserl will eventually propose to solve both the Problem of the In-itself of the Transcendent World and the Problem of the In-itself of Consciousness simultaneously. But in-between the statements of the problems (PAS 2.§§23-24) and their solution (PAS 2.§§42-48), there are around 90 pages of legwork. The overarching task which must be fulfilled is specified (PAS 2.§24) as follows: to clarify how, and to what extent remembering (Wiedererinnerung) can be justified as presenting us with objects as they were originally constituted in experience. This is a pressing task since, on the one hand, being able to remember an object appears to be a prerequisite for its appearing as a stable reality, in-itself, persisting through time. On the other hand, we know that memory is susceptible to error. The tasks are (i) to clarify how such error is made possible, and how it arises genetically, in passivity, and (ii) to clarify the extent to which this affects the constitution of objects in-themselves as stable realities. (This concerns both the constitution of experiences and transcendent objects in-themselves, as lasting objects with duration).

To clarify the extent of the essential justifiability of remembering, Husserl undertakes a sweeping overview of the phenomenology of association (PAS 2.§§26-41). A

\textsuperscript{21}Compare Experience and Judgment §38, pp.166-167, and the solution to the problem sketched in §42.
phenomenology of association is the “radical portion of the analysis of passive syntheses, namely, as genetic analysis” (PAS 2.§25.116). I shall examine only a small portion of this material in §8.3 below. For now, it suffices to sketch the role that it plays in the text: a phenomenology of association provides an account of how mis-remembering occurs, and thereby clarifies the limits of the justifiability of remembering. This is called upon (PAS §§42-48) to provide a dual solution to the Problems of the In-Itself of The Transcendent World and of Consciousness; and this in turn resolves (P||A). I will examine all this more closely in §8.3 below.

Husserl’s resolution of (P||A) completes Part 2 of PAS, and the main analysis of passive synthesis. Part 3 then proceeds to provide a more detailed analysis of active syntheses (PAS 3.§§49-65), leading back to the work of a Transcendental Logic. I shall not here be concerned in great detail with Husserl’s analyses of active synthesis. I have discussed the nature of egoic acts sufficiently in Ch.7 above. The investigation of active syntheses in PAS helps clarify new instances of egoic acts, and underscores their importance for a Transcendental Logic. But the basic account of egoic acts is not challenged by PAS, and cannot be significantly deepened by exploring Part 3 in detail. In contrast, we shall see that an investigation of passivity can greatly increase our understanding of egoic acts, by enabling us to distinguish spontaneous and receptive egoic acts.22 I confine discussion of PAS Part 3 to a footnote.23

22Compare Ideas II.1.1.§5.
21Part 3 of PAS elucidates the gradations of objectivation (der Stufengang der Objektivierung) which are accomplished in active synthesis. In any egoic act, we presuppose the objectlike formations (Gegenständlichkeiten) which are pre-given through passive syntheses. On their basis, egoic activity can constitute new objectivities – new noemata. These can then be presupposed again in the constitution of higher-order noemata. Briefly, here are the levels of objectivation which lead up to logical objects, and
8.2 Passive Syntheses

With the foregoing background in place, I am ready to step into PAS more selectively, highlighting some central claims in Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of passive synthesis, with the aim of shedding light on an Act Conception of intentionality.

To frame how the section will proceed, let me begin by reminding the reader of the dialectical situation that arose when we first discussed The Argument From Fulfillment and The Argument From Interpretation (ch.6, §§6.3&6.4).24

the progression from passively-synthesized object-like formations to logical objectivities (cf. PAS§§63-65).

Step 1. An object is made thematic, and attracts the cognitive interest of the ego.

Step 2. The thematic object is subjected to examinings (betrachtenden) which are prior to all explication (Explikation) (PAS 3.§63.339). This involves an examination that “delves into [der eingehenden... Betrachtung]” the object, and through this the object’s diverse content is unified in an active synthesis of identity (3.§63.). There is also an examination “passing beyond [der.. hinausgehenden Betrachtung]” the object to compare it to others (3.§63.). All such examination may be elicited from the ego, and does not necessarily involve any egoic striving towards knowledge: an object may simply grab our attention, and demand examination.

Step 3. In a second level of objectivation, the ego proceeds to judging. This is now “actively determining objectivating,” and it requires an active egoic intention (3.§64.341). This is not yet conceptualization: no universal or eidos is apprehended here. A number of classes of new thematic objects is established through judging: states-of-affairs (Sachverhalte) (3.§64.341) and relations as such (3.§64.342-343). These are not yet thematized in judging as new objectivites, but are prefigured in judging, and can then become new thematic objects.

Step 4. In “conceptualizing judgment” (begreifende Urteil) (3.§65.346), a concrete eidos is established as a new objectivity. This enables a new determination of objects: an object can be recognized as an F, as one of any F’s (3.§65.352).

Step 5. Once F-ness has been implicitly objectivated, it can become its own thematic object: we can come to know F-ness as such, can come to Ideate this universal without regard to any concrete object whatsoever (3.§65.353). We intuit forms as such.

With this, we have sketched out the path to knowledge of ideal laws, to a realm of “universal judgment” which is “law-giving” for all objects falling under an ideal eidos (3.§65.355). One such ideal eidos or form is that of judgment as such: i.e., the special case where F-ness = judgmentality. Apprehending this eidos, we may proceed to state universal laws of the essence of judgment as such. We have thus clarified the transcendental roots of a theory of judgment as such: we have laid the foundations for a Transcendental Logic.

On all this, compare Ideas II1.1.§4. Virtually the entirety of Experience and Judgment is focused on walking through this progression, but see esp. §§22-24.

24The Argument from Fulfillment was initially encountered in Ch.6, §6.3 above. The Argument From Interpretation was initially encountered in Ch.6, §6.4 above, and revisited briefly in Ch.7, cf. §7.1, on p.267 above. AFI can itself be regarded as a modulation of Brentano’s Argument From Unity, insofar as it attempts to ground all intentionality in acts – cf.ch.4, esp. §§4.4&4.6).
On the one hand, I wielded the Husserlian conception of “factions” to raise a complaint against Strawson’s conception of mental acts as they occur in self-directed thought. In Strawson’s reading, my mental action concerns only priming myself to think that $P$, and “the rest” – the actual, ensuing thinking that $P$ – “is waiting, seeing if anything happens, waiting for content to come to mind” (Strawson, 2003, p.232). Thus he likens it to a case where I decide to step off a cliff, and then fall – the deciding and stepping are perhaps volitional actions of mine, but the falling is not. I remarked that in a Husserlian view, Strawson’s conception would be unsatisfactory, since it failed to capture the fulfillment-character of self-directed thought. When I set out to think that $P$ and do so, or when I wonder what an object is and then (perhaps without striving) recognize it as an $F$ or a $G$, the fulfillment of my prior meaning-intention has the character of a kind of culmination or, as Husserl aptly characterizes it, a fulfillment. I get what was previously only meant; I “hit the mark.” The occurrence of self-directed thought does not present itself with the accidental character which “falling” might have when I merely intended “to step off a cliff.” Rather, thinking $P$ presents itself as my doing as I meant to do, and it presents itself as such: as a fulfillment. This is quite apart from whether I can be said to “strive” to fulfill any specific meaning-intention; whatever it is that brings it about that it is fulfilled, the relation here is fulfillment.

On the other hand, I raised two main criticisms against pursuing the Argument From Fulfillment as a way of grounding an Act Conception. First, Husserl didn’t seem to want to take this route to grounding an Act Conception: instead, he demanded that all thought of activity was to have been rigidly excluded from our conception of “mental
acts” just as soon as we saw that they need not arise from any personal striving. This was especially the case for unities of fulfillment: they need not arise from any personal striving, and so, in Husserl’s view, they are not to be thought of as involving activity. (In this, Husserl’s conception of the legitimate and genuine usage of the term “acts” seems to cohere with Strawson’s). The second difficulty was that all such unities of fulfillment presuppose intentionality, and not all intentional mental phenomena need to actually enter into such unities of fulfillment. So even if “factions” were in some abstract sense actions, still this account could not apply to all intentionality.

This led us to consider The Argument From Interpretation. The problem here was that even if “interpretation” were an endogenously-determined event which makes any experience intentional, still it was unclear why this event should be called an “act” – especially since there was, in LI, no actor who could sensibly be said to carry it out. With the Ideas behind us, and with an overview of PAS in hand, we can go further: in the Husserlian scheme, no such egoic conception can ground a globally applicable conception of all intentionality as actually carried out by an egoic agent, nor ground an analysis of interpretation as what gives rise to intentionality in the first place. Just as any unity of fulfillment presupposes intentionality, so likewise any egoic act does as well: the intentionality of a mental act or experience must be there for the (pure) ego to “step into” it. Prior to any “thematic act,” in the mode of cogito, there must already be a “sense-giving act – an intentional experience which has been constituted in passivity. All ego-intentionality (all active comportment of the ego) presupposes “act”-intentionality. The upshot of Ch.7’s Argument From Potentiality was that all intentional
mental phenomena are potentially acts of the pure ego. But thus far, we have found no “non-egoic” conception of mental acts, according to which – setting aside the ideal possibility of the ego’s involvement – every intentional mental phenomenon is already to be considered an act.

We are about to locate such a conception of mental acts in PAS. The core of this conception lies in Husserl’s mature conception of “passive intention.” Clarifying this concept, I argue, will at last provide us with a conception of mental acts as acts, even though they are not (even potentially) executed by an active subject. I will suggest that we can regard this account as at last grounding The Argument From Interpretation. Insofar as “passive intention” is central to a reconceptualization of unities of fulfillment, we can also understand the development explored here as a redux of the Argument from Fulfillment.

To reach this conception of passive intention, this section follows the steps of Husserl’s own reasoning in PAS, pausing at each step to compare and contrast his new view with claims in his earlier work.

First (§8.2.1) I follow Husserl in setting the task of clarifying how passive “confirmation” is to be understood. This is the overarching aim that will eventually lead Husserl (and us) to the concept of passive intention. But the road will be a bit long, and I take it step by step. The first step is to give a preliminary gloss on passive confirmation.

The next step (§8.2.2) is to clarify the manner in which synthesis is involved in giving rise to any intentional mental phenomenon whatsoever – any intentional mental phenomenon which could undergo passive confirmation. We shall see that it is specifically
associative synthesis which gives rise to intentionality, and shall clarify intentional directedness as a noematic aspect of some experienced objects. This conception of associative synthesis essentially replaces LI’s conception of “interpretation” (or “interpretive sense,” or “matter”) as the determinant of any experience’s intentional directedness towards an object. A fuller account of such synthesis will be pursued in §8.3 below.

Clarifying this revised conception of intentional directedness will lead us to Husserl’s first introduction of the term “passive intention” (§8.2.3). His initial characterization of passive intention is quite provocative, and I shall pause to draw some preliminary contrasts with LI. But Husserl’s initial gloss in passive intention is insufficient to provide a full account of passive confirmation. It is also unclear whether his talk of passive intention moves us beyond the (allegedly) in-apt metaphors and analogies which were at work in LI.

We shall follow Husserl in going further to clarify what the full account of passive intention amounts to. In §8.2.4, we shall begin trying to bring the guiding question of this section back into view: how shall we clarify “passive confirmation?” We shall follow Husserl in elucidating the distinction between confirmation and other forms of fulfillment.

All this culminates in an important development in PAS. In §8.2.5, we shall consider how Husserl intends to wield his conception of passive intention in the analysis of passive confirmation. There, I argue, we find a non-egoic conception of intentionality in terms of subintentional mental acts. It will be the task of §8.3 below to go even further, clarifying Husserl’s genetic phenomenology of the origins of passive intention.
8.2.1 Confirmation-in-fulfillment

In what follows, the example of perception will help guide us through Husserl’s (somewhat convoluted) line of argument. I have already discussed (see §8.1.3) Husserl’s claim that perception involves something like a mode of belief: there is a naïve certainty built into perception. This claim is generalized to all varieties of intuition (Anschauungsart) (all forms of consciousness which purport to present us some object “in the flesh”); it is also extended to every remembering (Wiedererinnerung): all such consciousness purports to present us with some object as it was (2.§16.106). Husserl refers to intentional phenomena which possess such belief-like characters as “passive doxa” (2.§16.106).\(^{25}\) Acts which have this characteristic correspond to what was called, in \(LI\), “fulfilling-intentions,” or acts which “hit the mark” and provide (presumptive) access to an experienced object (\(cf.\) pp.228 ff. above). Any mental act which lacks this belief-like character, but which is nonetheless directed intentionally at an object, Husserl now calls by the titles: “empty intentions [Leerintentionen],” “empty presentations [Leervorstellungen],” “empty consciousness [Leerbewußtsein]” or “a presentation which is not self-giving [einer nicht selbst-gebenden Vorstellung].”\(^{26}\) These locutions replace the \(LI\)’s conception of a “meaning-intention,” an experience which “aims” at an object but does not “hit it.” As I have already discussed (§8.1.3), perception is regarded as a flowing mix of empty and non-empty presentations.

\(^{25}\)Compare \textit{Experience and Judgment} §13, throughout.

\(^{26}\)The “self” which is given in a “self-giving” act is typically not one’s own self – it is not “I myself,” as conscious subject. Rather it is the “self” of the intended object; in a self-giving act, the object is given in-itself. E.g., in online perception of a coffee cup, the coffee cup is the self which is given.
In PAS, using this new terminology, Husserl again examines the intentional structure of unities of fulfillment. Fulfillment plays a special role in the analysis of confirmation. A special class of empty presentations are expectations of open possibilities. As we explore an object, we can confirm that the object is as expected, and this confirmation occurs through a special class of syntheses of fulfillment. We have an empty presentation of an object (or some feature of it), and then we are presented with the object (or some feature of it), and the prior expectation is fulfilled and confirmed as having correctly anticipated the object.

An analysis of confirmation-in-fulfillment is of crucial importance to Husserl’s project in PAS, for reasons we have already discussed. For on the one hand, Husserl endorses a conception of confirmation-in-fulfillment as occurring in passivity. On the other hand, this is precisely what leads to the difficulties posed by (P||A) – the Problem of the Parallels of Passive & Active Syntheses – see p.347 above. The problem, recall, is that on Husserl’s account, passive synthesis involves a kind of striving to attain knowledge in intuition. This makes it difficult to distinguish passive and active syntheses. Our task now is to make clear why Husserl is led to this conception of passive synthesis, by examining his new analysis of confirmation-in-fulfillment.

Husserl begins by considering whether or not all confirmation may be understood simply as fulfillment. He sketches a view very close to the conception of fulfillment which he upheld in LI:

...it may now seem that the unity of a synthesis of fulfillment [Erfüllungssynthese] (of a confirming one [einer bewarheitenden]) would be characterized by the fact that an empty consciousness (be it a consciousness that
is standing completely empty for itself, or a consciousness incompletely saturated by intuition \([\text{mit Anschauung unvollkommen gesättigtes}]\) would be synthetically united with an appropriate intuition, whereby what is emptyly intended and what is intuited coincide in the consciousness of the same [object], that is, coincide in the identity of the objective sense \([\text{gegenständlichen Sinnes}]\) (2.§16.109).

Husserl will reject the claim that we can understand confirmation simply as fulfillment. Rather, confirmation-in-fulfillment involves unique features which set it apart from other varieties of fulfillment. To clarify this account, the first step is a more general clarification of intentionality as such.

### 8.2.2 Synthesis and “A Ray of Directedness”

Let us follow Husserl in clarifying what is at issue in attributing intentional directedness to an experience. I begin with a special class of intentional experience that Husserl calls “making co-present \([\text{Mitgegenwärtigungen}]\),” and which he sometimes colorfully calls “memories of the present \([\text{Gegenwartserinnerungen}]\)” (2.§18.117).

A concrete example he discusses (cf. 2.§17.112; 2.§18.117) runs as follows. You are in one room, and you hear a knock on the door. In virtue of hearing the knock, you become aware of the room outside the door. You are not \textit{perceiving} the room outside the door, in Husserl’s sense – you do not have an intuition of the room “in the flesh.” (If you are in an unfamiliar room, you may know nothing at all about the room on the other side of the door, let alone be authentically given it in a sense-giving act). The “presentation” of the outer room is \textit{empty}. It is a kind of empty presentation quite unlike the implicit expectations at work in all perception. On the basis of the self-giving intuition
of the sound of the knock on the perceived door, a further intentional directedness arises, towards the room. This intentionality is not directed at the future, however, like a protention or expectation. We are aware of the room now, but emptily so.

Here is Husserl’s description of what goes on in such a case. Here we also get a concise description of what is involved in “synthesis,” more generally:

The connection of this perceptual presentation [i.e, of the audible knock] with the empty presentation [i.e., of the non-perceived outer room] is a “synthetic” one, which is to say, a unity of consciousness is produced that carries out a new constitutive accomplishment [eine neue konstitutive Leistung vollzieht], whereby both objectike formations [Gegenständlichkeiten] receive special characters of unity noematically. More precisely, the perceptual presentation, what appears perceptually in this way or that, points to [weist auf] the emptily presented object as something that belongs to it [das damit ihm zugehöriges ist]. A directed ray arises [Ein Richtungstrahl entspringt] in perception and goes clean through [geht durch] the empty presentation to what is presented in it [hindurch auf ihr Vorgestelltes]. From a genetic perspective, we also say with reason that the perception has awakened the [empty] presentation, but awakening [Weckung] means precisely both the emergence of a syntheses of directedness [einer Richtungssynthese] in which the one presentation is “directed toward [hinrichtend]” and in which the opposing presentation is accordingly directed in itself [in sich gerichtet ist], or in which the one presentation is characterized as terminus a quo, the other as terminus ad quem (2.§18.118).

What is involved in any “synthesis,” we are told, is that an alteration occurs in the objective senses of a plurality of intentional experiences – that is, an alteration in the noemata which they constitute. The alteration is such that the objects come to appear in some connection to each other. In the case at hand, the door and the audible knocking come to appear in a new way: they are experienced as media which provide access to the outer room; meanwhile the outer room is constituted (indeterminately, but in a determinable way) as a space-outside-the-knocked-upon-door. The presentation of the
knock-on-the-door points beyond itself to the room on the other side, even though one now has no self-giving perception of the room on the other side. One experiences the room as pointed-at by the knock on the door.

Such experiences of “making co-present” are special cases of a broader class of syntheses: the syntheses whereby one noema is constituted as “pointing-at” another. Other kinds of synthesis are involved in constituting other apparent relations between noemata (e.g., “similarly-colored,” “larger-than”). But note that the foregoing analysis of the synthesis of pointing-at has other important applications as well. We are familiar with a number of other cases of this special sort. When we reflect upon one of our intentional mental phenomena, we have a presentation of that mental phenomenon: it is the noema of our current, reflective act. That noema is itself directed at its noema. That is: syntheses just like the foregoing are constantly occurring, and give rise to a similar “intentional ray,” in virtue of which we are able to recognize our own mental phenomena as intentional at all. Here we have a case akin to the knock on the door: one noema (here, an experience) is constituted as directed-at another noema (here, that experience’s own noema). Such a noematic relation is constituted in a synthesis.

These syntheses occur passively: they do not require egoic activity. This is especially clear in the case we have just discussed, in which a synthesis gives rise to that most peculiar relation of intentional directedness of an experience towards its object. The actual occurrence of such a synthesis cannot generally presuppose the prior occurrence of egoic acts, since all egoic acts ultimately presuppose the intentionality which is produced by the synthesis. (This was not only the clear Husserlian doctrine as we saw it in Ideas,
but was also a conceptual requirement we put in place for any substantive Act Conception of intentionality early on – cf. Ch.1). The synthesis occurs without “my” involvement.

However, once any passive synthesis occurs – whether it constitutes a new noematic relation of “pointing-at,” or some other noematic relation – the ego can in principle then step into the act. And there are some noemata which are only fully-constituted through egoic activity. Once any egoic act has occurred, further synthesis can occur on its basis. For example, I might attentively “step into” my experience of the knock-on-the-door, and then it would occur in the mode of *cogito*. That experience, and any novel noemata constituted in it, can then be synthesized, in passivity, with others. This iterability of passive synthesis is at the root of Husserl’s conception of the “grades of objectivation,” and is central to his full account of how we get from sensory experience all the way up to logical thought (on this, cf. fn. 23 above.)

We now have a start towards a reconceptualization of “interpretation” as we encountered it in *LI*. In *LI*, interpretation was an endogenous something-or-other that “referred” (non-intentional) sensations to apparent objects, effecting the directedness-to-an-object which is characteristic of ‘mental act.” In *PAS*, there is a kind of synthesis which constitutes “pointing-at” as a noematic relation between two noema. Such a synthesis gives any intentional mental phenomenon its apparent directedness: such syntheses constitute the noematic character of anything’s “pointing-at” another object. This applies equally well to self-giving intuitions (the *LI*’s fulfilling intentions) and to empty presentations (the *LI*’s meaning intentions). The directedness-to-an-object, as noematic aspect, is in each case constituted in a synthesis.
8.2.3 A First Pass at Passive Intention

Let us now follow Husserl in reflecting further on the character of this “directedness” or “pointing-at,” and the syntheses that give rise to it. It is here that we first hit on the concept we are seeking to clarify, the concept of passive intention:

They are not syntheses that the ego has actively instituted [Es sind Synthesen, die nicht das Ich aktiv gestiftet hat], rather they are syntheses that are produced [herstellen] in passivity, and that nevertheless can [also] then be produced when the particular lived-experiences entering into the connection with one another have [as it happens] arisen from the activity of the ego [in der Aktivität des Ich entsprungen sind]. If, from the very beginning, we remain focused most simply on the realm that already has our exclusive interest now, the realm of passive presentations as the material for passively emerging [passiv erwachsende] syntheses, then we will be concerned generally speaking with such syntheses in which a presentation points beyond itself to [über sich hinausweist auf] another presentation. The latter thereby gains a new inner character that it otherwise could not have. It is the character of the specific “intention [Intention],” that is, of being-directed-toward-a-goal [des Richtungs-ziel-seins], of being-intended [Intendiert-seins], of being-meant [Vermeint-seins], or correlatively speaking: the presenting is not merely a general consciousness of its object [nicht bloßuberhaupt vorstellendes Bewußtsein von einem Gegenstand], but rather is in itself directed towards its object [in sich selbst aus seinen Gegenstand gerichtet]... For want of terms at our disposal, we avail ourselves of the apposition “passive,” passive intention [passiv Intention] (2.§18.118; translation slightly modified).\(^\text{27}\)

Here we see the first hints of a striking contrast between the basic conception of intentionality at work in \textit{LI} and that at work in \textit{PAS}.

In \textit{LI}, nothing could be more misleading than to characterize the intentionality of mental acts in terms of such “intention” – all thought of activity, all thought of personal striving towards an goal, was to have been rigidly excluded from our conception of

\(^{27}\)Steinbock’s translation of “des Richtungs-ziel-seins” is “teleological directedness.” I believe this quite committal reading is essentially correct in all its connotations: that is what I seek to show in what follows.
intentionality. At best, in *LI*, we could read Husserl as making an analogy to goal-seeking intentions to characterize fulfillment (cf. p.235 above.). For example, Husserl claimed that in the case of a dynamic or temporally-extended unification in fulfillment, “the act of pure meaning, like a goal-seeking intention [in der Weise einer abzielenden Intention], finds its fulfillment in the act which renders the matter intuitive” (*LI*, VI.1.§8.206b).

There seemed no impetus, in *LI* to read such claims as anything but an (ill-chosen) analogy.

Here in *PAS*, Husserl invokes the novel conception of passive intentions to characterize a being-directed-towards-a-goal which is held to characterize all intentional directedness. Is this talk of “goals” mere analogy? Or does it signify a more substantive commitment on Husserl’s part? Thus far, the matter is ambiguous. Immediately after invoking the concept of passive intention, Husserl offers a few remarks intended as clarification:

There is danger in this description [of intentional directedness in terms of “passive intention”] only insofar as it is not a matter of those very common meanings of the words, “to mean,” “to be directed toward,” “to intend,” which refer to the ego and its acts [*das Ich und seinen Aktus*], whereby the ego, and in a totally different sense, is the radiating point of directedness [*Ausstrahlungspunkt einer Richtung*] of a self-directedness toward the object [*eines Sich-richtens auf den Gegenstand*]... [setting this egoic conception aside] from here on we will speak only of passively intending presentations [passiv intendierenden Vorstellungen]. At the outset we also want to name the synthesis in which this intention arises [*der Synthesis, in der diese Intention entspringt*]: associative synthesis (2.§18.118-119, my emph.).

Let me set aside one important claim here. In this passage, Husserl gives a name for the kind of synthesis which gives rise to passive intention: it is called “associative synthesis.”
We are not yet ready to discuss associative synthesis, which will be the topic of §8.3 below. For now, we are interested only in clarifying what it is that associative synthesis gives rise to: what this conception of “passive intention” amounts to.

Regarding passive intention, what we learn from this passage is that, in some sense, passive intentions are not to evoke egoic (let alone personal) activity: we must ensure that the “directedness towards a goal” which is involved in “passive intention” is never confused with the manner in which I intend, when I have a goal. And yet Husserl remarks that he can find no better term to use here than “intention,” despite all the danger of confusion this invites.

This doesn’t offer us much to clarify the concept of passive intention, and it does not complete my exegesis of it. For now, one might maintain that this is just Husserl making bad analogies again. But let me pause to underscore what is at issue. The claim we are considering is whether, and in what sense, every intentionally-directed experience (prior to and independent of its entering into a unity of fulfillment) has the character of “intention,” or “directedness-toward-a-goal.” If Husserl’s remarks here are more than mere analogy, the prospects for a novel Act Conception of intentionality are significant. We can make this clear by revisiting a line of thought I raised far above, in our discussion of Strawson in Ch.6 (see pp.242 above).

One seeming difficulty for Strawson’s view is that it treats the occurrence of a thought which we intended to think as akin to falling after one has (merely) intended to step off a cliff. This misses the character of thinking an intended thought as doing what I intended to do; as hitting the mark. If we could read “passive intention” as
invoking directedness-towards a goal in more than an analogy, we would have a concise clarification of this issue. We would be able to clarify the sense in which any fulfillment properly has this character of fulfillment, by understanding it as fulfillment of a goal – even though it would not essentially be fulfillment of any of my personal goals. Despite the sharp difference between fulfillment of personal intentions and fulfillment of “passive intentions,” if Husserl intends more than an analogy here, we would have the first steps toward a conception of the attainment of fulfillment as the completion of a subintentional mental act, and we would have a positive characterization of this mental act as consisting in the attainment of a goal.

To assess whether this line of thought can be aptly pursued, we must gain further clarity regarding the sense in which “passive intention” involves “directedness-toward-a-goal.”

8.2.4 Confirmation-in-fulfillment

vs. “Clarifying” fulfillment

Let us take stock of where we stand. We initially set out to clarify the notion of confirmation-in-fulfillment (§8.2.1). We followed Husserl in explicating how “pointing-at,” as a kind of noematic relation between some noemata, arises through an associative synthesis (§8.2.2 – though we have delayed an investigation of associative synthesis itself). Lastly, we followed Husserl in initially framing the concept of “passive intention,” pausing to draw contrasts with LI and to clarify what is at stake in this conception for our
understanding of mental acts (§8.2.3).

We now want to follow Husserl in examining where we have gotten in our initial task: “is the concept of [passive] intention that we have previously obtained sufficient to attain the particular concept of fulfillment as confirmation?” (2.§19.121). We shall see that the answer is “no.” And we shall see that in providing an adequate account of confirmation-in-fulfillment, Husserl is compelled to go still further in revoking the claims of *Li*; still further in explicitly attaching an active connotation to “passive intention.” To begin working towards this view, we must first clarify what is at issue in understanding confirmation-in-fulfillment versus other forms of fulfillment.

Suppose I am now perceiving the front-side of an object which appears monochrome, or which appears to have a certain distinctive and regular pattern, such as a checkerboard. Part of my present perception is a horizon of protentions – expectations, of how the backside of the object will appear. There is a naïve (fallible, of course) expectation that the monochrome color, or the pattern, will continue on the backside. This expectation is “empty” – it does not present the backside of the object in the flesh, as it were. Now how can this expectation be fulfilled – how could the backside of the object be brought to a more full intuition, in an experience that gives the object as expected?

In two ways, after a fashion. The first is called “clarifying” (*Klarung*) fulfillment, and the second is proper “confirmation” (*Bewahrheitung*).\(^\text{28}\) Let us discuss each in turn.

First, I could, in a way, fulfill an expectation of an object if I “picture [ausmalen] how it will arrive” (2.§19.122). In a straightforward case, I could perform an egoic,

\(^{28}\)Compare *Experience and Judgment* §27.
imaginative act to present myself with the backside. In doing so, I conjure up an *image* of the object’s backside. Only some of what I fill into the image counts as properly fulfilling: because perceptions’ initial expectations are always in some ways indeterminate, only *some* features of the backside are expected, and only these can be filled in in a way that conforms to the expectation, or in a way that is fulfilling. The rest is conjured up only as “mere ‘filler’ [*bloße ‘Ausmalung’*]” for the sake of picturing an object with some degree of completeness (2.§19.122). For example, perhaps the lighting is such that were I to move around the object to see its backside, I would cast a shadow on it. If this is not “expected” in my perception, then any lighting-conditions I imagine will be mere filler.

In Husserl’s view, the appeal here to an egoic act of picturing is not essential. However it is that “filler” is provided for an expectation, the only filler that will count as at all “fulfilling” will correspond to the expectations themselves; everything else will be “mere filler,” and will not count as fulfilling. A suitable “image” might arise *passively*, without any egoic involvement. What is important is only the distinction between fulfilling filler versus “filler that does not fulfill” (*PAS* 2.§19.125).

Although such picturing is not fully fulfilling, it is to be regarded as a kind of “clarifying” fulfillment, in Husserl’s view. It is *fulfillment* because it is a case where an empty intention (e.g., a protention or expectation) is paired up with a corresponding intuition of the object (in this case, an imaginative intuition); the object is pictured as what was expected (and more: plus filler). It is *clarifying* in the sense that it is “disclosive [enthüllend] as actually clarifying the intended sense [den intendierten gegenständlichen Sinn]” – in filling out the expectation explicitly, we may come to understand better what
the expectation was (S.§19.122), distinguishing it from what was not actually expected.29

Now this kind of fulfillment is not sufficient for what Husserl has in mind with confirmation. Simply picturing what was expected (plus more: plus mere filler) does not give the intended object, in the flesh, in such a way that we could gain knowledge of it. This kind of “picturing” does suffice to fill-in the expectations, and so in that sense counts as fulfillment. But there is an epistemic or doxic character which is not present here. In contrast to “clarifying” fulfillment – the mere, partial “filling in” of an empty presentation – he sketches confirmation-in-fulfillment as follows:

There is an entirely different mode of bringing to intuition [Veranschaulichung], i.e., there is an entirely different synthesis of coinciding between intention and a suitable intuition, namely, the specific fulfillment of intention [der spezifische Erfüllung der Intention]...

What occurs here beyond what is prefigured [die Vorzeichnung], beyond what is determinately expected, we characterize not merely as filling, but rather as determining more closely [Näherbestimmung]. As such, the latter has the character of fulfillment. What first comes on the scene as coinciding with the prefigured element is a primary fulfillment [das primar Erfüllende]. But the overabundance [Superplus] that intuition supplies is also a fulfilling, a secondary one [sekundar... erfüllend], insofar as it is given as belonging to the object itself which is intended there and is now given in intuition as itself, precisely fulfilling the intention (PAS, 2.§19.122).

We can understand the key claim here as follows. Allow that anytime an expectation is

29If one finds the appeal to an imaginative picture as a kind of fulfilling or self-giving intuition to be somewhat problematic here, there are alternatives. For example, for those with sufficient artistic ability, one could literally draw a picture of an expected object; literally “fill it in” with details, and could actually work out on paper what was expected. This wouldn’t fulfill the expectation in a confirming way – and neither would the imaginative picturing Husserl sketches. But perhaps it helps make clear the “disclosive” character Husserl has in mind. Perhaps even better: suppose one is describing a person of interest to a police sketch-artist. Throughout description, you have an expectation of how the sketch should look. At the end of the drawing session, the sketch-artist shows you their work. You can then assess the extent to which the sketch fulfills your expectations. Of course, this doesn’t determine, in a confirmatory way, who the person of interest is. But it offers another illustration of the “disclosive” character Husserl is emphasizing here.
“filled-in,” there is a kind of fulfillment which occurs – what Husserl here calls primary fulfillment. Then we can say that primary fulfillment occurs both in confirmation, and also in merely “picturing” an object in a clarifying fulfillment. Beyond this, the two cases differ. In the case of clarifying fulfillment, what gets filled in beyond the expectation is “mere filler,” of no doxic import whatsoever. In contrast, in the case of confirmation-in-fulfillment, what gets filled in beyond the expectation also has the character of fulfillment. The fulfilling intuition goes beyond any determinate expectation, and gives more content than was expected; and yet what is given beyond the expectation appears as belonging to the intended object, rather than as mere filler.

We may clarify this using the example of perception. Perception always involves a mix of intuitions (e.g., of the frontside of the object) and empty presentations (e.g., expectations of the backside of the object). Part of the doxic character of perceptually confirming the object’s features arises because no matter what we find, there will be a naïve certainty that it belongs to that object. Even if perceptual experience presents us with something we had not determinately expected, it nonetheless presents us with some feature of the object. In contrast, in clarifying fulfillment, anything beyond determinate expectations makes no claim of presenting us with the object as it is.\(^30\)

Once we have made this distinction, we return again to the guiding question we have been trying to answer: what is the full analysis of passive confirmation, and does the foregoing concept of “passive intention” provide us with what we need to make sense

\(^30\)Husserl remarks that one cannot always radically distinguish between picturing or clarifying fulfillment and confirming fulfillment – in cases of bringing a retention to intuition, the two coincide (cf. *PAS* 2.§19.123ff). This will not disturb the main line of argument I am pursuing here.
of it?

8.2.5 The Argument From Passive Intention

Thus far, we have specified that Husserl invokes the notion of “passive intention” to capture the characteristic of being-directed-towards-a-goal. It has remained unclear whether this is mere analogy. We want to answer the following question: can “passive intention” help us understand passive confirmation-in-fulfillment? We have sharpened this question by elucidating the distinction between confirmation and merely clarifying or picturing fulfillment. With all this in place, we can proceed to examine Husserl’s answer to the question.

Every passive intention is to be understood essentially as something which could be ideally confirmed. Perception again provides an example. In perception there is intention(ality) towards an object. Perception purports to provide us with access to the object itself; perception purports to be a mode of access to perceived objects would could be continued on and on, passing into further and further fulfillment, determining the object fully as it is. (Of course we never in fact reach any such ideal of pure fulfillment, arriving at a completely self-giving intuition, in perception; and of course one might think, reflectively, that perception is misleading in even purporting to provide such a way of accessing objects; this does not diminish the purport as an essential feature of perception).

Summing up, (and jumping ahead to one of Husserl’s own late summaries): all self-givings demand “progressive clarification [fortschreitende Klärung]” or progression
through a “gradation of self-giving whose ideal limes is an absolute or ‘pure’ self-giving” – this is “a universal law of consciousness” (PAS 2.§44.254). When we take this ideal possibility of confirmation into account, we arrive at a new characterization of passive intention. Here is Husserl’s initial description:

The intention is directed toward its object; it does not want [sie will nicht] to be a merely empty intending toward it; it wants to go to the object itself [sie will zu ihm selbst] – to the object itself, that is, to an intuition that gives the object itself, to an intuition that is in itself the consciousness of having a self. But the intention does not really want to drive at [will nicht überhaupt darauf hinaus] coming into contact with the intended object in a corresponding intuition of the self, merely to find, for instance, that was was prefigured has been brought to [just any kind of] fulfillment; even then it is still unsatisfied [unbefriedigt] and strives onward [strebt fort] from one closer determination to another, again and again. The indeterminate generality peculiar to what is prefigured in very abiding emptiness is always only a form for the fulfillment intended in an affiliated objective sense, a fulfillment which is to be accomplished [leistende] in the form of a new, closer and closer determination (PAS 2.§20.126).

In seeking to understand passive intentions in relation to the ideal of complete confirmation, Husserl resorts to a pervasive usage of what is often called “intentionalistic,” “mentalistic,” or “anthropromorphic” language. Let us say that in his description here, passive intention is “quasi-volitional.” If Husserl is employing his conception of passive intentions as “being-directed-toward-a-goal” as a mere analogy or metaphor (as was done in LI), one must minimally recognize that he is exploiting the analogy in the extreme, by describing passive intentions quasi-volitionally. Just as we say that our own egoic intentions are not satisfied unless we do as we intend, so likewise Husserl says here that a passive intention is not satisfied by mere clarifying fulfillment; nor is it satisfied with a one-off confirmation, but instead “strives” toward further and further determination.
of the intended object – it strives towards the ideal of complete confirmation. It strives towards a self-giving intuition of the object which it intends.

To clarify what is at issue here, we can draw upon the distinction (cf. §8.2.4 above) between confirmation-in-fulfillment and merely clarifying fulfillment. It is of course an ideal possibility that any empty presentation could be “fulfilled” through a merely clarifying fulfillment. This, I suggest, is not sufficient to invoke the commitments which lead Husserl to adopt a quasi-volitional description. A clarifying fulfillment is partly fulfilling, and partly mere filler. If we consider a number of “images” which might fulfill a set of expectations, we shall find that we can impose only a limited ordering upon them. For example, some images may fulfill more of the expectations than other images do: some may be made more of mere filler. We could impose a rough ranking on the images in terms of this conception of “more-or-less fulfilling.” But clarifying fulfillment does not extend beyond the limited set of possible fulfillments which are predetermined by the expectations in question; and no picturing fulfillment prefigures new picturing fulfillments. So, for example, if we start with an empty presentation or set of expectations, the ideal limit of clarifying fulfillment is fixed at once: any image which fulfills the expectations will be as clarifying as can be. If two images equally fulfill all expectations, but differ in their mere filler, then they are on a par: they are both maximally fulfilling in a clarificatory manner. Any further content they have as mere “filler” cannot be regarded as giving the intended object, and it also doesn’t provide new expectations of the object itself.

Things are different with regard to confirmation-in-fulfillment. Here there is the
requirement of secondary fulfillment – of determining the object more closely by going beyond what was expected. Here the object is given partly as it was expected, but it is also given in an unexpected way: all the “filling” is fulfilling. Where confirming fulfillment is not complete – where the object still, as it were, hides a backside or an inside or an aspect from us – then the possibility of future unexpected fulfillment will simply reiterate. On the basis of a new experience of the object, there will arise new expectations; these can be fulfilled, and also surpassed, in yet another round of secondary fulfillment which determines the object yet-more-closely. In this case, we can impose a single, cohesive, ideal ordering on all possible confirming fulfillments. All of them are to be ordered in a single series depending on how close they come to the ideal possibility of a complete self-giving of the intended object.

It is this ideal possibility of a complete, confirming fulfillment which has no analogue in the case of mere, clarifying fulfillment. The results are as follows. First, every fully-empty passive intention has to be understood as the endpoint of an ideal series of confirming fulfillments, with an ideally complete confirmation of the object – a totally self-giving intuition of the object as it is in-itself – lying at the other end. Every passive intention essentially brings with it the ideal possibility of reaching the end-point of full self-givenness of the intended object. Second, every somewhat-full (or partially self-giving) passive intention lies somewhere in the middle of such an ideal ordering. And, crucially, every passive intention establishes the preconditions for a new passive intention which lies closer to the ideal of full intuition of the intended object. This establishes not just an order to this ideal series of passive intentions, but a directionality between
its members. Each passive intention brings with it expectations, which prefigure the possibility of a fulfillment. If any – even partial – confirming fulfillment then occurs, it will determine the object more closely, bringing with it new expectations, which prefigure new possibilities of fulfillment, which can be further surpassed as the object is determined more closely, and so on. It is this directionality, this ideal possibility of ratcheting up determination of the intended object, which I suggest Husserl seeks to capture through his use of quasi-volitional language.

One might still maintain that this is mere analogy: that Husserl is stuck invoking quasi-volitional language simply ‘for want of better terms at his disposal.’ I now want to argue that – whatever we may think of the view – this is not workable as a reading of Husserl: the quasi-volitional description is to be taken at face value, and cannot be regarded as mere analogy.

Husserl himself does not back down from this quasi-volitional description of passive intentions. Rather, he takes it that to the extent that we are forced into this mode of description simply in order to do justice to passive intention and fulfillment, “this entire manner of speaking of ‘driving at [Hinauswollen]’” shows that “there is still something more” to be added to the conception of passive intention:

It has not only been shown that a being-directed [Gerichtet-sein] stemming from an awakening belongs to all actual intentions and thus to an actually fulfilling, confirming synthesis. Rather, now this comes to the fore as belonging to a confirming intention: This directedness is tendentious [dieses Gerichtet-sein tendenziös ist], and as a tendency [als Tendenz], as a striving [als ein Streben], it is from the very beginning “driving at” satisfaction [auf die Befriedigung “hinauswill”] (PAS 2.§20.126).

Here we see the contrast between PAS and LI laid bare. In LI, Husserl maintained that
“activity,” in a genuine sense, required a link to personal strivings. Thus, he followed Natorp in claiming that it would be confusion to think that mental acts are “really” activity, on the grounds that an agent’s strivings are not essentially involved in them in the right kind of way (cf. p.228 above). In LI, Husserl’s technical conception of intentional directedness towards an object as “aiming” and “hitting” was to be sharply distinguished from any connotation of striving, and thereby, was to be sharply distinguished from any kind of activity.

In PAS, all basic intentional directedness is to be understood in terms of passive intention, and all passive intention is to be understood as a tendency, as a striving. And yet it is “an egoless tendency [ein ichlass Tendenz]”(2.§20.129). I suggest that the situation we find Husserl in here is precisely analogous to his turnabout regarding the pure ego. In LI, Husserl acknowledged that “in our description” of mental acts, “relation to an experiencing ego is inescapable,” but he still held that it would be a “misunderstanding” to treat every mental act as essentially relating to an ego (LI.IV.2.§12.101b, original emph). Later, in the Ideen, Husserl acknowledged the fundamental importance of this unavoidable description (see my earlier discussion of this contrast on p.288 above). Likewise, in LI, Husserl claimed to have set aside all connotation of activity and striving in understanding mental acts, and yet he repeatedly wielded the “analogy” in describing mental acts (cf. my concluding remarks in §6.5 above.). Now, in PAS, Husserl at last confronts what his (phenomenologically pure) descriptions of experience demands, by his own lights: a quasi-volitional conception of basic intentionality.

While he does not cite LI explicitly here and flag the rejection of his own earlier
view, Husserl makes this claim about as clearly as one could. In §8.2.2 above, we saw Husserl invoke the Latin phrases “terminus a quo” and “terminus ad quem” in characterizing the unique noematic relation of one noema’s “pointing-at” another. Here he revisits this characterization, and makes clear that it is to be grounded in the quasi-volitional conception of passive intention:

We spoke of *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* with respect to association as the synthesis between what is awakening and what is awakened by it, between the directedness-toward and what is taken up in the directedness [*zwischen... Hin-richtendem und Richtung*]. This way of speaking now takes on a new sense, and a more authentic one [*nimmt... einen neuen Sinn an, und einen eigentlchem*]. For now it concerns an authentic taking-aim [*eine eigentlich Zielung*]. The intention is that lived-experience [*Erlebnis*] that is an actual taking-aim, a having-in-sight [*in dem da bloße Abzlielen, das Abspheben-haben liegt*]; its fulfillment lies in the lived-experience of being-at-the-goal-itself [*Beim-Ziel-selbst-Seins*] (PAS 2.§20.127).

Precisely the rich sense of “aiming-at” which was to be rigidly excluded in *LI* is now set at the foundation of the correct understanding of passive intention. Passive intention must be understood as involving an aiming-at, an intention, and a striving-after an ideally complete confirmation of the intended object, as goal.31

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31 Compare Ideas II.3.2.§56b on the tendency that remains in “passive motivation,” and ibid.§56c on “hidden motivations” in experience: the active, egoic apprehension of any thing-like noema is said to depend upon a “web of motivations,” which are described as “intentional’ connections [*intentionale Verbindungen*]” and as “tendencies [*Tendenzen*]” (see esp.p.237).

It is difficult to locate such an explicit statement of this view in *Experience and Judgment*. Indeed, since that text is focused almost entirely on active syntheses, it would be easy to misunderstand Husserl’s claims and overlook passive intentions entirely. But with the reading of *PAS* in place, we can make good sense of Husserl’s otherwise cryptic claim in *Experience and Judgment* that there is “a doing which is not an ‘I-do,’ a doing which precedes the turning-toward” of the ego (§19, p.85, original emph.).

The term “passive intention” is not itself deployed in *Experience and Judgment*, but the concept is clearly at work. *Experience and Judgment*’s §6 clarifies that even the most basic kind of egoic verification, relying on perception, is an “activation... of passive protodoxa” (p.65). The view I offer makes plain how such activation occurs: by the ego’s stepping into a passive intention which is already operative. In §7, Husserl still maintains the view of passive doxa as tendencies. These are still sharply distinguished (see also §19) from the tendency of the ego towards knowledge: the ego’s stepping into an act is a “compliance with” pre-existing, non-egoic tendencies (p.78). Such non-egoic tendencies are described as “a tendency of
We can now summarize what I call:

**The Argument From Passive Intention** (“AFPI”)

1. Prior to any consideration of egoic activity, every intentional mental act is to be characterized as a “passive intention” which arises through associative syntheses.

2. Every passive intention involves a directedness-towards-an-object.

3. A passive intention is either empty, or it is fulfilling, or it is a mix of the two.

4. Understood in their essence, every passive intention implies the ideal possibility of a complete confirmation of the intended object.

5. Further, every passive intention (no matter how empty) involves expectations which prefigure their own fulfillment.

6. Should any (even partial) confirmation-in-fulfillment occur, this will involve determining the intended object more closely, which will bring with it new expectations, which will prefigure further fulfillments, whose confirmation will have all the same results, and so on.

7. All passive intentions thus fall onto a single, orderly continuum from complete emptiness to the ideal of complete confirmation, and any...
confirmation of one in the series leads progressively to another, further along the route to confirmation.

∴ Every passive intention must essentially be understood as driving or tending towards the ideal of complete confirmation of its intended object.

8. This quasi-volitional description of passive intention is demanded by the phenomena themselves, and must be taken literally.

∴ Every passive intention must essentially be understood as akin to a volitional act, even though they cannot possibly be understood in terms of any egoic act.\(^{32}\)

With this, I submit, we have located a non-egoic conception of intentional phenomena as acts – as strivings-for-a-goal. The account clearly meets our requirements of providing an account of mental acts as subintentional. What is at issue here is not any of my personal goals, or my strivings, or my egoic or personal acts. On the Husserlian view, (i) any single, isolated instance of non-completely-self-giving presentation of an object will incur all these commitments, and (ii) all such intentionality is presupposed by any egoic act, and (iii) – cf. *The Argument From Sedimentation* in Ch.7 above – all this is presupposed by any traditional actions involving personal volitions.

We have just arrived at the Problem of the Parallels of Passivity and Activity (P||A) (see p.347 above). We have clarified the sense in which all passive intentionality involves a striving for knowledge: “doxic life on the level of pure passivity takes on the shape

\(^{32}\)Compare my sketch of the “argument from potential fulfillment” back in Ch.6’s fn.15, p.244 above.
of the passive intention again and again, of a directedness \([\text{Gerichtet-seind}]\), which as a
tendency operating in an uninhibited manner \([\text{als Tendenz ungehemmt sich auswirkend}]\),
passes over \([\text{berführt}]\) to self-givenness” (2.§23, 146). And yet this is “exactly what active
cognition, at the highest level, predicative and theoretical cognition accomplishes” (2.§23,
146). We need to make clear what is “quasi-” about the quasi-volitional conception of
mental acts, and how it differs from what goes on in egoic volition.

Of course, the involvement of the ego is one important difference, but Husserl also
highlights another disparity which is worth clarifying. This is intended as a distinction
between passive confirmation \([\text{Bewahrheitung}]\) and active verification \([\text{Bewärung}]\):\(^{33}\)

...naturally – and we must never forget this – all the talk of verification
\([\text{Bewärung}]\) applying to such fulfillments in mere passivity is inaccurate
\([\text{uneigentliche}]\). Indeed, we are not speaking here at all of an active
striving and accomplishing \([\text{aktiven Streben und Leisten}]\) that is directed
toward a true being \([\text{auf wahres Sein gerichtet ist}]\) which normatively
regulates or measures its intending according to what is given as true
in the self-giving \([\text{das an dem in der Selbstgebung Gegeben als Wahren
sein Meining normiert, mißt}]\), although, however, it surely does concern
the presuppositions, and in a certain manner, the analogs \([\text{Analoga}]\) in
passivity, without which that activity could not function (2.§21.136).

The critical claim here is that we must not understand passive confirmation as regulated
according to a norm of truth, in the sense that active, egoic verification is regulated by a
norm of truth. Such an ideal conception of truth can, in the Husserlian scheme, only be
attained through egoic acts: it involves acts of position-taking \([\text{Stellungnahmen}]\) which
must be understood as “judicative believing” \([\text{einem Urteilsglauben}]\), cases where the
ego decides in favor of one of many open possibilities, ruling out others (PAS 2.§23.149).

An example Husserl provides concerns judgments in mathematics. When we egoically

\(^{33}\)On this distinction, see also Steinbock’s fn.62, on PAS p.127.
make such judgments, we do so with an ideal norm of truth in view. We are guided by the presupposition that

...whether we ever will or are even able to carry out a verification [Bewährung] or not, even without thinking about whether it may ever become a decision of the positive or the negative sort, it is surely decided in itself [es doch an sich entschieden] whether the judgment is verifiable or whether it is refutable, already in advance and thus for all actual and possible consciousness in the future (2.§.104).

In the pursuit of active, egoic verification we seek to determine an object in-itself, as it really is in (e.g., transcendent) actuality. Passive confirmation on its own provides less than this: it constitutes, for example, the perceived object as such: it constitutes a noema which we might then always egoically judge as misrepresentative of the intended object as it truly is “in itself.” This is precisely what occurs when we judge a stable perception to be “illusory.”

Husserl frames the upshot here in several ways. He distinguishes “essential truths [Wesenwahrheiten]” like those of mathematics from “experiential truths [Erfahrungswahrheiten]” (2.§23.150). He distinguishes “correctness in itself [Richtigkeit an sich]... truth in itself, truth in the strict sense of the word [Wahrheit an sich, Wahrheit im prägnenten Wortsin],” an ideal norm which regulates all active egoic verification, from the “empirical in-itself [empirischen Ansich]” which is constituted in passivity (2.§23.150). He distinguishes “the world in itself [die Welt an sich]” simpliciter, or “‘The’ one world [‘die’ eine Welt]” – which is the ideal target of theoretical knowledge – from the “world as the unity of experience [Welt sich als Einheit der erfahrung]” which is constituted in passivity (2.§23.151-2).34

34Compare Experience and Judgment §48 on the norm of truth which governs egoic striving after
As noted in §8.1.3, it is precisely this backing-down from actual being, and this stepping-back from “truth in the strict sense of the word,” which will lead Husserl to the Problems of the In-Itself of the Transcendent World and of Consciousness. It will become a central aim, later in PAS, for Husserl to explain how passivity provides the resources for us to ever attain the idea of truth in-itself. I am not concerned to investigate this here, but will take it up in §8.4 below.

For present purposes, what is important is that norms of worldly truth do not govern passive confirmation. This provides us with the resources to distinguish more cleanly the quasi-volitional structure of passive intention, versus active volitions. By the standard accounts of volitional action (cf. my Ch.1, esp. §1.2), actions involve believing that the world is thus-and-so, desiring that the world be thus-and-so, intending to bring it about that the world be changed by one’s actions, etc. The goal-directedness of volition is shot through with presuppositions regarding the actual world, and the norms of successful, volitional action involve “measuring” the relation between self and world. This is also the case in mainstream conceptions of mental actions (cf. my Ch. 1, esp. §1.3): it is presupposed that I myself am an empirically real agent in the actual world, that my mental capacities and processes are actual, and that successful mental action requires monitoring mental events as they actually occur.

In Husserl’s transcendental conception of quasi-volitional passive intention, by contrast, there is no essential presupposition of the actuality of the world. We are not at all discussing “a wishing, a desiring, or a willing with the expectation that the
intended element should be actual, should become actual, or should have been actual” (2. §21.130). The striving involved of passive intention cannot of course really make an object actual – its goal is not at all to affect a change in the actual world. This inability – and disinteredness – to change the actual world underscores the “quasi-” of quasi-volitional acts. They are characterized by an “epistemic striving [Erkenntnisstreben]” (2. §20.129ff).  

Passive intention involves a directedness “toward the experiential seeing of the self of what is taken for being [für seien Gehaltenen oder vielmehr auf das Erfahren selbst]”; it wants the object to be “actual [only] in the subjective mode of experiencing the self [im subjektiven Modus des Selbsterfahrens];” it is not directed at the object as truly being, in-itself, but rather in “the modified mode of being presented in the flesh [Wirkliche… im modus der Leibhaftigkeit]” (2. §21.132, all my emph.). The goal which passive intention aims at is a self-giving intuition of apparent objects: it aims to give us the empirical in-itself, and to attain a stable world considered only as the correlate of an orderly unity of experience. It is precisely passive intention which makes possible our egoic acts of making judgments about “the” world. Only once passive intention has succeeded (to some extent) can we pursue theoretical knowledge, asking (for example) “Is the world in itself as it appears, in experience?”

On the Husserlian account, subintentional mental acts are constantly being performed – passive intention is constantly striving for presentation of objects in self-giving intuition – and this constitutes our experience of an apparent world, prior to any egoic

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35 Compare Experience and Judgment §48; there the “cognitive striving” is mainly treated in connection with an ego which takes up an active interest in it.
activity. The quasi-volitional character of passive intention, as epistemic striving, provides us with a non-egoic conception of all mental acts as *acts*, and thereby does what the *LI’s Argument From Interpretation* sought to do, and what Brentano’s *Argument From Unity* would have been forced to do eventually. Striving towards the ideal limit of a complete confirmation-in-fulfillment is an essential feature of passive intentions, and thus the foregoing may also be understood as a reprisal of *The Argument From Fulfillment* as it was seen in *Ideen*.

*The Argument From Passive Intention* leads to an important reconceptualization of intentionality. In Husserl scholarship, one often hears “intentionality” glossed as roughly synonymous with “consciousness-of.” Yet even as far back as the *Ideas*, Husserl suggested that this would be inadequate. Here is an illustrative example:

> It is easy to designate what is distinctive about intentional experience in terms of its generality. We all understand the expression “consciousness of something,” particularly in examples of it that we can produce at will. As easy as this is, it is all the more difficult to get a grip, purely and correctly, on the phenomenological kinds of essential distinctiveness corresponding to the expression.... virtually nothing is done, by stating and observing that every instance of presenting refers to something presented, every instance of judging refers to something judged, and so forth... Thus “consciousness of something” is something readily intelligible and yet at the same time something supremely unintelligible (*Ideen* I.3.3.§87.172-173).

In *PAS*, Husserl is quite clear that his conception of passive intention is *not* to be regarded as synonymous with mere consciousness-of. Rather, the *intention*, in the quasi-volitional sense, is to be distinguished from mere consciousness-of – for a variety of reasons in different cases (cf. *PAS* 2.§22.137-139). The case of retention is especially important, and will be discussed in §8.3 below. I provide a preliminary illustration now.
Suppose there occurs in consciousness an image which could serve as the clarifying fulfillment of some empty presentation. If it comes about that this image “functions as picturing,” then an intention “enters into” the image, and the image can be assessed as clarifying the expectation; but the intention will still be unfulfilled, and the intention “goes clean through this ‘image,’” continuing to strive toward a confirming fulfillment (2.§22.137, my emph). The image is indeed a “consciousness-of,” and has its place in an orderly series of possible fulfillments for some experience or other, considered in relation to a passive intention; but that is because a number of distinct, particular consciousnesses-of – that is, a number of distinct intentional experience, presentations or intuitions – can share a single “intentional ray” of directedness toward fulfilling intuition as their joint goal.

Passive intention, in the sense explored here, is thus best understood not as a feature of isolated experiences. (This was implied already, insofar as directedness-towards on object generally is a noematic relation). Rather it is offered as a description of the essential relatedness of many conscious experiences, and we are forced to recognize the passive intentions insofar as we aim to make intelligible the orderly progression of consciousness through isolated consciousnesses-of-something. Husserl will eventually sum this up as follows:

Consciousness is an incessant process of becoming. But it is not a mere succession [eine bloße Aufeinanderfolge] of lived-experiences, a flux, as one fancies an objective river. Consciousness is an incessant process of becoming [Werden] as an incessant process of constituting objectivities in an incessant progressus of graduated levels. It is a never ending history [eine nie abbrechende Geschichte]. And history is a graduating process of constituting higher and higher formations of sense through which prevails
an immanent teleology \([\textit{einer immanente Teleologie}]\) (PAS 2.§48.270)

Our discussion of passive intention clarifies much of this statement, though I will say more about it in §8.3 below.

I have followed Husserl to provide an account of passive intentions as themselves \textit{active}. All intentionality is to be understood in terms of passive intention; any intentional experience must (in its essence) be understood as part of a teleological structure of (non-egoic, quasi-volitional) striving for intuition of objects. The claim is that this is an essential, \textit{noematic aspect} of intentional experiences as they are constituted in passivity: they have the \textit{feature} of tending, acting, or striving towards confirmation-in-fulfillment.\textsuperscript{36}

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We now need to take up a loose end from §8.2.2 above: we need to consider Husserl’s \textit{genetic} analysis of how it is that these noematic features of passive intention come about. We must turn to discuss associative synthesis.

\section*{8.3 Associative Synthesis: The Genesis of Intentionality}

A complete discussion of Husserl’s phenomenology of association lies beyond the scope of my aims here. I shall rather be concerned to highlight just a few aspects of

\textsuperscript{36}See again fn.27 above.

\textsuperscript{37}I shall not pause to follow Husserl in correcting an oversight of the foregoing exegesis: I have focused only on cases where fulfillment (and especially confirmation-in-fulfillment) does occur, and where passive intentions approach satisfaction. I have not at all discussed the phenomena of “passive doubt,” wherein two irreconcilable passive intentions arise and prefigure apparent objects in a conflicting way. I have leapt over much of Husserl’s elaborate discussion of how these doubts are resolved in passivity (cf. PAS 2.SS5-15; see also 2.§22.142). This is important for a full understanding of evidence and confirmation-in-fulfillment as it occurs in passivity, but not central to an exegesis of passive intention as such. I shall return to modalization in §8.4 below.
his view – though (as always) this requires some stage-setting.

We have seen in §8.2 that in PAS, Husserl maintains that all mental acts (all intentional mental phenomena) have noematic aspects which license construing them as subintentional mental acts: they are quasi-volitional. The guiding question I shall be pursuing in this section can be framed several ways, as follows. In Husserl’s view: (1) Are mental acts themselves produced by a kind of act which lies even further back from egoic activity? (2) Is associative synthesis a subintentional mental act whose achievement is to produce intentional mental phenomena? (3) Is the genesis of intentional mental phenomena itself to be understood as a mental act?

Pursuing this question requires setting out an overview of the phenomenology of association more broadly. I shall proceed as follows. First, I will offer some clarification of the scope (§8.3.1) and goals (§8.3.2) of the phenomenology of association. Second, I will outline the three main varieties of associative syntheses which Husserl distinguishes (§8.3.3). This basic overview will not suffice to answer our guiding question, but will poise us to pursue it in §8.4. There I shall clarify two different arguments which Husserl’s remarks support, and which clarify the status of associative syntheses as acts.

8.3.1 The Absolute Time-Constituting Flow

The phenomenology of associative synthesis asks after the genesis of intentional lived experiences. This is not the ground-floor of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology: even a genetic phenomenology of association works on certain presuppositions which must ultimately be further-clarified.
One thing which phenomenology of associative syntheses presumes – and which is a prerequisite for association to occur – is that our lived experience has a certain temporal form. “The living present” is Husserl’s phenomenological description of what is sometimes known, following William James, as the specious present. Our consciousness is not temporally punctate, but rather includes already an anticipation of the future (what Husserl calls protention) and a record of the immediate past (what Husserl calls retention, or primary memory). Elsewhere, Husserl (1928) pursued an elaborate analysis of this synthetic structure, in terms of what he calls the absolute time-constituting flow. Here in PAS, we simply take this forward-looking and backward-looking temporal form of the living present for granted (2.§27.170).

In doing so, we also presuppose that the time-constituting flow imposes a primordial *ordering* upon all experiences (intentional mental acts, as well as hyletic material) (2.§29.180). They are all ordered in immanent time. They are ordered in immanent time regardless of similarities or differences in their content – e.g., it does not matter which sense-modalities two hyletic materials came from; they will always be either simultaneous, or in succession (with one earlier than the other). And if a group of experiences \( E_1 \) are simultaneous, and so coexist(ed), then they must occur either before or after any set of experiences \( E_2 \) which is (or was) not coexistent with \( E_1 \): “all coexistences together form a single order of succession in every living, streaming field of present” (2.§29.186).\(^{38}\)

\(^{38}\)Compare *Experience and Judgment* §§16&35-36; there Husserl seems to lump the whole phenomenology of association and the absolute time-constituting flow under the title of “the passive synthesis of time-consciousness” (p.35).
8.3.2 The Goals of a Phenomenology of Association

With the absolute time-constituting flow (and thus the form of phenomenological time, which it constituted) presupposed, Husserl clarifies what the phenomenology of association does seek to clarify. The investigation is framed in two broad ways.

First framing: the goal of a phenomenology of association is to supplement a phenomenological analysis of time-consciousness in general. Husserl’s earlier work on time-consciousness reveals the form of the living present: there is the continuously changing Now, flanked by retention and protention. However, this analysis does not explain how that form is populated with experiences of concrete objects, or how it comes about that an object is presented as a unity with respect to its content (2.§27.174). The analysis of the form of temporal experience abstracts from all such questions; the phenomenology of association is to answer them. The goal is to explain how any “objectlike formation” can arise which persists through time, and which is internally cohesive despite variation in contents – more than merely a punctate sensation.39

Second framing: the goal of phenomenology of association is to supplement Kant’s transcendental deduction. As Husserl sees it, Kant sought to explain the constitution of spatial objects in the world, the syntheses lying behind our consciousness of a material nature which then serves as the target for positive scientific explanation. This is not Husserl’s target – or rather, it is not his only target. Rather:

...lying deeper and essentially preceding this is the problem of the inner, the purely immanent objectlike formation and the constitution, as it were, of the inner-world, that is, precisely the constitution of the subject’s stream

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39Compare Experience and Judgment §16.
of lived-experience as being for itself, as the field of all being proper to it as its very own... the constitutive problems of the world presuppose the doctrine of the necessary, most general structures and the synthetic shapes of immanence that are possible in general. Hence, we are to seek here in immanence what are in principle the most general syntheses. (PAS 2.§27.171)

This characterization ties back to the introduction I provided, in §8.1.3 above, of Husserl’s motives for pursuing a phenomenology of association in PAS. Here we see Husserl framing a phenomenology of association as the attempt to resolve The Problems of the In-itself of the Transcendent World and of Consciousness. Kant’s task was to explain how “the” world is constituted in experience. Husserl will also address this, but divides it into several subtasks.

First, there is the problem of how the living present is filled with objects at all (see the “first framing” above). Next, there is Kant’s question of how those objects come to be experienced as transcendent – the question of how a world is constituted with an enduring “in-itself.” Third and fourth, there are analogues of both these problems on the side of consciousness. How does consciousness get filled with objects, some of which are its own experiences? How does an enduring stream of consciousness get constituted as persisting through many lived presents?

As noted in §8.2.5 above: (i) these issues arise precisely because the idea of “truth,” of the “in-itself,” does not regulate the quasi-volitional character of passive intention and (ii) the phenomenology of association is to clarify how we ever get to the idea of truth at all. In the next section I provide a rough overview of the phenomenology

\[40\] Compare Experience and Judgment regarding the Kantian thesis of time as the form of sensibility: §38, p.164ff.
of association; I shall return to the *Problems of the In-itself* in §8.4 below.

### 8.3.3 The Varieties of Associative Synthesis

Husserl eventually distinguishes three varieties of associative synthesis. These are: *primordial association*, *reproductive association*, and *anticipatory association*. I shall provide an overview of each variety, in turn. Note that this initial presentation is incomplete. It crucially excludes treatment of the relationship between *affection* and association, and it does not yet fully-clarify how Husserl will resolve the *Problems of the In-Itself of the Transcendent World* and *of Consciousess*. These issues will be discussed more fully in §8.4 below.

**Primordial Association**

First, there is *primordial association*. In the living present, there are apparent objectivities which are constituted as *unities* of hyletic matter. For example, a slew of red sensations move together, and would be categorized (in an egoic act of thinking) as presenting me with the surface of a book. *Prior* to any such conceptual synthesis, the constitution of (what gets conceived of as) “the book” as a whole, and of (what gets conceived of as) “its cover” as a part, presupposes an associative synthesis which makes the hyletic material appear as hanging together, as one *unity* despite their multiplicity and diversity. In *PAS* Husserl calls such hyletic materials “object phases [*Gegenstandsphasen*], sensible points [*sinnliche Punkte*], so to speak” (2.§34.213.) The synthesis proceeds on the basis of the similarity or homogeneity of some hyletic materials, and
the corresponding contrast between others; similarity and contrast are basic phenomena which a phenomenology of association does not clarify, and which associative syntheses presuppose (cf. 2.§28-29). What is crucial is that the syntheses of primordial association go beyond mere similarity, and constitute whole objectlike formations not only as a unity in temporal simultaneity, but also as unities through time, through succession. Primordial association accomplishes “the constitution of hyletic objectlike formations, namely, as connected coexistences and successions” (2.§33.206). Once any such objectlike unity is formed in primordial synthesis, “wherever we speak of a consciousness, of an intentional lived-experience, we think without further ado of a consciousness of something offering itself as something for itself, a consciousness of something prominent, existing in a singular manner [ein Bewußtsein von einem sich als etwwas für sich Darbietenden, einem Abgehobenen, einzeln Dastehenden]” (2.§26.165).41 I flag now that this notion of “prominence” is something which I shall return to elucidate further in §8.4.2 below.

Once any such objectlike unity is constituted in passivity, primordial association iterates. For example, once the unities of two red prominences have been constituted on the basis of their internal similarities and their contrast with the surrounding hyletic material, the two red unities can again be synthesized as similar, and their common element (what we would call “redness”) can be made prominent as a unity: although they are two, they have the same “what-content” (2.§28.177ff). All this is prior to any cognitive conceptualization of the objects; it is rather the passive synthesis that prefigures

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41 Note that in Steinbock’s translation, each of the clear noun-forms in German (Darbietenden, Abge- hobenen, Dastehenden) is rendered as an adjectival in English. One might suggest instead rendering Darbietenden as “a feature,” Abgehobenen as “a prominence” (or perhaps even, thinking geologically, “a promontory”), and “Dastehenden” as (perhaps) “out-stander,” “outlier,” or “a pop-out.”
such active syntheses (2.§28.178).

    Primordial association must be understood not just as occurring at a moment – in
the Now – but in terms of the flowing form of immanent time, in terms of the fundamental
order of succession which is secured by the absolute time-constituting flow (see §8.3.1)
above. As soon as any objectlike unity is formed through primordial association, that
objectlike unity is a temporal datum, located in the universal order of immanent time.
Every such objectlike unity also has its duration – it persists through some interval of
immanent time. Within that duration, the objectlike formation is said to be “becoming
[Werden],” and this can occur when there is variability (e.g., some hyletic material is no
longer given, but the objectlike unity is still constituted through primordial association)
or where there is invariability (the hyletic matter remains constant) (2.§29.186). Should
any past objectlike formation be recalled (see below), primordial association can again
occur, enabling the synthesis of a present unity as a “repetition” of the same what-content
(2.§29.176).

Reproductive Association

    Second, there is reproductive association (cf. 2.§26). ultimately, reproductive
association will make possible the explicit remembering (Wiederinnerung) of past experi-
ences and experienced object. Husserl distinguishes two steps here, which I will try to
clarify.

    In the living present, there is constantly a horizon of retention. (This horizon is

\[^{42}\text{On all these points, see also Experience and Judgment, §23, especially subsection b.}\]
part of the form of the living present, arising from the absolute time-constituting flow, which we leave unanalyzed here – see §8.3.1 above). As new hyletic content comes along in experience, filling the “Now,” old content is displaced, and takes on the temporal characteristic of having-been, “just-now.” In PAS, Husserl maintains that retentions are not essentially intentional: “retentions, as they arise in their originality, have no intentional character [keine intentionalen Charakter]” (2.§18.120; see also 2.§18.116). Retentions are instead akin to sensations or hyletic materials, as these were discussed in LI: they are initially non-acts, non-intentional experiences. However, just as in LI, “interpretation” was capable of intentionally referring sensations to noemata, in PAS Husserl holds that it is possible that a retention can come to have an “oriented structure [Richtungsstruktur]” in virtue of “subsequent association” (2.§19.120). The associative synthesis at work here can be understood in light of our earlier discussion (§8.2.2) of how a noematic aspect of directedness arises when one hears a knock at the door.

A retention becomes intentional when, in the experienced Now, something is present which is similar to the past, retended experience. (Again, similarity and contrast are presupposed in the phenomenology of association). In the prototypical case of sensory experience, the hyletic material of the now-experience is partially shared with that of the past, retended experience: both contain “red,” for example, or both contain a similarly-sounding tone. The syntheses of reproductive association go beyond mere similarity, and establish a new noematic relationship between past and present: “we find a phenomenologically peculiar connective trait [Verbindungscharakter] that can be expressed in the following way: something present recalls [erinnert] something past”
There is a kind of directionality established as a noematic feature between present and past – a ray of directedness arises, as we saw in the case of the knock on the door. There is thus a kind of *passive intention* which arises here, and all the quasi-volitional features of passive intention are present. This intentional directedness also prefigures egoic activity, as usual: the ego could “step in,” and carry out what is passively intended.

But there are two central differences in the case at hand, two noematic features constituted through this associative synthesis which are not present in every passive intention. Here is Husserl highlighting both the similarities and differences:

Something present recalls [*erinnert*] something reproductively presentified [*Vergegenwärtigte*], which is to say, there is a tendency [*Tendenz*] that is directed from the former to the latter and a tendency that is fulfilled by intuitive reproduction. It follows from this that we, as attentive egos, look from this to that by being referred [*hingewiesen*] from the one to the other; and we can also say: The one points to [*deutet*] the other... Further, the phenomenon gives itself as a genesis [*Genesis*], with the one term as awakening, the other as awakened. The reproduction of the latter gives itself as aroused [*erwirkt*] through the awakening (2.§26.166).

The tendency toward fulfilling this “recall,” by bringing the past to intuitive fullness, is the basic feature of passive intention. In the case of the knock-on-the-door, the intentional ray goes ‘clean through’ the presentation of the knock, aiming instead at the room beyond the door. Likewise here, an intentional ray goes ‘clean through’ the retended experience, aiming instead at the possibility of a fulfilling intuition of the remembered event. In virtue of being recalled, the past experience comes to share in intentional directedness. After an associative synthesis, the retended experiences have become “directed [*gerichtet*] retentions, namely, retentions that have become intentions [*Intentionen gewordene*] by
such an awakening” and it is only these directed retentions which “are at issue for a synthesis of bringing to intuition” (2.§19.123). We are quite familiar with the basic account here.

But note, further, that reproductive association constitutes two new noematic aspects which are not present in all passive intention. First, the intuition which the passive intention “wants” to attain concerns a past object, as past.43 Husserl gives such a tendency the special name “reproductive tendency,” and the full confirming fulfillment of such a tendency requires an identification of the object as the same one which one has experienced before: “the synthesis of identity is the accomplishment [Leistung] of intuitive remembering, the accomplishment of a re-constitution [Wiederkonstitution] of the objectlike formation [Gegenständlichen], but in the mode of coming-back-again to something familiar, in the mode of being-presentified-again” (2.§38.232). This noematic aspect of “pastness,” and the noematic aspect of “coming-back-again” are unique to reproductive tendency. Suppose a present experience “recalls” a past experience of drinking coffee with a friend; this reproductive tendency would not be satisfied by an intuition of drinking coffee with a friend now; what it wants is the bringing-to-intuition of a past event, on the noematic mode of being-past.

Reproductive synthesis establishes also another new noematic aspect: a genetic or etiological noematic relation. The re-called past experience presents itself as arising in virtue of having been re-called or awakened by the present experience. In contrast, the

43The past object which the passive intention wants to recall could be a past experience. I shall generally set this aside, supposing that it is a past object of past experience, but my remarks are intended to apply to both kinds of case.
objects which our worldly experiences are directed at do not naïvely present themselves as arising genetically from that noetic experience.\textsuperscript{44}

This serves to clarify the unique features of reproductive tendencies which distinguish them from other varieties of passive intentions. We must also distinguish the establishment of a reproductive tendency, through reproductive association, from its fulfillment. Husserl calls reproductive association an “awakening that radiates back [\textit{der rückstrahlenden Weckung}]” (2.§38.230).\textsuperscript{45} This awakening is sufficient for an intentional ‘ray’ to pass through a retention, and for a reproductive tendency, as a passive intention, to be put into action. None of this is sufficient for \textit{remembering}, as Husserl uses this term. Remembering (\textit{Wiederinnerung}) is an \textit{egoic} act. In remembering, the ego takes up a thematic interest in a past event, and actively seeks to bring it to intuition: the ego seeks to \textit{fulfill} a reproductive tendency. The very possibility of this thematic act is what \textit{presupposes} the awakening that radiates back: if no past experiences were recalled by present experiences in a reproductive syntheses, then there would be no intentional “route” from lived present back to the experienced past – no intentionality, directed to the past experience, for the pure ego to “step into.” In Husserl’s view “the entire, essential lawful regularity of reproductive association is prefigured” by the passive, associative syntheses which awaken retentions by “radiating back” (2.§38.231).

Three final important points remain to be clarified concerning reproductive as-

\textsuperscript{44}Compare \textit{Experience and Judgment} §16, p.75.

\textsuperscript{45}Husserl offers even a more fine-grained discrimination of sub-types of this association that radiates back, which I shall not provide here. The basic issue concerns how far back a past experience lies (2.§§35-36. esp. pp.218-220). Husserl also distinguishes “continuous” and “discontinuous” forms of awakening that radiates back (2.§39).
sociation. First, we need to understand reproductive tendencies in their full context of the order of succession of immanent time. Once something now recalls something past, and a reproductive tendency has been established, intentional “rays” can branch off in a number of directions. Let us stick now with the egoic act of remembering. A retended experience has been recalled, and we are now trying to bring it to intuition. We could step back into the remembered experience, and could explore the objectlike unity which was constituted then by primordial association, and which has been specifically re-called in the present. We could also investigate what other objectlike formations were constituted in the same duration. We could also start from the remembered event, and explore its temporal horizons, by tracing out its place in the order of succession in immanent time. We could explore what was recalled at that past time – what the experience we are now remembering recalls, further back; we would then follow a backward-reaching chain of recall, reflecting further into the past.

Second, we must understand the interrelations of reproductive association and primordial association. Suppose a sequence of hyletic material is given, such that a sequence of objectlike formations are constituted in experience, and suppose that the sequence repeats with a similar duration, multiple times. Thanks to primordial associative syntheses, similarities between the two sequences can ground the noematic character of the new sequence as a repetition of the past sequence. Likewise, a sequence given now can “recall” a past sequence, and a reproductive tendency will be established whose aim is an intuition of the sequence, understood not as a temporally punctate objectlike formation, but rather as a content-laden duration of past, immanent time. The reproductive tendency
established here wants to be given that sequence in the mode of past; it wants to come-back-again to the whole sequence, not just one of its parts. (This will be especially important when we come to the third variety of associative syntheses).

The final important clarification is to reiterate that the appeal I have made here to egoic acts, merely for illustrative purposes, always hides the real work of associative synthesis. We can memorially explore past events in all these myriad directions because associative syntheses have already prefigured all these egoic acts; the remembering of a past event fulfills a reproductive tendency because of the basic, quasi-volitional structure involved in all passive intention.46

46Husserl himself is sometimes unclear on this point. In one place he says that the “transition of such awakened empty presentations in[to] reproductive intuitions” is to be regarded as a “third level” of associative synthesis (2§38.230) – with the first level being primordial association, and the second being the awakening that radiates back. This is puzzling, since the transition to fulfillment involves an egoic act. It would be infelicitous to read this as claiming that an egoic act (of remembering) is a kind of associative synthesis.

What Husserl has in mind, I suspect, is that when we do egoically remember any past event (and thereby fulfill a reproductive tendency), there is a new noematic aspect which is to be understood as arising from an associative synthesis. He says: “Rememberings [Weiderinnerungen]... always appear as consequences [als Folgen] of empty presentations, which for their part have arisen from an awakening” (2.§38.231). We can read this claim in two ways.

First, when Husserl says remembering appears as a “consequence,” we might take a non-etiological reading. We would not suppose that rememberings appear as arising from an empty presentation. Instead, we take a reading, presaged in §8.2.5 above, according to which the quasi-volitional structure of any passive intention grounds the description of their fulfillment as fulfillment of a goal. We simply read “consequence” as “fulfillment.” In this case, the syntheses of reproductive association are involved, since the goal-aimed-at-and-fulfilled concerns an intuition of the object in the mode of pastness. But there is no need to invoke a new variety of association to capture the appearance of rememberings as “consequences.” We only need the recognition that passive intentions can be fulfilled in egoic acts, and that those egoic acts then appear as fulfilling.

Second, we can take an etiological reading. We have already seen that a reproductive association makes the recalled experience appear as arising from or being re-awakened by the recalling experience. On this reading, we suppose that a similar genetic-noematic aspect is appended to our egoic rememberings when we carry them out: they also come to appear as arising from or being triggered by (“as a consequence of”) the recalling experience. Here again, what is novel is not a new kind of association, but merely a different kind of experience which goes into such a reproductive association: here we have a cogito being recalled.
Anticipatory Association

That completes my overview of primordial association (which gives rise to objectlike formations in the living present) and of reproductive association (which gives rise to a reproductive tendency which can then be fulfilled in the remembering of past events). The third broad variety of association is “inductive, anticipatory association [der induktiven, der antizipatorischen Assoziation]” (2.§26.169). Just as reproductive association involves the “recall” one a past experience, anticipatory association involves the “expectation [Erwartung]” of a future. Husserl’s treatment of this last variety of association is quite brief, and arrives quite late. He states quite clearly that “all the analyses we have undertaken” of primordial association and reproductive association “are presupposed for the elucidation of the phenomena of expectation” (2.§40.235). A new noematic aspect is to be secured by the associative syntheses of expectation, whereby an object or experience is not presented simply as being, not presented in the mode of “being in the flesh,” not presented in the mode of “being past,” but is “to be expected” – and what this means, in Husserl’s analysis, is that the expected thing is anticipatorily “characterized as in accordance with what has been [Gemäß dem Gewesener],” one has “a projected image or model of being prior to its actual being [Vorbild von Seiendem vor dem Wirklich-sein]” (2.§40.236).

Husserl’s basic analysis of anticipatory association can be framed in three steps. First, we review the presuppositions that the whole phenomenology of association works under. We presuppose the absolute time-constituting flow (see §8.3.1 above). With this
we presuppose that the living present has the tripartite form of (roughly) "just-now; Now; very-soon." We now ask (in the phenomenology of association) how any determinate content is fitted into this form: in particular, we ask how we come to expect anything in particular, very-soon.

Second, we help ourselves to the prior results of the phenomenology of association. We presuppose that primordial association has constituted objectlike unities out of hyletic matter in the Now, and that it has done so continuously, and that past experiences have begin to slip off into retention, filling the form of retention with content. We presuppose that all experiences take their place in the universal order of succession in immanent time – and thus, that the objectlike unities constituted in primordial association likewise take their place in that time, with their duration of becoming, and with their relations of temporal co-existence and succession. We presuppose that an experience occurring now can recall a past experience, and establish a reproductive tendency, through similarity. We presuppose that a whole network of intentional relations are established here, which prefigure myriad egoic acts of remembering.

Third, we specify the details of an example in order to clarify how expectation arises. Suppose that in recent experience, there occurred a sequence of hyletic material, which primordial association constituted as the objectlike unity $p$, followed by the objectlike unity $q$. Both of these have slid back into retention, with $p$ lying further back than $q$. Suppose that such sequences occur often. Then one has already had occasions in which the sequence has been similar to, and has recalled, past sequences, through an awakening that radiates back. Suppose that now an objectlike formation $p'$ has been
constituted, and is similar to the past \( p \). It is true that an awakening that radiates back will occur, and \( p' \) will recall \( p \), and a reproductive tendency will emerge. That reproductive tendency wants to be fulfilled in an intuition of \( p \)-as-past, \( p \)-as-being-familiar. But (thanks to the time-constituting flow) the past experience in which \( p \) was constituted includes a protentional horizon which points toward its relative future, in which \( q \) was constituted. And one has already had a history of recalling the sequence of \( p \)-like objectivities followed by \( q \)-like objectivities: the whole sequence has already become a unity of duration which has been recalled on prior occasions. On those occasions, a reproductive tendency was established that wanted to be fulfilled in an intuition of the sequence, \( p \) followed by \( q \). Under such circumstances, there is an associative affinity between \( p \) and \( q \), such that when \( p' \) awakens \( p \), it brings with it the awakening of \( q \), and so \( q' \) is expected to occur (2.\$40.237-238). When only \( p' \) arrives in the Now, \( q' \) “stands in the consciousness of ‘lack’ [steht da ihm Bewußtsein des ‘Fehlens’]” (2.\$41.239).

In short, there is an anticipatory tendency – an anticipatory passive intention – established here, whose goal is the ideal of a complete confirmation-in-fulfillment, bringing to intuition the expected object(s) as they are (experientially) in-themselves. The expectations will not be satisfied unless it is given an object, now, in the mode of “having-been-expected.” The expectation arises in a way that presupposes reproductive association, but has its own distinct conditions of fulfillment.

A remembering of a past object cannot fulfill an expectation which is grounded in experience in the original Now of the living present, but anticipatory and reproductive tendencies can interact and overlap. If I now have an experience which recalls a past
experience, then I could go back to it, and I could follow up the expectations of that experience (the past one), bringing these to fulfillment by moving into the relative future – the past experience’s future. In that case, I can intuitively fulfill a past expectation by remembering a more recent experience.

Such expectations, established passively through associative syntheses, occur prior to, and prefigure, any explicit egoic beliefs about the future, and they are what ultimately ground any inductive inference of judgment about what will actually occur in the future (2.§238). The expectations involve a kind of naïve (and most definitely defeasible) certainty in experience about what will occur in experience, but this is not to be confused with a judicative belief about what will occur in actuality, in “the” world.

### 8.4 Association as Act

We now have a basic overview of the phenomenology of association, but we are still missing two main features. First, we need to clarify how all this is to resolve the Problems of the In-Itself of the Transcendent World and of Consciousness. In short: we need to clarify how passive syntheses prefigure the idea of truth. As noted in §8.1.3 above, this requires explaining the limits of the justification of egoic remembering, and explaining genetically the source of misremembering within associative synthesis. All this is the task of §8.4.1 below.

Second, we need to address a crucial feature of association which we have thus far left out of account: the manner in which all objectlike formations which are constituted
in passivity exert an affection upon the ego. This is the task of §8.4.2 below.

Exploring each point will provide us with new arguments for construing associative syntheses as acts. Either argument could then be called upon to ground an account of all intentionality (all passive intention) as arising from subintentional mental acts.

8.4.1 Resolving the Problems of the In-Itself(s):

The Argument From Intention-Formation

We have examined (§8.3.3) how reproductive association makes possible all egoic acts of remembering (Weidererinnerungen). With this, the contents of the living present are, in a sense, enriched. Thanks to reproductive tendencies, the content of my experiences now can recall past experiences, and these could then be remembered, so that I now have a lived experience of the past.

The past experiences, however, are oddly appended to the living present; they are “recalled” by it, but they do not fit in the ongoing present of streaming, hyletic material—the past experiences are disjoint, called up from a completely distinct time:

The emergence of rememberings yields a peculiar enrichment of that living, originally constituting present that we conceived heretofore in a necessary abstraction, purely as a process of immanent hyletic experience—of original experience. Now joining the particular intuitions of this living experience... are rememberings like tattered rags [abgerissene Fetzen], rememberings arising from an entire previous experience that is reanimated [verlebendigten]. United in a certain way with the current present through association, they do not have any direct experiential connection [Erfahrungszusammenhang.] with it, they arise in a narrow sense [sie treten in einem prägnenten Sinn], disjoined [zusammenhanglos]. Different rememberings are also without an internal coherence with each other... [I]n the continuity of original experience the phenomenon of
modalization cannot emerge – original experience is a nexus of thorough-going concordance in absolute necessity. Only first with remembering [Wiedererinnerung], in more general terms, with the phenomenon of reproduction [Reproduktion], does there arise the possibility of connecting discordances [die Möglichkeit von Unstimmigkeitsverbindungen], the possibility of modalizations [von Modalisierungen] (PAS 2.§39.234).

Without reproductive tendencies, the living present would be only a continuous flow of hyletic content, exhibiting its own coherence through the brief duration of the living present. Past experiences would simply slip back into retention, never to be heard from again. When a reproductive tendency is fulfilled in remembering, though, there is an odd bifurcation of the living present: it now contains a past, and contains remembered experiences pulled out of their own time and reinserted into the Now.47 Husserl later clarifies this as follows:

It is an essential law in general that the original temporal field can only be filled out once in a completely intuitive manner. That is to say that even the perceptual present does not allow one remembering to become completely intuitive at the same time as and as long as it, the perception, is actually completely intuitive. The moment we put ourselves back into the past and in this way actually see intuitively, we are removed from the perceptual present, or we experience a peculiar competition... in general, the living present as a formal system of original constitution is only given originally once in a lived-experiential manner (PAS 2.§42.245)

In light of this, one might best regard the intentional “ray” of a reproductive tendency, which demands fulfillment in a memorial intuition, as a kind of window out of the hyletic material of the current, experiential present. When one remembers, one will do so “Now,” i.e., in the lived present; but one will have done so by backgrounding all the content of the sensory-perceptual present, filling the lived present instead with remembered contents.

47Compare Experience and Judgment §§37-38.
Here I shall pause to point out a connection between PAS and The Argument From Sedimentation of the Ideas (cf. Ch.7 above, esp.§7.4). The Argument From Sedimentation relied on the claim that the acts of the pure ego were involved in constituting the personal ego as noema, through the constitution of “convictions” and opinions as lasting unities of duration. Husserl’s genetic phenomenology of association does not upset this picture, but rather clarifies it. It clarifies not only that remembering past experiences is an egoic act, but it also clarifies the preconditions for this act to occur. Associative syntheses – especially reproductive associations – are constituted in passivity, such that experiences Now recall past, retended experiences. This makes possible the pure ego’s remembering past experiences, and thereby makes possible constituting “convictions” as stable psychological traits which last through time. The constitution of a personal ego involves an interplay of passivity and activity, wherein the provisions of passivity enable the pure ego to revisit a past; the pure ego does so, revisiting its own experiences, and objectifying itself as a human being in worldly time.

The extension of the lived present through reproductive association is crucial for understanding how a lack of confirming fulfillment can lead to a modalization of past experience.48 With the possibility of remembering comes the possibility of recognizing that what one experiences now is not what one had expected. The “discordance” can then become apparent. Here there arises the possibility of passive doubt.49 Passive doubt arises when two rival experiences emerge which purport to present the same object, but

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48See again fn.37 on p.385 above.
49Experience and Judgment’s §21 makes clear that this conception of passive doubt is retained in Husserl’s later work.
which cannot be coherently synthesized to form a unitary experience in which a single coherent object is given. One experience presents the object as thus-and-so; another presents it as otherwise. This doubt can also be passively resolved when one of the conflicting perceptions is simply left out of the syntheses (effectively, “crossed out” or negated) and a new synthesis of identity occurs which gives us the object in the mode of naïve certainty again (PAS 2.§14, 92). The object simply appears thus-and-so (whether this is what we initially expected, or whether it is otherwise). All this can occur without the ego’s involvement. This leads to passive decision-making. The ego is “undergoing a decision that just arises [als erfahrener, sich einstellenden Entscheidung]” (PAS 2.§14, 92).

If passive doubt is not resolved in a passive decision, then both the past expectation and the present experience have their own share of naïve certainty: they present a conflicting picture of the world. If the conflict is to be resolved, the ego must then actively institute a “judicative position-taking [urteilen Stellungnahme]” (PAS 2.§14, 92-93 – see 346 above). We must call the conflict in favor of one of the two experiences: either one or the other must be deemed as incorrectly documenting the object. One way of resolving the conflict is to strike down our remembering as a mis-remembering.

This is the first hint at how the phenomenology of association will resolve the Problems of the In-Itself of the Transcendent World and of Consciousness: in actively modalizing past experience, we are performing an egoic act which is guided by the norms of “truth,” of “actual being,” and we seek to establish the way objects “really” are. And yet we also have the resources to see a puzzle here, which Husserl sketches (PAS
On the one hand, consider what is built into the basic assumptions of the phenomenology of association (cf. §8.3). The reproductive tendency which arises through an awakening that radiates back is a passive intention. Its goal is an ideally complete confirming fulfillment, through remembering, of a past experience. But every past experience brings with its own an anticipatory tendency toward a (relative) future. This is another passive intention, and its goal is also an ideally complete confirming fulfillment. I could fulfill this expectation-in-memory by moving to a new memory: the memory of a later experience in which the expectations of the earlier memory were fulfilled. And so, “belonging ideally to every remembering is a possible continuity of awakening, a continuity of possible rememberings that will lead to the living present in which we stand now” (PAS 2.§42.244).

On the other hand, we know that error in remembering is possible. So the ideal possibilities which guided the phenomenology of association are not attained: there will be some rememberings which are simply false, and which cannot be put into a continuous progression of experience which connects with the present. But we have said nothing so far about how such error or misremembering is made possible in a way consistent with the essential insights of the phenomenology of association. Without this, we have not explained how modalization is possible, or how a judicative position-taking could be guided by the norms of truth in striking out a memory as incorrectly documenting the actuality of objects. Being guided by the norm of truth requires that the ego be able to modalize past experience; this requires that a judgment of error, a judgment that strikes
down a past experience’s naïve certainty, must be prefigured in associative synthesis.

Here I follow the steps Husserl takes to resolve this puzzle, to clarify how the ideal of truth can be prefigured in passivity, and to resolve the *Problems of the In-Itself(s).*

**Step 1: The Possibility of Misremembering.**

Husserl’s analysis of the genesis of mistaken memories runs as follows (*PAS* 2.§42). Suppose two past experiences, \( R \) and \( R' \) are equally recalled in the present. There would then be a kind of *de facto* contest (*Wettstreit*) to see which actually gets remembered. The contest arises because (i) a reproductive tendency recalling both might equally well be fulfilled by remembering either, and (ii) one cannot remember both at once. The living present could be filled in with the remembered contents of \( R \), or with the remembered contents of \( R' \) – but the form of the living present can only be filled in in one way or the other. (Of course I might continue to live in the sensory-perceptual present, not following up the reproductive tendency at all).

Further, suppose that the two remembered experiences have similarities between them (as they must, if they are both equally well recalled by a single experience now). Let us say they “share” a particular feature (what Husserl calls a “bridging term [*Brück-englidi*]”), such that \( R \) has a part \( a \) which is similar to a part \( a' \) in \( R' \). Then, whenever one of \( R \) or \( R' \) is recalled, it will also recall the other, through \( a \) and \( a' \). In the limit, \( a \) and \( a' \) would be *completely* similar, such that a (primordial) syntheses would constitute them as the same feature occurring again in a repetition. Husserl calls this a kind of “fusion” between \( a \) and \( a' \) – it is the same feature, repeated (*PAS* 2.§42.247-248).
Further, suppose that \( R \) and \( R' \) also share a common temporal form: they are past experiences which unfolded over a common duration, with a similar tempo and progression of contents throughout that duration. (E.g., they were both experiences in which a car horn sounded just as you turned the knob to the front door, and you then turned toward the noise and dropped the keys). The overall temporal “shape” of \( R \) – call it \( t \) – is similar to the overall temporal “shape” of \( R' \) – call it \( t' \). The result is that just as there is a de facto contest to recall \( R \) or \( R' \), so likewise there is a de facto contest through each phase of recall; at each phase of remembered experience, a content from the other experience stands in correspondence.

Consider then how reproduction would play out over time. In the perceptual present, something recalls \( R \) and \( R' \). Suppose \( R \) “wins” the de facto contest, and is remembered. Now \( a \) recalls \( a' \), awakening it. Since \( a' \) belongs to \( R' \) as a unity, this will result in a gradual awakening and recalling of \( R' \) as a whole. But so long as we remain in the remembering of \( R \), it fills the lived present, and excludes \( R' \).

Suppose we are in this something like this position. A new reproductive turn towards \( R' \), filling in the lived present with its content, can occur in a number of ways. First, we could fully-exclude all content of \( R \), step into a new act of remembering, and re-fill the lived present with the contents of \( R' \). Second, it might be that while the full content of \( R \) is no longer remembered, still some of its content is remembered; but \( a \) might be left out, and replaced with \( a' \), and the common temporal form of \( R \) and \( R' \) would then be “spottily filled out with the contents of \( R \) and \( R' \)” (PAS 2.§43.250). As analogy, Husserl offers the case of what occurs in binocular rivalry, in vision. Here we
have two images which are each unitary (one from each eye). They become a “muddle [Durcheinander]” with parts drawn from each image, and this is resolved to form a new unitary, binocular image (PAS 2.§43.250).

Husserl’s proposal is that just such a memorial “combined image [kombinierten Bildes]” can arise in accordance with the syntheses of association, and that this is the root of all error in remembering, making possible all modalization in a judicative position-taking (PAS 2.§43.250). In such a combined image, we have the illusion that various component contents belong together in a unity that we have experienced in the past. Association can explain how that illusion – this combined image – can arise as we pursue a reproductive tendency, seeking to bring a memory to intuition: the associations between different contents lead to a “muddle,” and an image is produced which borrows pieces from the experiences we really had in the past, filling in their common “temporal shape” in a way that corresponds to no past experience. And yet it remains ideally possible that we could fix the muddle – we could recognize that it is a muddle, a hodge-podge of contents drawn from distinct experiences – through a confirming fulfillment that reproduced the past experiences as they actually were.

Step two: The in-itself of the Immanent Past

With the possibility of “muddled” images arising in passivity, the possibility of an important egoic judicative position-taking is also prefigured. When we clarify that a memory is a muddle, we are free to strike down its purported validity, and make a judgment that it fails to present the past as it was. The inspiration (as it were) for such a
judicative act lies in the passive sphere itself. A reproductive tendency has as its goal a genuine, confirmation-in-fulfillment through a bringing-to-intuition of a remembered event. If a reproductive tendency has been duped into an illusory fulfillment, and if we are then able to clarify that the resulting remembering was actually a muddle, then the reproductive tendency will demand again its proper fulfillment. We can say, in sum, that reproductive tendencies demand not just a confirmation-in-fulfillment, but they also demand a “progressive clarification [fortschreitenden Klären]” of any memorial images offered up as fulfilling (2.§43.251). In order to meet this demand, “the ego strives [geht das Ich] to check [prüfen] its memories thoroughly, to clarify them deliberately [sie willkürlich zu klären]... to disclose the illusion by analyzing [durch Spaltung], and thus to advance to the true self” (2.§25.161)

The genetic analysis of reproductive tendencies, a special class of passive intentions, thus explains how passivity prefigures an ideal limit of complete, confirming fulfillment through the genuine intuition of past experiences. This prefigures the in-itself (Ansich) of the past of consciousness. That is, a genetic phenomenology offers an analysis of “how consciousness prior to all activity of the ego manages to objectify itself... how it manages... not only to have its own past in general, but how it manages to gain knowledge of it” (2.§45.262). A reproductive tendency seeks an ideal goal which we, in thought, can reflectively apprehend as the idea of a past of our own consciousness, a past that really was. The “real” past experience would correspond, as noema, to an ideally complete self-giving intuition of the those experiences which a reproductive tendency aims at. Such an ideally complete self-giving of a past experience may only rarely occur
in actuality. But when we reflectively apprehend the idea of such an absolute intuition, we set for ourselves “the norm of all approximation, the norm of the truth having-been; it is the true self of every having-been that is intended” in any retrospective act (2.§45.258.). Cases of mis-remembering are simply cases where the norm goes unsatisfied; cases where we judge that the remembered experience was illusory. We rely upon this idea of the true being of past consciousness to set “an ideal correlate of possible verification [Bewährung], an ideal norm” which governs egoic activity in seeking knowledge of past experience (2.§45.260). The norm doesn’t govern non-egoic mental acts: it is rather an intellectual conceptualization of their goal, a re-apprehension of their aims in a mode of thought which is wholly alien to passivity.

**Step Three: The In-Itself of the Transcendent World**

Husserl’s treatment here is quite brief and spotty, but it is in keeping with all the foregoing remarks concerning associative syntheses, as well as the broader commitments of his phenomenology. There is no doubt that experience constitutes a world of transcendent objects – the Natural Attitude lives in the naïve certainty that this is so. Husserl’s treatment of this topic in PAS comes in three chunks. The largest chunk covers essentially all of Part 3 of PAS, and I shall not pursue this here.\(^{50}\) In another place, Husserl points out that part of what is constituted in experience is one’s own lived Body. As a result, all immanent experience is referred to a location in the world, namely

\(^{50}\)For the sketch, see again fn.23 on p.351
one’s Body (2.§47.265).\textsuperscript{51} The constitution of the lived Body gets a first foothold in the transcendent world of nature (so long as we understand this as it is presented in experience, not, say, from a Naturalistic Attitude which already abstracts from parts of experienced nature). This is not at all sufficient to explain the constitution of all nature, but it offers one example.

To begin working towards the third chunk of Husserl’s treatment of how the transcendent world is constituted, let me make a general remark that links the idea of a transcendent world to the basic conception of passive intention. Any egoic judgment regarding the transcendent world relies upon what is pregiven in passive syntheses. In short: the ideal of the complete self-givenness of an object, which is the goal of any passive intention, prefigures the idea of an object in-itself. When we apprehend that idea reflectively, we have apprehended the norm of truth which governs all our verification of the way the object actually is (whether in casual exploration, or in scientific cognition).\textsuperscript{52} A straightforward example is provided by perception. Perception always presumes to have gotten at the object “in itself,” though it must always fail to do so completely. (An opaque material object must always hide a backside during any now; any material object must always hide something further). When we reflectively apprehend this ideal of fully-determining the object, of knowing everything about it after we have fully-modalized any “illusory” experiences, then we are off and running in the endeavor to attain the “truth” about the object in-itself.

\textsuperscript{51} We discussed this in greater detail in Ch.7, especially §7.2. This is the “indirect localization” of spirit in worldly space.

\textsuperscript{52} Compare Experience and Judgment §68.
If we consider the special case of reproductive tendencies, as one class of passive intentions, we shall find similarly the prefiguring of the idea of the past. We find prefigured the idea of a past of consciousness, which is what any reproductive tendency aims to be given in a fulfilling intuition. We also find prefigured the idea of a past of transcendent objects in the world – these are simply the objects of past experiences. That gives a decent sketch of how we come to understand the norms of truth which govern the transcendent world’s past and present. What about its future?

This is Husserl’s third chunk of comment on the question of the in-itself of the world. On the basis of reproductive association, consciousness is always projecting or anticipating a future for transcendent objects: they are presumed to continue to be roughly as they have been in the past (cf.§8.3.3 above). This projection occurs in line with basic essential laws gleaned from a phenomenology of association. The expectation is never irrevocable: it may be flouted. But the projection itself occurs in the mode of naïve certainty, and stands until it is flouted. If it is flouted in a new experience, that new set of experiences can be drawn upon to project a new anticipated future of transcendental objects, and this is done, again resulting in an expectation in the mode of naïve certainty. In this way the in-itself of the future (some future) of transcendent objects is secured by an analysis of passive synthesis. The long-lasting stability of experienced nature, extending indefinitely into the future, is secured as the idea which is prefigured in the ideal goal of any anticipatory passive intention (PAS 2.§46).
Step Four: The In-Itself of the Future of Consciousness

Here Husserl makes quite a clever move. He has already secured the ideal norms of truth, or our understanding of the in-itself, of the past, present, and future of the transcendent world. In doing so he has also secured the ideal norm of truth, or our understanding of the in-itself of the past and present of consciousness. Now he remarks that this already provides all we need to grasp the idea of an in-itself or a true being of the future of consciousness:

But it is now clear, I say, that by virtue of the constitution of nature as a nature, which universal time fills out objectively, a rule of lived-experience [Regel des Erlebens] and initially of perceiving – a rule encompassing the whole of consciousness and therefore also its future – is prefigured. There are norms of verification [Normen der Bewährung] [of the transcendent world]... Every genuine verification prescribes a determining rule for the course of perceptions, of past and future ones. Just because the thing [ein Ding] existed does not mean that we would have to carry out a perception and a progressive legitimation [forgehende Ausweisung] relating to it; but given that it existed, what is prefigured along with it is something that I could have seen or must have seen at some time by appropriately running back through my kinaesthetic data; as it is also prefigured that I could see it and the manner in which I could see it in the future, and the manner in which I could continue to legitimate [ausweisen] it as that existing being by the appropriate position or movement of my lived-body. Naturally, this yields the regulation [Regelungen] of my current or possible perceptual lived-experiences (PAS 2.§47.266-267).

The illustration appealing to the lived Body is a limited one. But the general claim is quite clear. Corresponding to the projected future of nature (on the noematic side) is a projected future for conscious experience (on the noetic side). A norm of verification is established for consciousness, and a rule for the orderly progression of its future experiences (PAS 2.§47). If consciousness is to continue to be conscious of a world, and if the world is to continue as it is naïvely expected to be, then experience must proceed
in a predictable manner. If experience does not proceed as expected, then the world does not appear as expected; and then, immediately, our expectations of the world are revised, and with them, or expectations of future experience. There must always be some future for the transcendent world; thus there must always be some predictable future for consciousness. Whether these expected experiences occur or not is beside the point: world-consciousness, if it occurs at all, must proceed so as to constitute ‘the’ one world. Thus an in-itself of the future of consciousness is secured: it is indexed to the future of the transcendent world, in-itself.

This completes my exegesis of Husserl’s dual solution to the Problems of the In-itself of the Transcendent World and of Consciousness. With this, Husserl has clarified the robust conceptions of “truth” and “verification” which enable him to resolve the larger problem: (P||A). On the foregoing account, passive synthesis does not itself determine what, precisely, the in-itself of consciousness and of the world amounts to. That is the task of active synthesis, of theoretical and scientific cognition. What passive synthesis provides is the possibility of such an achievement of theorizing knowledge. Further, passive syntheses, and passive “confirmation,” is not sufficient even to constitute the knowledge that there is an in-tself of the world and of consciousness: the knowledge that this is the case must be attained through active synthesis. The basic Husserlian solution is that every idea of an in-itself is prefigured by passive synthesis: the ideally complete, confirming fulfillment which any passive intention strives for is apprehended, in idea, as the in-tself of the meant object.
The Argument From Intention-Formation

I now return to the guiding question of this section: can it be said that passive intention (which is itself a kind of subintentional mental act) arises through a subintentional mental act (of a lower order), i.e., is associative synthesis a subintentional mental act?

Husserl’s view in PAS seems to provide support for this claim. Consider again one of Husserl’s concluding remarks at the end of his analyses concerning passive synthesis:

Consciousness is an incessant process of becoming. But it is not a mere succession [eine bloße Aufeinenderfolge] of lived-experiences, a flux, as one fancies an objective river. Consciousness is an incessant process of becoming [Werden] as an incessant process of constituting objectivities in an incessant progressus of graduated levels. It is a never ending history [eine nie abbrechende Geschichte]. And history is a graduating process of constituting higher and higher formations of sense through which prevails an immanent teleology [einer immanente Teleologie] (PAS 2.§48.270)

In §8.2, I argued that the conception of passive intention captures much of this claim. Passive intention helps to clarify one aspect of the teleological character of consciousness, as it appears in the quasi-volitional tendency towards confirmation. But this process begins first with the constitution of passive intention in passive, associative synthesis. As such, we must understand associative syntheses as an integral part of the broader quasi-volitional structure of consciousness. Associative synthesis sets the goals that passive intentions then strive to achieve: it is what makes an “intentional ray” shoot through experiences toward the goal of fulfillment. Associative synthesis is thus the passive equivalent of intention-formation as it occurs in the egoic and active sphere. Setting oneself to personally intend an aim is generally considered a kind of egoic action.
In Strawson’s (2003) conception of mental actions, this is roughly the only kind of mental event which can count as a volitional action. The rest, in his view is “waiting to see what happens.”

In the passive syntheses of association, we locate the passive analogue of such intention-formation or deciding-to-act. We can clarify this by revisiting what occurs in passive doubt. In passivity, associative syntheses may sometimes lead to two conflicting syntheses of an objectlike formation. For example (drawing upon primordial and reproductive associative syntheses) an anticipatory associative synthesis can constitute an expectation which is then flouted as experience proceeds; in a new Now, primordial syntheses constitute an objectlike formation which does not cohere with the orior expectation in at least some of its object-phases (i.e., some of its hyletic materials). This circumstance is what Husserl calls passive doubt.

When such passive doubt occurs, a modalization of the experiences can be achieved in passivity. In the paradigmatic case of perception, passive doubt means that the naïve certainty of normal perception is gone, and we are left with “questionable” perception: the object is presented not in the naïve mode of being-actual, but in the mode of being-questionable, perhaps being-probable, etc. (2.§8.75). Passive doubt is passively resolved when one of the conflicting perceptions is “crossed out” and a new synthesis of identity occurs which gives us the object in the mode of naïve certainty again (2.§14.92). Once again the object simply appears thus-and-so (whether this is what we initially expected, or whether it is otherwise). All this can occur without the ego’s involvement. When this occurs, Husserl says the ego is “undergoing a decision that just
arises [als erfahrener, sich einstellenden Entscheidung]” (2.§14, 92).

We must not get too hung up on Husserl’s language here. When Husserl speaks of passivity, he has in mind the contrast case of egoic activity. When he speaks of a decision that “just arises,” he has in mind the contrast case where the ego imposes a decision in a judicative position-taking. Passive decision-making is of course not action in this, egoic, sense, but it is quite compatible with all this that passive decision-making may be a subintentional act. Note, further, that all egoic acts of judicative position-taking presuppose the success of passive decision-making. In order to take an egoic stance against (say) a remembered perception, striking down its presumed validity, I must be able to remember the past perception. This is impossible without the passive syntheses of reproductive association, which are what provide the reproductive tendency (passive intention) that the ego can then step into in an act of remembering. Furthermore, when we do undertake an egoic decision so as to resolve a conflict, we aim in part to do precisely what passive decision-making often carries out: “the restoration of perceptual concordance... an unbroken unity” of experience of precisely the sort that passive decision-making enforces (2.§14.95). Of course, typically we aim to do more than this: we aim to get at the truth of things, in-themselves – but a prerequisite is to establish along the way such a perceptual concordance.

All these points license us in saying that passive decision-making accomplishes something analogous to active decision-making. But as we have seen over and over again, passive syntheses are not governed by norms of truth in the way that active syntheses are (though they precisely prefigure them). Still, for all the reasons that we normally regard
active, egoic intention-formation to be an integral part of volitional acts, likewise we can
regard passive decision-making as an integral part of quasi-volitional acts.

With this we can formulate what I call:

**The Argument From Intention-Formation (“AFIF”)**

1. Every passive intention must essentially be understood as a quasi-volitional, subintentional mental act (Cf. *The Argument From Passive Intention*, p.377 above.)

2. Passive intentions arise through associative syntheses and are maintained through passive modalization.

3. Associative syntheses and passive modalization must thus be understood as passive decision-making, or as passive intention-formation.

4. Just as, in volitional action, a decision-making or intention-formation is regarded as an active contribution to the intentional act – an act in its own right – so likewise, in quasi-volitional acts, passive intention-formation must be regarded as an active contribution to the act – an act in its own right.

5. Passive decision-making occurs prior to any egoic act, and (thus) prior to any personal act, and so counts as a subintentional act.

∴ Every passive intention must essentially be understood as arising from a subintentional mental act.

With this we have grounded two non-egoic conceptions of mental acts in *PAS*, and have also uncovered a dual-layered analysis of the origins of intentionality in two kinds of
subintentional mental act which are intimately related: passive intention, and passive intention-formation.

Note that this argument is currently limited in scope. We have here clarified the kinds of passive intention-formations which occur after primordial associative syntheses have provided us with objectlike unities. The “contest” in passive doubt is a contest between two noeses which each lay conflicting claim to present a single noema. Passive doubt relies on higher-level associative syntheses which bring together anticipatory and reproductive tendencies. We have not yet addressed how the most basic passive intentions arise in primordial association. I have stated the argument in generality, covering all passive intentions, since the next section will correct this oversight.

8.4.2 The Argument From Affection

There is one final aspect of PAS, and of associative syntheses, which I have not yet discussed. This is the whole domain of the phenomena of affection (Affektion). By bringing these phenomena into view, we shall complete our engagement with PAS, shall sketch more clearly how passive syntheses are to be understood in relation to the pure ego, and will provide the resources to articulate yet another conception of both passive intentions, and associative syntheses, as subintentional mental acts. Here we will also deepen our understanding of ego-intentionality as we initially encountered it in Ch.7’s Argument From Attention (see esp. §7.3).

The basic conception of affection can be framed in a very straightforward manner. In all the foregoing analyses, in discussing every form of associative synthesis, what
we have intended to clarify concerns how intentional experiences arise which present objectivities in consciousness for the ego. In Husserl’s phenomenology, the idea of an object of experience (an objective sense) which cannot be apprehended by the ego is (quite literally) nonsense. All the “prefiguring” which is accomplished in passivity is the prefiguring of objectivity for the ego. All objectlike formations are pregiven, meaning they can be given to the ego. And all this is to be understood in terms of the phenomenological description of these objectivities as affecting the ego, exerting a force on it, attracting the attention of the ego, and striving to garner the ego’s thematic regard.

Here is a succinct statement of this view:

...it is the accomplishment of passivity, and as the lowest level within passivity, the accomplishment of hyletic passivity, that [it] fashions a constant field of pregiven objectlike formations for the ego, and subsequently, potentially a field of objectlike formations given to the ego. What is constituted is constituted for the ego [Was sich konstituiert, konstituiert sich für das Ich], and ultimately, an environing-world that is completely actual is to be constituted in which the ego lives, acts, and which, on the other hand, constantly motivates the ego [beständig motiviert ist]. What is constituted for consciousness exists for the ego only insofar as it affects [affiziert] me, the ego. Any kind of constituted sense is pregiven insofar as it exercises an affective allure [einen affektiven Reiz übt], it is given insofar as the ego complies with the allure and has turned toward it attentively, laying hold of it. These are the fundamental forms of the way in which something becomes an object [Vergegenständlichung]\(^53\)

\[(PAS\ 2.\S\ 34.210;\ all\ my\ emph.).\]

In line with this doctrine, we must explicitly conceive of every objectlike formation which is produced in passivity as something which impinges upon the ego and attracts its attention. All the objectlike formations which are produced by primordial association

\(^{53}\)Compare Experience and Judgment: §7, pp.29-30; §8 p.37; §12 p.53; §17 throughout and especially p.76ff; and §63.
thereby become prominent.\textsuperscript{54} And we are to understand this prominence as the exertion of affect upon the ego:

\begin{quote}
...something that is prominent for itself functions affectively [\textit{für sich Abgehobenes fungiert affektiv}]. And a connection of something prominent [\textit{eine Verbindung Abgehobener}] stemming from homogeneity exercises [\textit{übt}] a unitary and augmented affective force [\textit{Kraft}] or tendency [\textit{Tendenz}] upon the ego, whether it [i.e., the ego] gives into it or not; and this affection relaxes, becomes fulfilled in a turning toward [\textit{Zuwendung}]... (2.§28.177).
\end{quote}

Note the correspondence between an affection of the ego by a passive prominent object and the implied motivation of the ego to turn towards it – I shall return to discuss motivation in a brief coda to §8.5 below. For now, clarifying the basic relationship between the pure ego and affection sketched here is my task: in doing so, we gain a better understanding of how non-egoic subintentional mental acts influence ego-intentionality, or the subintentional “comportment” of the ego. I shall examine a choice example: the interplay of affection and egoic acts in judicative decision-making to resolve doubt.

When passive doubt is resolved in a passive decision-making, the result is pure and naïve certainty. In contrast, when the ego must decide to resolve a doubt, we have a kind of “impure” certainty: a presumptive certainty in the face of conflicting evidence which we have struck down. In any judicative position-taking, the ego decides for one experience as valid and against another as invalid. Both must have a kind of “weight” for the ego to consider, as it considers which possibility is actual. This weight is to be understood as an enticement that is exercised upon the ego, and the comportment of the ego in making a decision is to be understood as responding to that affection:

\textsuperscript{54}See again fn.41 on p.391 above.
...certainty is impure insofar as it has the mode of making a decision for an enticement [den Modus einer Entscheidung... für eine Anmuthlichkeit], more specifically a [merely] subjectively secure [subjektiv sicheren] decision for an enticement, even though opposing enticements are there, and against which the ego decided despite their weight; the ego does not accept them, although due to their weight, they “demand” being validated [Geltung “beanspruche”]. Naturally, this demand or claim consists here in this weight itself, that is, in the affective force [affektiven Kraft] that the enticement exercises upon the active ego. By affective force I mean a tendency directed toward the ego [eine auf das Ich hingehende Tendenz], a tendency whose reaction is a responsivity on the part of the ego [eine antwortende Tätigkeit des Ich ist]. That is, in yielding to the affection [der Affektion folgend] – in other words, by being “motivated” [“motiviert”] – the ego takes up an endorsing position; it decides actively for what is enticing, and it does so in the mode of subjective certainty (PAS 2.§13.90-91).

In light of our prior understanding of passive intentions, we can follow Husserl in summarizing these claims by saying that in passivity, a “judicative tendency” [Urteiltendenz] is established, and now we add the claim that this tendency acts upon the ego, motivating it to pursue a decision (2.§14.98). When the ego steps into this tendency, it “goes along with [Mitgehen]” the tendency, and seeks its fulfillment in an egoic act – in a “subjective-active comportment [ein subjektivaktives Verhalten]” (2.§14.97-98).

There is more to judicative decision-making than simply going along with a judicative intention. Husserl illustrates this by considering a case where I am considering each of two possibilities, and have not yet decided. This is “active doubt,” and it has a unique egoic character that is not present in passive doubt (2.§15.100). In active doubting, I go along with each possibility for a time, testing out the presumption of its validity as it motivates me to do. But I have not settled the question; I go back and forth, going along with each possibility. I have not yet struck one of them down, denying its weight and
putting its motivation out of play. In active doubting, I am engaged in:

a mode of comportment [Verhalten] that displaces the ego into an act-schism [das Ich in Aktspalung versetzendes]. This essentially and immediately implies an uneasiness [Unbehagen] and an original drive to get beyond it [einen ursprünglichen Trieb, darüber hinauszukommen], to come back to the normal condition of unanimity [der normalen Zustand der Einigkeit]. There arises a striving [Streben] toward a firm decision, one that is ultimately uninhibited and pure. It frequently happens that the established concordance, and through this the inner unity of the ego with itself that is aimed at, can be lost once again [die hergestellte Ein-stimmigkeit und durch sie erzielte innere Einigkeit des Ich mit sich selbst wieder verlorengehen kann] (2.§15.100).55

Active doubting is a comportment of the ego, and it involves going-along-with a number of enticing possibilities, yielding to their affection. But this is not yet a judicative decision-making. Rather, this places the ego at variance with itself, and this is what motivates the ego to now spontaneously act, making a decision which is not at all a simple reaction to the affections provided by passivity.

Here we begin to see a distinction between two kinds of egoic activity. In Ch.7, we emphasized the pure ego’s status as “free” to step into any intentional mental act in the mode of cogito. Nobody ever said this would be easy for the ego to do – for example, the egoic acts which characterize the methodology of phenomenology are regarded as completely “unnatural” for the ego. We can now clarify why this is the case in terms of the phenomena of affection. The phenomena of the external world are especially enticing: in the Natural Attitude, they thoroughly capture our attention, and we barely reflect at all upon conscious experience itself, but rather live through it. It is possible for the ego to pursue a spontaneous act, to set itself to attend to anything which is available.

55Compare Experience and Judgment §§21b, 71, 76, and esp. 78 on “act-cleavage” (p.308).
to it. But this requires working *against* affections and tendencies which arise in passivity. The ego must resist stepping into passive intentions which are directed at transcendent reality. Likewise, in a judicative position-taking, the ego is initially *receptive*: judicative tendencies are soliciting the ego, motivating it to judge.\(^{56}\) To make its own decision, the ego must go *beyond* and *against* the provisions of passivity, acting spontaneously to resolve active doubt.

As such, the receptive activities of the ego may be understood as a triggering-into-activity, induced by affection arising from passivity. Here we hearken back to themes that loomed large in the Aristotelian conception of acts, which we reviewed way back in Ch.3. And Husserl invokes some quite traditional language to characterize his view of the distinction between egoic receptivity and egoic spontaneity:

> it is important to keep this in mind from the very beginning, and not as an empty generality: that the cognitive life [*Erkenntnisleben*], the life of *logos*, indeed like life in general runs its course in a fundamental stratification [*Schichtung*]. [Level] (1) Passivity and receptivity [*Passivität und Rezeptivität*]. We can include receptivity in this first level, namely as that primordial function of the active ego that merely consists in making patent, regarding and attentively grasping what is constituted in passivity itself as formations of its [i.e., the ego’s] own intentionality. [Level] (2) That spontaneous activity [*spontane Aktivität*] of the ego (the activity of *intellectus agens*) that puts into play [*ins Spiel setzt*] the peculiar accomplishments [*eigene Leistungen*] of the ego, as was the case with judicative decisions (2.§16.105).

\(^{56}\)In *Experience and Judgment*, such receptive egoic acts are called “prepredicative judgments” – cf. §13. On the ego’s receptivity see further §17.

In *Ideas*, see especially II.3.2.§54.

In both of these later texts (which include revisions that post-date *PAS*) Husserl tends to use the term “passivity” only to refer to the receptivity of the ego. He does not often look beneath this, to non-egoic passivity (but see *Experience and Judgment*’s “radical conception of passivity” – §13 p.60). One might then worry that Husserl’s conception of passivity has been altered. But in *PAS*, Husserl also includes egoic receptivity within “passivity” – see the passage I am about to examine on p.426 below. It seems his later texts simply focus here, rather than on pre-egoic passivity.
Here we see clearly Husserl’s claim that the affection of passive intentions is integrally involved in the ego’s receptivity. We thus locate a transcendental analogue of the Aristotelian conception of *activities-under-passivity*. Here the *ego* is the affected entity, and it is triggered into going-along-with passive intentions. This is to be distinguished from pure egoic spontaneity. This is a crucial sharpening of the conception of *cogito* as we encountered it in Ch.7.\(^{57}\) The pure ego’s stepping into a mental act, in the mode of attentiveness, is not always representative of the ego’s spontaneity, even though it is always an egoic act. The upshot here is an important clarification of the claim I advanced (at the end of Ch.7), that the Husserlian conception of egoic activity captures much of the *restrictive Aristotelian conception* of mental acts.\(^{58}\) In the Aristotelian view, not all of the intellectual soul is involved in pure activity; only the active intellect fits this mold. In parallel, for Husserl, not all of the pure ego’s activities are entirely spontaneous; some are receptive, activities-under-passivity.\(^{59}\)

The non-egoic analysis of passive intentions as subintentional mental acts also clarifies the manner in which the pure ego steps into acts, in the mode of *cogito*. In Husserl’s genetic analysis, quite generally, “affection precedes the receptive action [*der rezipierenden Aktion*]” of the ego (2.§20.127). It would be potentially puzzling if the ego stepped into a non-act, and somehow made it into an act. It is somewhat more comprehensible if the ego steps into a (quasi-volitional, subintentional, non-egoic) act, by *going along with it*, and begins to execute *that act* in an egoic, volitional manner.

\(^{57}\)Compare *Ideas* II.2.1.§24.  
\(^{58}\)Note that Husserl here even invokes the Aristotelian term: *intellectus agens*.  
\(^{59}\)On the idea of this kind of egoic receptivity as a kind of passivity, but also still yet a form of egoic activity, see especially *Experience and Judgment* §17, p.79.
Thus far, we have clarified how every passive intention, striving for a confirming intuition of the goal-object, exercises an affect on the ego. We have presupposed the constitution of “prominent” objectlike formations, which exercise an affect on the ego. We have not yet addressed the role of affection in association, however. The phenomena of affection run deeper than passive intentions; affection is also at work in the syntheses of association.

It is not difficult to see how affection plays a role in some associations. Anticipatory association, we have seen (§8.3.3), presupposes reproductive association. Reproductive association involves an “awakening that radiates back,” establishing a reproductive tendency that runs through retended experiences. All such awakening is to be understood affectively. More generally, the sinking-back of experiences in retention brings with it a gradual loss of affection. An objectlike unity was initially constituted (through primordial association) as prominent, and thereby had an affective force which it exerted on the ego. As this experience slides back into retention, its affective force is diminished, and it exercises less of a force upon the ego (cf. 2.§§35-36). At the limit, past experiences are “completely undifferentiated,” and the retention becomes “dead” (2.§35.219). It is this diminution of affective force which is halted and reversed by an awakening that radiates back. The reproductive tendency is precisely a “radiating back of affective force” (2.§36.222). The associative relation of “recall” which is established is a “peculiar affective accomplishment within the living present” (2.§36.222). In short, reproductive association increases the affective force upon the ego of objectlike unities which are past: this is precisely what makes possible the ego’s yielding to this affection,
turning towards the past experience, and fulfilling the reproductive tendency. And again, all anticipatory associations presuppose reproductive associations.

What is not clear is whether affection is to be understood as operating prior to the constitution of “prominent” objectlike formations. That is: is affection involved in primordial association?

This is not always entirely clear in Husserl’s remarks. Initially, he seems to say that “affection presupposes prominence” (2.§32.196), and likewise that contrast – which is one of the basic preconditions for any primordial associative syntheses (cf. p.391 above) – is “the most original condition of affection” (2.§32.197). This suggests a First Option: primordial association occurs before affection. Then again, Husserl later asks whether it has turned out that “affection and association... first make possible the constitution of objects” (2.§33.201). Here we have a Second Option: affection occurs prior to, and makes possible, the formation of objectlike unities. Husserl eventually explicitly takes up the question of which view is correct (2.§34).

On the one hand, it is maintained that it would be “incomprehensible” for something to “gain an affective force [affektiv Kraft] at all where nothing of the sort was available. That something which was not there at all for the ego – a pure affective nothing [ein pures affektives Nichts] – should become an active something [aktiven Etwas] for the first time, precisely that is incomprehensible” (2.§34.211).60 This effectively rules

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60 There is more than a passing affinity here to some of the views of Herbart (1834), who distinguishes various “thresholds” which presentations, understood as forces, must surpass in order to become conscious (at which time they are, somewhat paradoxically, no longer understood as forces). In none of the works from Husserl’s corpus that I have discussed in this dissertation can I locate a citation to Herbart in this connection. Since Herbart’s approach is empirical and not transcendental (and since he rejected the traditional Kantian ego of apperception), the similarities are surprising.
out the First Option above: primordial association cannot give affectiveness to anything which lacks it. Considered in ideal possibility, it makes no sense to suppose that some what-content which is not (even ideally) there for the ego, exercising an allure on it, should come to be there for the ego.

On the other hand, it cannot be that every bit of affective force comes about through awakenings, of the sort we have just surveyed. The awakening that occurs in reproductive association, for example, presupposes that a prominent object has affective force: only then can it awaken a retended past experience, “recalling” it for the ego. So affective force must start somewhere. While it is difficult to see that Husserl adopts the Second Option, I believe his remarks suggest that this is his view: affection occurs prior to primordial association.

To pursue the Second Option, one might try claiming that it is not whole object-like unities, but object-phases, which are originally affective (2.§34.213). That is, we might say that hyletic materials, or “sensible points,” are affective, prior to their primordial association to form objectlike unities. But this is somewhat phenomenologically implausible when we consider how affection is understood. It is exceedingly difficult to make sense of mere hyletic data as “affective,” insofar as it is exceedingly difficult to work out how the ego might turn towards a mere “sensible point.” In natural experience, it is whole objects (and their properties and relations) which garner our attention.

Husserl’s solution to this puzzle (as I understand it) is subtle. We need two claims to work it out. First, we need a reminder about the constitution of objectlike unities as becoming. We visited this point briefly in discussing primordial association
in §8.3.3. An objectlike unity always has a *duration*, and it is constituted as be-ing or becoming *through* that duration. The hyletic materials which fill this duration may remain stable, or they may vary to some extent. Whenever we speak of an “intuition” or a “presentation” of an *object*, we are always slurring over a *continuity* of experience, which draws upon a *continuity* of hyletic material, to constitute an object through a duration (2.§37.228). What primordial association accomplishes is the constitution, through synthesis, of a special associative connection between object-phases: an “objectlike connection [*gegenständlichen Verbindung]*” (2.§37.228). This is not “reproductive association” as it was discussed above: it is not one “prominent” and affective experience of an objectlike unity re-awakening another experience of an objectlike unity by “recalling” it. There are no object-like unities yet in view: there are only object-phases, hyletic matters. And the object-phase now is not being constituted with the noematic feature of “recalling” the recently-past object-phase; the noematic feature being instituted in this synthesis is simply “object-likeness.” The object-phases are being synthesised to appear in a relation of objectlike unity.

The second claim we need is that consciousness always constitutes objects as partly explicit, and partly implicit.61 Some parts and moments “have not yet come into relief,” and have not yet stood out as prominent; but “insofar as they *can* be brought into relief under ‘favorable conditions,’ are still taken into account under the standpoint of affection” (2.§32.196). He thus distinguishes “actual affection [*wirklicher Affektion]*” from “tendency toward affection [*Tendenz zur Akkeftion]*, the potentiality of affection

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61 Compare *Experience and Judgment*, §31.
Potentialität der Affektion” (2.§32.196). Husserl then makes an odd remark concerning the sensible data, or the hyletic materials which serve as object-phases in primordial association. “Sensible data (and thus data in general) send [senden], as it were, affective rays of force toward the ego pole [affektive Kraftstrahlen auf den Ichpol], but in their weakness do not reach [erreichen] the ego pole, they do not actually become for it an allure [Reiz] that awakens” (2.§32.196).

Taking these two claims into account, then, we can frame two distinct views regarding the relationship between affection and primordial association. On the first view, no hyletic material or object-phase can ever be actually affective, considered on its own: it can never win the ego’s attention in isolation. But object-phases are always, from the beginning, potentially affective in a clear sense: they could become actually affective. Every object-phase exercises a force upon the ego, but the force on its own is insufficient to ever win the ego’s attention. In primordial association, the similarities and contrasts of object-phases ground their synthesis into object-like unities. These objectlike unities are actually affective, and actually exert an affective force on the ego. Once this is done, the “implicit” features of the object, corresponding to its object-phases, can become prominent under favorable conditions. This is the only way that hyletic data can exert an effective force on the ego: they must first form a coalition in an objectlike unity, ride this affective force into the egoic regard as a whole, and then wait for favorable conditions to win the ego’s attention.

On the second view, no hyletic material or object-phase can ever be actually affective, tout court. They can never win the ego’s attention. But they are always, from
the beginning, potentially affective in a very weak sense: they exercises a force upon the ego, but the force on its own can never win the ego’s attention. In primordial association, the similarities and contrasts of object-phases ground their synthesis into object-like unities. These objectlike unities are actually affective, and actually exert an affective force on the ego. The object-phases, considered as hyletic data, are still not capable of being actually affective: they are not even regarded as “implicit” features of the whole object; they cannot ever become prominent even under favorable conditions. The only way that hyletic data can exert a force on the ego is as part of a coalition in an objectlike unity. We arrive at a theoretical understanding of hyletic data only via abstraction from wholes, attending to their similarities.

Husserl’s remarks do not settle which view he has in mind. I myself have some preference for the latter. But in any case, it does seem that Husserl is committed to say that in some sense, hyletic materials exercise a force upon the ego, even if this is always insufficient to make them prominent.

This provides sufficient clarification to see that there is a role for affection in all association: every associative syntheses presupposes some affective force. In reproductive and anticipatory association, the affective force attaches to prominent objectlike unities. In primordial association, the affective force attaches initially to object-phases, but the result of primordial associative syntheses is that an objectlike unity is constituted which is prominent, which has an actual affective force upon the ego, and can demand its attention.

The upshot is that although primordial association is not involved – but rather pre-
supposed – in the kind of passive intention-formation which I discussed above (cf.§8.4.1), nonetheless primordial association can also be regarded as a kind of passive intention-formation. Primordial association is the most basic synthesis which provides us with any passive intentions towards objectlike unities. The passive “decision” consists in following up the weak affective force of hyletic materials as they are given in experience, and synthesising them into whole objectlike unities. With this we have generalized the

*Argument From Intention Formation* to cover all passive intention-formation.

Since object-phases do not typically (and perhaps may not ever) have sufficient affective force to become the focus of egoic regard, it is difficult to assess precisely how this primordial decision is made. For example, it is unclear whether primordial association has “options” when it synthesizes objectlike unities, or if the continuous flow of hyletic matter is such that there always either is or is not a striking affective affinity between object-phases, and thus never any ambiguity in how they ought to be synthesized. Either view, it seems to me, could be defensible; neither, it seems to me, would deeply undermine the decision-like character of primordial association. If there is only one way that a current manifold of hyletic materials can be primordially associated, we would simply have here a limit-case of decision. It would be the passive analogue of instances of active, egoic decision-making where we simply resign ourselves to intend to do the only thing we can.

Shoring up the *Argument From Intention-Formation* has been one payoff of our examination of affection. The other has been to clarify the relationship between subintentional mental acts and egoic acts. We can now state what I call:
The Argument From Affection ("AFAff")

1. Every intentional experience is a subintentional mental act, and they all arise through lower-order subintentional acts of intention-formation (See the Arguments From Passive Intention and From Intention-Formation).

2. In any egoic act, the ego is stepping into an ongoing subintentional act, taking up explicitly the aims which had already been pursued in a passive intention, seeking confirmation of the intention in a fulfilling intuition of the intended objectlike formation.

3. When the ego steps into any such act, it must be understood as acting receptively, giving in to an affection which is exercised upon it by the passive intention.

4. Whether the ego steps into the act or not, the subintentional act is being performed, and is exerting an influence upon the ego.

∴ Every intentional experience must essentially be understood as an act, and it essentially acts upon the ego.

In the case of passive intentions, we have already clarified their quasi-volitional structure, and so we ought to be comfortable saying that (in Husserl’s view) they are acts. The ability of the pure ego to step into them and carry them out underscores this point. What the Argument From Affection adds to this picture of quasi-volitional acts is a further specification of the kind of acts that intentional phenomena are, and how they act. Their end is the confirming intuition of an objectlike unity. Their means to this end is to garner the attention of the ego, making it step into receptive activity to carry out the passive
intention actively. These non-egoic subintentional mental acts act by acting upon us; our egoic subintentional act of in stepping into them is an activity-under-passivity, a triggering-into-activity under their influence.\textsuperscript{62}

Note that I have not pursued the claim that the (questionable) affection of the ego by object-phases secures the conclusion that hyletic materials are acts. Such an argument would not be compelling: acts can be effective in affecting the ego, and so (perhaps) can non-acts. The mere claim that non-intentional experiences affect the ego is not sufficient to license viewing them as acts in any substantive sense.

Note, in sum, the contrast between (a) acts with the character of passive intention, versus both (b) those non-intentional experiences which serve as object-phases and (c) the passive syntheses which constitute (a) out of (b). Passive intentions are in themselves ego-less acts, but the ego can step in. The ego’s stepping into an act always presupposes the formation of a prominent objectlike unity, which attracts the ego’s attention. Thus the ego cannot step into type-(b) experiences (which are non-acts), and the ego cannot step into the most basic type-(c) acts: type-(c) acts constitute type-(a) acts, and make possible the ego’s stepping into the latter. But the ego cannot carry out basic passive syntheses in the mode of cogito.\textsuperscript{63} Type-(b) experiences (hyletic materials) and basic type-(c) acts (passive syntheses) are essentially ego-less in themselves. (At best, the ego might turn towards hyletic materials after they have been joined by primordial association in a

\textsuperscript{62}Compare Experience & Judgment’s discussion of “passivity in activity,” §23, p.108.

\textsuperscript{63}I am commenting here only on the impossibility of the ego stepping into the most basic forms of associative synthesis. Associative syntheses iterate, and is quite possible for the pure ego to step into associative syntheses at higher levels: this is central to Husserl’s analyses of active synthesis – see again fn.23 on p.351 above.
prominent objectlike-formation).

### 8.5 PAS’s Conceptions of Mental Acts in Sum

Let us summarize the fruits of our investigation of PAS. The complete, Husserlian, transcendental-phenomenological Act Conception of intentionality consists (at least) in adherence to the following doctrines. Some still remain with us from as far back as *LI*, as we saw in Ch.7, §7.5 above:

(H1) (extended (B1)) We should not (generally) understand “mental acts” as involving active striving, in the sense that characterizes strict, volitional actions (see §7.2.2, p.279 above.),

rather, (H2) Any such “strict action” involves a specific instantiation of the generic intentional structure of factions, or a unity of fulfillment between a meaning-intention and a fulfilling-intention (see again §7.2.2, p.279 above);

but, (H3) (replaced (B2)) Any singular instance of intentional directedness towards an object (i.e., any *cognition*) is itself an “act,” and this conception of mental acts is presupposed in (H2) (see §7.3, p.285).

However, one central claim from *LI* requires revision. In §6.5 and in §7.5, I summarized part of Husserl’s view with the statement:

(H4) Every intentional mental phenomenon is characterized by *noesis*, which is required
to go from the passive receipt of sensations to the presentation of an object (see again §7.3, p.285).

This should now be replaced with:

(H4*) (Replaces H4 – cf. *The Arguments from Passive Intention*, and *From Passive Intention-Formation*) Every noetic or intentional mental phenomenon is characterized as a subintentional and non-egoic mental act which is quasi-volitionally striving to fulfill a *passive intention*, and such passive intentions arise through lower-order subintentional non-egoic mental acts of associative syntheses, or acts of passive intention-formation.

Meanwhile, nearly all the claims of the *Ideas* may be retained without modulation:

(H5*) (replaced (H5)) The class of experiences includes both “acts” (intentional experiences or *noeses*) and non-acts (hyletic material – cf. §7.1, p.267 above). The class of “acts” includes some egoic acts of *cogito*, involving ego-intentionality, but also some acts in which the pure ego is not active (cf. §7.3.1). We cannot swap talk of mental acts with talk of a “mentally active subject,” since egoic acts are only one class of mental acts.

(H6*) (partially replaced (H6)) the naturalistic-psychological concept of the ego as soul (*Seele*) applies to mental phenomena just insofar as they can be localized in a Bodily-psychic unity, and thus best fits non-intentional experiences such as sensations, (see §7.2.1 above).
(H7*) (partially replaced (H6)) the personalistic concept of the ego applies to mental phenomena which are “unities of duration” (e.g., convictions) just insofar as they “belong” to a person (a stable Bodily-spiritual unity in the apparent natural world) and thus enter into an explanation of her behavior as motivated. The personalistic concept of the ego thus best fits noetic experience. Empathic apprehension of these same personalistic traits is presupposed by naturalistic psychology, but is not there grasped as a theme of research (see §4.2 above). (see §7.2.2 above).

(H8*) (The Argument From Attention – partially replaced (H6) and rejected (H7)) the pure ego is an essential posit incurred by the “polarity” of every attentive experience with the form of cogito, and it “lives” in such acts as the active subject who carries them out. (See §7.3 above.).

(H9*) (The Arguments From ἐποχή and Ideation – extends (H8*)) the pure ego is active in freely performing every variety of phenomenological research. (See §7.3.1 above.)

(H10*) (The Argument From Sedimentation – extends (H8*)) the pure ego actively constitutes those unities of duration (convictions) which, from the natural (but not naturalistic) “Personalistic Attitude’ of the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) serve as the appearances of the personal ego. (See §7.4 above.)

Note, however, that a genetic phenomenology clarifies the preconditions, in passivity, for all the egoic acts described in (H8*-H10*). This is related to another point regarding one claim from Ideas which now requires explicit correction. In summarizing the Ideas, I proposed:
(H11*) \((The \ \text{Argument From Potentiality} - \text{transcendentalized (H5* & H8*-H10*)})\) It belongs to the essence of all mental acts which are not egoic acts that it is ideally possible for the pure ego to “step into” them, in the mode of actuality, converting them into a \textit{cogito}\ (cf. §7.3.2 above). Thus all non-egoic mental acts are in essence potentially acts of the pure ego – they constitute the pure ego’s field of freedom, and the pure ego is an eidetic posit (a pole in the polarity of act-intentionality) incurred in their case as well.

This accurately describes only those non-egoic acts which have the character of passive intention: it is possible for the pure ego to step into these. The most basic non-egoic acts, the ground floor of associative syntheses, are not something the pure ego can carry out in the mode of \textit{cogito}, but are rather what constitute the passive intentions which make any such egoic act possible. Meanwhile, we need to incorporate into the claims from \textit{Ideas} a recognition of the affection of acts upon the ego, and the distinction between receptive and spontaneous egoic activity. So let us replace (H11*) with a pair of theses:

(H11**) \((The \ \text{Argument From Potentiality} - \text{transcendentalizes (H5* & H8*-H10*)})\) It belongs to the essence of all non-egoic acts with the character of passive intentions that it is ideally possible for the pure ego to “step into” them, in the mode of actuality, converting them into a \textit{cogito}. Thus all passive intentions are in essence potentially active intentions of the pure ego.

(H12*) \((The \ \text{Argument From Affection} - \text{clarifies the genesis of egoic acts})\) When the ego steps into an ongoing passive intention and takes it up as its own intention, the ego
is giving into the affection of a subintentional mental act which acts upon the ego, and the ego comports itself receptively in an activity-under-passivity. In contrast, when the ego spontaneously performs a free act (as in H8*-H10*), it is resisting the affection of subintentional mental acts, and determining itself against their influence.

With this we have a complete picture of the Husserlian Act Conception of intentionality. I have argued that the Husserlian division between spontaneous and receptive egoic acts provides grounds for regarding the former as the transcendental analogue of the Aristotelian’s active intellect, as captured by the restrictive Aristotelian Conception of mental acts. I have argued that the role of passive intentions in affecting the ego in its receptivity provides grounds for understanding the ego’s receptive turning-towards as an activity-under-passivity, in the sense captured by the permissive Aristotelian conception of mental acts. Meanwhile, the quasi-volitional structure of passive intentions provides a wholly novel ground for regarding them as mental acts in a uniquely Husserlian sense.

**Coda: The Absolute Time- Constituting Flow**

In closing, I offer some speculative remarks regarding the real ground floor of transcendental phenomenology: the absolute time-constituting flow. On the foregoing account, all constitution of noemata, of noematic aspects, and of noematic relations occurs through synthesis. Such synthesis is an act (see the Argument from Intention Formation), and this act produces noemata as pointed-as in an intentional mental phenomenon, where this mental phenomenon is itself an act (see the Argument From Passive Intention). This
framework applies to *every synthesis* and to *every instance of constitution* – except perhaps one. We have not at all discussed the constitution which is at work in the absolute time-constituting flow.

I want to suggest, in closing, that the intimate relationship between act and intentionality goes right to the ground floor of Husserl’s phenomenology: the absolute time-constituting flow is *itself* to be understood as a subintentional mental act, forming a continuity with the quasi-volitional structures we have already discussed. On this view subjectivity, in its most basic origins (in the Husserlian scheme), is inherently active, and it is constantly acting. In the transcendentally most fundamental act, the absolute time-constituting flow constitutes *itself*; in an equally primordial act, it constitutes *immanent* or *phenomenological time*; in an equally primordial act, the associative syntheses are performed *in time*, and these in turn give rise to passive intentions. The pure ego can then step into these passive intentions.

I offer a variety of claims, drawn from all stages of Husserl’s career, to illustrate how this view would go. Insofar as Husserl is keen to *avoid* lengthy discussion of time-consciousness in much of his work, and insofar as his treatment of the absolute time-constituting flow is quite sparse overall, my task is actually fairly straightforward. There are not many passages to discuss in detail. I begin with the *Ideas*.

As we saw in Ch.7, §7.1 above, in *Ideas I* Husserl declares that the topic of phenomenology concerns consciousness in its immanence – after the ἐποχή – construed as “absolute being.” The focus is on conscious *experiences*, and on their objective senses, without care for the actuality of the world. But this is not quite right. Husserl remarks
that this...transcendental “absolute” that we have isolated for ourselves through the reductions is in truth not ultimate. It is something that constitutes itself in a certain, deep-lying, and fully sui generis sense [etwas, das sich selbst in einem gewissen tiefliegenden und völlig eigenartigen Sinn konstituiert] and that has its primordial source in what is ultimately and truly absolute (I.3.2.§81.156).

What I want to tentatively suggest is that in fact, the constitution of the totality of experiences – of immanent consciousness as a whole – is not wholly sui generis. This constitution can instead be viewed as continuous with the basic framework I have clarified, according to which constitution is actively carried out originally in subintentional mental acts with a quasi-volitional structure.

One thing which is more absolute than conscious experiences is what Husserl here called “phenomenological time” – distinguished from “cosmic time [kosmischen Zeit].” Phenomenological time, as we shall see, is said to be constituted by the absolute time-constituting flow. The absolute time-constituting flow is the final, the genuine absolute of phenomenology. For now let us stick with phenomenological time itself, which is already more basic than associative syntheses. Phenomenological time is described as “not only something pertaining universally to every individual experience but also a necessary form, combining experiences with experiences [Erlebnisse mit Erlebnissen verbindende]" (I.3.2.§81.157). Every conscious experience occurs in one unified phenomenological time. Crucially, we are able to reflectively apprehend the form of phenomenological time in a reflective, egoic act. We do not find the form given concretely, the way we find a past experience given when we bring it to intuition in a remembering. Rather, we apprehend
“the stream of experience as a unity [der Erlebnisstrom als Einheit]... not as a singular experience but in the manner of an idea in the Kantian sense” (I.3.2.§83.160).

This is about all that Husserl offers in Ideas I regarding immanent time. What is striking here is the suggestion that prior to any (even primordial) associative synthesis, a unity of the stream of consciousness in phenomenological time is constituted which, apparently, exercises an affect upon the ego, insofar as the ego is able to turn towards it and actively apprehend it in an idea. In my exegesis so far we have been given no account of how such a unity could be constituted, and thus how it could be prominent, or how it could exercise an affective force upon the ego. This unity cannot be constituted in any of the subintentional mental acts we have discussed, since all of these occur in, and so presuppose, the unitary form of immanent time.

Commentary in Ideas II on this point is scattered, but significant. It is said again that we are able to apprehend the stream of consciousness as a unity (II.2.1.§20.97-98). And when we do, we find that all our lived experiences themselves have the unity of a “flux of time [Zeitflusses],” and that the overarching unity of the entire sphere of immanence is “the unity of a constant flux [die Einheit eines stetigen Flusses]” (II.2.1.§29.126-127). Pure consciousness is a “a genuine temporal field, a field of ‘phenomenological time’” distinguished from objective time (II.3.1.§49c.188).

These claims raise all the same questions as do the claims in Ideas I. But Ideas II explicitly offers a direct engagement with the deeper question I am pursuing here, and I shall now try to bring this to light. In Ideas II, Husserl seems to deploy the term “motivations [Motivationen]” to capture much of what was discussed in PAS as affective
Thus he speaks in Ideas II.3.2.§56c of “hidden motivations” in passive experience: the active, egoic apprehension of any thing-like noema is said to depend upon a “web of motivations” which arise in passive experience, through association, and these motivations are described as “‘intentional’ connections [intentionale Verbindungen]” and as “tendencies [Tendenzen]” which “come to the fore and sustain themselves [Sie heben und tragen sich]” (ibid., p.237). Husserl initially and provisionally distinguishes several varieties of motivations, depending on whether or not it is a case of egoic acts motivating other acts. But he then suggests that motivations may all be of the same fundamental type: they may all be associative motivations – that is, motivations which arise through associative syntheses (ibid., p.237). All this fits neatly into my foregoing analysis of passive intentions arising from associative syntheses: these are of course presupposed in any egoic act.

Husserl then raises the issue which we discussed in §8.4.2 above. There, we asked whether all affection arose through association (after objectlike formations were constituted as prominent), or if instead a kind of affection by object-phases was already at work in guiding the most basic syntheses of primordial association. I concluded that some such affection by object-phases must be recognized in the Husserlian view. Husserl’s parallel remark in Ideas II is that if all motivation is specifically associative motivation, then we seem to be forced to trace all motivation (affection) “back to an original togetherness [ursprüngliches Zusammen] and an original consequence [ursprüngliche Folge], where

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64See again fn.8.4.2 on p.423 above: the language of “motivation” of the ego is also centrally deployed in PAS, though I have emphasized the (universally and essentially correspondent) “affection of” the pure ego.
there is yet nothing of [associative] motivation” (II.3.2.56c.237).

Here follows a remark that points us beyond my claims in §8.4.2 above. Husserl complains that the conception he has just sketched – according to which all motivation (affection) is associative – faces a difficulty:

But to what extent that would be thinkable, and to what extent the unity of a stream of consciousness could be precisely a unity if it is without any motivation [wie weit auch nur die Einheit eines Bewußtseinsstroms ohne jede Motivation eben Einheit sein könnte] – that is the question (II.3.2.56c.237).

This raises precisely the issue I mean to discuss. Husserl is committed to the claim that the stream of consciousness is a unity, and it may seem that this unity must arise prior to any associative synthesis. All unities arising through associative synthesis arise in the stream, as parts of the unity of the stream. But now, the basic analysis of how all unities are constituted, which has applied in every other case, is that unities arise through synthesis. And every synthesis we have encountered thus far has presupposed affection/motivation. In this brief passage, Husserl signals that if the original unity of the stream of consciousness itself does not also arise in a way dependent upon affection/motivation, then it is incomprehensible how this unity arises at all. And yet it may seem that the “missing” form of affection/motivation cannot presuppose associative synthesis. For what we need is a kind of affection/motivation which constitutes the temporal unity of the stream of consciousness, and this is precisely what is presupposed by the phenomenology of association.

Husserl goes on to offer a claim which we have not yet encountered before, and which helps to clarify this “missing” form of affection/motivation:
...here we touch on upon the main difficulty. We do not say that the
unity of the stream of my lived experiences each lived experience is nec-
essary, necessarily conditioned by [notwendig bedingt durch] the lived
experiences which precede it... When I become aware of a thing, the
thesis [Thesis] contained in the perception is not always a thesis “in con-
sequence of” [ein Thesis “infolge”]: e.g., when I see the night sky lit
up by a meteor shower or hear quite unexpectedly the crack of a whip.
Still, even here a kind of motivation can be exhibited, included in the
form of inner time-consciousness. This form is something absolutely
fixed: the subjective form of the now, of the earlier, etc. I can change
nothing of it. Nonetheless, there exists here a unity [Einheit] of co-
apurtenance [Zusammengehörigkeit], in virtue of which the judgmental
positing [Urteilsetzung] “Now this is” conditions the futural positing
“Something will be,” or again, “Now I have a lived experience” condi-
tions “It was a lived experience previously.” Here we have a judgment
motivated by another judgment, but prior to the judgment the temporal
forms themselves motivate each other [Hier haben wir ein Urteil durch
ein anderes motiviert, aber vor dem Urteil motivieren sich die Zeitformen
selbst ineinander]. In this sense we can say that even the pervasive unity
of the stream of consciousness is a unity of motivation [die durchge-
hende Einheit des Bewußtseinsstromes eine Einheit der Motivation sei]
(II.3.2.§56d.239)

The wholly novel claim on offer here is that the temporal form of experience involves its
own native motivation. This stands in contrast to every case we have discussed above.

In discussing the phenomenology of association, we have mainly had in view
cases where a new objectlike formation now, and one in the past to which it is merely
similar, enter into an associative synthesis, such that the new one recalls the earlier one.
This kind of reproductive association, as we have seen, is indeed one way in which an
“etiological” or genetic noematic relation can be constituted. The recalled experience
presents itself as arising from the recalling experience. We have also discussed primordial
associative synthesis, in which the (potential) affection of object-phases is presupposed
in the constitution of any prominent objectlike formation. What we have in the passage
above is a form of affection/motivation which is *prior to* any such associative syntheses, and which *does not* constitute any etiological or genetic noematic aspect. Quite generally, the *form* of the now motivates the *form* of the future and of the past, but the future and the past do not appear as *arising etiologically from* the present. This kind of formal affective affinity is wholly unlike the affinity of hyletic contents which is at work in all associative synthesis. Such a formal affective affinity appears to be Husserl’s proposal for how the *unity of the stream of consciousness* is constituted.\(^65\) In the passage above, Husserl *initially* defers to explicit, egoic judgments concerning the phases of immanent time to illustrate the motivations at work here. But he then re-asserts the general claim that all such egoic acts are prefigured in passivity. In this case, there is a basic passive affection/motivation at work which is the formal unity of time-consciousness as such, and it is *in virtue of this* that the ego can execute any judgment which recognizes that unity. The affection is what enables the unity to become prominent, and that is why the ego can turn towards the unity. And yet it is, we have seen, precisely this unity which is presupposed in any associative synthesis. Thus we have a domain of passive affection prior to all associative affection.

I submit that in order to understand this formal affective affinity, we could extend the *Argument From Passive Intention*. We would then maintain that at a formal level, the experience of the now *as such, and in general, intends* an experience of the future: the form of the present *strives toward* the form of the futural, and this striving is satisfied

\(^{65}\)There is, in fact, some precedent for this claim in *PAS*. Husserl remarks there that there is an “affective peculiarity of the living present” and that the living present itself is an “affective unity” (*PAS* 2, §35.216ff.)
when some experience (any experience) appears in the mode of having-been expected. Correspondingly, the form of the present also strives towards the form of the past, and this striving is satisfied when some (any) experience-now appears in the mode of having-just-been. These non-egoic acts prefigure the egoic apprehension of the form of phenomenological time as such. When we apprehend this form, we apprehend it in idea – we have here yet another instance of how passivity prefigures the ideas which the ego can apprehend, setting as norms for experience. The most basic norm of temporal progression, and the order of time, is prefigured in passivity, just as the norms of truth (in-itself) are prefigured in passivity. If we pursue this extension of The Argument From Passive Intention then we will have located a new layer of subintentional acts, distinct from all the others we have discussed in this chapter. We would understand these formal passive intentions on analogy with extremely general personal intentions. For example, I might intend “to get something at the store.” This intention is satisfied when I buy anything at the store. Likewise, in the living present, the Now intends a past and a future of experience. This intention is satisfied when any experiences occur which present their objectlike formation in the intended temporal mode. Just like when I go the store, I typically fulfill my overarching intention by forming a more determinate intention (I shall buy this), likewise consciousness fulfills its overarching intention for a past and future by

66Note that this reading supplements, but does not replace, the solution to the Problem Of the In Itself of Consciousness explored in §8.4 above. There we relied on consciousness of transcendent objects to resolve the Problem of the In-itself of a consciousness’ future. Here we appeal only to the form of consciousness as such to secure the form of future experience. But since the form of future consciousness as such is wholly indeterminate, it does not fix the in-itself of any concrete experience. What is prefigured here is the wholly indeterminate judgement that a future shall occur. Again, the phenomenology of association surpasses the formal phenomenology of time-consciousness, by showing how this form is filled concretely – the in-itself of future experience demands a judgment of what the contents of future experience shall be like, and the associative analysis grounds the supposition that they shall be like the contents of the past.
forming more determinate intentions: by forming concrete, content-laden reproductive tendencies and anticipatory tendencies, through associative synthesis. These then strive to fulfill their specific aims, and in doing so, they fulfill the overarching intention, at the level of temporal form, toward a past and a future in general.

Pursuing this view does not seem to require any special extension of the Argument From Affection. We considered how object-phases might exert an affection upon the ego. The claim I am offering is that the temporal forms of Now, just-past, and soon-to-come, these forms as such fulfill their general intentions by way of more determinate passive intentions, which affect the ego as usual. Formally, the Now strives toward a past and a future in general. This striving is fulfilled by way of the passive intentions toward determinate futural and past objects, which in turn fulfill their striving by acting on the ego, as usual. The result of all this is that the progression and unity of phenomenological time is something the ego can reflectively judge to be formally necessary, in idea. It is true that this analysis does need an account of how the ego turns towards the form of phenomenological time, rather than toward any objectlike formation which is intended by an experience within that form. But the basic issue here is simply how we apprehend any form – how any form affects us, and how we can have knowledge of any formal objects. This is provided by the Husserlian conception of an egoic act of Ideation. An account of how Ideation is grounded in passivity is provided in Part 3 of PAS, and this can simply be applied without further ado to the special case in which the ego apprehends the form of phenomenological time – see fn.23 on p.351 above.

That is step one of the extension of my framework to deal with temporal con-
sciousness. It provides an analysis of the affective unity of the living present, and thus the unity of the stream of lived experiences. But in Husserl’s view, one further round of phenomenological analysis is required to lead us to absolute transcendental bedrock. The absolute time-constituting flow is held to constitute the formal unity of phenomenological time. On the reading I am pursuing here, the absolute time-constituting flow would thus give rise to the affective unity of phenomenological time, thus to the formal unity of the stream of lived experiences. Is there room even here for another extension of the basic framework, according to which every non-egoic act or instance of intentionality is a passive intention which exercises an affection upon the ego)?

We could extend the framework by extending the Argument From Passive Intention-Formation. On this view, the absolute time-constituting flow is the fundamental subintentional mental act which constitutes the formal affective unity of phenomenological time in any living present. The flow is a flowing synthetic act of intention formation, and in its activity it forms the extremely general intention which characterizes the form of phenomenological time: a striving from the form of now to the forms of past and future. As absolutely fundamental, the time-constituting flow can presuppose no further synthesis. Rather, it would have to be regarded as synthesizing and constituting itself as a unity. It would be a subintentional act that is constantly driving itself forward and sustaining itself – a case of what is called autopoiesis.

Husserl’s remarks in the text of The Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (PCIT) suggest such a view, so long as we read them in light of his later clarification of genetic phenomenology. In lectures of 1905, he asks how we are to
understand the way in which we can egoically apprehend the absolute time-constituting 
flow iteself. The question is not how we apprehend transcendent objects in world-time 
(e.g., a sounding tone). The question is not how we apprehend immanent experiences 
(e.g., those constituting consciousness of a sounding tone) in phenomenological time. 
The question is not how we apprehend the unity of the stream of lived experiences, or 
even how we apprehend the form of the living present as an affective unity. The question 
is how we apprehend the flow which constitutes this affective unity. In order for us to 
apprehend this, the flow itself must be in some sense constituted as a unity. And yet 
there is “a difficulty concerning how it is possible to be aware of a unity belonging to 
the ultimate constituting flow of consciousness” (§39, p.84).67 The difficulty is that 
we cannot regard the flow itself as constituted in time, as the stream is; rather, it is to 
constitute even the form of the living present, the form of all phenomenological time, the 
temporal order of the stream. In this sense, the kind of constitution can appear wholly 
“sui generis,” insofar as it is not constitution in time – it does not arise via primordial 
association, or reproductive association, or anticipatory association. Nonetheless, I want 
to suggest that it is not entirely unlike every other case of synthetic constitution of a unity 
we have seen: it arises through an act.

Husserl’s own solution is sketched as:

the following answer: There is one, unique flow of consciousness in 
which the unity of the tone in immanent time and the unity of the flow of 
consciousness itself become constituted at once. As shocking (when not 
initially even absurd) as it may seem to say that the flow of consciousness 
constitutes its own unity, it is nonetheless the case that it does. And this

67I offer references to Brough’s 1980 translation.
can be made intelligible on the basis of the flow’s essential constitution (PCIT §39, p.84).

One claim here is that the unity of the flow is essentially constituted as a unity which we can apprehend. Another claim is that when we do apprehend it, we shall see that it constitutes its own unity. Husserl then attempts to clarify how all this occurs, and how we apprehend it.

To do so, he distinguishes a “horizontal intentionality [Längsintentionalität]” and a “transverse intentionality [Querintentionalität]” in all temporal consciousness. Transverse intentionality is what we are quite familiar with: it is directed outside of the flow of consciousness, typically at transcendent objects, and presents them to us as objects in time. For example, suppose I experience the sounding of a tone for some duration. Then “If I direct my attention toward the tone, if I immerse myself attentively in the ‘transverse’ intentionality,’... then the enduring tone sounds before me, constantly expanding in its duration” (PCIT, §39, p.87).

Horizontal intentionality is different. It is a intentional relatedness between experiences, within the stream. I shall suggest that we have already become familiar with this in PAS’s conceptions of reproductive and anticipatory tendencies. Husserl introduces it as follows, using an example of retentions:

If I focus on the “horizontal intentionality” and on what is becoming constituted in it, I turn my reflective regard away from the tone (which has endured for such and such a length of time) towards what is new in the way of primal sensations at one point in the retentional being-all-at-once and toward what is retained “all at once” with this new primal sensation in a continuous series. What is retained is the past consciousness in its series of phases (first of all, in its preceding phase). And then, in the continuous flowing-on of consciousness, I grasp the retained series of
the elapsed consciousness together with the limit of the actual primal sensations and the continuous being-pushed-back of this series, along with the new addition of retentions and primal sensations (*PCIT*, §39, p.87).)

I have already suggested that the living present is a formal affective unity, and that the *form* of the Now strives toward the *form* of the past (and also that of the future). It is in virtue of this that any concrete sensory materials *now* can recall any past sensory materials: the phenomenology of association presupposes the form of the living present, presupposes succession and simultaneity and all ordering of experience in phenomenological time. Here Husserl seems to be walking us through an egoic act of apprehending all this. Note that in this piece from 1905, Husserl is not entirely clear that retentions themselves are not *inherently* intentional, as we saw in *PAS*. He seems to be simply presuming that associative syntheses are occurring such that past, retended experiences are *recalled* Now, such that I can step into a reproductive tendency and egoically *remember* the past experiences. Taking this into account, here are the steps Husserl walks us through thus far.

We begin from a concrete experience of an object as enduring through world-time. We then turn our attention to the immanent contents (the object-phases), and to *their* duration in *phenomenological* time. In particular, we remember the retended object-phases; but we apprehend them as butting up against the ever-new Now, and we apprehend the Now as anticipating a future. From here we could perform an act of Ideation, apprehending the *essential form* of the living present as an affective unity of just-now, Now, soon.

As I understand Husserl’s proposal, we apprehend the unity of the absolute time-constituting flow when we see that it is the *same* flow which runs through all experience.
For example, we apprehend the stream of experiences as a continuously-updated filling of the *form* of the living present, and we *further* apprehend that the flow is flowing through every such living present.

We believe, therefore, that the unity of the flow itself becomes constituted in the flow of consciousness as a one-dimensional *quasi*-temporal order by virtue of the continuity of the retentional modifications and by virtue of the circumstance that these modifications are, continuously, retentions of the retentions that have continuously preceded them.” (*PCIT*, §39, p.86).

In the presentation Husserl provides here, focusing again on retention, I suggest that we must do a better job than he does in distinguishing the role of passive synthesis. Retention is constantly occurring, and the stock of retended experiences is constantly growing, but retentions are not inherently intentional. They are *made* intentional through a reproductive awakening. When Husserl here offers an account of how we *egoically* apprehend the unity of the flow, he is presupposing that *reproductive association iterates*. In virtue of this reiteration, any retended experience which is *recalled now* must be understood as having *its own* horizons of retentions lying further back, which were *recalled back then*. We apprehend the unity of the flow when we see that just as we posit the flow in any living present to account for the form of phenomenological time, we posit the *same* flow as a unity persisting through all moments of phenomenological time, and constituting the whole of phenomenological time. Because the flow essentially constitutes *one* phenomenological time, it is essential that we posit *one* unitary flow throughout that whole time. We are able to apprehend the unity of the flow to the extent that we are able to remember past consciousness; we are able to execute this remembering
to the extent that reproductive association has enabled us to do so. The flow essentially secures the temporal form of the lived present; this form essentially secures the possibility of associative synthesis, and in particular of reproductive association; the reproductive associations essentially secure the possibility of our apprehension of the constancy of the form of the living present as it is re-filled through phenomenological time, and with this comes the apprehension of the unity of the stream of lived experience. We then apprehend the unity of the flow, lying beneath the unity of the stream.

This may seem like a bit of a bait-and-switch. We wanted to understand how the unity of the absolute time-constituting flow is constituted, and we were told that it is self-constituting. Perhaps we thought we would understand that unity without reference to associative syntheses, thinking that the unity of the flow is established prior to any such associative syntheses. But how could we, egoically, apprehend anything without relying on associative syntheses? How could we understand the unity of the flow without it becoming prominent, having an affective force, and eliciting our attention? As I read Husserl's claim regarding the flow’s self-constitution, it is a process with several moments distributed across many strata of passivity, and also reaching up into egoic activity. In regarding any living present we must posit the flow as giving rise to the formal affective unity of the living present. This formal affective unity is what makes possible (and indeed, makes necessary) associative synthesis. But by relying on such associative syntheses, we can objectivate the form of the living present as such, and can recognize egoically that it has its own affective/motivational structure. I have suggested that we can recognize it as a kind of pervasive, formal, general passive intention. Likewise we can recognize
that the stream of experiences – the unity of many such living presents – is itself a temporally-extended affective unity in the form of phenomenological time. And we can then recognize that it is the same “flow,” in its quasi-temporal unity, which is always flowing, constituting the whole unity of phenomenological time and of the stream of experiences. The possibility of all such egoic recognition is prefigured in passivity, but it is only when we take up an interest in the phenomenology of internal time that we see that the flow has constituted itself as a unity – where this means (as always) that it has constituted itself as a unity for us, for the ego. There is no constitution of a genuine unity prior to an egoic act. There is only the passive prefiguring of such a unity. And this holds for the absolute time-constituting flow as it does for every other case. It does not constitute itself as a unity prior to associative syntheses and to egoic acts. Rather, it constitutes itself as a unity through associative synthesis, there to be apprehended as a unity for the ego.

On this reading then, we understand the absolute time-constituting flow as the most basic form of passive intention-formation, an act which is carried along in all the more determinate forms of passive intention-formation. The flow passively prefigures the formal affective unity of phenomenological time in the living present; in this affective unity a future and a past are passively and generally intended; these passive intentions are made determinate in passive, associative syntheses, which form specific passive intentions. These last passive intentions are the intentional mental phenomena which make up the stream of lived experience, and they affect the pure ego, which can receptively step into all of them. There the pure ego can reflectively conceptualize all intentional
mental phenomena as passive intentions. It can conceptualize the varieties of associative
syntheses as instances of passive intention formation. It can reflectively conceptualize the
formal affective unity of the stream as a whole as an network of highly general passive
intentions. It can then reflectively conceptualize the unity of the flow as giving rise to
the whole stream. The highly general passive intention which is formed by the flow may
be conceptualized: “to be-conscious-of in the form of phenomenological time,” or, ‘to
be-conscious-of (just-now, Now, and very-soon).” This is what the flow is constantly
striving to attain. This deep-lying passive intention cannot properly be understood as a
striving for consciousness of the world – the idea of the world is prefigured in passivity,
but is not apprehended except through an much higher-level, founded, egoic act.

This whole domain of transcendental subjective activity is artificially broken up,
and apprehended as a number of diverse intentional objects of reflective acts, by the
ego, when we perform an analysis to apprehend each moment. But prior to this, in pure
passivity, there is only “the-flow-which-essentially-produces-the-form-which-essentially-
produces-the-syntheses-which-essentially-produce-passive-intentions-which-affect-the-ego.”

We have one massive, quasi-volitional, non-egoic act-complex – a flow which is striving
to be-conscious, and articulating itself into more determinate intentions all along.

This view clarifies a puzzling remark which Husserl makes in a 1921 manuscript,
while he is seeking to clarify the aims of genetic phenomenology. He declares that:

...the primordial law of genesis is [So ist Urgesetz der Genesis] the law
of original time-constitution, the laws of association and reproduction,
the laws through which the monad is constituted for itself as a unity, etc.
(PAS S.B.642)
How is it that the fundamental law of genesis (singular) turns out to be an ongoing list of laws (plural)? How should the fundamental laws cover everything from original time-constitution, on the one hand, to the constitution of the subject for itself, as a unity, presumably apprehended in an egoic act? This follows as a matter of course if all genesis is a continuum, and if the quasi-volitional character of intentionality serves as the key to the whole domain of absolute, active subjectivity.
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