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THE FOUNDATION OF EVALUATION AND VOLITION ON COGNITION: A NEW CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE OVER HUSSERL'S ACCOUNT OF OBJECTIFYING AND NON- OBJECTIFYING ACTS¹

abstract

In the present article I aim to make a new contribution to our phenomenological understanding of the foundation between intentional experiences. In order to accomplish this goal, I discuss Husserl's effort to avoid the conflation of the class of non-objectifying acts, i.e., evaluations and volitions, with the class of objectifying acts, i.e., cognitions. Through the analysis of the transition from his early to his mature account, I explore how Husserl, by readdressing the idea of foundation in relation to the shift from the practical-evaluative to the theoretical attitude, clarifies how evaluations and volitions can exert their intentionality only on the basis of a foundation on cognitions without thereby being reduced to a mere special case of founded representations.

keywords

Phenomenology, Husserl, Axiology, Metaethics

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1. Introduction

The analysis of the relation among cognition, evaluation, and volition is one of the most complex aspects of Husserl's phenomenology. The famous thesis that the so-called "non-objectifying acts," i.e., volitions and evaluations, are founded on "objectifying acts," i.e., cognitions, has been extensively discussed and critiqued by scholars. In this paper, I aim to take stock of the debate over Husserl's account and make a new contribution to our phenomenological understanding of the foundation of volition and evaluation on cognition. In the first section of the paper, I first clarify why Husserl feels obliged to revise his early account of the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts that he develops in the 5th *Logical Investigation*. Then, I explicate Husserl's mature account that is contained in the *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory from 1909-1914, Ideas II*, and the *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness*. In doing so, I show that Husserl, by readdressing the idea of foundation in relation to the shift from the practical-evaluative to the theoretical attitude, eventually manages to clarify how evaluations and volitions can exert their intentionality only on the basis of a foundation on cognitions without thereby being reduced to a mere special case of founded representations. This clarification is, by Husserl's own admission, fundamental in order to preserve the very distinction between objectifying and non-objectifying acts and avoid the consequence that valuing and willing are conflated with knowing. In the second section, I defend Husserl's mature account against the charge of "intellectualism" leveled by some followers and commentators. By taking into consideration *Experience and Judgment*, I show, on the contrary, that Husserl gives a thorough analysis of how the experience of values, goods, and actions can be prior to the thematic explication of the logical properties of objects.

2. Analysis of the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts

In the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl distinguishes between "objectifying acts" and "non-objectifying acts," or, which is the same, between "primary intentions" and "secondary intentions" (Hua XIX, 515).¹ Whereas evaluations and actions are non-objectifying acts, cognitions are objectifying acts. Objectifying and non-objectifying acts take their names from the fact that the latter owe their intentionality to the foundation on the former (see *ibid.*). Indeed, objectifying acts are "representations" (*Vorstellungen*) that provide the

¹ Hereafter, where possible, all references to Husserl's works will use the German pagination of the Husserliana edition (abbreviated "Hua") including volume and page number. If a published English translation is cited, the reference page will be indicated in square brackets.

non-objectifying acts founded upon them with an objective reference. As an example, the experiencing subject can take delight in something, e.g., a blue sky, through the foundation of a non-objectifying act of joy upon the objectifying act of perception that represents such an object.

Although Husserl sticks to the above definition of objectifying and non-objectifying, he thoroughly revises his own understanding of the reason for which non-objectifying acts owe their intentionality to their foundation on objectifying acts. In order to clarify this crucial change that takes place between his early and mature account, I will consider first his early inquiry contained in the *Logical Investigations* and then his mature reflection contained in the *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory from 1909 and 1914, Ideas II*, and the *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness*.

In the *Logical Investigations*, the reason for the *a priori* validity of the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts lies in Husserl's principle that "[e]ach intentional experience is either an objectifying act or has its basis in such an act, i.e., it must, in the latter case, contain an objectifying act among its constituents, whose total matter is individually the same as its total matter" (Hua XIX, 514). In order to understand this principle, let me clarify the meaning of the phenomenological notion of "matter."

In the 5th Logical Investigation, Husserl analyzes the structure of intentional experiences by distinguishing between the "quality" and "matter" of an act (Hua XIX, 5th Investigation, §20). The quality is the constituent part of an act that determines the type of intentional experience, e.g., perceiving, judging, evaluating, willing. The matter is the constituent part of an act that determines "the manner [*Weise*] of objective relation" (Hua XIX, 429), that is, it establishes what object is intended as well as the properties under which it is intended. The reason why non-objectifying acts are founded on objectifying acts is, specifically, that "all matter, according to our principle, is the matter of an objectifying act and only through the latter can it become matter for a new act-quality founded upon this" (Hua XIX, 514). That is to say, objectifying acts provide the matter for the non-objectifying acts that are founded upon them, such that these non-objectifying acts can refer to the intentional object in a novel way through their specific act-quality.² Thus, Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl (2013) notes that non-objectifying acts "[...] do not establish any relation to an object and do not contribute anything to the constitution of the object. They rather give a closer determination of the way in which the subject of consciousness affectively, volitionally, and evaluatively (positively or negatively) reacts to the given object being represented or judged" (p. 66, translation mine; see also Melle, 1990, p. 41). For instance, when a subject delights in the blue sky, that subject simply reacts evaluatively, on the basis of the act-quality of an act of joy, to the theoretical representation of the purely logical properties of this object, such as color, extension,

2.1 Husserl's account
in the Logical
Investigations

2 More precisely, objectifying acts provide non-objectifying acts with a matter positionally qualified, as Staiti observes (2020, pp. 85-87). The matter of objectifying acts is indeed always qualified by a "positional" quality. "Positionality" is an essential feature of the quality of objectifying acts, on the basis of which the objects represented through them are "posited" as having a specific mode of being (i.e., as real, unreal, possible, impossible, doubtful, true, false, etc.). For example, in perception a blue sky is intended as actually existing, while in fantasy as non-existing. The reason why the founding matter must be always positionally qualified is that it is not possible to combine an act-quality of any kind with any matter. On the contrary, Husserl argues that: "[o]ne thinks that qualities of any kind could be bound up with a single matter [...]. Our law asserts that all this is not possible, that in each act there must necessarily be an act-quality of the objectifying kind, since there can be no matter that is not the matter of an objectifying act" (Hua XIX, 516 [168]). Given this, Staiti (2020, p. 87, footnote n. 2) is clearly right in pointing out, contra Drummond (2005, p. 364), that an act must always be founded on a whole objectifying act (i.e., on its matter and its positional quality) and not only on the mere matter of such an act.

duration, shape, etc.,³ and not to the delightfulness that may characterize it as one of its “real” (*reel*) axiological properties. Axiological properties do not indeed exist for the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*.

According to Staiti (2020, pp. 89-90), in the *Logical Investigations* Husserl *neglects* that the axiological properties of objects come to manifestation through non-objectifying acts due to the fact that his phenomenological analyses are deliberately focused on intentional experiences and do not take into account the objective (noematic) dimension. However, even though it is true that in the *Logical Investigations* the examination of the objective (noematic) dimension of experience is missing, the narrow focus of Husserl’s analysis does not prevent him from arguing that objectifying acts establish an intentional relation to objects and their logical properties. Nevertheless, Husserl never argues that non-objectifying acts establish an intentional relation to values, actions, and their axiological or practical properties. Given this, it is my view that in the *Logical Investigations* Husserl is not negligent, rather he *mistakenly holds* that there are no axiological and practical properties of objects, and that, as noted by Rinofner-Kreidl, evaluative and volitional experiences just give a closer determination of the way in which the experiencing subject volitionally and evaluatively reacts to the objects theoretically represented. In support of my thesis, I would like to quote a passage from a very early manuscript, written probably in either 1986 or 1897, in which Husserl clearly states that:

Is to be found a value moment in what is pleasing (truly pleasing, desirable, etc.), or in the corresponding enjoying, wishing, etc.? No. In the object are to be found objective predicates [*gegenständliche Prädikate*]; in it is to be found no value (Hua XLIII.2, 282).

Arguably, in the *Logical Investigations* Husserl still holds this position. It is no coincidence that, in his later works, he openly admits that, in this book, he *lets himself be deceived* when he argues that the fulfilment of a wish is tantamount to the fulfilment of the *objectifying act* directed towards the desired object (see Hua XXVIII, 343). More generally, Husserl openly recognizes that “pleasure, sadness, wish, and the like are also ‘directed’ towards something. They are not directed towards the objectivities of their underlying objectifications. The joy at a matter of fact [*Tatsache*] is not directed toward this matter of fact [...]” (Hua XXVIII, 342, translation mine). I further discuss Husserl’s dissatisfaction with his early account in the next section.

In conclusion, according to Husserl’s early account, non-objectifying acts are founded on objectifying acts insofar as (i) evaluative and volitional acts do not have their own specific intentional objects but rather refer to the objects represented in the underlying theoretical acts, and (ii) these are the only kinds of experiences that can establish an intentional relation to objects via their positionally qualified matter.

2.2 Preliminary analysis of Husserl’s account in the Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory from 1909 and 1914

Rinofner-Kreidl’s observation about the intentionality of non-objectifying acts is valid with respect to the *Logical Investigations*, but is not applicable to Husserl’s later works. Indeed, the father of phenomenology soon recognizes that evaluative and volitional experiences have their own specific intentional correlates, and, therefore, that they *do* establish a relation to the object and *do* contribute to its constitution. This mature account is mainly articulated in the *Lectures on Ethics and Value Theory from 1909–1914* and *Ideas II*, but relevant texts can

³ As already pointed out by Staiti (2020, p. 91), Husserl deliberately calls the objective properties intended through theoretical acts “logical” or “theoretical” rather than “natural.” The reason is that these properties are exhibited also by objects that do not belong to the realm of nature, such as fictitious and unreal objects. For example, although a unicorn is an object of fantasy, it still possesses the “logical” properties of extension, color, shape, etc., which characterize natural objects (see Hua XXVIII, part C, §4b; see also *ibid.*, 359, footnote 1).

also be found in the recently published *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness* (see especially Hua XXVIII, Part A, §§6-8; Part C, especially §12; Appendix XII. Hua IV, §§4-7. Hua XLIII.2, Appendixes VIII, IX, XII). Notably, it is Husserl himself who points out the unsatisfying character of his early analysis. After stating that, in the *Logical Investigations*, he managed to successfully clarify Brentano's problematic notion of "representation" (*Vorstellung*), he adds: "[o]n the other hand, I could not admittedly cope with the affective acts [*Gemütsakten*] and the whole essence of the foundation of them and its relation to the objectifying acts [...]" (Hua XXVIII, 337). In his revisited account, the fact that evaluative and volitional acts have their own specific intentional relation to objects is said to be unquestionable: "there is no doubt that, as a consciousness, evaluating in its different forms, as pleasing, as desiring, as willing, as acting, is the equivalent of the acts that we call perceiving, thinking, supposing, and the like, [namely, NS] that it has its differentiated modes of relation to objectivities" (Hua XXVIII, 266; see also *ibid.*, 361). Importantly, Husserl states explicitly that these objectivities are not those given in the underlying theoretical acts (see Hua XXVIII, 72; see also *ibid.*, 340). Evaluative acts are directed not towards the objects of sensible perception or judgment, but towards values, which are nonetheless "something objective, something truly or actually existing just as other objects" (Hua XXVIII, 255). Values are indeed "objects that have value, and that objects have value means that they have certain inner or relative predicates that in turn are valuable and make their subjects have value" (Hua XXVIII, 256).⁴ Husserl says, accordingly, that "also the axiological predicates belong to objects; they also therefore have a certain unity with theoretical predicates" (Hua XXVIII, 368). Instead, as Husserl thoroughly describes in the volume '*Will and Action*' of the recently published *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness* (Hua XLIII.3), volitional acts are directed towards actions. Yet also actions are nothing but objects that exhibit, as a fundamental practical property, the character of volitionality (*Willentlichkeit*) (see Hua XLIII.3, ch. I), and, accordingly, are thematically experienced as the bearers of practical properties.

The description of evaluative and volitional acts as intentional experiences having their own intentional objectivities, i.e., values and actions, motivates Husserl to reconsider the idea of foundation holding between objectifying and non-objectifying acts. After all, if evaluations and volitions actually have their own intentional objects, do they still need to be founded on cognitions? Husserl answers this question in the affirmative (see XXVIII, 359-360). To explain why, he points out, *to begin with*, that axiological and practical predicates always belong to objects, which come to manifestation only if they are represented in their own logical properties through theoretical acts.⁵ Indeed, as Staiti (2020) notes, "the logical properties are those that preserve the objectual unity according to the essence of the object under consideration" (p. 91). The reason is that a theoretical object is "self-enclosed" (*sich abgeschlossen*), that is to say, it preserves its self-identity even when it is thought only in its purely logical properties, such as extension, duration, shape, color, etc. The reverse does not hold true; for we cannot think about any axiological or practical property irrespective of the theoretical object to which it belongs. Accordingly, axiological and practical properties exist only as founded on the logical properties that make up the unity of such an object. As an example, I can represent in pure phantasy a blue sky without thinking that this object

4 I will stick to this meaning of the term "value" throughout the article. By "value" I will thus refer to anything that, in ordinary language, is called a "value object" or "valuable object," such as a beautiful statue, an enjoyable blue sky, a friendly person, etc.

5 According to Husserl, though, this does not mean that the bearers of axiological and practical properties, i.e., values and actions, are originally experienced only as determinations of the theoretical objectivities founding them. See §III below.

possesses any axiological property of joyfulness and is thereby something I can take delight in. Yet, I cannot fantasize a blue sky as delightful without representing any of its logical properties. Such a valuable object can neither be thought nor be; for the axiological property of delightfulness gives itself only in conjunction with the logical properties of blueness, immensity, airiness, etc., of the sky. Likewise, I can fantasize the logical properties of a bodily movement, e.g., the extension, duration, direction, etc., of my hand-movement, without representing the practical properties that make such a movement an external action, namely the “*fiat*” (i.e., the volitional intention starting the action) and all the following “creative moments” (i.e., the successive volitional intentions that govern the action springing forth from the *fiat*). However, I cannot fantasize any external action without representing also the logical properties of the bodily movement that the agent performs through it.

In conclusion, even though evaluative and volitional acts have their own intentional objectivities, i.e., values and actions, for the late Husserl they must be founded on theoretical acts insofar as axiological and practical predicates always belong to objects, which can be constituted as self-enclosed intentional unities of sense only if they are represented according to their logical properties. The scholar who has already taken into consideration and, in my opinion, successfully clarified this aspect of Husserl’s mature account is Andrea Staiti (2020, ch. III). However, in the next session I will show that the reference to the objectual unity of the object alone is not yet sufficient to clarify the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts.

2.3 Conclusive
analysis of Husserl’s
account in the
Lectures on Ethics
and Value Theory
from 1909-1914 and
Ideas II

It must be noted that Husserl’s reflections discussed above do not represent the final solution to the problem of the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts. On the contrary, they simply bring out the tremendous complexity of the phenomenological issue dealt with. The long passage in which Husserl notes this deserves to be quoted in its entirety:

Obviously a problem now remains. I strongly emphasized against other views that an evaluating act, e.g., a joy, exerts an intentionality through the medium of a founding representation. If it now emerges that what is called intentionality here means something different from what such a thing is called in objectifying acts, then it remains to clarify, as an uneasy residue, the sense and function of this intentionality, to sharply separate its pure phenomenological essence in naive evaluating [*Werthalten*] as opposed to all other interpretations and reflective objectifications, and through such investigations to subject the seriously compromised concept of ‘Act’ to a final analysis. Does the concept of ‘Act’ still have unity? Is it not shattered by the recognition of the double sense of intentionality? In any case, there is a deep gap here, a fundamental essential difference that would be poorly described if one merely spoke of foundation. We also have significant differences between simple and categorial objectifications, and also the latter are characterized as founded; there too, the intentionality of the whole act, of the act building up [*sich emporbauend*] in levels, in a certain way goes through the underlying and ultimately simple acts. However, in all this we have unity of essence and foundation [*Fundiertsein*] everywhere, and the speech of a continuous intentionality has a completely different sense from that in the affective sphere [*Gemütssphäre*] (Hua XXVIII, 337-338; see also Hua XXVIII, 333-334).

The fact that evaluative and volitional acts have an intentional relation to their own specific objectivities jeopardizes the unity of the concept of “Act.” More specifically, it puts into question the distinction between objectifying and non-objectifying acts; for Husserl realizes that “if one tries to say that in evaluative acts values appear, then values are just objects

after all, and the acts in which objects appear are objectifying acts. The title ‘objectifying act’ therefore devours everything, and there is no prospect of how one should hold onto the concept of a non-objectifying act” (Hua XXVIII, 333). Importantly, to say that axiological and practical objects are founded on logical objects, and, accordingly, can be constituted in affective acts only if the full, self-contained logical object is constituted in theoretical acts, *does not solve the problem*. The reason is that the same kind of foundational relation can actually be found within the class of objectifying acts. Categorical objects are indeed founded on sensuous objects in an analogous manner. For instance, the state of affairs “the sky is blue” constituted in an act of judgment is founded on the thing “the sky” and its quality “blue” constituted in acts of sensuous perception. As is the case with values and actions, the founded state of affairs is an objectivity at a higher level, which, therefore, can be constituted only if the founding objectivity at a lower level, i.e., the level of the sensuous object, is also constituted. The reverse does not hold true, for the sensuous object can be perceived without any act of judgment about it being performed. Shall we thus conclude that evaluative and volitional acts are nothing but a specific kind of founded objectifying acts? *We should not do so*, because Husserl insists that, under closer examination, the kind of intentionality exerted by affective acts through the medium of founding representations is *essentially different* from the intentionality of any founded objectifying act. Let me explain difference more precisely. The fundamental question to be addressed, Husserl says, is the following: “how can evaluative acts function as constituting?” (Hua XXVIII, 324). More specifically, it must be clarified how “in these acts being-directed means that something shows itself in the act by virtue of its foundation” (Hua XXVIII, 336).⁶ We just saw that one cannot simply argue that an evaluative or volitional act establishes an intentional relation to an axiological or practical objectivity by virtue of the fact that the founding theoretical act has established an intentional relation to the underlying logical objectivity, for this argument does not rule out the possibility that evaluative or volitional acts are just a specific kind of founded objectifying acts. In contrast to his Neo-Kantian colleague Natorp, who “regards willing as knowing,” and, therefore, “abandons the view that evaluating is something fundamentally different from perceiving and judging, while the latter two belong together” (Hua XXVIII, 370-371), Husserl wants to hold onto the distinction between these two classes of intentional experiences as non-objectifying and objectifying acts, respectively. Accordingly, he stresses that “valuing is not seeing, an intuition in the sense of perception” (Hua XXVIII, 366), and remarks that “[...] in the actual sense only objectifying acts are directed towards objects, towards beings or non-beings, whereas evaluative acts [are directed; NS] towards values, and more specifically, towards positive and negative values” (Hua XXVIII, 72; see also *ibid.*, 339-340). Of course, we saw that, by Husserl’s own admission, values are “something objective, something truly or actually existing just as other objects” (Hua XXVIII, 255). Yet the father of phenomenology tackles this problem by making the following crucial remark: “evaluative acts are not directed towards values as objects” (Hua XXVIII, 338).⁷ In *Ideas II*, he exemplifies what he means by giving the following example: when we, seeing the radiant blue sky, live in the rapture of it, we are not performing a seeing in the eminent sense of the term, such that the blue sky *appears* to us as an *object that is delightful* (Hua IV, 9). More simply, we delight in the blue sky, without its objective character of delightfulness becoming objectified. The value in question, i.e., the

6 As I already pointed out at the beginning of the section, Husserl maintains this definition of non-objectifying acts to the very end.

7 In fact, Husserl never abandons the conviction he has had since the *Logical Investigations*, according to which the intentional relation to an object in the strict sense of the term, i.e., as a being such and such determined, can be established only through objectifying acts.

delightful blue sky, is rather an “object” only in the sense that it is the intentional correlate of a “value-taking” (*Wertnehmen*) (Hua XXVIII, 370-371),⁸ namely it is something that the ego intentionally relates to in the manner of feelings (see Hua IV, 9). As Husserl writes in *Ideen II*:

The most original constitution of value is performed in feelings as that pre-theoretical (in a broad sense) delighting giving-in [*Hingabe*] on the part of the feeling Ego-subject for which I used the term “value-taking” [*Wertnehmen*] already several decades ago in my lectures. The term is meant to indicate, in the sphere of feelings, an analogon of truth-taking [*Wahr-nehmen*; i.e., sensible perception; NS], one which, in the doxastic sphere, signifies the Ego’s original (self-grasping) being in the presence of the object itself. Thus, in the sphere of feelings what is meant by this talk of enjoying is precisely that feeling in which the Ego lives with the consciousness of being in the presence of the Object ‘itself’ in the manner of feelings (Hua IV, 9 [11], translation amended).

Value-taking, thus, is an act that is conscious of a value as its own intentional object; importantly however, this act does not seize and posit the value as a self-identical “being” (*Seiendes*) such and such determined, that is, as a substrate of properties that is characterized by a given mode of existence, e.g., actual, possible, impossible, non-existent, etc. The intentional directedness of value-taking is not doxic, but purely axiological, since the ego is conscious of a value only to the extent that it feels an object in its valuable character without determining this value character in any doxic manner. In the *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness*, Husserl explicitly stresses the distinction between this original feeling of a value and the “objectification of value” (*Wertobjektivation*) which can follow from it:

But is there not a distinction to be made here between the enjoying being turned toward of the I [*das genießende Zugewendet sein des Ich*], which lives striving in pleasure [*Lust*], and the being turned toward the determination of the value [*das Zugewendet sein zu der Bestimmung des Wertes*] as toward determinations in general, or the judging-objectifying attitude and the feeling attitude from the I? [...] The I carries out the feeling as a feeling [*Gefühl*], as an evaluation [*Bewertung*] of the founding object (the substrate of the feeling), and that is different from the execution of a value objectification [*Wertobjektivation*]. Do I not have to say that I arrive at the objectification of value as an explicit, patently accomplished one only through the fact that, after turning toward the founding object and the relevant founding determination, I first carry out “enjoying” the valuating feeling [*„genießend“ das wertende Fühlen vollziehe*], and only then can I move on to the value judgment attitude? And does not this say as much as: at the outset, valuing [*Werten*] is not an objectification [...] (Hua XLIII.2, 212).

The “enjoying being turned toward of the I,” or, which is the same, its “enjoying valuing feeling,” is the ego’s value-taking as the most original experience in which value is constituted. This intentional experience is *not* an objectification but rather a *non-objectifying* act. Other than the passages from *Ideen II* and the *Studies* quoted above, which give a clear exegetical proof of this, the reader should keep in mind, more importantly, Husserl’s theoretical reason for assuming this position: if value-taking, as the act in which the most original constitution of value take place, were an objectifying act, then there would be no prospect of how one should

⁸ In German, perception is called *Wahrnehmen*, which literally means “truth-taking.” Given this, Husserl draws an analogy between perceptual and evaluative acts by coining the term *Wertnehmen*, literally “value-taking.”

hold onto the idea that valuing is something fundamentally different from perceiving and not just a specific class of founded objectifying act.

That said, how does the objectification of value originally constituted in value-taking take place? Husserl writes:

Values are something objectifiable, but values as objects are objects of certain objectifying acts; *they constitute themselves in these [acts; NS] based on valuing acts, but do not constitute themselves in the valuing acts.* The valuing acts as peculiar acts are “directed” towards something, but not towards objects, but rather it just belongs to their essence that this direction of them can be grasped in an objectifying way [*objektivierend erfaßt*] and can then be judged and determined objectively [*objektivierend beurteilt und bestimmt*] (Hua XXVIII, 340, emphasis added. See also Hua IV, 15; Hua XLIII.2, 212-213).

In *Ideas II* Husserl illustrates what he argues above with the example of a work of art (see Hua IV, 8-9 [10]; see also Hua XXVIII, 60). If we look at a picture “with delight,” i.e., if we enjoy the picture, we relate to the picture exclusively in the manner of feelings, but as soon as we judge the picture as beautiful, we are now performing a theoretical act that turns the work of art into an “object” in the strict sense of the term. The work of art is now intuited not only in sensuous intuition but in *axiological intuition*. That is to say, the work of art is now intuited as the subject of the predicate of aesthetic enjoyableness, which makes up its “what,” as it were (see Hua IV, 9). It is my opinion that the scholars have not properly clarified this transition. Rinofner-Kreidl (2013, p. 71) and Staiti (2020, pp. 94-95) both argue that values are objectified when they are analyzed as objects in themselves irrespective of their possible real instantiations, such as when we consider, for example, the value of “Beauty,” “Bravery,” “Friendship,” etc. Husserl’s thesis, however, is different, precisely because for him an objectification takes place already when a value, from being a mere “object” of feelings constituted in value-taking, “becomes a theoretical object, an object, that is, of an actively performed positing of being in which the Ego lives and grasps what is objective, seizes and posits it as a being [*als Seiendes*]” (Hua IV, 11 [13]). Importantly, this theoretical positing of being does not take place only when a value is intended as an *universal*, but already when a value is intended as an *individual* that is the bearer of axiological properties.⁹ In the *Studien*, Husserl states this aspect clearly:

These value-taking acts are then the ground [*Unterlage*] for perceiving ones, namely for those acts that perceive the value by purely seeing [*rein schauend den Wert wahrnehmen*] (not value in abstracto; just as in perception that which is perceived is not the being [*das Sein*] in abstracto, but the object, so is it also here: the value in its valuableness). [...] *If we understand value-takings as something related to individual particulars*, like perception, then we have to add the value-seeing acts [*wertschauenden Akte*] related to the universal (Hua XLIII.2, 271, emphasis added).

To sum up, whenever the experiencing subject intends something *qua* the real or ideal substrate of axiological properties or, conversely, *qua* the axiological property of a real

⁹ In a recently published article, Claudio Maiolino (2022, footnote n. 15, pp. 195-196) stresses that Husserl never uses the expression “ideal being” (*ideale Seiende*), since he uses the term “being” (*Seiende*) always and only to denote real individuals and their own properties and relations. It is no coincidence, then, that Husserl uses the expression *Seiendes* in the passage just quoted, precisely to indicate that a value is objectified as a real individual object and not yet as a ideal general object.

or ideal substrate, the axiological strata of sense of the intentional object in question has been objectified in addition to the logical strata. Accordingly, a value *qua* an object, be it an ideal object (*idealer Gegenstand*) or a real being (*reale Seiende*), is a theoretical objectivity of a higher level (see Hua IV, 9), which shows itself as endowed with axiological properties, e.g., delightfulness, other than sole logical properties, e.g., extension, color, shape, etc. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to practical objects.

Another important aspect that must be noted is that the theoretical act that objectifies a value constituted in value-taking is not an act of reflection, which “turns back” upon the evaluative act and makes it an intentional object. Husserl points out indeed that “through abstraction [of the moments of evaluative acts; NS] we gain the ideas of evaluation in general, of desire or will in general, of pleasure in general, but we do not gain a value and also not the idea of ‘value’” (Hua XXVIII, 277). In *Ideas II*, he further clarifies this crucial point by making a distinction between “the transition into the theoretical attitude and the transition into reflection” (Hua IV, §6). The objectification of a value takes place through the former and not through the latter, insofar as “[...] it is in the object itself that I find the beauty. Here ‘the beautiful’ means anything but a predicate of reflection, as, e.g., if I say, ‘It is pleasing to me.’ The ‘pleasant,’ the ‘enjoyable,’ the ‘sad,’ and all similar predicates of objects are, as to their Objective sense, not relation-predicates referring to the acts” (Hua IV, 14 [16]). Of course, one can also objectify the evaluative act itself and judge, for instance, that “I take pleasure in this object.” Yet the fact remains that the objectification of the delightful character of the object, rather than the objectification of the evaluation directed towards it, requires the transition into the theoretical attitude and not into reflection. I cannot, thus, agree with Rinofner-Kreidl (2013, p. 71) and Staiti (2020, p. 108), who argue, on the contrary, that values are objectified in reflection.

In order to fully understand Husserl’s mature account, it thus remains to clarify the precise sense of the “theoretical attitude” through which, to use Husserl’s words from the *Lecture on Ethics*, there takes place a certain looking into evaluative acts so that the value intentionally intended in them is theoretically extracted (see Hua XXVIII, 366). In this respect, the first thing to notice is that the phenomenon of “attitude,” and, more specifically, of “change of attitude,” has, for Husserl, a transcendental-constitutive role that enables the experiencing subject to disclose the stratified objective sense of intentional objects. Indeed, one and the same object can be intended by giving thematic privilege to one of the three dimensions of sense, i.e., the theoretical, the axiological, or the practical, that may characterize it. The shift of thematic focus takes place precisely through a change of the ego’s attitude. For instance (but see also Hua IV, 12-13), I may simply delight in looking at the blue sky, without the thematization of the logical properties of extension, blueness, and airiness that characterize it as a mere thing. In this case, I am in the evaluative attitude and not in the theoretical one. Yet, I can assume this latter attitude, and thereby focus on the pure logical properties of the blue sky, while its axiological property of delightfulness remains in the background. Or, I may be focused on the practical realization of a work of art by means of a tool, e.g., I might be carving marble with a chisel, without the thematization of the form, the orientation, and the dimension of the chisel that I use to accomplish my work. By shifting from the practical to the theoretical attitude, I can turn these properties into the privileged theme of my experience, while the practical realization of the marble sculpture, although I continue to carry it out, recedes into the background. The crucial point, however, is that the transition to the theoretical attitude does not necessarily entail that the experiencing subject focuses on the intentional object as the bearer of mere logical properties. In fact, *through shifting to the theoretical attitude the ego can also objectify values, goods, actions, and all other possible bearers of axiological and practical properties*. As Husserl states:

[...] we move about in the domain of the new, founded, qualities. *We draw into the sphere of theoretical interest*, into the compass of the theoretical attitude, the predicates correlative to these acts, too. And then we have not just mere things but precisely values, goods, etc. (Hua IV, 17; see also Hua IV, 11, 16).

That said, let me discuss the details of the specific way in which, according to Husserl's mature account, non-objectifying acts exert their intentionality by virtue of the foundation on objectifying acts. As discussed above, even though evaluative and volitional acts have their own intentional objectivities, i.e., values and actions, they are one-sidedly founded on theoretical acts insofar as axiological and practical properties are always properties of objects, which must be represented according to their logical properties in order to be constituted at all as intentional unities of sense. Yet we also discussed the fact that a similar situation can be found within the class of objectifying acts, insofar as the constitution of the logical objectivities of the higher order presupposes the constitution of the objectivities of the lower order in certain founding acts. The paradigmatic example is the foundation of categorial acts on sensuous acts. The former, too, exert intentionality by virtue of their foundation on the latter. However, evaluative and volitional acts exert their intentionality by virtue of the foundation on theoretical acts also because of the following aspect, which does not apply to any founded objectifying acts, and, therefore, is the *authentic reason* for which evaluative and volitional acts are non-objectifying: (iii) values and actions can be posited as a *being* endowed with axiological and practical properties only through a shift to the theoretical attitude. Given (iii), what exactly is the foundation on the basis of which non-objectifying acts can exert their intentionality? In answering this question, it must be noted that in Husserl's mature account there are actually two foundational relations at play between non-objectifying acts and objectifying acts. There is (I) a first foundational relation between, on the one hand, the theoretical acts that constitute values and actions according to their logical properties, and, on the other hand, the evaluative and volitional acts that constitute, although in a non-objectifying manner, these values and actions according to their axiological and practical properties. This foundational relation is, for example, that between the perception of the blue sky as an extended, colored object, and the value-taking (*Wertnehmen*) of its value predicate of beauty. In turn, there is (II) a second foundational relation between the evaluative or volitional acts and the theoretical acts that are newly performed with the transition to the theoretical attitude. It is only on the basis of this second foundational relation that theoretical acts objectify values and actions, insofar as they draw the axiological and practical objectivities that are "implicitly contained," i.e., pre-constituted, in evaluative and volitional acts. In the example of the blue sky, the foundational relation in question is the one between the evaluative act through which the experiencing subject *feels* the beauty of this object and the theoretical act through which the beauty is *grasped* (*erfasst*) *theoretically* as an objective property of the sky.

It is important that the reader understands Husserl's claim that "all acts which are not already theoretical from the outset allow of being converted into such acts by means of a change in attitude" (Hua IV, 8 [10]) and his similar claim that "[...] every act is implicitly Objectivating at the same time" (Hua IV, 16 [18]) in terms of the foundational intertwining described here. Indeed, it would be puzzling for Husserl, who wants to hold onto the distinction between objectifying and non-objectifying acts, to eventually describe the essential difference between these two kinds of intentional experiences by saying that *one and the same* non-objectifying act can *magically* transform itself into an objectifying act through a change of attitude. That the transformation of a non-objectifying act into an objectifying act rather consists in the evaluative or volitional act serving as a foundation for a new theoretical act, which then

objectifies the value or action pre-constituted in the former, is openly declared by Husserl in the *Studien*:

Thus, objectivation (judgment) and feeling (evaluation [*Wertung*]) are fundamentally [*grundwesentlich*] different. The feeling *qua* feeling evaluates on the ground [*aufgrund*] of some objectivation, it thereby grounds [*begründet*] a new objectivation, but it is not in itself an objectivation (Hua XLIII.2, 213, emphasis added).¹⁰

One might point out, however, that in the case of this second foundational relation the situation has in fact turned around, since the role of founding acts is played by evaluative and the volitional acts, while the role of founded acts is played by theoretical acts. After all, the experiencing subject is not obliged to shift from the evaluative or practical attitude to the theoretical attitude, and thereby objectify the values and actions pre-constituted in evaluative and volitional acts through the performance of new theoretical acts. Although this is true, the fact remains that it is only through the performance of such theoretical acts that evaluative and volitional acts can gain an intentional relation to values and actions *qua* objects in the strict sense, *i.e.*, *qua* something theoretically grasped, seized and posited as a being.¹¹ Therefore, one must acknowledge that, in order for the appearance of value or action in axiological or practical intuition to take place, the foundation between, on the one hand, evaluative and volitional acts, and, on the other hand, theoretical acts, is not one-sided, but rather *reciprocal*. The cooperation of *both sides* is indeed needed for the appearance of values and actions.¹²

10 Hua XLIII.2, 213, emphasis added. Further support can be found in the passage from the lectures on ethics from 1909 quoted above (see Hua XXVIII, 340), in which Husserl describes how values can be objectified, and by the passage in which he states that a value “[...] comes to givenness by virtue of the cooperative evaluative acts” (Hua XXVIII, 366), since “[...] without evaluation there is no value” (Hua XXVIII, 277; see also Hua IV, 9). Other relevant passages are contained in the lectures on ethics from 1914: “[a] judging can possibly build up only on the ground of affective acts that evaluate the beautiful or the good (Hua XXVIII, 60, emphasis added); “[...] also valuing is therefore a holding as [*Dafürhalten*], an intending [*Vermeinen*], and it is so *qua* affective-consciousness [*Gemütsbewußtsein*] and thus before any judgments joining in” (Hua XXVIII, 61, emphasis added); “[t]he axiological reason with its constituents is hidden to itself, so to speak. It becomes manifest only through the performance of knowledge on the ground of affective acts” (Hua XXVIII, 63, emphasis added); “[b]ut mere evaluative reason does not see, does not understand, does not explicate, does not predicate. Acts of the doxastic sphere, logical in the broadest sense of the word, must be intertwined with it. Only through the performance of such acts can acts in general and that which they believe come to objective givenness, and can we see then that evaluative acts are the ‘believing’ of the beautiful, of what is considered good, and then, that they stand under the ideal predicates of right and wrong, etc.” (Hua XXVIII, 69, emphasis added).

11 In this respect, it must be noted that Husserl never abandons the conviction he has had since the *Logical Investigations*, according to which the intentional relation to an object in the strict sense of the term, *i.e.*, as a being (*Seiendes*) such and such determined, can be established only through objectifying acts.

12 Husserl states that evaluative acts are founded on theoretical acts insofar as the latter are necessary for the appearance of value in his 1914 lectures on ethics: “[...] every evaluating act is necessarily based on theoretical acts, ‘objectifying’ (representing or judging or presuming acts) in which the evaluated objectivities are represented and possibly stand there as existing or non-existing in certainty or probability. And this being founded is not a merely psychological one. Rather, the evaluating act is essentially founded on the intellectual act, insofar as it constitutes the appearance of value” (Hua XXVIII, 72, emphasis added). Husserl argues something similar about volitional acts by stating the following: “[t]he judgment is consciousness of an ‘it is so’; the will is consciousness of an ‘it should be so’.” However, the will alone cannot assert and cannot state that of which it is conscious in its own manner; *this is its form of non-independence* [*Unselbständigkeit*]. In order to be able to speak, *the will needs logical acts* [...] (Hua XXVIII, 63, emphasis added). As one can see, Husserl characterizes the inability of volition to bring its own intentional object to objective givenness as “its form of non-independence” (*Unselbständigkeit*), and hence foundation, on theoretical acts, since the latter are needed for the appearance of such an object.

Husserl's account of the foundation of non-objectifying acts on objectifying acts is still an object of debate. On the one hand, Husserl's contemporaries such as Martin Heidegger (1927) and Max Scheler (1913–16), but also recent scholars such as John Drummond (2013) and Sonja Rinofner-Kreidl (2013), undertake to criticize Husserl's account, and even revise it altogether. On the other hand, scholars such as Roberta De Monticelli (2018) and Andrea Staiti (2020) find the account convincing. In particular, Staiti (2020, ch. III, §1) recently tried to defend, successfully in my opinion, Husserl's theses from the criticism of the abovementioned scholars. In the following, I summarize the main points of the debate and try to further support and develop Staiti's analysis.

The main source the criticism of Husserl's foundational account is its putative "intellectualism." These critics argue that the foundation of volitional and evaluative acts on theoretical acts is not faithful to our experience, which is always practically and axiologically connotated and does not seem to show a non-independence of volition and evaluation on cognition. More specifically, Scheler (1913–16, pp. 17–18) argues that the perception of values can even be prior to the perception of purely logical objects; while Heidegger (1927, p. 130) contends that the two are co-original. By taking into account the position of these two thinkers, Drummond (2013, p. 250, 256) does not reject Husserl's foundational account altogether, but calls for it to be rectified. According to Drummond, two problems must be faced: (i) there is no real unity between objectifying and non-objectifying acts, for the latter are merely "piled" on the former; (ii) the idea that theoretical acts have a priority over evaluative acts is counterintuitive (p. 250). Drummond proposes two modifications to Husserl's account. In order to solve (i), one must (α) reinterpret the relation of foundation by specifying that it does not actually hold between theoretical and evaluative acts, but rather between the logical and the axiological objects that are intended through them (*ibid.*); in order to solve (ii), one must recognize that (β) theoretical and evaluative experiences are co-original, as Heidegger argues. On this view, we should say for instance that the subject perceives co-originally the intentional object as a blue sky and as delightful, and that it is the axiological property of being delightful that is founded on the logical properties of extension, blueness, etc., that belong to the sky as a natural thing.

According to Staiti, however, Drummond's revision of the idea of foundation is not entirely convincing. With respect to (α), Staiti remarks: "[t]his solution, however, seems to concede too much to the critics of the Husserlian model. If we adopted it, we should admit a strange asymmetry (this one really counterintuitive) between the structure of evaluative experiences, which are not articulated in terms of foundation, and the objects that show themselves in them, which are instead structured according to the stratification just mentioned" (Staiti, 2020, p. 93, translation mine). For my part, I agree with Staiti and I would like to further elaborate the point he makes. To begin with, I have shown that it is Husserl's himself who correlates the noematic foundation of practical-axiological objects on logical objects with the noetic foundation of volitional-evaluative acts on theoretical acts (see Hua XXVIII, 359). Furthermore, I have shown that the *appearance* of values and actions in axiological and practical intuition is based on an objectification, which requires a foundational relation between evaluative and volitional acts and the new theoretical acts that are performed with the shift to the theoretical attitude. Last but not least, Husserl's analysis of the change of attitude, discussed above, does not seem to legitimize, in the first place, Drummond's concern (i) that there is no real unity between evaluative and theoretical acts. According to Drummond (2013), the reason for this lack of unity is that on Husserl's account "I see x ; x affects me in a certain way, and I adopt an emotional attitude toward x that is somehow distinct from my seeing x " (p. 250). However, Staiti (2020, p. 93) notes that Drummond (2013, p. 51) himself recognizes in passing the fact that Husserl considers our experience as always

axiologically connotated, and that therefore it would be odd for him to think of evaluative acts as mere occasional additions that are “piled” on theoretical acts. Husserl’s foundation thesis, Staiti (2020) remarks, “should not be read in a ‘temporal’ sense, as if a non-objectifying act would step in in a second moment, *after* the objectifying act founding it has established the intentional reference to the object” (p. 89).¹³ Furthermore, I would also like to add that from the noetic point of view, the shift from the theoretical to the evaluative attitude is to be understood as the change of the overall thematic orientation of *one and the same* complex intentional experience. In such a complex experience, each single theoretical and evaluative act either plays a supporting role, thereby contributing to the constitution of an *unthematic* strata of sense of the intentional object, or plays the role of the principal act, thereby determining whether the intentional object, as a whole, is *thematically* intended as logical or axiological (see Hua IV, 13). Therefore, the shift from the theoretical to the evaluative attitude does not actually take place by “piling” a new evaluative act on the top of a theoretical act, but rather by changing the constitutive role played by the former from “supporting” to “principal”. In doing so, the ego’s *seeing x* recedes from the foreground into the background, while the ego’s *feeling x* emerges from the background into the foreground.

With respect to (ii), Staiti (2020) takes Drummond’s concerns seriously, claiming that “[we] can certainly assert, following Drummond, that in experience there is an overall apprehension of the object, thanks to which we have simultaneous intuition of the value and the representational dimension” (p. 93, translation mine). In order to prove that Husserl himself shares this view, I now turn to the task of showing that he actually gives a thorough phenomenological account of how the thematic explication of practical and axiological objects can take place without a prior thematic explication of their logical properties. Although overlooked by scholars so far, this account can be found in *Experience and Judgment*. Therein, Husserl observes that the bearers of practical-axiological determinations are “original substrates,” that is, intentional objectivities that are *thematically experienced from the start* as values, actions, cultural objects, animals, persons, etc., without the need to explicate beforehand their axiological and practical properties *qua* determinations of the natural (more generally speaking, logical) objectivities on which they are founded (Husserl, 1939, p. 158 [138]). Husserl then clarifies the precise sense in which these original bearers of practical-axiological determinations are “independent” (*ibid.*). Since they are founded on logical objectivities, practical and value objects are non-independent parts of a more encompassing whole, which is made up also of logical objectivities, or, better yet, logical objective strata. Accordingly, practical and value objects, *qua* original substrates, are “independent” *not* in the *formal ontological sense* that they *can exist* without belonging to a more comprehensive whole characterized also by a logical objective strata, but rather in the *phenomenological sense* that they *can be thematically experienced* as something for and in itself, and not as something which is only in another, in an existent for itself (Husserl, 1939, p. 155 [136]). Furthermore, these practical-axiological substrates can be explicated in their own “personal” determinations without the need to explicate *thematically* the logical determinations founding them.¹⁴

13 In this respect, Staiti (2020, p. 89, footnote n. 3) notes that Benoist (2004) also seems to understand the foundation between objectifying and non-objectifying acts in temporal terms, for he repeatedly describes the relation between these two classes of acts by employing the terms “first” and “then.”

14 I emphasize the word “thematically” since the unthematic explication of logical determinations must still take place for Husserl, who *never endorses* Scheler’s thesis that a value is ontologically independent of its bearer (see Scheler 1913–16, pp. 17–18). In the lectures on ethics from 1909 Husserl states very clearly that objects must let their being be explicated according to its logical predicates in order to be valuable at all (Hua XXVIII, 267–268).

I venture to say, then, that the Husserlian account of foundation can actually accommodate both Scheler's and Heidegger's insights. On the one hand, Scheler is right that the perception of value objects can be prior to the perception of logical objects,¹⁵ insofar as value objects are original substrates that can be straightforwardly explicated in their own axiological determinations. On the other hand, Heidegger is right that theoretical and volitional-evaluative experiences are co-original, insofar as, even when practical-axiological substrates are explicated in their personal determinations first, the fact remains that the logical determinations upon which these practical-axiological substrates are founded are still experienced, although unthematically.

Given that the thematic explication of practical-axiological objectivities can be prior to the thematic explication of the logical objectivities founding them, one may wonder when and how the foundation of volitional-evaluative experiences on theoretical experiences and, correlatively, the foundation of practical-axiological objectivities on logical objectivities, is phenomenologically discovered. The answer to this question is given by Rinofner-Kreidl (2013), who duly notes that the foundational relation in question is not discovered at the level of the direct, naïve experiences of practical-axiological objectivities, but rather at the "level of reflective analysis of what is given to us in the [direct, naïve; NS] experience" (p. 71, translation mine). However, Rinofner-Kreidl (2013) argues that Husserl's foundational account still needs an amendment; for she claims, contra Husserl, that a theoretical act is independent when performed on its own as a singular experience, but it becomes a non-independent part when performed in a more complex act (p. 70). The reason for this change of mereological status is the "situational fusion [*situative Verquickung*] of descriptive and evaluative aspects," whereby "the selection and interpretation of what happens presupposes already an evaluation" (p. 69, translation mine). That is to say, the natural (logical) properties of objects are altered by the axiological properties founded on them (Rinofner-Kreidl, 2015, p. 102). As an example, Rinofner-Kreidl mentions the case of a handshake between (1) two business partners who reach an agreement; (2) a politician and a mafia boss, who shakes the hand of the former to signal to a killer that he is the intended target; (3) a young guy and a policeman who just convinced him not to throw himself out of a window; (4) two test subjects who perform this gesture in a laboratory in order to determine the number of bacilli exchanged. According to Rinofner-Kreidl, the logical properties of this bodily gesture putatively change depending on the context in which it is performed.

This amendment to Husserl's account, however, presents some issues. As Staiti (2020, p. 96) points out, it lacks a solid exegetical basis. More importantly, "the independence or the non-independence of a unitary experience is a structural mereological characteristic that does not depend on the factual circumstances of the consciousness in which the unitary experience in question is located" (*ibid.*, translation mine). Indeed, the formal ontological category of non-independence, on which the notion of foundation is based, does not regard factual mereological relations among objects, but rather essential relations. As Husserl states: "a non-independent object can only be what it is (i.e., *what it is in virtue of its essential properties*) in a more comprehensive whole" (*Hua* XIX, 253; emphasize added). Accordingly, Staiti (2020) concludes that "the integration of an objectifying act into an evaluative-volitional non-objectifying act *does not affect at all its mereological independence*" (p. 97). For example, if we conceive of one and the same physical handshake as taking place between, on the one hand, two business partners, and, on the other hand, a politician and a mafia boss, the axiological property associated to this gesture can change from being "an expression of gratitude" to

15 However, see footnote n. 14 above.

being “an expression of betrayal.” There seems to be no reason, however, to think that the change of this axiological property also necessarily involves a change of the mere natural properties of the handshake, such as its extension, duration, shape, etc. (p. 107). Notably, Staiti tries to clarify the sense in which Rinofner-Kreidl’s insight holds true. He notes: “Rinofner-Kreidl calls the attention to a very interesting and too often neglected point: it is the normative perspectives that we assume contribute to making us see the natural properties which are relevant for the foundation of axiological properties” (p. 107, translation mine). For example, if the experiencing subject assumes a moral perspective, it might focus on the natural properties that are relevant with respect to the potential damage of others, such as when, in blaming the practice of torture, we pay closer attention to the physical properties causing pain. Rinofner-Kreidl’s insight is, thus, valid if it is understood as saying that, due to the “situational fusion” of descriptive and evaluative aspects, the *epistemological relevance* of the natural (logical) properties of objects—but not their ontological constitution—is altered by the alteration of the axiological properties founded on them (see Staiti, 2020, p. 109). If we consider again the example of torture, it could be the case that the experiencing subject assumes a sadistic attitude instead of a moral attitude, and therefore focuses on the physical properties that are expressive of pain rather than on those causing it. I conclude here my study, which I hope deepened our phenomenological understanding of the foundation of volition and evaluation on cognition.

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