



Husserl's Other Phenomenology of Feelings: Approval, Value, and Correctness

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Abstract

This essay is motivated by the contention that an incomplete picture of Edmund Husserl's philosophy of feelings persists. While his standard account of feelings, as it is presented in his major works, has been extensively studied, there is another branch of his theory of feelings, which has received little attention. This other branch is Husserl's rigorous and distinct investigations of the feeling of approval. Simply stated, the goal of this essay is to outline the evolution of this secondary branch of Husserl's philosophy of feelings from 1896 to 1911. I highlight how Husserl's examinations of approval – as an intention that performs both an axiological and a seemingly cognitive function – lead him to extraordinary observations about the execution of feelings and the truth of judgments.

Keywords Axiology · Affection · Studies concerning the structures of consciousness · Emotion · Value theory · Brentano

1 Introduction

Edmund Husserl's standard theory of feelings, as it is presented in his *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory* (Husserl, 1988)¹ is perhaps the most discussed element of his thought today. Husserl there claims that feelings are grounded in cognitive objectifying intentions (Husserl, 1988, pp. 260–262, pp. 328–344. See Husserl, 1984,

¹ While all translations are mine, I provide references to the corresponding English translations where available, following a slash after the German pagination. Quotes from the *Logical Investigations* always come from the First Edition.

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pp. 515–518/1970, pp. 168–169; Melle 1990, pp. 41–44; Rinofner-Kreidl 2013, pp. 64–68, 2015, pp. 90–93). He further asserts that cognitive intentions reveal the truth of the situation and he concludes that feeling acts refer to values. That is, I “see” or become conscious of the value of the object through my axiological and affective experience of it (Husserl, 1988, pp. 252–257, pp. 260–262. Crowell 2005, pp. 109–112; Drummond 2009, pp. 365–370, 2018, pp. 138–139; Jardine 2020, pp. 55–57). For this reason, Husserl famously describes feelings by analogizing them to perceptions. *Wahrnehmen* (truth-taking, perception) reveals the true features of the object in a similar way to how a *Wertnehmen* (value-taking, feeling) uncovers the value.

At the same time, Husserl naturally affirms that truth and value are not the same. On the one hand, values are not originally objectified, as the true objects of cognitive acts are (Rinofner-Kreidl 2013, pp. 70–71; Wei & Xin 2009, pp. 135–137). On the other hand, even when objectified, value and truth represent two distinct realms of being, which do not cross over into each other (Husserl, 1988, p. 277, p. 284. See Hua III-1, pp. 267–268/1984, p. 282; Melle 2012, p. 76; Rinofner-Kreidl 2013, p. 73; Byrne, 2021, 2023). Objectified values represent one realm of being, with their own (axiological) logic. And existent true objects comprise another realm with their own distinct (intellectual) logic (Husserl, 1988, pp. 130–136, p. 221. See Drummond 2018, pp. 139–141; Hart 1990, pp. 206–209). This is not to deny that truth is valuable. Husserl clearly recognizes that theoretical reason also has practical value. For example, in the *Prolegomena*, Husserl discusses how normative disciplines are grounded in theoretical disciplines (Husserl, 1975, pp. 59–62/1970, pp. 38–39. See Haddock 2000; Philipse, 1989, pp. 64–66; Byrne, 2020; Byrne & Williams, 2022). Rather, it is to deny the idea that truth is truth, because it is something that is valuable.

In contrast to this standard account of feelings, there is also what can be called another branch of Husserl’s theory of feelings, which has been largely ignored. This is his study of the feeling of approval. Husserl focused much of his work on approval not only to engage with Brentano’s theory of correct emotions (see note seven below), but also because he recognized that approval seems to partially perform a peculiar cognitive function. As approval – as Husserl describes it – has the role of ascribing correctness, it appears that it is related to truth and thus has some cognitive component. Husserl even goes so far as to question, “What kind of act is an ‘approval’? Is it an ‘act of understanding’ or an emotional act?” (Husserl, 2020, p. 315).

A goal of this other branch of Husserl’s philosophy of feelings is thus to account for the affective and quasi-cognitive components of approval. More specifically, he sought to describe how the *feeling* of approval can justifiably ascribe (seemingly *cognitive*) *correctness* to its referent.² Husserl, however, found that this task was more difficult than it may have initially appeared. His attempts to understand the experi-

² As a study of intentionality, Husserl’s analysis of an approving intention is accordingly also a study of its referent, the first-level experience as *being correct*. That is, Husserl also seeks to uncover how to understand the quasi-cognitive and quasi-axiological nature of the correctness of the first-level experience. While Husserl’s definition of correctness will thus be drawn out through this study of his phenomenological analyses, I can state – here at the start – that Husserl *initially* understands correctness as distinct from truth, because the former is not a purely intellectual achievement like the latter (see sections two and three). As is well known, the early Husserl states that truth can be realized where an intellectual categorial intuition fulfills an intellectual cognitive categorial act (See Byrne 2019, 2022).

ence of approval were consistently frustrated. As Husserl was never content with the conclusions of his investigations, he frequently returned to the topic of approval throughout the late 1890s and 1900s.

Husserl's numerous extensive discussions of approval cannot however be found in any of his major works, but only in manuscripts from his *Nachlass*. Because most of these manuscripts were only published in 2020, in the new Husserliana volume, *Studies concerning the Structures of Consciousness* (for example, Husserl, 2020, pp. 261–269, pp. 270–275, pp. 276–286, pp. 293–296, pp. 313–319), his conclusions were previously not accessible to a general audience and have consequently remained mostly uncharted. As such, there are, to my knowledge, no published works that are solely dedicated to this other branch. I accordingly contend that a somewhat incomplete picture of Husserl's philosophy of feelings persists.

To resolve this lack, this essay investigates Husserl's first and last (Melle, 2012, p. 63, p. 70) examinations of approval, with the goal of providing a skeletal overview of his thought on this topic. Specifically, Husserl's first text on approval, which he composed in 1896 or 1897, is entitled, "Approval, Value, and Evidence" ("*Billigung, Wert, und Evidenz*": Husserl, 2020, pp. 261–268. Hereafter, BWE). Husserl's final essay on approval is his 1911, "Approval as a Secondary Feeling, which is Directed at Correctness. The Double Sense of Approval and Valuation" ("*Billigung als sekundäres Gefühl auf Richtigkeit gehend. Doppelsinn des Billigens und Wertens*": Husserl, 2020, pp. 313–319). By juxtaposing these two works, I will outline – in broad strokes – the evolution of this secondary branch of Husserl's philosophy of feelings, where this will allow for a more complete picture of his whole theory of feelings to emerge. I must emphasize that the presentation of this alternative branch does not contravene, but rather augments extant interpretations of Husserl's standard theory of feelings. This essay is simply an exegetical exploration of this additional branch of Husserl's analysis of feelings, which developed with (and in partial distinction from) his traditional investigations.

To accomplish these goals, this essay is divided into four further sections. In section two and three, I examine Husserl's early insights from BWE. Specifically, I look at his discussion of how approvals are justified in different ways, depending upon what is approved. In section two, I examine the justification of the approval of another feeling act. And in section three, I look at the justification of the approval of a judging intention. To be emphasized is that, during the latter analysis, Husserl presents a different picture of consciousness than his standard account. He asserts, in that work, that a judging intention is recognized as correct and *true*, when it is evidently *approved* as valuable. Given what has been learned about Husserl from the publication of his *Nachlass* over the last 100 years – as I discuss in detail below – this idea stands out as an anomaly. Indeed, this observation goes against tenets of Husserl's theory of feelings and more so, his general philosophy of truth. Despite this divergence from Husserl's *oeuvre* – to my knowledge – no attention has been given to this insight.³ In section four, I cash out my technical analysis to show how Husserl – in

³ The only secondary literature that deals with BWE in any detail is Ullrich Melle's 2012 chapter. While Melle certainly does present piercing insights, he only addresses BWE on two pages and does not touch upon Husserl's conclusions that I discuss in this essay (Melle, 2012, pp. 63–64).

his 1911 manuscript – worked against, disregarded, and developed different parts of his early theory to compose his new account of approval. I also gesture at the fact that this 1911 description of approval is compatible with Husserl’s standard philosophy of feelings; in the end, in both his primary and secondary studies of feelings, Husserl correctly separates value and truth (see note twelve below). Altogether, the examinations of sections two to four disclose a sketch of the evolution of this secondary branch of Husserl’s philosophy of feelings. I conclude in section five by discussing two limitations of my analysis.

Before commencing this study, however, it is critical to introduce one elementary tenet of Husserl’s theory of intentionality, which serves as a central pillar of his analysis of approval: There is a difference between, on the one hand, experiencing or living through an intention and, on the other hand, intending or objectifying an intention. When I experience an act, I live through that act. The act is not the object of my consciousness. I am only pre-reflectively aware of that act and not explicitly intending it. In experiencing the object I am at once pre-reflectively self-aware of my experiencing the object, but the latter awareness, while directed to the experiencing, is not (necessarily) an instance of (reflective) object-awareness. In contrast, I do not have to, but am free to execute another additional act, which intends the ‘first’⁴ intention itself. This second act is a reflective act. I objectify that first intention and am then aware of the first intention as my object.

2 Justified Approval of Feelings

From the start of BWE, Husserl recognizes that approval is a special kind of feeling. He classifies approval and disapproval not only as the feelings of positive and negative valuation, but also as the ascriptions of correctness and incorrectness (Husserl 2020, p. 261). Equally important is that he describes approval and disapproval as “secondary” feelings. As secondary feelings, they stand in contrast to primary feelings, such as liking (*Gefallen*) and disliking (*Missfallen*). Concerning the latter, for example, I can execute the primary act of liking, where I like the flower that I perceive before me. I live through this primary liking. When living through this feeling, I may experience my liking as evident. Yet, I do not yet intend the liking, nor do I intend it as evident or as correct. If, however, I then execute a secondary feeling of approval, that approval does intend the primary liking intention (and not the primarily liked flower). Husserl writes that approval, “goes to the primary feeling: the approval of pleasure, of joy, of hope, of fear, of wishing, etc.” (Husserl 2020, p. 262. Compare Brentano 1874, pp. 159–170/2009, pp. 93–99). When I execute this approval, I am no longer just *experiencing* the primary liking as evident. Instead, I am now also *intending* the primary liking and I may be *intending* it as evident and *as correct*. This approving – it must be emphasized – is no categorial act, as if I were here,

⁴ When discussing acts in a complex whole, I will often employ the terms “first” and “second” or – in line with Husserl – “primary” and “secondary”. The reader should note that this terminology does not refer to the chronological order of intentions. Instead, it is descriptive of the transcendental structures of consciousness.

via a judgment, ascribing the predicate ‘correctness’ to the ‘liking act’, as subject. Rather, I am simply intending the liking act as evident and correct via a *single-rayed* approving act.

The reader should note that approval is not directed to the primary liking intention as it is straightforwardly executed. Rather, according to Husserl, for a liking act to be approved, it must first be reflectively objectified. Via a reflecting cognitive objectifying intention, I first intend the primary liking act as an object. It is this objectified primary feeling that I intend and approve as correct and evident (and not the lived through act simpliciter). Husserl writes that, the approval always “refers to an objectively presented [intention]” (Husserl 2020, p. 262). Husserl further asserts that the secondary feeling of approval may not only be directed at my objectified primary feeling, but also at another’s primary feeling that I have objectified, or at a primary feeling that I objectify via an imagining act. When I approve a primary pleasure, “This can – but doesn’t have to be – actual pleasure; I can present pleasure in the obscene and then disapprove it, without actually feeling this pleasure” (Husserl 2020, p. 262).

After these introductory comments comparing approval to liking, Husserl focuses on describing how the approval of a primary feeling can be evident and justified.⁵ That is, he seeks to determine how I justifiably positively value and ascribe correctness to an objectified (reflectively intended) primary feeling. Husserl’s resolution to this dilemma is relatively straightforward. He claims that the objectified primary feeling can have a characteristic, which not only motivates, but can also help justify the approval. This is to say that the approval is justified on *objective* grounds. The *objectified* primary feeling has a trait that motivates me to approve it and further, this characteristic – when pointed out – reveals why the approval is justified and evident (Compare Brentano 1922, p. 23/2009, p. 20. See Chisholm 1966).

Husserl, however, does not think that just any characteristic of the objective – that is, of the objectified primary feeling – can motivate and properly justify an approval. Rather, only certain traits are able to do so. Husserl initially lists several characteristics, which can motivate and justify an approval, such as the moral, the good, and the noble. Yet, he particularly focuses his analysis on the trait of nobility. He writes, “The noble pleasure, the noble hope, a moral (*sittlicher*) will have in their ‘nobility’ a peculiar characteristic, because of which they are approved as valuable. If I experience the noble itself, then it is necessarily valued” (Husserl 2020, p. 263).⁶ In sum then, a primary feeling is justifiably approved when it possesses a characteristic that is *objectively* valuable, such as being moral, good, or noble.

⁵ For clarity, throughout this essay, I elucidate Husserl’s observations by normally using the example of approval, instead of both approval and disapproval. This is in line with Husserl’s own analysis, as he too most often discusses just approval, rather than examining both experiences. Naturally, all of Husserl’s insights about approval can be easily translated into the negative register to account for disapproval.

⁶ Approval receives its full justification, Husserl claims in 1896/97, when an evident approval ‘fulfills’ a non-evident approval. He writes that there is an “authentic and fulfilling approval [that is] opposed to a vague feeling, which arises, for instance, in the ‘thought’ of the noble and is sometimes directed this way, at other times in another way” (Husserl 2020, p. 263).

3 Justified Approval of Judgments

While Husserl continues to analyze approval in the second half of BWE, he no longer examines the approval of a primary feeling, but rather the approval of a primary judging intention. To begin this analysis, Husserl asserts that an approval of a judging intention is also an experience composed of several acts. I may execute a primary judging intention, a reflection on it, and finally a feeling of approval. First, I can live through a primary intention of judging that can be experienced as evident or as non-evident. If the judging intention is lived-through as evident and fulfilling, then it (may be) revealing the truth; It (may) reveal the true state of affairs of the world. This judging intention can then be reflected upon via an objectifying act, where it is also intended as true. Finally, this judgment, which has been reflected upon and objectified as true, can be intended as correct via an approving act. Husserl writes: “We distinguish: The execution of a judgment and the approval or disapproval of the Judgment” (Husserl 2020, p. 264). An evident approval non-categorially refers to an objectified primary judging act as correct.

After this general introduction, Husserl – in the same way that he previously sought to discover what motivates and justifies the evident approval of a feeling – now investigates the motivation and justification of an evident approval of a judging act. He seeks to answer, what is it about an approval of a judgment, that makes that approval justified? Stated objectively, he is inquiring, what is it about a judging act, that makes it valuable? When attempting to respond to these questions, Husserl discusses an initial potential solution, which he ultimately deems unsatisfactory. He is thus inspired to outline a second account, which is philosophically interesting.

Husserl’s first theory is similar to his account of the justification of the approval of a primary feeling. Husserl claims that, for both, the justification occurs on objective grounds; the approving act is justified because of something about the objectified and approved primary judgment or feeling. In both cases, there is something about the objectified approved act (the reflected upon feeling intention or judging intention), which justifies the approving intention. While he asserts that the nobility of the objectified feeling act motivates and justifies its approval, Husserl initially believes that *the evidence* (what he understands as objective evidence, that is, the evidence of the object) of the judging intention is that which motivates and justifies my approval of that judging act. I justifiably approve of a judging intention, when that objectified judging intention is experienced with (objective) evidence. A judging intention earns my approval – it is valuable – when the judgment is evident, that is, when it is experienced as having the characteristics of clarity and insight. Husserl thus writes: “A judgment appears with the character of inner clarity, with the character of insight. And it is this, which underlies our approval ... A judgment is to be approved, because it is evident” (Husserl 2020, pp. 264–265).

Yet, in the 1896/97 manuscript, Husserl (mistakenly) comes to believe that there is an all-encompassing problem with this first account. This dilemma arises from his equivocal uses of the term ‘evidence’ here. In a comment later added by Husserl, he remarks that if the term ‘evidence’ is correctly fixed, an accurate philosophy of justified approval can be constructed. He writes: “However, these difficulties resolve themselves, when one refers to evidence as a subjective expression, for what

we objectively call truth” (Husserl 2020, p. 265). On the one hand, Husserl – when developing this first account – correctly uses the term evidence to discuss the subjective experience of evidence. He describes evidence as subjectively lived-through evidence. On the other hand – and here arises the problem – Husserl additionally and imprecisely uses the term evidence to refer to something objective. He describes evidence as the ‘evidence’ of the *objectified* primary act. As Husserl claims in the above cited quote, this is incorrect, because this should rather be termed objective truth and not evidence.

Because Husserl does not – here in 1896/97 – properly distinguish subjective evidence from objective ‘evidence’, his first theory, that the (objective) evidence justifies the approval of a judgment, appears to be contradicted by his novel insight: a judgment, which lacks (subjective) evidence, can be rightly approved. For example, I rightly approve of my judgment of Newton’s second law, “ $F=ma$ ”, even though I currently do not judge that law with (subjective) evidence – that is, I do not intuitively experience (categorially intuit) the relevant state of affairs (Husserl 2020, p. 265). Because I can justly value a judging intention, which I do not currently experience as (subjectively) evident, Husserl rejects his first account, that only (objectively) evident judgments can be approved. He states that the evidence of the judging act itself cannot be that which justifies my positive valuation of the judging intention. To reiterate: Because I can justly approve of judging acts without (subjective) evidence, Husserl believes that it cannot be the (seemingly subjective or objective) evidence of the judging act that motivates and justifies my approval of it. He writes that the thesis: “A judgment is true ... regardless if the judge experiences the evidence” is a conclusion, “which one truly should not adopt” (Husserl 2020, p. 266).

Having rejected this first theory, Husserl formulates his alternative second account.

This second account is different from Husserl’s first theory in two ways. I address these distinctions individually.

First, Husserl shifts how he understands the justification of approval simpliciter. According to Husserl’s first theory of justification, approval is justified on objective grounds; approval is correct, because of something about the judgment, namely, its (objective) evidence. In this second theory, Husserl instead makes a Brentanian turn to describe the approval as being justified on subjective grounds. Simply stated, he asserts that the approving act of a judging intention is right and justified when it (the approving intention itself) is experienced as evident. My (subjective) experience of the evidence of the approving act is that which reveals that self-same approving act (the approval of the judging intention as correct) to be justified. I experience my approval of the judging act as justified, by (subjectively) experiencing it as evident (Husserl 2020, pp. 265–267).⁷ Husserl writes: “It is simplest, when we exclusively

⁷ This second theory seems to be at least partially inspired by Franz Brentano’s insights concerning the correctness of an emotion. To explain this in an elementary manner; at certain points in his career, Brentano believes that an emotion (or a judgment) can be recognized as correct *not* because it accurately corresponds to some object. Brentano instead places priority on the experience itself; An emotion is correct when it is experienced as correct (Brentano 1922, p. 22–24/2009, p. 15–16). Wilhelm Baumgartner and Lynn Pasquerella elucidate this point well by writing, “With the standard for beauty and goodness becoming the evident judge, there is no property inhering in these objects which causes the emotion and in virtue of which our acts of love or hatred become correct or incorrect. The concepts of the good and

locate the evidence in the approval. A judgment is true, when it is valuable. We have the experience of [the correctness of the judgment], during the evident approval” (Husserl 2020, p. 265).⁸

Husserl’s second change works from, but is more radical than his first revision. Specifically, he reverses the direction of justification. He now states that something about the approving intention also justifies the objectified (reflected upon) judging act. To restate this reordering more explicitly: While Husserl – when developing his first theory – thought that the intentional act is justified on objective grounds, he now – in this second account – asserts that the intended object is justified on subjective grounds. Specifically, he believes that it is the (subjectively experienced) evidence of the approving intention, which justifies the judgment.

While perhaps not initially evident, this conclusion is a denial of some of the core tenets of Husserl’s standard philosophy of feelings and cognition. Simply stated, Husserl’s radical idea here is that the approval (the ascription of correctness) is the ascription of truth. The approval is the intending of the judgment as true – and Husserl now appears to be taking correctness and truth as equivalent terms (Husserl 2020, pp. 265–267). *While I may have previously experienced (lived through) my judging intention as true, it is through the evident approval that I first intend this (objectified, reflected upon) judging act as true.* For example, Husserl writes: “We present the judgment objectively, and an actually distinct act of approval, which refers to [the judgment], attaches to [the judgment]. It has a particular character and it endows the judgment with a corresponding relative character, namely, that of evident truth” (Husserl 2020, p. 267).⁹

Husserl is thus claiming here in BWE, that the evident approval *is* that which reveals the judging intention to be true. I do not value a judging act, because it is evident or true. Instead, my positive valuation is what explicitly shows the judging intention to be true. The approval is, as Husserl writes, that which “endows” the judging act with the character of truth (Husserl 2020, p. 267). For Husserl, this means that, “The evident approval is that, which we call inner clarity, insight, etc.” (Husserl

the beautiful can be derived from emotions experienced as correct” (Baumgartner & Pasquerella 2004, p. 229). And at another point, they write that for Brentano, “When a good desire, love, or will is ‘correctly characterized’ it becomes evident that its intention is worthy of desire, love, or will” (Baumgartner & Pasquerella 2004, p. 227. See, Chisholm 1966, 1982, p. 50–51). Husserl’s second theory of the justified approval of a judgment appears to directly draw from Brentano’s ideas. Husserl claims that there is no property of the judgment, which justifies my approval of it. Rather, the justification for the approval is to be found in the experience of the feeling – the approval – itself. The feeling of approval is correct when it is experienced as correct. To be further noted is that Husserl’s study of approval is engaged with Brentano’s theory of emotions. As I cannot discuss the complex and significant influence that Brentano had on the development of this secondary branch of feelings, I refer the reader to Chisholm 1966; Geniusas 2014, p. 9–13; Rollinger 1999, p. 40–43.

⁸ For this and the following quotes, I provide the original German text in the footnotes. Here, Husserl writes: “*Am einfachsten ist also die Sache, wenn wir die Evidenz in die Billigung ausschließlich verlegen. Ein Urteil ist wahr, wenn es billigenswert ist. Die Erfahrung davon machen wir in der evidenten Billigung*“.

⁹ “*Wir stellen dann das Urteil objektiv gegenüber, und daran knüpft sich ein wohl geschiedener und aufes bezogener Akt der Billigung, der einen eigentümlichen Charakter hat und dem Urteil selbst den entsprechend relativen Charakter verleiht, eben den der evidenten Wahrheit*“.

2020, p. 266).¹⁰ The evident valuation itself *is* my clarity or insight into the truth of the judgment. When one combines these observations with Husserl's previously discussed conclusion – that an approval is justified on the basis of the evidence of that approval – it becomes lucid that the ascription of truth is not justified, because the primary intention possesses some characteristic (as Husserl previously claimed was the case for feelings). Rather this approval (of the judging act as correct and true) is justified via the experience of the approval itself, namely, via the experience of its evidence.

The important result of these observations is that the ascription of truth is not a cognitive achievement. Rather, the ascription of truth is an evaluation. The endowment of truth is an achievement of my affective and axiological life. To maintain this conclusion, Husserl must and does claim that the concept of truth is arrived at on the basis of the feeling of approval and not on the basis of the judgment. Husserl writes, "How can we recognize this value? The reflection on the approval is not enough. We must also grasp the evidence of the approval as a particular character of the approval" (Husserl 2020, p. 263). The ramification of these conclusions is that, when I state that a judgment is true, I am stating that it is valuable. As quoted, Husserl believes that, "A judgment is true, when it is valuable" (Husserl 2020, p. 265). Judgments about truth or falsity *are* thus value judgments (Husserl 2020, p. 267). Accordingly, the predicates of correct or truthful – as moments of value judgments – are not properly speaking simply cognitive predicates, but rather "intellectual value-predicates" (*intellektuelle Wertprädikate*, Husserl 2020, p. 268).

4 Mature Philosophy

Husserl was naturally not content with his early account of approval, because he subsequently saw that his 1896/97 observations incorrectly mixed truth and value. As such, Husserl returned – again and again – to revise his theory, with the hope of properly clarifying these experiences. Over the next fifteen years, he continued to struggle with reconciling the affective and seemingly cognitive elements of approval. As such, if this essay only examined Husserl's early philosophy of approval, it would be unsuitably limited. It is also prudent – here in the penultimate section – to explore his mature descriptions of approval, so that a more complete picture of his theory can emerge. By investigating Husserl's first and last works on approval, this essay presents a skeletal outline of (the evolution of) the secondary branch of Husserl's philosophy of feelings. Specifically, I will here briefly address Husserl's final writing on this topic (Melle, 2012, p. 70), the 1911 "Approval as a Secondary Feeling, which is directed at Correctness. The Double Sense of Approval and Valuation" (Husserl 2020, pp. 313–319. Hereafter BSG). I demonstrate that, although BWE still informs Husserl's mature understanding of the problem, his resolution to the dilemma of approval avoids many of the mistakes of the 1896/97 manuscript. My investigation will show how Husserl amended and rejected distinct parts of his previous theory to compose his mature philosophy of approval.

¹⁰ "Diese evidente Billigung ist das, was wir innere Klarheit, Einsicht und dgl. nennen".

BWE and BSG can be easily compared, because they have the same general structure. Husserl begins both texts with an introductory discussion of the distinctions between approval and liking, before then examining how the approval of a feeling and the approval of a judgment are justified. The structural similarity between the two works intimates that there are traces of BWE present in BSG; Husserl still sets up the dilemma of approval in the same way as he had in 1896/97, despite now proposing a different answer to that difficulty.

As in BWE, Husserl starts his 1911 analysis by affirming that approval is distinct from liking. He writes, “Is approval not a liking? ... Yet, I can have a liking, while I do not have an approval. Approval presupposes liking” (Husserl 2020, pp. 313–314).¹¹ Further, he again affirms that approval is a secondary feeling in contrast to liking, which is a primary feeling. He writes: “Approval is related to liking; disapproval is related to disliking, however, it is a *secondary* feeling, it is directed at the primary act and initially to the feeling, to the emotional-activity” (Husserl 2020, p. 314). Husserl nuances his discussion of approval as a secondary feeling in a new way in 1911, when he emphasizes that my secondary approval concerns not just the primary act, but rather the primary act *as* directed at its own primary object. While this point may have been assumed in the earlier manuscript, Husserl’s new explicit comments give rise to a clearer, if not more accurate presentation. He writes, “I accordingly approve the act, so far as it is directed to the object” (Husserl 2020, p. 314). And on the same page, he states, “I approve of a pleasure, as a pleasure on O, I approve of a joy as a joy on A, I approve of a wish as a wish about A” (Husserl 2020, p. 314). Finally, Husserl claims that when I approve of an act – *as* directed to its object – I am valuing that intention. Approval is a holding-as-valuable (*Für-Wert-Halten*. Husserl 2020, p. 316).

After this introduction, Husserl executes his more technical examination of the justification of approval. Rather than – as he did in BWE – first examine justified approvals of feelings, Husserl now first investigates the justified approvals of judgments.

The important change that Husserl makes to his theory of the justified approval of judgments involves his understanding of the number of acts involved in these experiences. While he stated, in BWE, that I can directly approve of an objectified judgment, he claims, in BSG, that another intention must mediate between the two. First, there is the simple judging act, which is related to the judged state of affairs. There is then another – a second – judging act, which intends the first objectified judging act and intends it *as truthful*. Finally, there is the approving act, which positively values the judgment, because it is truthful. Husserl describes these three acts in the following passage:

- 1) The judgment as a simple judgment, as an intending (*Meinen*), as a conviction: S is P!

¹¹ Husserl is not entirely consistent regarding these descriptive definitions. At a later point in the text, without any further clarification, he simply writes that “[a]pproval is an emotional act, and really a *liking* of the correctness of the act” (Husserl 2020, p. 315. Emphasis in the original).

- 2) The secondary judgment, the authentic holding-as-true, holding-as-correct: The judgment: “S is P” is correct
- 3) To this, the acknowledgment (*Anerkennen*), the approval of the judgment (or the disapproval), namely, the acknowledgment on the basis of the correctness of the judgment, that is, the acknowledgment or approval of the judgment as a correct [judgment]. (Husserl 2020, p. 316)

Critically, on this mature account, it is a second judgment – a second cognitive act – through which I intend the first judgment as truthful. I judge that the first judgment categorially intends the world in the way that it actually is. The intending of the first judgment as true is thus a cognitive achievement. This means that the approval is *not* the act that is responsible for my realization of (my intending of) the first judgment as true. The recognition of truth is not accomplished through the affective and axiological experience of approval. Rather, the act of approval is now described by the mature Husserl as a taking of the judgment as valuable, *because* it is judged to be true. If I have executed a second judgment – that the first judgment is truthful – I can intend the first judging act as something of value, because it is true – via my third act of approval. Husserl writes, “A judgment has value for me (there is always the possibility of error), when it aligns with the things themselves ... or what is the same, when it is correct” (Husserl 2020, p. 317). Further, Husserl states that an approval is evident and (in a wider sense of the term) fulfilled, when the first judging act is evident. He writes, “It is clear: If the judgment is evident, then the approval is a ‘fulfilled’ approval. It is an approval that is in its own way, evident” (Husserl 2020, p. 315).

These observations clearly segregate truth, which is ascribed by the second judgment, from value, which is intended via the third act of approval. While these two were at times collapsed into each other in BWE, Husserl now correctly writes that, “We thus have to distinguish: The truth, the correctness of the judgment, as its own property, and the value, of that true judgment, which it possesses by virtue of that property” (Husserl 2020, p. 317).¹² This further means that the concept of truth is arrived at via a categorial forming grounded in the second judging act, and not via a reflection on the approving act, as was claimed in BWE. The concept of value is, in contrast, arrived at via acts executed on the basis of the approval: The (objectified) approved object can be categorially formed to judge and speak about value.

Husserl applies these insights to account for the justified approval of both feeling acts – wishes, hopes, fears – and doxically modalized intentions – questionings, supposings, probablizings. Regardless of which kind of intention he studies, Husserl arrives at the same general insight: I can approve of an act, *because* I have judged it to be correct. This conclusion however introduces another – new – problem. The dilemma does not concern the approval itself, but rather my second act of judging, that is, my judging of the primary intention as correct. The novel problem here is: On what basis can I *judge* that a doxically modalized act or a feeling intention is correct?

¹² Because Husserl here correctly distinguishes between value and truth, his overall theory of approval from BSG does not contravene his standard account of feelings as (non-)objectifying intentions. In other words, in 1911, the primary and secondary branches of Husserl’s phenomenology of feelings – while remaining distinct – are not directly at odds.

What would it mean for me to judge that either of these intentions are correct (Compare 1984, pp. 740–750/1970, p. 327–334)?

Husserl presents his answer to these questions in a rather pithy manner. Concerning doxically modalized acts, he simply writes that “[t]he question is correct, when that, what is questioned – the questioned in the ontological sense (the being-questionable) – obtains; the supposition is correct, when that, what is supposed – the probable – obtains. And we can refer to that with a judgment” (Husserl 2020, p. 318). Husserl is here affirming that I can – for example – judge a question to be correct, when it is the case that this fact, which I am questioning, is actually in question. If I know that a certain state of affairs obtains (or does not obtain), then my questioning of it would be ‘incorrect’. He writes, “The knowledge, that M is, excludes the question, if M is, the doubt that M is, and it excludes the supposing that M is” (Husserl 2020, p. 318). While this account of the correctness of doxically modalized intentions has complications, Husserl still presses forward. He affirms that once I have judged the doxically modified act to be correct, I can – just as is the case with primary judging acts – approve of my primary doxically modified intention (importantly, compare 1988, pp. 72–73, p. 221).

Finally, Husserl briefly investigates how a primary feeling – such as a wish – can be judged as correct and then approved. He straightforwardly describes the three acts of this whole experience, by writing, “I judge the wish is justified. I judge: That S be P is desirable, and I approve the wish in the second sense, I attach value to such wishing, to right wishing” (Husserl 2020, p. 319). He then addresses the relevant difficulty; namely, how can a wish feeling intention be judged as correct? Husserl concludes that I can judge my feeling intention as correct or incorrect if that latter act is ‘fulfilled’. By intending and inspecting the fulfilled feeling act and its given object in a certain way, I can judge the feeling act to be correct. He describes this process by writing: “Via ‘consideration’, that is, through following the motivations of the valuation and its fulfillment, the correctness [of the wish] comes to actual givenness. And the judgment orients itself towards this presence” (Husserl 2020, pp. 318–319). Once the wish is judged as correct, it can, as other acts, be approved as valuable (Husserl 2020, pp. 287–292, pp. 395–405. See Hua III-1, p. 272/1983, p. 282; Melle 2012, p. 99).

5 Conclusion

This discussion of Husserl’s first and last text on approval suffices to provide a skeletal outline of the other branch of his theory of feelings. On the one hand, in his early work, Husserl was led to conclude that the recognition of truth is the affective and axiological achievement of approval. This observation is an anomaly, which has no parallel anywhere else in Husserl’s *Nachlass* and certainly deserves even further study. On the other hand, in his mature manuscripts, Husserl corrected his previous theory, by rightly separating truth and value. He observed that judgments are responsible for ascribing truth, whereas approvals ascribe a kind of value.

To avoid misinterpretation, I conclude this essay by highlighting two of its limitations. First, because this text has focused on the evolution of Husserl’s theory, I have

been unable to address recent phenomenological analyses of the intending of a feeling act as correct. For example, in the last ten years, Geniusas (2020), Roberta De Monticelli (2021), and Rinofner-Kreidl (2014) have all presented piercing observations about this phenomenon. At the same time, I believe that a comparison of Husserl and Drummond's works can prove most fruitful. On the one hand, Drummond's theory directly parallels Husserl's account, because he also claims that the correctness of our feelings can be determined by approval or disapproval – which he synonymously terms approbation and disapprobation. For example, Drummond writes, “Feelings of self-disapprobation and related emotional conditions such as embarrassment, shame, and guilt disclose the fact that the underlying emotional condition is unwarranted and inappropriate; feelings of approbation and related emotional conditions such as pride, on the other hand, disclose the fact that our underlying condition is warranted” (Drummond 2004, p. 123). On the other hand, Drummond is more in agreement with Brentano, when he asserts that these feelings of approbation and disapprobation are non-thematic and pre-reflective (Brentano 1874, pp. 159–170/2009, pp. 93–99). Drummond states that, via the disapprobation I can “recognize the inappropriateness of the emotion” (Drummond 2004, p. 123). These feelings are an aspect of the subject's experience of the object, rather than a separate intention. While I unfortunately cannot further engage with Drummond's observations here, future research will be dedicated to demonstrating how Husserl and Drummond can augment each other (and indeed, how Drummond's theory may be – at times – more accurate).

Second, as this essay only outlines the alternative branch of Husserl's theory of feelings, it has not touched upon the relationship between the two branches. This essay does not even attempt to challenge current interpretations of Husserl's standard philosophy of feelings, but instead to augment them via this exegetical presentation of the new research materials. Indeed, any investigation that attempted to compare these two branches and to uncover possible relationships between them would be the task of a much larger and more technical project. It was rather the more modest goal of this paper to call attention to this overlooked branch of his theory, in an attempt to suggest that a more complete picture of Husserl's philosophy of feelings is possible.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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