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Title	Practical intentionality: from Brentano to the phenomenology of the Munich and Göttingen Circles
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Publication date	2018-06-14
Original Citation	Salice, A. (2018) 'Practical intentionality: from Brentano to the phenomenology of the Munich and Göttingen Circles', in Zahavi, D. (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 604-622. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198755340.013.7
Type of publication	Book chapter
Link to publisher's version	http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198755340.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198755340-e-7 - 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198755340.013.7
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Download date	2024-03-28 09:36:20
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/7437

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Penultimate draft, to be published (possibly with minor amendments) in: D. Zahavi (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology*. Oxford: OUP. Please, quote from the published version.

Practical Intentionality.
From Brentano to the Phenomenology of the Munich and Göttingen Circles

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0. Introduction

Intentionality – understood as a specific property which, if instantiated, makes minds *of* or *about* objects and facts – is a topic that is almost inextricable from phenomenology itself. However, this specific understanding of "intentionality" captures just *one* meaning of that abstract term. Given that "intentionality" is the nominalization of the predicate "intentional," there is a second and much more common usage of this predicate within ordinary English – one that first and foremost relates to actions: "A schoolteacher may ask a child who has spilled the ink in class: 'Did you do that *intentionally*?'" (Austin 1970: 274, my emphasis). Now, what property is intentionality in this *second* sense? As a first approximation, it can be said that an action is *intentional* if it is prompted and steered by a conative state. For instance, to spill ink intentionally somehow requires the agent to have a state of a kind similar to that of desires, volitions, wishes, intentions, etc. Put another way, it is at least partly because the agent has the desire or will or intention to spill ink that her action qualifies as intentional – in the more ordinary sense of this predicate.

One interesting aspect of such conative states is that, however they are to be described, they too seem to be *of* something or directed *towards* something – a state of affairs or fact or event that the agent intends to bring about. Accordingly, one can ascertain a certain overlap between the two meanings of "intentionality" – for an action to be intentional in the *second* sense, the subject must have an adequate conative state that, being about a goal, is intentional in the *first* sense. This makes the conditions for an action to be *intentional* different from – and yet not unrelated to – the conditions for a mental state to be *of* something.

This practical dimension of intentionality has not escaped the attention of phenomenologists either. Quite the contrary. One segment within the history of this philosophical movement, which is especially relevant for the topic at issue, stretches from the end of the nineteenth to the first decades of the twentieth century. During this period of time, one can observe a fairly definite line of research that originates with Brentano's considerations about the specific topic of intentional action and is developed further by the phenomenological circles of Munich and Göttingen (on the phenomenology of these two circles, cf. Salice 2015a). In the turn of not even five years (from around 1910 to ca. 1915), early phenomenologists have all made the

notion of intentional action the target of a proper battery of investigations. Here, I am mainly referring to the relevant publications of Alexander Pfänder (1900, 1911), Adolf Reinach (1912/13), Max Scheler (1913/16) and Dietrich von Hildebrand (1916 – this is the revised text of Hildebrand's dissertation submitted in 1912).[1] These contributions take all their first steps exactly from the intuition that there are intentional experiences of a conative kind, which trigger and accompany our actions, but they diverge on how exactly to account for these experiences and for their relation to action. In a recent paper, Uriah Kriegel associates the French philosophy of the 40s with "the golden decade of conative phenomenology" (cf. Kriegel 2013: 538) – but the considerations put forward in this article suggest that conation became the subject of a lively research interest already within early phenomenology.

This paper claims that phenomenological contributions to the theory of action are highly relevant for at least two orders of reasons. The first is mainly historical: they indicate that phenomenological reflection on intentionality has, from its very beginning, taken into account and accommodated both senses of the term "intentionality."[2] The second reason is grounded in systematic considerations: these contributions are second to none when it comes to the wealth of insights they secure. In particular, they uncover that intentions are mental states of a *sui generis* kind, to be distinguished from desires, wishes, willing, and other kinds of conative states, and that intentions play an indispensable role for planning, deliberation and, ultimately, action. Early phenomenological theory about practical intentionality hence bears

[1] In this narrative, a fundamental role is played by Edmund Husserl. First, in Vienna, Husserl attends Brentano's courses on ethics in 1884/85 and 1886 (cf. Schuhmann, 1977: 13, 15) where Brentano develops important ideas about his theory of action (cf. Brentano 1954). Second, Husserl's *Logical Investigations* of 1900-01 exert a forceful influence on the work of early phenomenologists (cf. Salice 2012). Third, Husserl's lectures on *Ethics and the Theory of Values* given in Göttingen 1908/09, 1911 and 1914 present ideas about volition and action that are developed in the same period of time and stand in close relation to those discussed in this paper (cf. Husserl 1988). This notwithstanding, this article is not in a position to address Husserl's view in any detail (on Husserl's treatment of action in the first two decades of 1900, cf. Melle 1997, Mertens 1998, Rinofner-Kreidl 2014, Uemura 2015). Other important contributions to the topic at stake, which again will remain neglected in this paper, are provided by Theodor Lipps (cf. 1902, 1909) – the teacher of many early phenomenologists in Munich and an equally profound source of inspiration.

[2] This clearly counteracts a widely received view in the literature according to which the first extensive account of actions or activities has to be credited to Martin Heidegger (cf. Dreyfus 1991). Moreover, it should not be neglected that early-phenomenological investigations go much further than merely taking conation into consideration. They are not limited to pure descriptions of practical intentionality, but enter the normative dimension by crucially touching upon the ethical and legal bearing of intentional actions. (Although important and interesting, an exploration of ethical and legal aspects of actions would exceed the purposes of this chapter.)

striking similarities to the theory of intentions later developed by Searle (1983) and Bratman (1987), as will be shown.

Against this background, the present article is an attempt to mine, present and evaluate main aspects of the development of phenomenological theory about *practical intentions*. To reach this goal, the paper is organized into three parts. In the first Section, the notion of intention as a conative state of a genuine kind is briefly introduced by illustrating the shift that occurred within contemporary theory of action from the belief-desire (BD) to the belief-desire-intention (BDI) model of practical intentionality. The second Section illustrates Brentano's view about action and presents it as a variant of the BD-account. Finally, Section 3 reconstructs the substantial revision that Brentano's ideas underwent in early phenomenology. It is argued that early phenomenology already accomplished a turn from a BD to a BDI account of intentionality agency and that it operates with a notion of an intention that, in many respects, is more fertile than the one at the core of current debate.

1. The Belief-Desire-Intention Model of Practical Intentionality.

What makes an action intentional? The answer that used to dominate the philosophical debate on action is that an action is intentional if it enters into an adequate relation with the beliefs and the desires of the agent. For instance, assuming that I am thirsty, if I wish *not* to be thirsty and if I believe that having a drink will extinguish my thirst, then the action of drinking can be considered as intentional. Philosophers diverge on how to cash out the notion of an "appropriate relation," and especially on whether this is a motivational (cf. Anscombe (2000)) or a causal (cf. Davidson (2002a) and Goldman (1970)) relation, but the agreement upon the explanatory function of beliefs and desires for the notion of intentional action licenses the umbrella term "belief-desire [BD] model" to qualify this account.

In the last decades, the BD-model of intentional action has encountered growing resistance. And this is mainly because its explanatory power seems to fall too short (cf. Bratman 1987). On the BD understanding, "intentionality" is first and foremost a property that applies to actions in the sense that an action qualifies as intentional if it is done *with* an intention. And it is done *with* an intention, if the agent has the relevant beliefs and desires. But this means: the BD model does not leave space for intentions as *specific* conative states *of the mind*. Put another way, according to this approach, intentions are nothing else than suitably aggregated complexes of beliefs and desires (cf. Davidson 2002b).

Yet, it seems that there are good reasons for hosting genuine practical intentions in our mental repertoire. In particular, prior or future-directed intentions (what are also called "decisions") are recalcitrant to being accommodated within the BD framework. To see why, consider the following example. Imagine that you decide at time *t* to make Sauce Mayonnaise at a later time *t'*. How should this fact, i.e., *your decision*, be

described? It is certainly something related to your future action, but it is also, and crucially, formed *before* the action's onset – to be sure, there are circumstances in which actions immediately follow decisions, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Consequently, it seems plausible to characterize (practical) intentionality as something that, when it comes to future-directed intentions especially, qualifies the mind primarily and actions secondarily. Against this background, however, one could argue that to form a decision is nothing else than to have a desire with peaking intensity. Indeed, it appears that desires or wishes occur with different degrees of intensity. Still, there are other considerations that may be able to block this interpretation.

Firstly, desires are volatile – they wax and wane over time depending on the contexts, emotions, moods of the agent, etc. Intentions, by contrast, enhance stability in one's conduct. They do so because they generate *commitments* (cf. Bratman 1987: 15ff). If you have decided to make Sauce Mayonnaise at *t'*, you will then tend to discard alternative options – that is, you will tend *not* to revise your intention: e.g., the option of making a Sauce of some other kind becomes less attractive. To be sure, the commitments at stake here are intrapersonal; they are mere "creatures of the will," as Margaret Gilbert puts it (2006: 6), meaning that they can be reneged by the agent herself alone and, thus, have a limited binding force. This force is limited especially if it is compared with that of interpersonal commitments, such as those brought about by promises or other speech acts, which can be rescinded only in accordance with their addressees (as Reinach already highlights, cf. his 2012). And, yet, intrapersonal commitments *are* commitments and, consequently, they commit the agent to the conduct she has decided upon, making it costly to retract the original intention.

Secondly, if one makes a decision, one puts oneself under the demand of forming at least a rough plan of how to reach the goal set by the intention (Bratman 2014: 15ff). Intentions, in other words, are *plan states* for they involve planning and the design of a (however vague) project or plan or strategy towards the goal. That is, intentions create a pressure to settle on means and to respect the norms of instrumental rationality. If you have decided to make Sauce Mayonnaise, you are already in the thick of it: you have an idea of how to make it (or of where to look for the recipe), and you structure your further actions in light of that intention. By contrast, one can entertain desires without any pressure to settle on the means that should lead the agent to fulfill the contents of that desire. That opens the possibility for a subject to have contrasting, i.e., mutually incompatible, desires, but impedes her from having contrasting intentions, at pain of irrationality. In other words, you can have the two desires to make Sauce Mayonnaise and to make Sauce Béarnaise – but you can decide in favor of only *one* of the two lines of actions.

Thirdly, intentions are causally self-referential states (cf. Searle 1983: 86ff). To understand what is meant by causal self-referentiality, suppose you intend to φ (for instance, you intend to become rich). Given that intentions are intentional states, they

have intentional contents – the intentional content being the element of a mental state that identifies its conditions of satisfaction. Intentions are self-reflexive attitudes because their content prescribes that the state of affairs φ has to be caused by the very intention to φ. Hence, in order to satisfy your intention of becoming rich, becoming rich is something that has to be brought about by your very intention. Desires, by contrast, do not need to be causally self-referential. If you have the desire of becoming rich, your desire would be satisfied even if you become rich because, e.g., you inherit a fortune from an unknown relative.

Considered altogether, these thoughts recommend a revision of the BD-model, one that takes seriously the role of intentions as conative states of a genuine kind in our thought and agency (the 'BDI'-account). One particularly interesting remark with respect to this argumentative move is made by Bratman in his *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason* (1987). Though only in passing, Bratman claims there that the BDI-account he so convincingly advanced is supposed to be developed in accordance with commonsense psychology (Bratman 1987: 9). One way to read this remark is that everyday mentalistic talk is imbued with references to intentions and that the BDI-account is in a position to refine our commonsensical notion of an intention.

This may be correct, but it is far from clear why the BDI model has to seek congruence with commonsense psychology – for it is not the task of folk psychology to produce accurate descriptions of our mental states. Yet, and arguably, this is exactly (one of) phenomenology's task(s). And, if so, then perhaps advocators of the BDI-account may be better advised to start with accurate descriptions of our mental states, rather than with laymen's opinions – and that just means starting with phenomenology, rather than with folk psychology (cf. Gallagher/Zahavi 2012: 10). But then, the question arises as to whether phenomenologists do have a salient notion of intention. The next two Sections formulate an answer to this question.

2. Brentano on Willing.

The place Brentano reserves for action and volition in his work is rather limited, especially if this is compared with his treatment of other topics within his descriptive psychology. Yet, if one reads the relevant passages against the background of the general framework of his psychology, they can be easily contextualized and can allow for a number of conclusions that enable the emergence of a coherent view about his theory of action. Hence, it is fruitful to begin by outlining some core ideas of his general framework before entering into the details of conation.

In his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1995a), Brentano claims that mental states ("*psychische Phänomene*") fall into three, and only three, kinds: mental states are presentations, judgments or what he calls "*Gemütsbewegungen*" – generally translated as "emotional states," or, perhaps better, "affective" states. These three kinds of mental states ("phenomena" or "acts" in Brentano's terminology) are in a

hierarchical order. Presentations are the most basic states in the sense that they are always presupposed by judgments and affects. Accordingly, Brentano also qualifies the latter acts as "superposed acts" (Brentano 1995b: 90). To present an example, if a subject judges that this particular rose is red, then the judgmental act can be said to be "superposed" on a presentation of the red rose, in the sense that the former act could not exist without the latter. Similarly, if a subject hates something or someone, then a presentation of that thing or person underlies the emotion of hatred.

Superposition, according to Brentano, entails identity of the intentional object: if an act is superposed on another act, both acts have the same object. This means that the difference between superposed acts and presentations cannot be accounted for in terms of a difference in their objects. What rather distinguishes these mental phenomena is the very kind of intentional relation in which their subject is involved: more specifically, all superposed acts come either in a positive or in a negative form. For instance, in affects, one is directed towards an object with inclination or disinclination (love or hate, pleasure or displeasure). Similarly, judgments are characterized by the fact that the subject, when judging, adopts either a positive or a negative stance (either belief or disbelief) towards the object. By contrast, no corresponding opposition is observable in presentations (Brentano 2009: 17).

As said, judgments and affects belong to different classes of mental states. Brentano develops several arguments for distinguishing these two classes of mental acts, but one is crucial for the purposes of this paper (but cf. Brentano 1995a: 225 for other interesting arguments): Brentano argues that, given the presentation of an object, there is only *one* correct judgment that a subject can make about that object. This is a positive judgment if the presentation targets the object (expressible by a sentence of the form "the object *x* exists") and a negative one if the presentation is empty or misfires (expressible by a sentence of the form "the object *x* does not exist"). Put differently, judgments come either in a positive or in a negative quality and, given the presentation of an object *x*, only *one* of these two judgmental stances can be *correctly* adopted by the subject towards object *x*. Things are different in the case of affects: given the presentation of an object *x*, Brentano claims, the subject can adopt different affects, which can both be credited as correct with respect to that object *x*. For instance, suppose that you love a given object *x* and that, at some point, an object *y* presents itself to you as more valuable than object *x*. In this situation it seems legitimate to say that you *correctly* love *x*, but that you *also* correctly love *x less* than you love *y*.

However, this is not a faithful description of this mental scenario, Brentano contends, for "[it] would imply that for each instance of rejoicing only a certain amount of joy is appropriate." (Brentano 2009: 15) But loving *x* less than *y* does not necessitate that the subject is prevented from loving *x* with the greatest love possible. To put this differently, one can fully enjoy *x* and yet *prefer y* to *x*. Hence, a more accurate description is that loving *x less* than loving *y* just means *preferring* object *y* to object *x*

(cf. Brentano, 1954: 147). The mental state of "preference [*vorziehen*, *bevorzugen*]" is portrayed by Brentano as a *sui generis* affect that puts two (or more) objects into a relation: accordingly, when a subject prefers something to something else, she is directed not to one, but to two (or more) objects. Furthermore, since *y* is more valuable than *x*, the preference of *y* over *x* is *correct* (on the axiological relations that correlate to correct preferences, cf. Chisholm 1977). This leads to the idea that judgments and affects belong to two distinct kinds of mental states. They are different because a subject can adopt two *different* yet both *correct* affects towards one and the same object – but it is impossible for her to adopt two correct judgments, but with different qualities, towards one and the same object. In other words, one can love (or hate) things or persons more or less than others (depending on one's preferences), but one cannot judge things "more or less" than others.

Brentano's framework accommodates conations in his *third* class of mental states. One of the reasons for this classification is that the same observations made above with respect to the emotions of love and hate can also be made about desires (*Wünsche*, *Begehrungen*).[3] Most importantly, what conative experiences share with emotions is the fact that desires, just like emotions, can enter into a relation *with an act of preference* (1995a: 225). But how is the act of preference to be described within the conative dimension?

Suppose a hungry and thirsty donkey is located at an equal distance from a stack of hay and a pail of water. The donkey has two contrasting and opposite desires, but it is only if the donkey has a greater desire to, say, eat rather than to drink, that it won't starve. This scenario, according to Brentano, is analogous to the one described above with respect to emotions. It is analogous because, to survive, the donkey has to realize a specific act of *preference* to the effect that, ultimately, one of the two things is preferred to the other. When a preference occurs between contrasting desires, the subject has made what in ordinary language is called a "choice." However, since the concept of preference is not confined to conation, as we saw above, "preference" can be considered to be the more general concept, while "choosing [*wählen*]" is the more specific. There are two conditions that, if fulfilled, turn a preference into a choice.

The *first* is that choosing has to entail an act of "deciding [*Entscheiden*]." Decision, again, is not an act that is confined to the sphere of *action.* To illustrate this, Brentano shows that affects in general can enter into an exclusive or non-exclusive relation. For instance, one can have two affects of love, both of which are compatible with each other (non-exclusive), e.g., the love of mathematics and the love of poetry (cf.

[3] Another reason put forward is Brentano's "transition argument" – to use an expression employed by Michelle Montague (cf. Montague 2017); this argument relies upon a certain phenomenological continuity in the quality of affects which, according to Brentano, makes it impossible to neatly distinguish volitions from emotions (cf. Brentano 1995a: 184, but cf. Anscombe 1978 for a critical response to the transition argument).

Brentano 1954: 219). But, in certain cases, affects are in an exclusive relation to each other – e.g., the desire that the sun will be shining tomorrow is not compatible with the desire that it rains tomorrow. In the latter cases, the subject may be forced to *decide*. Now, not all decisions are volitions (the decision in favor of the desire that the sun will shine tomorrow is not a volition), and yet all volitions are decisions – to use Brentano's wording: "all willing is deciding" (cf. Brentano 1954: 219, my trans.).

But then, what characterizes volition or the phenomenon of willing in contradistinction to desires? What, in other words, is the *second* condition that transforms a preference into a choice? This has to do with certain *beliefs* of the subject: a decision is a volition if and only if the subject *believes* that the content of her desire can be realized through her actions. Once this element is in play, Brentano concludes:

> We can thus define the will as a decisional desire [*entscheidendes Wünschen*], which has as its object something, which can be brought about by ourselves and which is expected with conviction to be an effect of our desire. In other words, this is a desire, in whose favor we have decided and in whose realisability through our actions we believe (cf. Brentano 1954: 219, my trans., cf. also 1995a: 193, 2009: 102).

On the basis of this definition, it is just a small step to infer that "the willing is not a primitive [*elementares*] phenomenon" (cf. 1954: 219) – it is not, because it can be traced back to a desire standing in an appropriate relation to certain beliefs of the subject. More precisely, willing is always choosing in the sense that it is a decision between two or more desires and that this decision is based upon beliefs about the realizability of the desire's content. This reconstruction[4] credits the view that suitable aggregations of beliefs and desires are the horse that pulls the cart in Brentano's explanation of practical intentionality.[5] To put this differently, Brentano seems to embrace a BD model of intentional agency.

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[4] However, these are certainly not the only beliefs that seem to accompany willing – for instance, the donkey should also have a belief about the fact that eating decreases hunger. This might lead to an objection against the above reconstruction: given that, for Brentano, all mental states are conscious, if action has to be traced back to desires and beliefs, all the agent's beliefs involved in agency should be conscious. But this is highly implausible. To resist this objection, one could recur to Brentano's notion of "habitual dispositions": these are physiological entities, which – although existent – are not mental phenomena, because they are not conscious (cf. 1995a: 45). If this is correct, then an intentional action is one that is linked not to a belief-desire pair *sic et simpliciter*, but also to habitual dispositions. (This suggestion goes back to an exchange I had with Uriah Kriegel about these issues. I am thankful to Uriah for his essential contribution, though I am solely responsible for every possible mistake made here.)

[5] It should not go unmentioned that there is another way of reading Brentano on volition – one which does not emphasize the link between desire and the belief about the desire's

3. Early Phenomenologists on Motivation and Deliberation.

Brentano's considerations on volition initiate a series of investigations that directly connect to early phenomenology. One way to read early phenomenologists is by emphasizing an important distinction that remains underdetermined in Brentano' account – this is the distinction between motivation and deliberation. Whereas, for Brentano, intentional actions can be traced back to the will and the will to a suitable combination of desires and beliefs, early phenomenologists hold, *first*, that the will belongs to a specific kind of experience and, *second*, that the will itself has to be discerned from intentions. Within the phenomenon of agency, volitions are confined to the dimension of *motivation*, whereas intentions identify the dimension of *deliberation*.

This conceptual distinction is argued for in at least *four* conceptual steps. *First*, early phenomenologists contrast the attempt to characterize willing by starting with desire – they vindicate the phenomenological credentials of willing, and some of them attempt to define desire in terms of willing. *Second*, they locate willing at the level of *motivation*, which may or may not lead the subject to form a *decision* or an *intention*. *Third*, they accommodate intentions as acts of a primitive kind, disclosing the whole dimension of deliberation. And *fourth*, they define intentional action or action *tout court* (*Handlung*) in terms of an activity that is performed upon an intention.

In this Section, these argumentative steps are reconstructed and put in relation to those authors that have developed them most extensively. Steps one and two comprise the focus of the first subsection, while steps three and four comprise that of the second subsection. At this juncture it is important to note that it is not the aim of this paper to argue that early phenomenologists articulated a *unitary* theory of intentional agency. But instead of focusing on the divergences between their ideas, the leading thread of this chapter is that their insights are largely compatible with one another's and that, if suitably combined, they license an account of intentions and actions that shows systematic relevance.

3.1. Willing

As seen in the previous Section, Brentano claims that desires turn into volitions if (among other conditions) they are accompanied by certain beliefs regarding the

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realisability through the subject's actions. In fact, in some passages, Brentano equates willing with decision *tout court* rather than with choice, cf. "It should be noted that I can thus want or desire a thing without at all believing it to be something I can bring about myself. I can want or desire that the weather be good tomorrow, but I have no *choice* in the matter" Brentano 2009: 102, cf. also 2009: 77). This second, and more general, sense of 'willing' is at the core of Kriegel's reconstruction of Brentano's conative phenomenology, cf. Kriegel 2017, ch. 7.

possibility of realizing the contents of those very desires. Exactly the opposite view is adopted by Scheler. According to him, willing is the most fundamental conative experience such that it is the notion of desire that has to be defined through willing and not the other way around (cf. Scheler 1973: 124). Many of Scheler's insights about intentional agency will be developed further by other phenomenologists, but the core idea seems to be that willing is, first and foremost, a striving (*Streben*), the content of which is given to the subject as something *to be realized* ("*als ein zu realisierender*," 1973: 123 – the normative meaning conveyed by this formulation will be addressed in 3.2). Under this characterization, one could say that a child may genuinely *want* "that a star fall into his lap" (cf. Scheler 1973: 123). And this also explains why many human beings to this day can still think that the will can make it rain or make the sun shine or even why "an educated person feels something like 'guilt' if something which he had 'willed' to happen occurs accidentally, e.g. the death of a person" (Scheler 1973: 124).

Especially the two former cases show that individuals literally need to *learn* that, for any content of the will to be realized, the will has to be complemented by a further attitude, which Scheler labels "will-to-do [*Tunwollen*]". A will-to-do is a *specific* form of will in the sense that its *contents* are more specific – for the will-to-do is, indeed, the will *to do* something (whilst "will" *tout court*, as highlighted above, is not subject to that restriction). The difference in content between these experiences is tackled in 3.2, but a word is first needed on how Scheler's considerations hack back to the notion of desire. According to Scheler, the will-to-do closely correlates with a third experience – the experience of *being-able-to-do* (*Tunkönnen*); the two are closely tied because the will-to-do has to be accredited, as it were, by an experience of being-able-to-do. Without the first experience, the second cannot occur for it is only if one has a sense of being able to do something that one can want to do that.

Once these two mental states (the will-to-do and the being-able-to-do) are in place, in the sense that the subject at some point in her mental life has experienced them, desires can make their appearance on the mental scene. More precisely, a volition acquires a desire character (*Wunschcharakter*) for a subject, when she forms a will that lies beyond the sphere of the *being-able-to-do.* The notion of desire, in other words, does not pick out a genuine kind of mental state, but is just an experiential coloring that the will assumes once it becomes transparent to the subject that that state cannot be accompanied by a will-to-do (and this because it is not possible for the subject to be in a state of being-able-to-do about the content of that volition).[6] If considered from this perspective, even the desire "that something should happen

[6] It seems plausible to argue that Scheler's "desire character" is a phenomenal nuance that accompanies the volition and not a qualification that the subject assigns to her volition on the basis of *inferences* grounded in beliefs about what one can and cannot do. In fact, being-able-to-do is described by Scheler as an experience (*Erlebnis*) rather than as a *belief* or *knowledge* about one's agentive possibilities (cf. 1973: 129).

'through' me remains a 'desire' and does not become a 'will'" (Scheler 1973: 124, trans. mod., on this difference cf. also Mulligan 2012: 65). Similarly, "willing is not wishing; even a willing that, in certain circumstances, is futile, devious, impossible, is not a wishing for this very reason" (Löwenstein 1933: 167, my trans.[7]).

Forming a volition is not an event that occurs out of the blue in one's mind, as it were – this experience enters into important relations with other experiences. To see this, it might be important to first look into some of the general traits of the will, which especially Hildebrand's investigations contribute to laying bare. Hildebrand describes the will as a stance or position-taking (*Stellungnahme*) of the conative kind (cf. also Reiner 1927: 74).[8] There are two ideas that one can find packed in the single claim of willing being a stance. The first is that the will is the subject's *response* to a correlate and the second is that it requires a *founding* experience.

The will is a response in roughly the same sense in which emotional stances, like love, enthusiasm, blame, hate, disgust, etc., can be described as *responses*: in all these states, the subject does not passively represent an object or a state of affairs, but she rather adopts a given stance towards it. More precisely, she responds to what nowadays is called the correlate's "formal object" (cf. Kenny 2003: 134) – in Hildebrand's terminology: she responds to the mind-independent "values" of the correlate or to the mind-dependent preferences that she associates with that correlate.[9] Put differently, volitive and emotional stances enter into relations with formal objects: if one appreciates a work of art, one appreciates it because of, say, its beauty; and if one wants something, one is responding to the goodness of the correlate or to its importance for the subject.

On the one hand, the formal object specifies the criteria of adequacy for the stance *vis à vis* its correlate – the stance is adequate if it is elicited towards suitable values or preferences. On the other hand, however, the formal object is not in a position to

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[7] While insisting on the unbridgeable difference between wishing and willing, Löwenstein argues in favor of the idea that wishing is a primitive kind of mental state with its own distinctive phenomenology, cf. Löwenstein 1933: 177ff.

[8] Interestingly, while Brentano distinguishes between beliefs and affects, early phenomenologists tend to conceive of them as belonging to the same kind of mental state (beliefs, emotions and volitions are stances). This is mainly due to the fact that, unlike Brentano, they distinguish belief (or conviction) from assertion (*Behauptung*) within the notion of judgment. As illustrated in 3.2, just like intentions, assertions are mental acts that, indeed, cannot be described as stances, but rather as spontaneous *actions* of the subject.

[9] In contrast to Scheler's theory, Hildebrand's theory of volition radically distinguishes between cases in which the will responds to values and cases in which it responds to the subject's preferences (cf. Crosby 2002). Exploring this distinction, which bears importantly on ethical issues, would exceed the purposes of this paper. Yet, it should suffice to say that, just like values, preferences set adequacy criteria for stances. Put differently, subjects can be mistaken about their own preferences, cf. Reinach 1989b: 298.

exact a response on the side of the subject. To put the last point differently, it is possible for the subject to be aware of the correlate's formal object without eliciting a corresponding response. It is possible, e.g., for a subject to be aware of an artwork's value without this awareness' giving rise to an emotion of admiration. Or it is possible for a subject to be aware of the value of a certain action (e.g., to help someone in need) without this awareness leading the subject to a will to help (on this, cf. also Pfänder 1967: 28).

These considerations suggest that stances do not coincide with the apprehension of the correlate's formal object. And this leads to the *second* claim that early phenomenologists connect to the idea of willing as a stance: whenever a volition occurs, this stance is based on or founded by a further act, which is supposed to grasp the correlate's formal object (cf. Mulligan 2010). That is to say, volitional stances are in-need-of-being-founded, given that their existence is grounded in the existence of other states that provide access to the correlate's formal object. According to Hildebrand, the routes that lead a subject to form a volition are manifold: one can be acquainted with values directly by means of an experience of feeling (*Fühlen*, cf. also Scheler 253ff, Reinach 1989b: 295). Or one can cognize that a given action has a value, or one can know (in a non-intuitive way) of a given action that it has a certain value. All these states (feeling, cognizing a state of affairs, or non-intuitive knowledge) can ground volitions (in a morally significant way, cf. Salice 2015b).[10]

But if the will is not *exacted* by those underlying states, what is the relation between them? Phenomenologists argue that this is a relation of *motivation*. Willing, in other words, relies on motives – *not on causes* – as Pfänder claims (1967: 33f). More precisely, motivation requires the subject to be opened to the facts and objects in the world in the sense that, given the worldly circumstances that perceptions, feelings etc. present to the subject, she is confronted with the question "what shall I do?" (Pfänder 1967: 28, Reinach 1989b: 291, 298).

This question triggers a process of reflection on the side of the subject. In this process, the subject is attentive to the demands (*Forderungen*) that the world is raising. If, e.g., I enter a room and I feel cold in the room, the perceived chill can invite me to consider the question "what shall I do?" Obviously, this question does not need to be explicitly stated, but it induces the subject to "listen to [*hinhören*]" the demands that

[10] Note that the acts grasping values can miss their targets. When the act misfires, it presents the subject with what could be called a 'perfect impostor,' i.e., a phenomenal element that merely emulates a value or a preference. If the subject elicits a response in this case, then this has to be the correct response with respect to the impostor. In other words, what is at fault here is primarily the act that presented the alleged formal object to the stance, while the stance itself is only indirectly at fault. Hildebrand formulates this point as follows: "concerning the phenomenal value which is *given* to me, the value-response [*Wertantwort*], if any, can only be the correct one" (Hildebrand 1969: 40, my trans.).

the situation is raising. In Pfänder's example, such listening can put the subject in a position to "perceive" or, more literally, "hear [*vernehmen*]" the demand to leave the room. However, hearing the demand and acknowledging [*anerkennen*] its validity does not yet mean that one is moved to leave the room (just as perceiving the value of helping someone in need does not yet comprise the will to help him or her). It is only if the subject wants to leave the room *on the ground of* (*auf Grund*) – or *by relying on* (*sich stützend auf*) – the demand that her decision is *motivated* by the demand (on the motivational process of listening/hearing/relying to, cf. Pfänder 1967: 28f, and also Reinach 1989b: 290-303).

3.2. Practical Intentions

At this stage, a further distinction has to be drawn. Volitions, it has been said, are motivated by other states, but they can also motivate. They are motivating because they motivate actions – *via* intentions. Just as one and the same volition can be triggered by different acts, so can one and the same decision be motivated by different volitions. For instance, I can decide to go to the pub because I want to meet a friend, or because I want to have a pint, or because I am in a low mood and want to partake in the pub's jolly atmosphere, etc.

But then, what are intentions – in contradistinction to volitions? Terminologically, early phenomenologists employ the juridical term *Vorsatz*, but also the more colloquial *Entschluss* (and sometimes the technical terms *Willensakt*, *Willensentschluss, Willensvorsatz*, etc.), to name these states.[11] Both terms could be translated as "resolution" or "decision" and are used in combination with the reflexive verbs *sich entschließen*, *sich vornehmen* (literally, "to decide," viz. "to resolve" to do something – though the reflexivity of the verbs gets lost in the English translation). Conceptually, there are at least five different, and yet not unconnected, aspects that seem to univocally qualify intentions: (i) intentions are mental actions of the subject; (ii) they are acts of self-determination; (iii) they generate commitments; (iv) their contents come with an instrumental structure built in (they are *projects*); and (v) they secure a unique, first-personal, perspective towards the action itself.[12] With that, it is now time to turn to the level of deliberation.

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[11] Interestingly, the more straightforward German equivalent of "intention," i.e., *Absicht*, is not used frequently by early phenomenologists. An exception is Scheler, who employs this term to refer to the will-to-do: "A will 'to do something specific,' however, is called an 'intention [*Absicht*]'" (1973: 137). Yet, intention *in this* sense, according to Scheler, is not the same as a decision or resolution (*Vorsatz*), cf. 1973: 124, 138. It is the latter notion, not the former, that I use as co-extensive with "intention" in this paper.

[12] To this list, one could also add that, whereas willing comes in a polar form ("she wants to tango, he doesn't," to use Mulligan's example), intentions do not, cf. Stein 1970: 311, Mulligan 2013: 108.

The first element is that intentions have to be described as mental acts – understood in the sense of mental *actions*: "a doing of the self [*ein Tun des Ichs*] and thereby a spontaneous act" (Reinach 2012: 18). They are actions because the subject is active in a specific sense – she is the "phenomenal originator [*phänomenaler Urheber*]" of the act (Reinach 2012: 18). To see this, consider the difference between having a belief that *p* and asserting *p*. Assertion, though grounded in the belief that *p*, is a linguistic action that is spontaneously performed by the subject; it exists at a given *point* in time, and does not have a temporal extension. By contrast, beliefs do not seem to be under the control of a subject and show a dispositional nature – they can last for years and do not need to be linguistically articulated (cf. Reinach 1989a). Similar considerations hold for the distinction between willing and intention. The willing assumes a dispositional form ("I *always* wanted to visit Copenhagen, but I never found the time"), but it can also ground a decision ("I *now* decide: I will fly to Copenhagen next month"), in which case we face a spontaneous and punctual action of a subject (Hildebrand 1969: 36, Pfänder 1963: 134, Reinach 2012: 18f[13]).

But what sort of action is that? Phenomenologists tend to portray it as a case of self-determination (cf. Pfänder 1967: 23, Heller 1932: 254f): among other things, making a decision also means determining oneself to do something – in other words, the very self is at stake in intentions to the effect that "immediate self-consciousness" always belongs to these acts (cf. Pfänder 1967: 23).[14] Characterizing intentions as self-determining acts has two important consequences – the first is that the content of the decision has to range over actions of the self. After all, self-determination is determination of one's conduct, and I cannot decide on things that are not under my control. The second is that the perspective that a subject has towards her actions is unique and comes with a unique phenomenology. Let us approach these consequences step by step.

In the case of willing, the content of the experience – to put this in Scheler's parlance – is just something *to be realized*. No reference needs to be made to the agent in the content of willing. By contrast, intentions can only be intentions of their subjects *to do something*, meaning that the subject has to be adequately involved in the process of bringing about the state of affairs that satisfies the intention. This implies that the

[13] While holding that intentions are actions and, hence, aligning them with forgiving, praising, blaming, asserting, questioning, commanding, etc. (which are not stances), Reinach also maintains, somehow ambiguously, that making a resolution (*Vorsatzfassen*) is a stance, cf. 1913: 294.

[14] This is an idea that is captured by the reflexivity of the corresponding German verbs pointed out above, but which is not mapped onto the locution "I intend to φ." In this sentence, the infinitive clause hides the fact that it is I who am supposed to be the subject of φing. One way to make this transparent is by reformulating the dependent clause as a that-clause: "I intend *that* I φ." Despite the awkwardness of this construction, cf. Williamson (forthcoming) for arguments in favor of the equivalence between these two formulations.

content of willing differs from the content of an intention, for the latter content, not the former, must include a reference to the agent.

But once this conceptual result is achieved, one is allowed to take a further step: we have seen that, according to Scheler, the content of willing is framed as something that *is to be brought about*. Such a normative perspective is inherited by the intention, as it were. It is because I want a given state of affairs to exist or obtain, that I decide to do something to bring about that state of affairs – just like the content of willing, so is the content of the intention also framed as something that shall be brought about. But given that the intention's content is about an action of the agent, the normative perspective adopted by the subject in intending to do something now puts *the very subject of this intention* under a commitment to realize the action. This is nicely formulated by Hildebrand:

> An ought-relation [*Soll-Beziehung*] with the realization is already given in willing. *But only the intention* [*das Vorsetzen*] makes this relation committal [*festlegen*], insofar as it assigns a determined form to this relation. If the stance [i.e., the willing, A.S.] applies only to the state of affairs, then the resolution [*das Sichvornehmen*] is already directed towards the realization of the state of affairs (1969: 34, my trans and emphasis, cf. also Reiner 1927: 71).

Accordingly, the sentence "I intend to φ" can be interpreted in two different senses. According to the *first* interpretation, this sentence is nothing else than an instance of a theoretical proposition of the form "there is an *x* such that this *x* intends to φ," where *x* refers to the utterer. But according to the *second* interpretation, which in Pfänder's[15] view is the correct one (cf. 1967: 21f), that sentence does *not* express a theoretical proposition, but rather an *intent* – a logical meaning of an altogether different kind. The proposition does not posit a state of affairs: it *proposes* it (the function at stake is not one of *Setzung*, but *Vorsetzung*). And, indeed, it is the latter proposition (not the former) that is semantically equivalent with the proposition "φ should be done" (cf. Pfänder 1982: 310 – and given all what was said above, one could perhaps add: "φ should be done – *by me*").

However, what is it that the agent commits herself to, when she makes a decision? Certainly, this is a given action of the subject, but early phenomenologists further specify this: they claim that the correlate of an intention is a *project* (*Projekt*, cf. Pfänder 1967: 22, Hildebrand 1969: 43, Reinach 1989b: 291) – and, in doing so, they signal that this correlate comes with an instrumental structure, even if such a structure may be articulated only *in nuce*. Put another way, the agent commits herself to bringing about a given state of affairs by means of a given strategy – a strategy that

[15] To be more precise, Pfänder's example is "I will φ"; however, this sentence is taken to express a *Vorsatz*, hence, a resolution or an intention. The interpretation of *Vorsatz* developed in this paper would license the reformulation of Pfänder's sentence into "I intend to φ."

involves means and ends and that, therefore, is subject to the norms of instrumental rationality. Indeed, the process of settling on means and reflecting upon the best strategy towards a goal is one that has its own phenomenology, as Reinach highlights. He calls the epistemic agency that a subject engages in when she has to determine "how" to reach the goal an "intellectual-practical reflection" (1912/13: 304). This form of reflection is not purely practical because it is not concerned with the ultimate goal of an action (this being the object of a merely *practical* reflection, like the one outlined at the end of 3.1). But this is also not purely intellectual because it aims at solving a problem, which is immediately related to an action and to the identification of the best strategy to achieve a goal.

A *second* consequence of introducing intentions into the architecture of intentional agency is assigning the agent a privileged perspective towards her action. The decision being made, the agent starts engaging in the actual action the moment a further experience is formed – this is the experience of *realization* or *performance* (Reinach 1912/13: 305f, Scheler 1973: 121f), which can be further characterized either as a doing or as an omitting (Hildebrand 1969: 64).[16] Such an experience is always relative to and dependent on an intention – for realization is the realization *of* the content of an intention. But this means that certain bodily movements are conceived of by an agent as a genuine action only when these movements are experienced as the realization of an intention. This fact bestows the agent with unique epistemic authority: actions are always actions from an agent's perspective, for only the agent can access her action from within, as it were.

To employ Anscombe's expression, the agent is granted non-observational knowledge about her actions, since it is her intention, and her intention alone, that determines whether certain movements or activities are experiences of realization (of that very intention) or not. This gives the agent the last word about her actions, as it were. Certainly, third parties might be in a better position to describe the bodily movements and the consequences of an action. However, bodily movements and consequences taken *per se* are *not* actions for they do not display the correct mind-dependence or, perhaps more precisely, the correct *intention*-dependence. That is why the very notion of an intentional action (*Handlung*) is restricted to those activities of a subject that are experienced as realizing or fulfilling an *intention* (cf. Hildebrand 1969: 65ff).

4. Conclusion

[16] In addition, Hildebrand postulates a further act, an 'triggering act' (*Inangriffnahme*), which is supposed to initiate the realization proper (cf. Hildebrand 1969: 36f). Reiner criticizes this idea by arguing that the triggering act is nothing else than the phenomenally salient initial part of the realization (cf. Reiner 1927: 76ff). I am thankful to Christopher Erhard who drew my attention to Reiner's criticism of Hildebrand.

Phenomenological investigations into practical intentionality are diverse, rich and articulated, but they all rest upon two basic pillars. First, actions are motivated by volitions – volitions are complex attitudes: they are stances, which rely on a yet different stratum of experiences. Second, volitions support deliberation. The deliberative moment of action is exemplified by intentions, which play an essential role in agency. Deliberation is essential because it puts the agent and her actions under the yoke of practical rationality and grounds a unique form of practical knowledge.

Two general conclusions can be drawn. The first is that, from the very beginning, practical intentionality represented a core interest for phenomenology. Most crucially, phenomenology secured a series of insights into intentional agency that developed out of a sophisticated theory of intentionality – now in the sense of *aboutness*. But all this becomes especially visible once the focus on such historical considerations is enlarged and early phenomenologists and their works are paid the careful consideration they deserve.[17]

The second and perhaps more important conclusion one could draw from this reconstruction, is that, when it comes to the topic of intentionality in general and to that of practical intentionality more specifically, one is well advised to develop theories that are conducive to and in accordance with phenomenological descriptions – and not, or at least not primarily, folk psychology. A look at early phenomenology not only highlights all the striking convergences between the phenomenological account of practical intentionality and the current BDI model, but it can also pave the way to systematic investigations in which the wealth and fruitfulness of phenomenological distinctions and descriptions are brought to bear on the issue.

Acknowledgements

A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the Workshops "Phenomenology in Action" (Munich, 10-12 February 2016) and "Intentionality and Normativity" (Dublin, 19-20 February 2016) where I received much appreciated feedback. I also wish to express my gratitude to Christopher Erhard, Uriah Kriegel, Kevin Mulligan and Genki Uemura, who read and commented on previous drafts of this paper.

Bibliography

[17] Early phenomenologists appear to have influenced further reflection on these topics within the broader phenomenological movement. For instance, Stein's notion of motives (roughly corresponding to Pfänder's concept, cf. Stein 1970: 53f) is explicitly endorsed by Merleau-Ponty (cf. 2002: 36) and his ideas on practical intentionality resonates with Scheler's views (cf. 2002: 508). Also, the importance of Pfänder's reflection on volition has been explicitly recognized by Ricoeur (cf. Ricoeur 1982). However, the full extent of this influence remains to be ascertained.

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