Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Kultura i Wartości
ISSN 2299-7806
Nr 34 (2022)

http://dx.doi.org/10.17951/kw.2022.34.27-52

Approbation and Disapprobation in Husserl's Phenomenology: Navigating Value Conflicts through Justified Evaluations*

Alessandro Guardascione
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1617-561X

The analysis of the acts of approval (*Billigung*) represents one of Husserl's first attempts to describe value estimation or appreciation (*Wertschätzung*). As some authors show (Melle, 2020; 2012; Ramírez, 2018; Montagová, 2012), the acts of approval play a prominent role in our experience because through them we are primarily confronted with the justification of our emotional and volitive acts. Yet, despite their importance, these acts seem to play no further role in Husserl's later reflections on the evaluative experience. By relying on the recent publication of the manuscripts included in the *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins*, I offer a reconstruction of the Husserlian account of approval, situated between the emotional-volitive acts (*Gemütsakte*) and the intellective acts (*Verstandesakte*). In particular, I explore what problems Husserl faces in conceiving approval as a "secondary feeling" (*sekundäres Gefühl*) related to liking (*Gefallen*). I also propose that by examining the validity of our intentional acts, approbation and disapprobation not only reveal our evaluative position-takings but also constitute the affective ground upon which we can take sides in value conflicts. Indeed, by

ALESSANDRO GUARDASCIONE, Irish Research Council Scholar, Ph.D. student at University College of Dublin (UCD); address for correspondence: School of Philosophy, Fifth Floor, 510D, Newman Building, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland; e-mail: alessandro.guardascione @ucdconnect.ie.

* Acknowledgement: The research conducted in this publication was funded by the Irish Research Council under grant number "GOIPG/2021/606".

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

becoming aware of our evaluations we can endorse or reject emotions, desires, and wishes, and their related values on the basis of whether we take them right or wrong, justified, or unjustified.

Keywords: approval and disapproval, evaluative experience, justification, Husserl, value conflicts

Introduction

Value conflicts are those situations in which different individuals or groups hold incompatible values or beliefs. They may manifest through affective phenomena like contrasting emotions or feelings, understood as disagreements about what is deemed valuable. In this regard, protests, marches, sit-ins, and demonstrations, as manifestations of discontent, are generally expressions of people's disapprobation of local and foreign governmental policies or divisive leaders. For instance, as spectators of world events in democratic regimes, we disapprove of the incarceration of innocent victims of totalitarian regimes. Disapprobation may even develop into a feeling of indignation for suffering and oppression. Conversely, jubilance and celebration may welcome the election of a beloved political party, the end of a repressive era, or even the joy of a sports competition. It is worth noting that in all these cases, approbation and disapprobation are not necessarily the product of rational decision-making. Still, these feelings may constitute a contributing factor in determining one's stance in a conflict of value. Indeed, by genuinely endorsing a particular evaluative position, our personal conviction must be sustained by a constant sense of approval, even if it is subject to change.

Values come into opposition with one another on different levels and contexts. In fact, value conflicts can also occur at an individual level and are often expressed in tribulation that may result in personal revisions. Any conflict of value necessarily calls for taking sides for one position or another. In this regard, approbation and disapprobation represent two intentional acts with a specific phenomenology that describe those peculiar moments in which we are confronted with the justification of our position-takings. As I will show later in this article, the experiences of approbation and disapprobation are originally effective in the sense that they primarily consist of emotional stances over other emotions or intentional states in general. Consequently, these feelings can be revelatory of our

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

present value commitments because they ultimately signal what is significant to us or what we care about. By carefully paying attention to these affective experiences, it is possible to assess the validity or correctness of one's emotions, wishes, and willful acts. In particular, while the feeling of approval may result in a positive appreciation of a will or a desire, disapprobation, on the other hand, takes the form of a negative valuation (*Abschätzung*).

In this paper, by relying on the recent publication of the manuscripts included in the *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins*, I present and discuss Husserl's analyses of the acts of approval and disapproval (*Billigung und Misbilligung*). Broadly, these acts represent one of Husserl's first attempts to describe value estimation or appreciation (*Wertschätzen*).

In the first section, I trace the origins of Husserl's interest in the acts of approval by examining the influence of Brentano and Hume on his early ethics. Briefly, following Brentano's critique of Hume's sentimentalism, Husserl intended to save the idea of objective correctness of moral judgments by developing an a priori theory of moral sentiments. Therefore, Husserl's interest in the acts of approbation and disapprobation was dictated by Hume's insight according to which, ultimately, moral judgments originate in these moral sentiments, which are, in turn, feelings of pleasure or displeasure through which we assess persons' character traits and actions.

In the second section, by analyzing some texts found in the second volume of the *Studien*, I identify several issues that Husserl encountered in his initial axiological thoughts, which likely led him to abandon the concept of approval in his later speculation. I discuss why Husserl considers approval and disapproval both emotional (*Gemütsakte*) and intellective acts (*Verstandesakte*). In particular, what constitutes the "object" of these acts, and what are the conditions of their correctness? Are approbation and disapprobation merely idiosyncratic expressions of personal sympathy and interests? What problems does Husserl face by conceiving approval as a "secondary feeling" (*sekundäres Gefühl)* related to liking (*Gefallen*)?

Finally, in the last part of this paper, I explore in what sense these acts can raise awareness of our value commitments and support our positioning in everyday conflicts of values. The discovery or recognition of our evaluative position-takings can be provoked or favored, for instance, by those experiences in which we feel the urge to take a side, even if these result in intimate experiences of inner

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

clarification. In this regard, the approbation or disapprobation of our emotions and desires may contribute to making thematic our taken-for-granted value commitments so that we can ask for the reasons for their correctness. Therefore, I claim that these acts may contribute to self-understanding because they fulfill the function of a sort of emotional *logon didonai* of our intentional life.[1] Indeed, as Husserl argues, approbation and disapprobation altogether with reflective judgments constitute the condition of the possibility of self-evaluation (*Selbstbeurteilung*), and consequently prepare the development of our morality (*Moralität*) through self-determination (*Selbstbestimmung*) and self-education (*Selbsterziehung*).[2]

1. Situating the Analyses of Approbation and Disapprobation in Husserl's Early Ethics

The recent publication of the manuscripts composing the *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins* offers the opportunity to discover Husserl's reflections on often overlooked phenomena. The supplementary texts collected under the title "Wert und Billigung" are among Husserl's first attempts to describe the complex nature of value-experience (*Werterfahrung*) since they include

[1] The Greek expression "logon didonai", often found in Plato's dialogues and commonly translated as "giving (a) reason" broadly means "accounting for one's belief." Cf. Flavia G. Gioia, "A propósito de *didónai logon* en algunos primeros dialogos de Platón," *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofia* 36, no. 2 (2010): 135–161. Arguably, approbation and disapprobation are feelings through which we are called to respond to the justi-fication of our intentional acts, such as evaluations or emotions. On the contrary, the expression "logon didonai" is traditionally associated with a propositional kind of knowledge, if we consider, for instance, the centrality of dialogues in Plato's dialectic method exemplified by Socrates' maieutic. Yet, it can be argued that since approbation and disapprobation constitute a modality of verification of the correctness of our (emotional and volitive) position-takings, by analogy they may be considered as an affective form of "logon didonai."

[2] Edmund Husserl, *Einleitung in die Ethik: Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1920/1924*, ed. Henning Peucker (Berlin: Springer, 2012), 161–162; cf. also 156–162, 165–166, 169–171. From now on "Hua XXXVII".

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

manuscripts dated probably 1896/97.[3] In that period, as *Privatdozent* at the University of Halle, Husserl delivered the *Vorlesung über Ethik und Rechtsphilosophie* of which only a few fragments are available. In these lectures, Husserl denounces the widespread ethical skepticism and the rise of materialism and relativism. Against the general decline (*arge Verflachung*) of the public debate on ethics and the reduction of the latter to jurisprudence, he argues for an objectivist idea of ethics that does not turn into mere moralizing.[4] As Melle notes, there is a striking resemblance between Brentano's lectures on practical philosophy and Husserl's early lectures on ethics and value theory.[5]

Like Brentano,[6] Husserl adopts an Aristotelian conception of ethics whose objective is the highest purpose of life (*die hochsten Lebenszwecke*) and the means associated with its attainment.[7] Ethics is conceived as a theoretical and practical discipline (*Kunstlehre*) that sets as objective an account of the "ultimate sources of all ethical regulation" (*die letzten Quellen aller ethischen Regelung*).[8] In

[3] Edmund Husserl, *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins. Teilband II: Gefühl und Wert. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1896-1925)*, eds. Ulrich Melle, Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht: Springer, 2020), f261. From now on "Hua XLIII/2".

[4] Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen Über Ethik und Wertlehre (1908–1914)*, ed. Ulrich Melle (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), 381–382. From now on "Hua XXVIII".

[5] Ibidem, XX. Between 1884/1885 and 1886, Husserl attended Brentano's lecture courses on practical phi-losophy in Vienna. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, eds. Thomas Nenon, Hans Rainer Sepp (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 304–305. From now on "Hua XXVII". For a broader overview of Brentano's influence on Husserl's pre-war ethical thought see: Nicolas De Warren, "Husserl and Phenomenological Ethics," in: *The Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Sacha Golob, Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 562–576, DOI: 10.1017/9781139519267.044; Cf. also: Michael Gubser, "An Image of a Higher World: Ethical Renewal in Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl," *Santalka: Filologija, Edukologija* 17, no. 3 (2009): 39–49, DOI: 10.3846/1822-430X.2009.17.3.39-49; Ulrich Melle, "The Develop-ment of Husserl's Ethics," *Études Phénoménologiques* 7, no. 13 (1991): 115–135; Ulrich Melle, "Edmund Husserl: From Reason to Love," in: *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, eds. John J. Drummond, Lester Embree (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), 229–248, DOI: 10.1007/978-94-015-9924-5_12

[6] Ibidem, 3–7.

[7] Hua XXVIII, 384. See John J. Drummond, "Aristotelianism and Phenomenology," in: *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, 15–45, DOI: 10.1007/978-94-015-9924-5_2

[8] Hua XXVIII, 383–384.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Husserl, we find Brentano's ambition to develop a systematic account of ethical principles that are universally valid and, at the same time, grant a central role to feelings. Similarly, to Brentano, Husserl searches for a reconciliation between the truth of the *Gefühlsmoral*, which grants a foundational role to the acts of the heart (*Gemütstatigkeiten*),[9] and the rationalist conviction shared by "the moralists of reason" (*Verstandesmoralisten*). In particular, the conviction of the objective validity (*objektive Geltung*) of ethical norms based on a kind of lawfulness (*Gesetzmässigkeit*) binding for any rational being.[10]

Indeed, it is not by coincidence that Husserl's critique of Hume and Kant in the lecture course *Grundfragen der Ethik* of the summer semester of 1902 resembles that of Brentano in the *Grundlegung*.[11] On the one side, unlike ethical intellectualists, such as R. Cudworth (1617–1688) and H. More (1614–1687) from the so-called "Cambridge School," Husserl shares with Brentano and Hume the idea that the knowledge of ethical principles cannot be grounded only in the cognitions of a priori axioms of morality but necessarily demand the participation of feelings.[12] On the other side, following Brentano, Husserl rejects the sentimentalist view, represented by Shaftesbury (1671–1713), J. Butler (1692–1752), F. Hutcheson (1694–1746), and above all by Hume, who would consider moral laws merely as "summary inductions" (*zusammenfassende Induktionen*) based on a general comparison of human feelings, desires, and wills.[13] Briefly, the problem

[9] Ibidem, 390.

[10] Ibidem, 385.

[11] Regarding Husserl's understanding and critique of Hume's theoretical philosophy and the influence of the Austrian's gloss over the English philosopher see Hynek Janoušek, Dan Zahavi, "Husserl on Hume," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2020): 615–635, DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2019.1678457. Analyzing the difference between Brentano's and Husserl's critique of Hume is complex, and it is beyond the intention of this paper. However, they both share a similar evaluation of Hume's philosophy, maintaining that the shortcomings in Hume's psychological analyses led him to posit that reason is merely a "precondition" for ethical distinctions, as it is ultimately our feelings that make the final judgment.

[12] The idea that axiology is grounded in feelings already is already present in his *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* where he develops a classification of mental phenomena. See Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, ed. Linda L. McAlister, transl. Antos C. Rancurello, Dailey B. Terrell, Linda L. McAlister (London: Routledge, 2009), 150–155, 185–190.

[13] Hua XXVIII, 393.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

with a morality based on feelings is that, as Brentano also argues, feelings cannot turn into principles nor be the object of any dispute.[14] In this sense, they cannot offer that source of "validity conformed to laws" (*gesetz-mässige Geltung*) upon which grounding our moral knowledge.[15]

Against this background, as M. Crespo notes,[16] the central problem for Husserl was finding whether a morality based on feelings would have necessarily implied the renunciation of the absolute validity of moral norms. In this context, Husserl's interest in the feelings of approbation and disapprobation can be understood by looking at his critique of Hume, who was considered the modern representative of the *Gefühlsmoral*. Hume offers a psychological and causal explanation for the origin of moral principles and judgments. For him, our moral judgments and evaluations derive from our feelings of approbation and disapprobation. As he writes, any "approbation of moral qualities" stems from our "moral taste" or "depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species."[17] Specifically, in Hume's theory of passion, approbation and disapprobation derive from "certain sentiments of pleasure or disgust, which arise upon the contemplation and view of particular qualities or characters."[18]

Still, it is worth noting that, for Hume, the feeling of approval and disapproval are not driven by our situational interests but arise from "the general survey."[19] As a matter of fact, Hume defines virtue as what "gives pleasure by the

---

[14] Franz Brentano, *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*, ed. Roderick M. Chisholm, transl. Roderick M. Chisholm, Elizabeth H. Schneewind (London: Routledge, 2009), 13, 27–28.

[15] Hua XXVIII, 417.

[16] Cf. Mariano Crespo, "Toward an A Priori Gefühlsmoral: Husserl's Critique of Hume's Theory of Moral Sentiments," in: *Perception, Affectivity, and Volition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, eds. Roberto Walton, Shi-geru Taguchi, Roberto Rubio (Dordrecht: Springer, 2017), 111. Cf. also Hua XXVIII, 390.

[17] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, eds. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 173.

[18] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, eds. Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 871.

[19] Hume, *A Treatise*, 499. It should be noted that, despite the foundational role Hume assigns to pleasure and pain, he is not a hedonist because our moral sense always lies in a "general view" that it is not reducible to mere interests.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

mere survey,"[20] or, in other words, what gives to "a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation," while vice is defined as its exact contrary.[21] However, a morality so conceived does not grant to moral intuitions (*moralische Intuitionen*) any absolute value.[22] Indeed, from Husserl's perspective, Hume's concept of morality would restrict the validity of moral judgments to inductive truths that are dependent on the beliefs and sentiments of the "general point of view," and, as Brentano points out, it would make moral judgments "depend entirely upon the particular structure of the human species."[23] In this respect, for Husserl, the analysis of approval and disapproval offers the occasion to address the issue of whether there is an inherent principle of lawfulness within our affective life, which may serve as a basis for a morality whose principles aspire to have universal validity.

In particular, Husserl defends the idea that there are a priori laws of morality that would be grounded on the conceptual essence of the acts of the heart (*Gemüt*), *just like* there are purely logical laws grounded in the conceptual essence of acts of thought.[24] In Husserl's view, the lawfulness of ethical principles would not derive from an intellectually formal lawfulness[25] nor from the formal categories of value but from the forms of feeling and will. As such, the validity of ethical principles would be independent of any accidental content, that is to say, from the content of individual feelings.[26] In light of this, contrary to Hume,

[20] Ibidem, 591.

[21] Hume, *An Enquiry*, 289.

[22] Hua XXVIII, 387.

[23] Ibidem, 28.

[24] Hua XXVIII, 393. Husserl accuses Hume of having confused the bindingness of an a priori law with the bindingness of natural law or psychological constraint. The existence of moral law, like an a priori logical law would not stop us to behave immorally or think illogically. Yet, they stand as truth-maker conditions of our moral and logical judgments.

[25] Husserl also makes the example of types of laws, like "there is no tone without intensity," that are not "formal" or "analytical" since do not concern an "empty notion of Something or Object" (Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations. Volume 2*, ed. Dermot Moran, transl. John N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 2001), 19). These "material" laws relate essentially to a specific domain of existence, in this case, "sound." The idea of *material a priori laws* is used again in his critique of Kant, see, Hua XXVIII, 405.

[26] In this sense, Husserl criticizes Hume for having excluded the possibility of basing morality on purely formal moral judgments, which include purely formal laws of value and refer to the difference between real and hypothetical values. For instance, "it is unreasonable to want

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Husserl differentiates the problem of the origin of moral concepts from the question of the epistemological character of moral principles.

It is in this vein that Husserl objects to Hume of underestimating the distinction between "It is approved" (*Es wird gebilligt*) and "it is worth approving" (*Es ist billigenswert*),[27] and, consequently, the "correctness in evaluations" (*Richtigkeit bei Wertungen*).[28] Actually, the approval of an emotion based on feelings alone does not guarantee its moral correctness, despite being widely accepted as valid by common sense.[29] It is not sufficient for a moral judgment to simply align with the "general point of view" in order to be considered correct. For instance, the mere fact that actions such as murder or closing ports to prevent immigration are widely accepted by common sense does not necessarily make them morally correct. Thus, for Husserl, as for Brentano, our feelings of approbation or disapprobation must find their justification on a more solid foundation. Given these considerations, it is evident that the question of how to justify one's feelings of approval and disapproval is the *primary* concern addressed by Husserl in several manuscripts of the *Studien*.

In the following section, I show that Husserl's critique of Hume reverberates in his intention to develop a detailed description of our acts of approval and disapproval that is not limited to sympathy nor to feelings as ultimate principles for explaining moral judgments but includes an account of the *correctness* of these acts. In this regard, Husserl's account of approval departs from Hume's intuition while sharing similar intentions, in particular, describing fundamental acts of our ethical consciousness. Still, as I also show, it is this systematic aspiration that leads Husserl to replace the analysis of the acts of approval and disapproval with an investigation of our affective consciousness in general. Arguably, Husserl found more fundamental and pressing questions in his broader description of value-experience. In view of this, I claim that Husserl's painstaking redefinition of the fundamental structures of consciousness may explain why the analysis of the acts of approval and disapproval was replaced by deeper analyses concerning the relationship between our evaluative and affective consciousness.

---

the end and not to want any of the means which alone could realize it," or "if the existence of A is a value, its non-existence is a non-value.", Hua XXVIII, 397–398.

[27] Ibidem, 397.

[28] Ibidem.

[29] Ibidem, 401.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

2. Toward a Phenomenology of Approbation and Disapprobation

Husserl's first reflections on the acts of approval and disapproval probably date back to his lecture course on ethics and philosophy of right, even if several texts were revised around 1907/8 and 1909/10.[30] Similarly to Hume, Husserl believes that our moral judgments are expressed through everyday acts of approbation and disapprobation. And yet, Husserl's examination of the acts of approval is motivated by the conviction that, following Brentano, there are formal requirements for attaining what he defines as "truly valuable" (*wahrhaft wertvoll*).[31] As Melle notes, Husserl's writings on approval were motivated by a discussion of Brentano's ideas about the evidence of the heart (*Gemütsevidenz*), as well as by his idea that the good and the true have their source in the inner intuition (*innerer Anschauung*) of the acts of the heart and judgment characterized as correct.[32] Husserl's main intention is to understand how our approbations and disapprobations are correct and that can aspire to have universal validity. In this context, Husserl's analysis of the acts of approval and disapproval is developed in confrontation with that of the acts of judgment, whose theory Husserl was developing in the *Logical Investigations*.

Briefly, Husserl generally conceives approbation and disapprobation as "secondary feelings," i.e., feelings directed toward other emotional acts.[33] In the case of approval, we experience something like a liking (*Gefallen*) or to be glad (*Sich-Freuen*), while in the case of disapproval, a disliking (*Missfallen*),

[30] Hua XLIII/2, 261–319.

[31] Hua XLIII/2, 263.

[32] See, Melle, "Husserls deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse," 62–75.

[33] In a text probably dated 1911, Husserl considers approbation as "a liking that is directed toward an emotional behaviour as object" (*Gemütsverhalten*), ibidem, 314. Melle names them as "feelings of reflection" (*Reflexionsgefühle*) (Melle, "Husserls deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse," 63), while Summa, Klein, and Schmidt also talk of approbation and disapprobation as "indirect emotions," capturing the idea that "The inten-tionality of approval has a double character to the extent that it involves a stance—which is not itself cognitive but emotional—regarding one's own emotions, and thus also encompasses the intentional structure of the original direct emotions." (Michela Summa, Martin Klein, Philipp Schmidt, "Introduction: Double Intentionality," *Topoi* 41, no. 1 (2022): 105, DOI: 10.1007/s11245-021-09786-7

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

unpleasure (*Unlust*), or unhappiness (*Unfreude*).[34] Through approbation or disapprobation, we attach the predicates "good," "right," "worthy," or "bad," "wrong," and "unworthy," to a judgment, an emotion, or a desire:

> I approve of a joy: You, rejoice in it, this is right. It is gratifying that the German people received such a great and noble personality in Kaiser Wilhelm. That not only means that you are happy about it, but also that you have a "ground" (*Grund*) to be happy about it. It's a legitimate joy (*berechtigte Freude*). It lies therein an approval of the joy.[35]

Since these acts do not only refer to the emotional sphere but also to the sphere of judgment, Husserl often wonders in the texts whether approval is an act of intellect (*Verstandesakt*) or an emotional act (*Gemütsakt*) and, consequently, distinguishes the correctness of judgment (*Urteilsrichtigkeit*) from the correctness of the hearth (*Gemütsrichtigkeit*). In other texts, he clarifies that these types of approbation entail two different acts. On the one side, approbation consists of an objectifying act, directed to the content of the judgment that establishes whether it is *true*. On the other side, we find an evaluating approving, directed to the content of the emotion (*Gemütsinhalte*) as *good*. Indeed, as Husserl argues, we not only approve of correct judgment, but we also "value correct emotional behaviour […] This approving is liking over being right, being correct."[36]

As I have shown, Husserl's main attention in the texts collected in the *Studien* is related to the epistemological problem of understanding on what grounds we can distinguish evident from non-evident approbation and disapprobation. In this respect, it is worth noting that Husserl links subjective value to non-evident approval and objective value to evident approval ccordingly:[37] "An evident

[34] See, Hua XLIII/2, 262. Husserl also talks of disapprobation as "contempt" (*Verachtung*).

[35] The following passages are translated. The original text is provided in the footnotes. "Ich billige eine Freude: Du, freue dich daran, das ist recht. Es ist erfreulich, dass dem deutschen Volk in Kaiser Wilhelm eine so große und edle Persönlichkeit beschieden wurde. Das heißt nicht nur, man freut sich daran, sondern auch, man hat „Grund", sich daran zu freuen. Es ist eine berechtigte Freude. Es liegt darin eine Billigung der Freude." (ibidem, 261).

[36] "Wir legen auf richtiges Gemütsverhalten wert, wir billigen es in dem zweiten Sinn. Dieses Billigen ist Gefallen über das Rechtsein, Richtigsein." (ibidem, 315).

[37] "Die Billigung kann nun sein eine evidente oder nicht-evidente. Dem entspricht der objektive und subjektive Wert." (ibidem).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

approval makes what is approved appear to be truly valuable."[38] As Melle points out, Husserl seems to oscillate between thinking that the correctness of an intentional act is granted by our approbation, and thinking that evident acts of approval or disapproval simply reflect the evidence of those underlying intentional acts characterized by "clarity" (*Klarheit*) and insight" (*Charakter der Einsicht*).[39] Is a judgment right because of my approbation, or is my approbation that is grounded on the judgment being correct? In this regard, Husserl starts to test the idea that it is on the basis of a fulfilling intuition that we can experience evident approval. According to this view, an approbation like "«2 + 2 = 4» is right" would derive its correctness from the internal evidence of the judgment that constitutes the object of approbation. In addition, Husserl also argues that when we approve of a judgment like "S is P" and claim that our approval is evident, we are not just expressing an evaluation by which we merely believe that "«S is P» is right," we should also experience its worth in being a correct judgment.[40]

Therefore, the problem of understanding the condition of the possibility of evident approbation leads Husserl to explore how values are constituted and grasped in experience in the first place. Indeed, for instance, in the approbation of an emotion, I am acknowledging the emotion as worthy to be approved. In particular, Husserl claims that in the act of approval, we evaluate whether a judgment or emotion is correct by appealing to a "moment of value" (*Wert-moment*). Yet, the question of how one can determine if an approbation is justified arises. How do we know that our approbation is justified? According to Husserl, if we claim that our approbation is evident, it is not because we simply find pleasure (*Lust*) in what we are approving but because there must be a positive value that would guarantee the correctness of our approbation.

Husserl holds that "worth" is a "predicate pointing back to affective or

[38] "Eine evidente Billigung lässt das Gebilligte als wahrhaft wertvoll erscheinen." (ibidem, 263).

[39] See Melle, "Husserls deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse," 62–66.

[40] Correctness, that is an *intellectual value predicate* (*intellektuelles Wertprädikat*): "»A judgment is correct«, that is a value judgment: a judgment is correct, which judges what should be judged. In "should" an evaluation (*Bewertung*) is pronounced." ("[…] „Ein Urteil ist richtig", das ist ein Werturteil: Ein Urteil ist richtig, das urteilt, was geurteilt werden soll. Im „soll" ist ja eine Bewertung ausgesprochen."), Hua XLIII/2, 267.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

emotional activities" (*Gemütstätigkeiten*),[41] and since approbation and disapprobation are "secondary feelings", then he starts to wonder whether these acts are value-constituting: "In certain acts of approving, the object stands there, 'so clothed with value', that we recognize that value does indeed belong to it, that it is not merely considered worthy, but is worthy." (my emphasis)[42] Is a noble wish (*edlen Wünschen*) worthy of being approved because a value "lies" in it, or is the approval that bestows to the noble wishing its value? Clearly, this problem reminds the problem of the approbation of a judgment. As Husserl argues, a judgment may be correct, but the certainty of its correctness can be obtained only through justification and evidence. In the same way, we need to see whether a noble wish is so by bringing it to evidence. Just as with judgments, the nobility of a wish can be established only by making it evident.

In this regard, Husserl distinguishes then a double sense of evaluation (*Bewerten*). In the first sense, for Husserl, just as we assess judgments according to an adequation to the truth, or according to their justifiability (*Begründbarkeit*), we can also assess emotions (*Gemütsakte*) according to the "fitness to norms of the heart, to conditions of 'correctness' or satisfiability."[43] Evaluation means here measuring the correctness without questioning whether "the measure itself has a value in a real sense." For instance, we can evaluate our judgments through intuition (*Anschauung*) to check whether there is truth in the sense of adequacy (*Adäquation*).[44] Instead, in the second sense, evaluation means asking whether something has value or is worth, as it were, in an ontological sense. Husserl claims that in this second type of evaluation there is a kind of "assuming" (*Annehmen*)

[41] For Husserl, value predicates are not simply given through perception as it were sensible objects, they must be actively constituted by valueceptions (*Wertnehmungen*), which are, in turn, based on perceptions.

[42] "In gewissen Akten des Billigens steht der Gegenstand so da, „so mit Wert umkleidet", dass wir erkennen, der Wert gehört ihm in der Tat zu, er sei nicht bloß für wert gehalten, sondern sei wert." (Hua XLIII/2, 267).

[43] "Angemessenheit an Gemütsnormen, an die Bedingungen der „Richtigkeit" oder der Erfüllbarkeit." (Hua XLIII/2, 273–274).

[44] "Ist diese Auffassung begründet, so scheint es, dass wir in der Tat zu scheiden haben Urteile und Beurteilungen; die letzteren ermöglichen die Normierung. Ich kann aber gar nicht sagen, dass ich mir schon klar bin. Beim Urteil haben wir die Anmessung an die „Anschauung", haben wir die Evidenz im Sinn der Adäquation." (ibidem, 275).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

acting like as seeing (*Sehen*)[45] so that emotional phenomena (*Gemütsphänomen*) would function as a taking-to-be-worthy (*Fürwert-Halten*) or valueceptions (*Wertnehmungen*). In this sense, an estimation (*Schätzen*) would consist not only in the cognition (*Erkennen*) of a value but also in the cognition that an object essentially includes a determinate value-characteristic (*Wertcharakter*). In light of this, we may even consider "the relative weight" of the cognized value (*das Abwägen des relativen Gewichts*).[46]

Consequently, by observing that our acts of approbation and disapprobation are grounded on valueceptions, Husserl moves to the question of how feelings, generally conceived, can be value-constituting (*wertkonstituierendes Gefühl*) in the first place and makes an example related to food tasting. In what manner does one ascribe value to a wine? When partaking in the tasting of a wine deemed to be of high quality, our approbation may be directed toward the immediate sensory experience, or actual tasting, that is, the pleasing flavor, or toward the wine itself. In this way, a distinction can be made between the pleasure (*Lust*) obtained through relishing the taste (*Geschmack*) of a wine deemed to be good and the intrinsic value of the wine as being truly pleasant or of good quality.

The first kind of pleasure directly stems from sensuous pleasure (*Lustempfindung*), and for this reason, it is a subjective expression.[47] Conversely, when the wine is deemed as being objectively good, it is assumed that the predicate "good" "is objectively linked in the same way as any other predicate, such as 'red' and 'round'. […] As pleasure is 'linked' to the object, it appears as a bearer of a certain predicate; the "pleasure" appears as the determination of the object."[48] However, when it is discovered that others find the wine that is positively evaluated to be repugnant, the relativity of opinions in matters of taste becomes apparent. For this reason, Husserl argues that what makes the wine *good* is not

[45] Ibidem.

[46] Since Husserl notes that an evaluation entails something as "the consideration of the relative weight" (*das Abwägen des relativen Gewichts*), which reminds an operation of the sphere of the presupposition (*Vermutungssphäre*), it would be legitimate to question the intertwinement of the intellective and emotional acts in evaluation. After all, our approbation as secondary feeling can turn to a higher-level reflection.

[47] Hua XLIII/2, 275.

[48] "Das Prädikat wird objektiv angeknüpft in der Weise eines sonstigen Prädikats, etwa „rot" und „rund". Indem sich Lust an das Objekt „knüpft", erscheint es als Träger eines gewissen Prädikats; die „Lust" erscheint als Beschaffenheit des Objekts." (ibidem, 276–277).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

the liking or the appreciation but the fact that the wine is *worthy of liking*, or that "the liking belongs to it – and to such a thing at all – that it is 'reasonable liking'."[49] Yet, one can ask again, how does one justify the intuition that "the object 'demands' the value predicate"?[50]

Husserl's strategy in this regard amounts to arguing that our feelings and emotions show a kind of "*Konvenienze*" with the objects of experience so that any "value-constituting, value-exhibiting feeling" founds its ground in the objects themselves.[51] As for the intellectual sphere, Husserl speculates on an "analogue of evidence" for "proving" the correctness of our emotions that lies in "the clarity of feeling,"[52] as in the case of a liking or appreciation that carries a "justification in itself" ("*Berechtigung" in sich*). Husserl's argument is that value predicates must be somehow connected to the properties of the objects because of the evidence that our feelings are not compatible with arbitrary objects. In reality, our emotional experience is not chaotic. For instance, when one listens to a piece of music, the emotional response may be intense and varied, yet it adheres to a structured pattern and does not constitute an unorganized nexus of experiences. The melody, rhythm, harmony, and lyrics all contribute to producing an emotional experience that has its own lawfulness.

Against this backdrop, even though we may attach or attribute different value predicates to the objects of our experience, Husserl claims that there must be a peculiar relationship between a given sensory material, an apperception, and a categorical apperception that would guarantee the correctness of our valueceptions. In this account, for instance, the pleasing taste of a strawberry, the

[49] Was macht den Gegenstand zum „Guten"? Nicht das Gefallen überhaupt, sondern dass er gefallenswert sei, dass das Gefallen zu ihm gehöre – und zu so einem überhaupt – dass es „vernünftiges Gefallen" sei." (ibidem, 280).

[50] "Der Gegenstand „fordert" das Wertprädikat." (ibidem, 283).

[51] "Wir haben die Evidenz (im Urteilssinn), dass das wertkonstituierende, wertausweisende Gefühl, das klare, nicht mit beliebigen Gegenständen verträglich ist und dass, wenn es mit einem Gegenstand eins ist, diese Einigkeit etwas im Wesen des Gegenstandes Gründendes ist (bzw. im Wesen des sich anpassenden Anschauens, Vorstellens etc.). Wir haben weiter die Evidenz, dass, wenn auf einer Unterlage (die zum Wesen des Gefühls gehört) ein klares Gefühl sich gründet, mit ihr ein klares entgegengesetztes unverträglich ist, dass ein klares Ge-fühl der und der Spezies mit gewissen Unterlagen verträglich, mit anderen unverträglich ist etc." (ibidem, 284–285).

[52] "Analogon der Evidenz, die Klarheit des Gefühls […]" (ibidem).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

apperception of that strawberry with its taste, and the categorical apperception of a good strawberry should all possess some common characteristics. Yet, for Husserl, this relationship remains only an ideal possibility (*ideale Möglichkeit*). In his view, ideally, a given material substrate would give rise to a determinate feeling or emotional apperception (*Gefühls-* or *Gemütsapperzeption*), so that the "clarity of feelings," or our emotional evidence, would be grounded, in turn, on the ideal possibility of corresponding apperceptions. Therefore, for Husserl, the evidence of an axiological predicate, which is grounded on an intentional feeling directed to a perceived value, rests on the harmonious accord of the various formations of apperceptive consciousness. And still, in turn, our apperceptions, which are non-original forms of consciousness,[53] must ultimately be accountable for that which is presented through immediate intuitive experience.

Indeed, in Husserl's account, a feeling is justified only if it were considered "as "belonging" („*zugehörig*") to the "factual situation", for instance, through intuition, as in the case of judgments.[54] In this sense, *de iure*, the correctness of the approbation of wine as good should be grounded on the recognition of the appropriateness of the feeling linked with the object and presenting a positive value. Actually, in the last text dedicated to the theme, Husserl sets on one main sense (*Hauptsinn*) of approbation: "evaluation (*Beurteilung*) of a correctness (*Richtigkeit*), and this correctness is the accord of (*Übereinstimmung*) the judicial-meaning, presumption-meaning, wish-meaning etc., with its "thing," with its meant."[55]

---

[53] In Husserl's phenomenology, apperception (*Apperzeption*) is a term that refers to a grasping that exceeds what is immediately perceived. In particular, this form of intending is founded on the consciousness of an object that is originally present. For instance, in the visual perception of an apple, I see just one side of the apple while I can apperceive the other side of it. This is the reason why apperceptions are conceived as non-original forms of consciousness. Cf. Saulius Geniusas, "Husserl's Concepts of Apperzeption and Weltapperzeption," in: *Die Welt und das Reale/The World and the Real/Le Monde et le reel*, eds. Karel Novotný, Cathrin Nielsen (Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2020), 187–204.

[54] Hua XLIII/2, 285.

[55] "[…] überall der eine Hauptsinn von Billigung: Beurteilung einer Richtigkeit, und diese Richtigkeit ist Übereinstimmung der Urteilsmeinung, Vermutungsmeinung, Wunschmeinung etc. mit ihrer „Sache", mit ihrem Vermeinten. Diese Übereinstimmung ist phanseologisch das Deckungsbewusstsein zwischen dem betreffenden Urteilen, Fragen, Vermuten, Wünschen etc. und dem entsprechenden „originären" Bewusstsein, in dem das „S ist P!", „Ist S P? ", „S dürfte

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

It is worth stressing that Husserl's initial reflections on approbation and disapprobation were probably an attempt to provide a competing account of moral sentiments compared to that found in Hume's sentimentalist ethics. Husserl aimed to address the issue of the validity of feelings of approval and disapproval in relation to a conception of morality that holds the universal validity of its principles. Therefore, this explains his epistemological interest in understanding how it is possible to distinguish evident from non-evident approbation and disapprobation. Yet, as I have shown, by speculating on this problem, Husserl had first to solve other questions related to his broader phenomenological axiology. If the correctness of our acts of approbation and disapprobation originate in the clarity of our feelings, then the issue at hand becomes understanding the justificative force of our affective experience for our evaluations. Arguably, this likely explains why Husserl moved away from the theme of approbation and disapprobation to general issues about the relationship between feelings and values.

3. Taking Sides in Value Conflicts

Husserl intended to investigate whether the sources of our moral judgments, the feelings of approval and disapproval, are not merely an expression of our pleasures or impressions, or the internalization of cultural habits or norms. Despite the fragmented and stratified nature of Husserl's writings on the acts of approval and disapproval, the main idea is that through these "secondary feelings" we are able to recognize the correctness (*Richtigkeit*) of our emotional and volitive acts, and the value-contents carried by them. As I have shown, in approving or disapproving, there is an evaluation that takes the form of liking or disliking. Yet, it is not always the case that I merely approve of a liking and disapprove of a disliking. Sometimes I may disapprove of a liking properly because I consider the liking to be wrong and the disliking right. For example, in grieving, we undergo negative emotions, and nonetheless, we consider grieving for the death

P sein!" zur Selbst-„Gegebenheit" kommen, oder, wie wir auch sagen können, in dem das Wahrhaftsein (Ausrufungszeichen), das „fraglich", das „möge" etc. als Wahrsein, Fraglichsein, Seinmögen dieses Bedeutungsgehalts zur Selbstgegebenheit kommen." (ibidem, 319).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

of a friend or relative as an appropriate emotion, i.e., a correctly justified emotion. In this sense, our approbations and disapprobations are not simply a direct consequence of our sensations of pleasure and displeasure. If we agree with Husserl's insights, the evidence of our feelings of approbation or disapprobation stems from a sense of inner clarity that has a presentive justificatory force.[56] Correctly characterized emotions present the value of what we approve or disapprove of as "belonging" to the state of affairs or the object in question. Of course, this is justified only in the case that we agree with the general idea of a *Konvenienz* between emotional acts and objects of experience.

Even if the acts of approbation and disapprobation do not play a role in Husserl's later reflections on the affective/emotional sphere,[57] it is worth noting that for Husserl these acts assume fundamental importance for the development of our moral ego because:

> […] one might say, that the I, as a moral subject, exists and lives only insofar as it judges itself in its behavior, approves or disapproves of it, thus reflects, and only insofar as it is determined by such reflective judgment in its further behavior and it is the I that determines itself. […] Similarly, as this self-evaluation enables morality in the form of self-determination, and self-education, so the judgment of others, and others again as I-subjects and subjects of their acts, enables social morality in the form of I-Thou determination, education of others, moral renewal of others, and thus social-ethical I-effectiveness in general, in which the I knows itself as a subject of a moral community and acts as such.[58]

---

[56] On the epistemological significance of evaluative experiences and their "justification-conferring presentive phenomenology" see Philipp Berghofer, "Evaluative experiences: the epistemological significance of moral phenomenology," *Synthese* 199, no. 3/4 (2021): 5747–5768, DOI: 10.1007/s11229-021-03044-4

[57] Indeed, there are few traces only in the lecture course on the *Grundprobleme der Ethik* dated 1909. See Hua XXVIII, 253–254. See, Ulrich Melle, "Einleitung," in: Edmund Husserl, *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins. Teilband I: Verstand und Gegenstand Texte aus dem Nachlass (1909-1927)*, eds. Ulrich Melle, Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht: Springer, 2020), LXX, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-35788-7. Cf. also, Ulrich Melle, "Husserls deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse," in: *Life, Subjectivity & Art. Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet, ed. Ronald Breeuer, Ulrich Melle* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 51–99, DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-2211-8_3

[58] "Als moralisches ist und lebt das Ich doch nur, mochte man sagen, sofern es sich selbst in seinem Verhalten beurteilt, es billigt oder missbilligt, also reflektiert, und nur, sofern es durch solche reflektive Beurteilung in seinem weiteren Verhalten bestimmt ist und sich selbst bestimmendes Ich ist. […] Ähnlich wie diese Selbstbeurteilung die Moralität in der Form der

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Indeed, as Montagová suggests, reflecting on our approbation and disapprobation is a way to take *responsibility for our evaluations*. It means not only becoming aware of our emotions, wishes, and desires, but also questioning the correctness of these acts and their objects. As she argues, it is possible to differentiate between a "taken-over approval", grounded, for instance, on tradition or authority, which is not rooted in clear emotions, and a genuine approval that directly stems from our value intuitions.[59] Approving or disapproving without having some evidence would then mean having an unfulfilled intention that would make our intentional acts merely devoid of meaning.[60] On the contrary, being accountable for our evaluations means possessing some kind of justifications for them. This can be achieved by directing our emotional scrutiny toward our affective experiences to provide a foundation for our evaluative position takings or value-commitments. Consequently, approbation and disapprobation can be conceived as feelings related to the validation and confirmation or rejection and refutation of our emotional and volitive life.

It is worth considering the implications of our feelings of approbation and disapprobation in relation to conflicts of value that we commonly experience in our daily lives. These feelings pertain to anything that can be evaluated as "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad," "worthy" or "unworthy". While reading the newspaper, a title draws my attention. It is on the new education reforms discussed in Parliament. After briefly reading through the new proposals, I feel sad and concerned about some of the ideas presented by the ruling party. Is it right to find this sad? During a discussion with a friend, I harshly react to one of his questions.

Selbstbestimmung, Selbsterziehung ermöglicht, so ermöglicht die Beurteilung der anderen, und zwar der anderen wieder als Ichsubjekte und Subjekte ihrer Ichakte, die soziale Moralität in der Form der Ich-Du-Bestimmung, der Erziehung anderer, der moralischen Erneuerung der anderen und so der sozial-ethischen Ichwirksamkeit überhaupt, in der das Ich als Subjekt einer moralischen Gemeinschaft sich weiß und als das betätigt." (Hua XXXVII, 161–162).

[59] Kristina S. Montagová, "The Moment of Approval and the Constitution of Values in Husserl's Phenome-nology," in: *Studies in Contemporary Phenomenology*, vol. 6, eds. Gert-Jan van der Heiden, Karel Novotny, Inga Römer, Laszlo Tengelyi (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), DOI: 10.1163/9789004222595_015. See Hua XLIII/2, 282.

[60] Actually, for Husserl, our approbations should be ideally grounded on a "moment of value" (*Wertmoment*) even though "If the value-indicating moment is missing, it is not the value that is missing, but only the insight into the value." ("Fehlt das wertanzeigende Moment, so fehlt nicht der Wert, sondern nur die Einsicht in den Wert.)" (Hua XLIII/2, 282).

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Is it good to feel angry in this situation? Afterward, on my way, I disapprove of my reactions. Sometimes, I think of quitting my job and devoting myself to musical composition. Is it good to wish this? In all these cases, our acts of approbation and disapprobation, without developing into a high-level self-reflective inquiring, can already reveal or disclose our value commitments. In fact, by disapproving of an evaluation, an emotion, a wish, or a desire, whether mine or of another person, I immediately gain the emotional awareness of what I do not take to be "good," "right," or "worthy". With approbation, we may undergo a syntonic affective experience because our feeling state is attuned to the content of our approbation. This is the case of approving the feeling of happiness about the upcoming wedding of a wonderful couple of friends. Yet, as I have shown, we may also feel that it is right to experience the negative emotion of sadness when it is justified, for instance, in the case of the death of a beloved parent. In this case, we may experience a dystonic state that can be associated with a peculiar bittersweet feeling.

Let's think about capital punishment to briefly show the potential role of approbation and disapprobation when taking a stand in conflicts of value. As N. Berns shows, the death penalty discourse has experienced an "emotion-domain expansion" as other social dilemmas, like abortion.[61] Briefly, the pro-death penalty discourse is populated by the so-called "closure argument" according to which "the death of the killer is needed for victims' families to move on, find closure, and heal."[62] Instead, abolishers, among other things, refer to forgiveness and reconciliation as those appropriate emotional responses against capital punishment. In particular, they claim that capital punishment "does *not* provide closure for victims' families and can make things worse".[63] Accordingly, the opposition between death penalty supporters and the abolitionist movement can be conceived as an opposition involving the emotional stance of the parties involved over what constitutes a valid and appropriate emotional response to murder. In this scenario, our positioning in this debate of values can be justified by appealing to the feelings of approbation and disapprobation of those emotions

[61] Nancy Berns, "Contesting the Victim Card: Closure Discourse and Emotion in Death Penalty Rhetoric," *The Sociological Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2009): 383–406, DOI: 10.1111/ j.1533-8525.2009.01145.x

[62] Ibidem, 388.

[63] Ibidem, 395, 402.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

underlying our conception of the death penalty. For example, a sincere condemnation of capital punishment may include not just the belief that the death penalty is not an effective deterrent to crime but the feeling of disapprobation toward the deliberate deprivation of life. From this perspective, by attending to one's emotional acts, it is possible to take a stance about whether capital punishment contains a real value or not.

Through this process, the primary value-contents of the emotions underlying our beliefs about the death penalty and their corresponding objects, such as the policy of capital punishment, as well as the mental processes, are re-evaluated and considered to be either right or wrong. Thus, through the acts of approving or disapproving, both the policy and its goals are confirmed or rejected. Consequently, the emotional scrutiny enacted through approbation and disapprobation may reveal our underlying evaluative position-takings and consequently help us navigate value conflicts by confronting us with the problem of justifying our evaluations. Understood in this sense, the acts of approbation and disapprobation may be considered as propaedeutic to a reflection about "what is like" to participate and take a stand in conflicts of value.

4. Conclusions

Husserl's account of approbation and disapprobation necessarily presupposes a deeper understanding of our evaluating consciousness; in particular, the role of emotions in value perception (*Wertnehmung*) and the relationship between objects of experience and evaluations. Husserl tackles important axiological problems in his analysis of the acts of approval, like defining the role of feelings in grounding moral knowledge and the function of evaluation and understanding the relationship among emotions, values, and objects. In this respect, the analysis of the acts of approval surely led Husserl to develop a deeper understanding of the role and function of feelings and emotions in our ethical consciousness. Yet, Husserl does not offer a genetic or generative account of approbation since he simply abandons this theme. These results are, of course, the fruit of Husserl's static method, since there is little or no particular interest in understanding the role of instincts, drives, or strivings, and habits, that, shaping our feelings and evaluations, also function as motivating factors of our

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

approbations. Indeed, it can be argued that the analysis of the acts of approval and disapproval was replaced by the analysis of preference and postponing (*Bevorzugung und Hintansetzung*), wishing, desiring, and willing. Arguably, Husserl found more fundamental and pressing questions in a broader description of value-experience that not only includes the systematization of a general formal axiology, but also a redefinition of the fundamental structures of consciousness.

Even if Husserl's account of approval is fragmented and underdeveloped in some respects,[64] it may be further studied in the broader domain of value conflicts. Feelings of approval and disapproval can greatly influence our positioning in value conflicts. As I have shown earlier, these feelings can represent a guide in determining the stance we take in a value conflict. In this regard, wondering whether our emotions, wishes, or desires are "good," "right," or "worthy", not only informs us about our underlying value commitments but motivates us to search for their justification. This form of self-reflection must not be confused with an intellective type of decision-making. Indeed, on the contrary, we can engage into an inquiry about the rightness of our emotional and volitive acts only if we first carefully attend to our feelings. In this sense, approbation and disapprobation also play a role in our self-evaluation. Indeed, for Husserl, it is only because we can approve or disapprove of ourselves that we can live as moral subjects in a moral community. Still, it is worth noting that for Husserl when we take a stance, we simultaneously endorse a value position while rejecting another because we have the evidence "that every feeling has its right or wrong, that if one has its right, the negative has no right but wrong, etc."[65]

[64] For instance, Husserl does not seem to clearly distinguish between approval as a self-reflexive evaluating act and higher-level questioning. See, Montagová, "The Moment of Approval," 263–264.

[65] "dass jedes Gefühl sein Recht oder Unrecht hat, dass, wenn eines sein Recht hat, das Negativum kein Recht hat, sondern Unrecht usw." Hua XLIII/2, 285. Husserl refers to it as an essential law (*Wesensgesetz*), connected to the evidence that if we have a clear feeling that is grounded on a base, which belongs to the essence of that feeling, an opposite feeling is incompatible (*unverträglich*) with the same base, cf. Hua XLIII/2, 284–285.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Bibliography

Berghofer, Philipp. "Evaluative experiences: the epistemological significance of moral phenomenology." *Synthese* 199, no. 3/4 (2021): 5747–5768. DOI: 10.1007/s11229-021-03044-4

Berns, Nancy. "Contesting the Victim Card: Closure Discourse and Emotion in Death Penalty Rhetoric." *The Sociological Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2009): 383–406. DOI: 10.1111/ j.1533-8525.2009.01145.x

Brentano, Franz. *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Ed. Linda L. McAlister. Transl. Antos C. Rancurello, Dailey B. Terrell, Linda L. McAlister. London: Routledge, 2009.

Brentano, Franz. *The Origin of Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*. Ed. Roderick M. Chisholm. Transl. Roderick M. Chisholm, Elizabeth H. Schneewind. London: Routledge, 2009.

Crespo, Mariano, "Toward an A Priori Gefühlsmoral: Husserl's Critique of Hume's Theory of Moral Sentiments." In: *Perception, Affectivity, and Volition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, eds. Roberto Walton, Shigeru Taguchi, Roberto Rubio, 97–111. Dordrecht: Springer, 2017.

De Warren, Nicolas, "Husserl and Phenomenological Ethics." In: *The Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Sacha Golob, Jens Timmermann, 562–576. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. DOI: 10.1017/9781139519267.044

Drummond, John J. "Aristotelianism and Phenomenology." In: *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, eds. John J. Drummond, Lester Embree, 15–45. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-015-9924-5_2

Geniusas, Saulius. "Husserl's Concepts of Apperzeption and Weltapperzeption." In: *Die Welt und das Reale/The World and the Real/Le Monde et le reel*, eds. Karel Novotný, Cathrin Nielsen, 187–204. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2020.

Gioia, Flavia G. "A propósito de didónai logon en algunos primeros dialogos de Platón." *Revista Latinoamericana de Filosofia* 36, no. 2 (2010): 135–161.

Gubser, Michael. "An Image of a Higher World: Ethical Renewal in Franz Brentano and Edmund Husserl." *Santalka: Filologija, Edukologija* 17, no. 3 (2009): 39–49. DOI: 10.3846/1822-430X.2009.17.3.39-49

Husserl, Edmund. *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins. Teilband II: Gefühl und Wert. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1896-1925)*, eds. Ulrich Melle, Thomas Vongehr. Dordrecht: Springer, 2020.

Husserl, Edmund. *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*. Eds. Thomas Nenon, Hans Rainer Sepp. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989.

Husserl, Edmund. *Vorlesungen Über Ethik und Wertlehre (1908–1914)*. Ed. Ulrich Melle. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988.

Husserl, Edmund. *Einleitung in die Ethik: Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1920/1924*. Ed. Henning Peucker. Berlin: Springer, 2012.

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations. Volume 2*. Ed. Dermot Moran. Transl. John N. Findlay. London: Routledge, 2001.

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. Eds. Lewis A. Selby-Bigge, Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Eds. Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge, Peter H. Nidditch. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Janoušek, Hynek. Dan Zahavi. "Husserl on Hume." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2020): 615–635. DOI: 10.1080/09608788.2019.1678457

Melle, Ulrich. "Edmund Husserl: From Reason to Love." In: *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, eds. John J. Drummond, Lester Embree, 229–248. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-015-9924-5_12

Melle, Ulrich. "Einleitung." In: *Edmund Husserl. Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins. Teilband I: Verstand und Gegenstand Texte aus dem Nachlass (1909-1927)*. Eds. Ulrich Melle, Thomas Vongehr, LI–LXXV. Dordrecht: Springer, 2020. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-35788-7

Melle, Ulrich. "Husserls deskriptive Erforschung der Gefühlserlebnisse." In: *Life, Subjectivity & Art. Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet*, eds. Ronald Breeuer, Ulrich Melle, 51–99. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012. DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-2211-8_3

Melle, Ulrich, "The Development of Husserl's Ethics." *Études Phénoménologiques* 7, no. 13 (1991): 115–135. DOI: 10.5840/etudphen1991713/144

Montagová, Kristina S. "The Moment of Approval and the Constitution of Values in Husserl's Phenomenology." In: *Studies in Contemporary Phenomenology*, vol. 6, eds. Gert-Jan van der Heiden, Karel Novotny, Inga Römer, Laszlo Tengelyi, 255–265. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012. DOI: 10.1163/9789004222595_015

Ramírez, Ignacio Quepons. "Aprobación del Valor, Decisión y Motivación Racional: Observaciones sobre la Ética de Edmund Husserl." *La Lámpara de Diógenes* 16, no. 30 (2018): 117–132.

Schuhmann, Karl. *Husserl-Chronik. Denk- und Lebensweg Edmund Husserls*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff , 1977

Summa, Michela, Martin Klein, Philipp Schmidt. "Introduction: Double Intentionality." *Topoi* 41, no. 1 (2022): 93–109. DOI: 10.1007/s11245-021-09786-7

Streszczenie

Aprobata i dezaprobata w fenomenologii Husserla.
Zarządzanie konfliktami wartości poprzez uzasadnione oceny

Analiza aktów aprobaty (*Billigung*) to jedna z pierwszych prób podejmowanych przez Husserla w celu opisu wartościowania lub oceny (*Wertschätzung*). Jak wskazują niektórzy autorzy (Melle, 2020; 2012; Ramírez, 2018; Montagová, 2012), akty aprobaty odgrywają

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

znaczącą rolę w naszym doświadczeniu, gdyż to dzięki nim stykamy się pierwotnie z uzasadnieniem naszych aktów emocjonalnych i wolitywnych. Mimo swego znaczenia, akty te zdają się jednak nie odgrywać dalszej roli w późniejszych rozważaniach Husserla na temat doświadczenia oceniającego. Opierając się na niedawno opublikowanych rękopisach włączonych do *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins*, rekonstruuję Husserlowską koncepcję aprobaty, usytuowanej między aktami emocjonalno-wolitywnymi (*Gemütsakte*) a aktami intelektualnymi (*Verstandesakte*). W szczególności analizuję problemy, z którymi Husserl styka się, gdy pojmuje aprobatę jako „uczucie wtórne" (*sekundäres Gefühl*) związane z podobanime się (*Gefallen*). Wskazuję również, że gdy badamy ważność naszych aktów intencjonalnych, aprobata i dezaprobata nie tylko ujawniają zajmowaną przez nas postawę oceniającą, ale stanowią również uczuciowe podłoże, na którym możemy opowiadać po jakiejś stronie w konfliktach wartości. W rzeczy samej, uświadamiając sobie nasze oceny, możemy przyjąć lub odrzucić emocje, pragnienia i życzenia oraz związane z nimi wartości – na bazie tego, czy uznajemy je za dobre czy złe, uzasadnione czy nieuzasadnione.

Słowa kluczowe: aprobata i dezaprobata, doświadczenie wartościujące, uzasadnienie, Husserl, konflikty wartości

Zusammenfassung

Billigung und Missbilligung in der Phänomenologie von Husserl.
Umgang mit Wertekonflikten durch begründete Bewertungen

Die Analyse von Billigung ist einer der ersten Ansätze von Husserl, Bewertung oder Wertschätzung zu beschreiben. Wie einige Autoren betonen (Melle, 2020; 2012; Ramírez, 2018; Montagová, 2012) spielen Billigungsakte eine bedeutende Rolle in unserer Erfahrung, denn dank ihnen werden wir ursprünglich mit der Rechtfertigung unserer emotionalen und volitionalen Handlungen konfrontiert. Trotz ihrer Bedeutung scheinen diese Handlungen in Husserls späteren Überlegungen zur Erfahrung des Bewerters jedoch keine weitere Rolle zu spielen. Anhand von jüngst erschienenen Manuskripten, die in *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins* aufgenommen wurden, rekonstruiere ich Husserls Konzept der Billigung, das zwischen emotional-volitionalen Handlungen (Gemütsakte) und geistigen Handlungen (Verstandesakte) angesiedelt ist. Insbesondere analysiere ich die Probleme, auf die Husserl stößt, wenn er Billigung als *„sekundäres Gefühl"* versteht, das mit Gefallen verbunden ist. Ich weise auch darauf hin, dass, wenn wir die Gültigkeit unserer absichtlichen Handlungen untersuchen, Billigung und Missbilligung nicht nur unsere wertende Haltung offenbaren, sondern auch eine emotionale Grundlage darstellen, auf der wir in Wertekonflikten Partei

Pobrane z czasopisma **http://kulturaiwartosci.journals.umcs.pl**
Data: 31/10/2026 04:38:27

ergreifen können. In der Tat, indem wir uns unserer Urteile bewusst werden, können wir Emotionen und Wünsche und die damit verbundenen Werte akzeptieren oder ablehnen – je nachdem, ob wir sie für gut oder schlecht, gerechtfertigt oder ungerechtfertigt halten.

Schlüsselwörter: Billigung und Missbilligung, bewertende Erfahrung, Rechtfertigung, Husserl, Wertekonflikte

Ins Deutsche übersetzt von Anna Pastuszka

Informacja o autorze:

ALESSANDRO GUARDASCIONE, MRes, Irish Research Council Scholar, doktorant w University College of Dublin (UCD); adres do korespondencji: School of Philosophy, Fifth Floor, 510D, Newman Building, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland; e-mail: alessandro.guardascione@ucdconnect.ie

(cc) BY-NC-ND