

Uwe Meixner · Albert Newen (eds.)

Logical Analysis and
History of Philosophy

Philosophiegeschichte und
logische Analyse

The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl

Guest Editors / Gastherausgeber
Uwe Meixner · Rochus Sowa

mentis

Münster

Husserl's Concept of Motivation: The *Logical Investigations* and Beyond

Philip J. Walsh, University of California at Irvine

Abstract

Husserl introduces a phenomenological concept called “motivation” early in the First Investigation of his *magnum opus*, the *Logical Investigations*. The importance of this concept has been overlooked since Husserl passes over it rather quickly on his way to an analysis of the meaningful nature of expression. I argue, however, that motivation is essential to Husserl's overall project, even if it is not essential for defining expression in the First Investigation. For Husserl, motivation is a relation between mental acts whereby the content of one act make some further meaningful content probable. I explicate the nature of this relation in terms of “evidentiary weight” and differentiate it from Husserl's notion of *Evidenz*, often translated as “self-evidence”. I elucidate the importance of motivation in Husserl's overall phenomenological project by focusing on his analyses of thing-perception and empathy. Through these examples, we can better understand the continuity between the *Logical Investigations* and Husserl's later work.

Introduction

In the First Investigation of his opus, the *Logical Investigations* (*LI*), Husserl sets out to make “essential distinctions” between the ideal nature of meaningful expression and the psychologically real processes of conscious experience.¹ In the course of this project he introduces a key concept – “motivation” – to describe an important way in which mental acts are related to one another. Motivation is a relation between mental acts whereby the content of one act make some further meaningful content probable. A visual perception of smoke, for example, *motivates* the judgment that there is fire nearby. Smoke stands in an *indicating* relation to fire, and motivation is the subjective context (or in more contemporary terms, the “phenomenal character”) constitutive of one's awareness of indication relations.

Although Husserl passes over it rather quickly in this first section of the *LI*, the concept of motivation is essential to some of Husserl's most important analyses. In

¹ I will cite Husserl's works using the following titles: *Logical Investigations* = *LI*; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology, Second Book* = *Ideas II*; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology, First Book* = *Ideas I*; *The Crisis of European Sciences* = *Crisis*. I will include both the section number and page number of the English translation when citing these works, indicating any modifications I have made to the translations in a footnote. When referring to the original German texts, I will use the standard “Hua” format, including volume and page number. When citing the *LI* I will include the investigation number before the section and page numbers.

Ideas II, Husserl characterizes motivation as the “fundamental law of the spiritual world” (§ 56, 231). The concept plays an important role in Husserl's analysis of inner time-consciousness, the development of genetic phenomenology, his conception of the lifeworld, and his analyses of intersubjectivity. As an exhaustive analysis of the function of motivation throughout Husserl's prodigious career is beyond the scope of this article, I will focus on his initial explication of motivation in the First Investigation of the *LI* and then highlight the role of this concept in his analyses of thing-perception and empathy in *Ideas II*. I conclude by arguing that the phenomenology of motivation sheds light on the motives driving Husserl's phenomenological philosophy.

1. Husserl's Explication of Motivation in the First Investigation

Husserl offers a brief analysis of motivation in the first chapter of the First Investigation, however he passes over it rather quickly in order to focus on the distinctions between ideal meaning species, meaning-conferring mental acts (or “meaning-intentions”), acts of communication, and the objects referred to through meanings. In this section I will provide an overview of Husserl's essential distinctions in the First Investigation and explain how motivation figures in his analysis of meaningful expression. I will then attempt to further clarify the concept of motivation in relation to Husserl's notion of evidence. Motivation can be thought of as the experiential character of something feeling plausible, but not “evident” in Husserl's sense of “self-evidence” [*Evidenz*] characterized by “insight” [*Einsichtig*].

1.1 *The Task of the First Investigation*

The First Investigation of the *LI* is titled “Expression and Meaning”, and the first chapter of this Investigation is titled “Essential Distinctions”. The essential distinctions that Husserl sets out to make here pertain to linguistic expression, which may lead one to wonder why Husserl begins his project of clarifying pure logic with a phenomenology of *linguistic* expression. Husserl sees the First Investigation's project of linguistic clarification as essential to heading off the dangers of equivocation – namely, the threat of misinterpreting logical concepts as empirical psychological concepts:

It is also possible ... that a misinterpretation based on equivocation may distort the sense of the propositions of pure logic (perhaps turning them into empirical, psychological propositions), and may tempt us to abandon previously experienced self-evidence and the unique significance of all that belongs to pure logic. (*LI*, Introduction, § 2, 167–168).

Given the importance of language for expressing propositions of pure logic, the very terms ‘expression’ and ‘meaning’ present the most immediate threat of equivocation. For if ‘expression’ and ‘meaning’ are not distinguished from

‘utterance’ and ‘the mental act of the speaker conveyed by an utterance’ then Husserl’s labors against psychologism in the *Prolegomena* may be undermined.

1.2 Motivation and Husserl’s Essential Distinctions

Husserl’s first and most important distinction in the First Investigation is between indication and expression. Smoke *indicates* fire (to a thinker) but does not *express* fire in the way that the spoken or written sign ‘fire’ expresses fire. When one cries out to a neighbor, “The barn is on fire!” the utterance both expresses a meaning (that the barn is on fire) and indicates a mental state (one’s perceptual judging that the barn is on fire). In everyday discourse we typically dwell in the expressed meanings and not the indicated mental states. Husserl refers to this form of indication, specific to communicative speech or writing, as *intimation*. Intimation, however, is not essential to the meaningful, expressive nature of an utterance. Insofar as an utterance performs a *communicative* function, intimation is essential. The neighbor in the example above must take the utterance to be honestly conveying someone’s perceptual judgment, if communication is to function properly. As Husserl points out, however, the communicative function of expressions is a subsidiary function since expressions are still meaningful in solitary life. Soliloquy is still meaningful despite having no communicative function (*LI*, I, § 8, 190).

After showing that meaning is not essentially tied to communicative acts, Husserl pursues further distinctions. The meaning-conferring act (or “meaning-intention”) of a thinker, which makes even soliloquy-expressions meaningful, remains distinct from the ideal meaning itself, which is instanced in the act. Meaning-conferring acts and conferred meanings are also distinct from the objects referred to through them.

The issue of meaning takes precedence at this point for Husserl because it is key to understanding the issue set up by the *Prolegomena*: how an ideal meaning can enter into the real flux of experience and become the epistemic possession of a subject (*LI*, Introduction, § 2, 169). The mental acts of the subject that are intimated by verbal and written signs are precisely the contingent, natural, psychological realm that Husserl turns away from in his discussion of logic in the *Prolegomena* of the *LI*. Meaning does not originate in the real psychological acts of the speaker, but rather is *instanced* in them. Thus, the sense in which expressions intimate the mental acts of the speaker must be explained (or deferred) so that Husserl can direct his energies to the all-important meaningful essence of expression.

The concept of motivation, however, is meant to capture the experiential character common to all indications (and thus intimation). A speaker’s words express a meaning and *motivate* one’s understanding of certain mental features of the speaker. This understanding need not come in the form of explicit judgments: “it consists simply in the fact that the hearer *intuitively* takes the speaker to be a person who is expressing this or that, or as we certainly can say, *perceives* him as such” (*LI*, I, § 7, 189). Husserl introduces motivation during his initial discussion of indication, before specifying intimation as a subspecies. He identifies the essence of all forms of indication:

A thing is only properly an indication if and where it in fact serves to indicate something to some thinking being. If we wish to seize the pervasively common element here present we must refer back to such cases of 'live' functioning. In these we discover as a common circumstance the fact that certain objects or states of affairs *of whose reality someone has actual knowledge* indicate to him *the reality of certain other objects or states of affairs*, in the sense that *his belief in the reality of the one is experienced as a motive* (though as a non-insightful motive) *for a belief or surmise in the reality of the other.* (*LI*, I, § 2, 184).²

The essence of indication, for Husserl, lies in the peculiar "descriptive unity" binding mental acts with distinct objective correlates into a unitary experience with a unitary correlate. For example, smoke indicates fire to a thinker in that the thinker has "actual knowledge" of the smoke and the belief founded on this actual knowledge motivates his belief or surmise that there is fire. The thinker has actual knowledge of the smoke because it is evident to him in sensuous perception, but only a belief or surmise that there is fire because he cannot see it. The distinctness of these acts (visual perception, belief) and their correlates (smoke, fire) can be clarified upon reflection, but in the "motivational unity" of experience there is a singular experience with a "unitary state of affairs" as its objective correlate (*LI*, I, § 2, 184). This kind of objective correlate has a distinctive structure:

[T]hat certain things *may* or *must* exist, *since* other things have been given. This 'since', taken as expressing an objective connection, is the objective correlate of 'motivation' taken as a descriptively peculiar way of combining acts of judgment into a single act of judgment. (*LI*, I, § 2, 184).

The objective connection holding between distinct parts of a state of affairs, expressed by 'since', may be a connection of probability, as in the case of "the controversy as to whether volcanic phenomena do or do not indicate that the earth's interior is molten" (*LI*, I, § 3, 186), or an "ideal rule" pertaining to the propositional contents of a conclusion entailed by certain premises (*LI*, I, § 3, 185). Thus, motivation is a kind of relation essentially distinct from both contingent probability relations and necessary entailment relations. And yet, judgments in which states of affairs constituted by either of these objective relations are (often) experienced as unitary wholes in virtue of their occurring in the "context of motivation" within a thinker's experiential life (*LI*, I, § 3, 185). Explaining precisely how the motivational context of consciousness accommodates both judgments of probability *and* necessity requires a closer analysis of motivation's relation to the different notions of evidence discernable in Husserlian phenomenology.

² Translation modified; Findlay's translation of Husserl's parenthetical remark in this passage is not exact. Findlay translates the latter half of the passage as: "... in the sense that *his belief in the reality of the one is experienced* (though not at all evidently) *as motivating a belief or surmise in the reality of the other.*" I feel it is better to use "non-insightful motive" here for Husserl's "*ein nichteinsichtiges Motiv*" rather than "not at all evidently" (Cf. Hua. XIX/1, 31–32). The reason for this will become clear further along in the article, where I argue that Husserl did grant a kind of evidentiary weight to motives, just not the sort of "self-evidence" (which is Findlay's translation of *Evidenz*) that comes with insight (*einsichtig*). I owe thanks to an anonymous reviewer and Philip Freytag for help with this point.

1.3 *Analysis of Motivation in Terms of "Evidentiary Weight"*

While Husserl is clear that the experiential character of motivation is non-insightful, and thus different in kind from the insightful nature of what is "self-evident", it is helpful to think of motivation in terms of evidentiary weight. "Weight" is a nice metaphor here, especially when contrasted with the familiar ocular metaphors of evidence *qua* "insight" or "clarity". When some contents are presented in full intuitive givenness such as in the case of "straightforward" [*schlichter*] sensuous perception, they may *motivate* further contents in the sense that the motivated contents are *pressed upon* the thinker – i. e., the thinker *feels the weight* of the motivated contents to a certain degree, with more or less "conviction" [*Überzeugung*] (*LI*, I, § 2, 184). This felt-belongingness differs from the Humean associationist psychology of A "triggering" B in that the overall unity of motivating and motivated contents differs in kind from the kind of unity bestowed by causal succession:

If *A* summons *B* into consciousness, we are not merely simultaneously or successively conscious of both *A* and *B*, but we usually *feel* their connection forcing itself upon us, a connection in which the one points to the other and seems to belong to it. (*LI*, I, § 4, 187).

For example, upon hearing someone say "Please pass the salt", the directly experienced audible content of the spoken utterance motivates the hearer's understanding of that person as desiring the salt. The mental act of desiring the salt is *the speaker's*, and thus not something that can be directly experienced by the hearer. The speaker's mental act is presented to the hearer, however, in *some* manner. The hearer does not experience the auditory perception of the words and the understanding of the speaker's desire in a step-wise structure. The hearer does not consciously infer, as one would while working on a proof, that the speaker wants the salt after hearing his words. The hearer's auditory perception and doxastic state are parts of a unitary experience. Upon reflection one may parse the distinct mental acts and objective correlates that constitute this overall experience, and grasp that there is no essential connection between the words and the mental state.

Thus, we must explain the manner in which a speaker's words make his mental state evident. This form of evidence differs from the insightful self-evident nature of what Husserl calls "*Evidenz*". In the case of *Evidenz*, a meaning-intention is confirmed by a meaning-fulfilling act. For example, suppose one forms the belief that there is fire behind the wall. This is an unfulfilled meaning-intention: a state of affairs is *meant* here, but not directly (or "straightforwardly") *given*. Now suppose one climbs up the wall and looks down upon roaring flames. This would be a *meaning-fulfilling* act for the previous belief because now the meant state of affairs is directly given (via perception in this case, but Husserl also thought that imagination yield meaning-fulfilling acts). If X motivates Y, on the other hand, X does not make Y *self-evident*. Rather, X *attests to* Y in the sense that testimony in a court of law attests to the state of affairs in question. The distinction between these different kinds of evidence is easy to overlook when Husserl's "*Zeugnis ablegen*" is translated as "providing evidence for":

[In the case of indication] an object or state of affairs not merely recalls another, and so points to it, but also attests to the latter [*sondern der eine zugleich für den anderen Zeugnis ablegt*], fosters the presumption that it likewise exists, and makes us immediately feel this in the manner described above. (*LI*, I § 4, 187).³

The phenomenal character of “felt-belongingness” supplied by motivating contents explains the sense in which indications can make certain things evident, but we have yet to explain the role of motivation in cases of genuine demonstration, or proof, which are characterized by conscious step-wise inference with insight. What sense can we make of Husserl's comment that “we cannot avoid talking about ‘motivation’ in a general sense which covers strict demonstration as much as empirical indication”? (*LI*, I § 3, 186).

Here we may be tempted to say that the geometer's genuine insight into the ideal connections between premises and conclusion is constituted by motivation to the highest possible degree. This would place the judgments of indication and proof on a scale of motivational strength, thus rendering Husserl's comment about the “general sense of motivation” intelligible. We would be wrong, however, to conclude that insight is simply the ideal of motivated judgment. Husserl does say that “motivations within the framework of evidence” produce unities of consciousness correlative to instances of logical grounding (*Ideas II*, § 56, 232). We must be careful, however, not to confuse these motives of reason with the meaning-fulfilling acts that actually bestow self-evidence.

A rational motive impels a thinker to move from premises to conclusion, but the connection between the ideal meaning contents itself “extends its sway beyond the judgment here and now united by ‘motivation’” (*LI*, I, § 3, 185). The contents of the premises may provoke a thinker to draw a conclusion, but the insight that makes the connection between premises and conclusion evident is different in kind from motivation. Motivation is a function of meaning that gives rise to further acts of meaning, not intuitions. Since meaning-intentions have no evidence without fulfilling intuitions, motivated acts have a different epistemic essence from insightful acts. The precise nature of the ideal law connecting premises and conclusion can be grasped through “ideative reflection” on the contents themselves, while their unity in the experiential life of a judging thinker is constituted by the motivation.

Furthermore, the motivational unity that binds judgments in the rational context of purely logical thinking is no guarantee of validity:

Even invalid conclusions belong under the heading of motivation of reason. Their “material” is perhaps a sediment of previous acts of reason, but one which now comes forth in a confused unity and in that state maintains the thesis. Reason is a “relative” one here. (*Ideas II*, § 56, 233).

Past experience or rote learning may lead to something's being a “blind motive” for something else (*LI*, I § 3, 185). Husserl's most detailed elaborations on this

³ Translation modified. Findlay translates “*sondern der eine zugleich für den anderen Zeugnis ablegt*” as “but also provides evidence for the latter”, which is coherent, but may also lead the English reader to equivocate on the concept of evidence in Husserl's philosophy (cf. Hua XIX/1, 37).

theme come later in his career, in *Crisis* and *The Origin of Geometry*, where he distinguishes the “originary sense” of geometric insight from “sedimented” formulaic procedure whose originary sense may always be “reactivated” with self-evidence (*Crisis*, 46, 359).

As we have seen, Husserl characterizes the structure of a broad range of conscious life through his concept of motivation. Motivating contents press on us to varying degrees toward that which they motivate, binding analytically distinct mental acts into experiential wholes in virtue of a felt-belongingness. The motivation relation itself does not constitute the correlative objective relations found in nature or ideal logical space. Thus, Husserl passes over the concept of motivation rather quickly in the First Investigation since his focus is on the ideal meaningful nature of expression, and not on the mental states that expressions indicate. Motivation remains, however, an essential concept for understanding the different ways that contents play a role in experience, albeit in a non-insightful modality.

2. The Role of Motivation in Phenomenological Analysis

Husserl provides his most robust account of motivation in *Ideas II*, where it plays a central role in the analyses of both perception of physical objects (“thing-perception”) and understanding of other persons (“empathy”). Though there are important differences between these two forms of experience, a common thread connects them: experience presents objects as *unitary wholes*, despite the piecemeal, adumbrated structure we may discern upon reflection. Husserl makes this clear in the *LI* immediately after his initial explication of motivation:

All unity of experience, all empirical unity, whether of a thing, an event or of the order and relation of things, becomes a phenomenal unity through the felt mutual belongingness of the sides and parts that can be made to stand out as units in the apparent object before us ... The single item itself, in these various forward and backward references, is no mere experienced content, but an apparent object (or part, property etc., of the same) that appears only in so far as experience endows contents with a new phenomenological *character*, so that they no longer count separately, but help to present an object different from themselves. (*LI*, I, § 4, 187)

This passage resonates with analyses of perceptual constancy in the Sixth Investigation. As one glances at her desk, her experience is constituted by a continuous stream of percepts with different color tones, but her experience is as of a single object. A separate act of identification is not necessary to posit the identity of these percepts as parts of a self-same object (*LI*, VI, § 47, 285). While perceptual constancy does not function in exactly the same way as indication, both phenomena are examples of how experience endows its contents with a *unitary feel*, or to use more contemporary terms, a phenomenal character of unity:

In this field of facts [i. e., the unity of experience] the fact of indication also has its place, in virtue whereof an object or state of affairs not merely recalls another, and so points to it, but also provides evidence for the latter, fosters the presumption that it likewise exists, and makes us feel this immediately in the manner described above. (*LI*, I, § 4, 187).

Of course, the nature of the “evidence” in the case of indication is not the self-evidence of insight but rather the testimonial weight of motivation (see section 1.3 above).

In *Ideas II* Husserl deepens his analysis of the unity of experience, following the trajectory he laid out in the *LI*. Whereas in the *LI* Husserl speaks of all perceiving as “a web of partial-intentions, fused together in the unity of a single total intention” (*LI*, VI, § 10, 211; see also VI, § 47), in *Ideas II* he speaks of “thing-perception” in terms of “nexuses” or “webs of motivation” running through “the unitary intentionality in which a thing is given to me in one stroke” (*Ideas II* § 56, 236, see also 238f.). A brief detour through *Ideas I* will illustrate how Husserl comes to understand webs of partial intentions as webs of motivation.

Unitary meaning intentions present structured wholes rather than a collection of their parts, but this does not mean that these wholes are “given” in the strict sense of intuitive fullness. In fact, already in the *LI*, Husserl thought that meaning-intentions directed at physical things are *necessarily* indeterminate. Indefiniteness is a definite feature of such intentions (*LI*, VI, § 10, 210). In *Ideas I* he refers to this necessary indeterminateness as the “transcendent” nature of physical things. Physical things are transcendent in that the meanings through which we intend them necessarily characterize them incompletely:

Necessarily there always remains a horizon of determinable indeterminateness, no matter how far we go in our experience, no matter how extensive the continua of actual perceptions of the same thing may be through which we have passed. (*Ideas I*, § 44, 95; see also § 47, 53, 149).

This horizon of further possible thing-determinations is not a set of all the logically possible acts directed at a physical thing. Rather, the further “experienceableness” of a physical thing consists of possibilities “*motivated* in the concatenations of experience” (*Ideas I*, § 47, 106f.). For example, as one looks at a desk, it is an “empty” possibility that its unseen underside has ten legs instead of four (*Ideas I*, § 140, 337). Its having four legs is a motivated possibility in virtue of one’s background experiences and beliefs.

Thus, by the time of *Ideas II*, where Husserl undertook his studies in the constitution of objects in the realm of intentional experience, the motivation relation achieved a new prominence in his analyses. By considering the Ego as a person in relation to a surrounding world and to a community of other persons, Husserl comes to understand the motivation relation as the “fundamental lawfulness of the spiritual world” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 231). In the next section I will examine the role of motivation in thing-perception in more detail, which will lead to a brief discussion of Husserl’s notion of empathy and the role of motivation therein.

2.1 *Thing-perception*

As discussed above, when one looks at a desk, she only sees (in the strictest sense of intuitive fullness) a profile (*adumbration*), and not the entire desk. And yet, her experience is as of a complete desk, including the unseen sides. For Husserl,

this means that the unseen back and bottom parts of the desk are *appresented*, or “co-given”, along with the part that is directly given. The co-giveness of the unseen sides does not result from conscious inference, nor is it a kind of future-directed expectation (*LI*, VI, § 10, 211). Rather, the side that is given points to, or indicates, the existence of the other sides in that one “feels as if” there is a whole desk before her and not a mere desk façade.

In *Ideas II*, Husserl identifies active and passive variations of motivation operative in one’s relation to a desk (or any physical thing). In the active sense, the unity of the thing in one’s consciousness serves as a point of departure for a variety of motivated possibilities: one may seek to understand the thing theoretically, evaluate it aesthetically, or find a practical use for it. All of these possibilities weigh on one to varying degrees depending on one’s background and current situation. Husserl calls this form of motivation “Ego-motivation” or “motivation of reason” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 234). This form of motivation is characterized by meaning-intentions of the form “in consequence of” (*ibid.*, 238–239). Husserl uses this characterization to convey the active sense of motivation in that motives of this form compel one to *do* something.⁴ For example, one’s judgment that this desk will be a suitable workstation occurs in consequence of her taking it to be sturdy, solid, smooth, etc.

Motivation operates in a more passive way at a basic level of thing-perception. The intuitive qualities of physical things, as they present themselves to someone, “prove to be dependent on [his] qualities, *the make-up of the experiencing subject*, and to be related to *[his] Body and [his] ‘normal sensibility’*” (*ibid.* § 18, 61). As one perceives some features of the thing before him in a straightforward manner, these visual percepts are functionally correlated with his current kinesthetic and postural percepts (i. e. the feeling of how his eyes are positioned, how his head is angled, etc.). Due to this functional correlation, series or systems of kinesthetic sensations motivate the continuation (or cessation) of the current visual perception. There is a “familiar order” of kinesthetic sensations “interwoven” into the manifold of visual perception that conditions how things appear:

We constantly find here this two-fold articulation: kinesthetic sensations on the one side, the motivating; and the sensations of features on the other, the motivated. (*Ideas II*, § 18, 63).

Here, one may object that the distinction between “active” and “passive” motivation is becoming vague, or even incoherent. Indeed, Husserl recognizes that the perceptual experiences we typically understand as “passive takings” essentially include an active element.⁵ The “in consequence of” structure is present even in the basic kinesthetic motivations described above: certain features of a thing appear in consequence of one’s eyes shifting or head turning. I still find the active/passive distinction useful here because these basic kinesthetic motivations are ingrained in us to the point where they are hardly noticeable.

⁴ “[I]n a certain sense the subject is always “doing something” here, even in purely logical thinking” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 233).

⁵ See Nöe 2004 for a contemporary analysis of the essential connection between action and perception.

There is, however, an even more fundamental form of motivation that we may understand as completely passive. This is the kind of motivation “*included in the form of inner time-consciousness*” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 239). A full examination of the role of motivation in Husserl's analyses of time-consciousness is obviously beyond the scope of this article. It is worth pointing out, however, that Husserl includes a brief discussion of this topic in *Ideas II*. In the midst of unpacking the subtle distinctions between more-or-less active forms of motivation, Husserl wonders how the motivational unity of experience could apply to sudden experiences that seemingly have no felt connection to what precedes them. A meteor shower lighting up the night sky or the sudden crack of a whip are examples of how not every meaning-intention is one “in consequence of” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 239). Nevertheless, the felt mutual-belongingness of motivational unity remains ever-present in the absolutely fixed form of inner time-consciousness,

in virtue of which the judgmental positing “Now this is” conditions the futural positing “Something will be,” or again, “Now I have a lived experience” conditions “It was a lived experience previously.” Here we have a judgment motivated by another judgment, *but prior to the judgment the temporal forms themselves motivate each other*. In this sense we can say that even the pervasive unity of the stream of consciousness is a unity of motivation. (*Ideas II*, § 56, 239, my emphasis).

Thus, Husserl moves from the phenomenal unity that characterizes thing-perception to the most basic unity of consciousness – inner time-consciousness – by way of motivation.

2.2 Empathy

Just as thing-perception occurs “in one stroke,” and not through a piece-by-piece series of positings, awareness of other persons occurs in a unitary fashion. One does not perceive other bodies and then infer that they are conscious beings. Rather, “We find *unitary* human beings” (*Ideas II*, § 56, 246). Here again we may discern active and passive variations of motivation.

In the most basic and passive sense, motivation functions in one's awareness of other persons through one's awareness of their bodies as centers of orientation in relation to a shared world of physical things. The very sense of the physical world, as constituted by thing-perception, depends on one's understanding of every point in space as a possible “here”, from which a possible “there” may be regarded. Husserl claims that we grasp this in virtue of the motility of our own bodies, but also through a grasp of the possibility of this “here” being the viewpoint of another subject (*Ideas II*, § 18, 88; see also § 46, 176).⁶ Motivation functions on this basic level in that one's sensuous perception of other bodies is woven into a “system of appresentations” which indicate the inner experiences of others as analogous with one's own basic sensorial fields (of vision, touch, etc.). The movements of others indicate their experiential states in the context of motivation: one's awareness of

⁶ See also Zahavi 1997 for an examination of Husserl's theories of horizon and intersubjectivity and their relation to perception.

another person's bodily orientation is felt as making it more or less plausible that that person is having certain kinds of experiences.

A slightly less passive form of motivation operates in empathic awareness in the realm of communicative understanding. Husserl's discussion of intimation in the First Investigation already contains a proto-theory of empathy. Recall that intimation is the subspecies of indication specific to the communicative function of expression:

To understand an intimation is not to have conceptual knowledge of it, not to judge in the sense of asserting anything about it: it consists simply in the fact that the hearer *intuitively* takes the speaker to be a person who is expressing this or that, or as we certainly can say, *perceives* him as such. (*LI*, I § 7, 189)

Husserl goes on to clarify that our intuitive grasp of others as manifesting their inner experiential lives to us in speech is not a form of *adequate* intuition, but intuitive in a more general sense. Here we can see a fundamental distinction between thing-perception and empathy: while both present their objects with a built-in indeterminacy, the indeterminacy in thing-perception stands under the possibility of being brought to further and further determinateness. The indeterminacy that we find in empathic experience remains inaccessible in principle. The inner experiences of the other that constitute an essential part of empathy's intentional object can only be experienced in "primal presence" by the other herself. Thus, in everyday spoken discourse, a hearer's attention is primarily directed to the expressed meaning of the speaker's words, but motivation functions here as the hearer experiences the speaker's words as belonging to the speaker's communicative intention. Motivational weight will not press upon the hearer very heavily in most cases of mundane, honest discourse. Motivation will play a more active role, however, when the communicative intentions of the speaker are less clear.

When a speaker utters "Yeah, right" in a certain tone, the hearer takes the speaker as being ironic, as not actually agreeing with what was just said. In such instances hearers do not dwell in the literal meaning of the expression, but rather on the intimated mental act of the speaker. In such a case what is "meant" is the doubt of the speaker, and the hearers understands this on the basis of the indication relation between the speaker's words and his mental state rather than on the expressive relation between an utterance and the ideal meaning it tokens. As I hope to have made clear by now, this indication relation functions in a motivational context of consciousness. If we extrapolate from this simple example, we may see how motivation is involved with all problems of interpreting behavior.

The most sophisticated form of empathizing occurs in what Husserl calls the "personalistic attitude." In order to understand another person one must first of all recognize that the other is *subject* to motives. If an interpreter judges that "He took out the trash because he is afraid of his wife", the "because" expressed here does not express a "causality of nature (a real causality)" but rather "the motivational because" (*Ideas II*, § 56, 242). One judges that the interpretee's knowledge of the full-trash-can state of affairs (in conjunction with background angry-wife-experiences) are *felt* by him in such a way as to motivate his belief that taking

out the trash would be wise. Of course, the interpreter's own motivations are in play here as well, since certain of the interpretee's actions stand in indicating relations to various beliefs, surmises, evaluations, etc. that the interpreter may have about such actions in virtue of my his own background. Succinctly put, just as we understand nature in terms of causality, we understand personal behavior in terms of motivation.

Conclusion

Motivation is a phenomenological concept pertaining to the structure of experience that is introduced in the *LI* and resonates throughout Husserl's overall phenomenological project. If we consider Husserl's conception of the task of phenomenology more broadly, we can see, from another angle, why Husserl passes over motivation so quickly in the First Investigation – and perhaps why this concept has not received explicit attention amongst contemporary phenomenology scholars.⁷ The operant function of motivation is what Husserl seeks to overcome in his pursuit of phenomenological rigor. Phenomenological analysis is difficult precisely because it goes against the grain of our everyday motives:

The source of all such difficulties lies in the unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires. Instead of becoming lost in the performance of acts built intricately on one another, and instead of (as it were) naïvely positing the existence of the objects intended in their sense and then going on to characterize them, or of assuming such object hypothetically, of drawing conclusions from all this etc., we must rather practice 'reflection', i. e. make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our objects. (*LI*, I, § 3, 170)

In the natural attitude we dwell in the meaningful contents of our mental activity, "living through" mental acts rather than reflecting on them. The radicality of phenomenological reflection lies in the need to resist the typical motivated chains of consciousness that characterize everyday experience. In reflection we can trace the motivated possibilities that weigh on us in a particular act, and in this way discover the manner in which the act's sense [*Sinn*] prescribes an implicit horizon of possible experiences and further object-determinations. Thus, motivated concatenations of experience in everyday life drastically differ from the kind of consciousness we take up in phenomenological reflection. Shifting from the "plain sailing" of everyday naïveté to the "hardship" of phenomenological rigor is difficult because it requires us to push back against the weight of our typical motivations (*LI*, I, § 10, 194).

⁷ Motivation is discussed in a handful of places, but a focused treatment of this concept has proven elusive. See, e.g., Mohanty 1995, Mulligan 1995, and Smith 1995, all in Smith and Smith 1995. See also, Steinbock 2001. Edith Stein provides one of the best explications of motivation in her dissertation, *On the Problem of Empathy* (Stein 1989). Merleau-Ponty also considered motivation an important phenomenological concept (Merleau-Ponty 2002). For an excellent discussion of motivation in Merleau-Ponty, see Wrathall 2005.

In this very act of “pushing back”, however, we may come to see how our motives play a constitutive role in a broad variety of forms of experience. Husserl’s analyses of thing-perception and empathy are prominent examples of the importance of motivation in phenomenological research. These analyses in *Ideas II* lay the groundwork for Husserl’s mature theory of intersubjectivity and his concept of the lifeworld. Furthermore, as was briefly discussed above, motivation plays a crucial role in Husserl’s analysis of inner time-consciousness. Though closer and more detailed analyses of each of these particular facets of Husserlian phenomenology have been underway since the inception of phenomenology, a straightforward account of the role of motivation, and its initial presentation in the *LI* helps to clarify a distinct thread in Husserl’s complex, interconnected writing style. Authors have noted that when reading Husserl, often times one must, in a sense, understand his entire philosophy in order to understand a single paragraph, or even a single sentence.⁸ Though this may be true, a thoroughgoing consideration of motivation in the *LI* and elsewhere is very useful for Husserl scholarship. It provides us with a holistic view of Husserl’s work while simultaneously limiting our focus to one facet of Husserl’s idea that the way we experience the world constitutes the objects of our experience. Thus, an account of motivation is both historically and philosophically interesting. Its historical role in Husserl’s thought shows the consistency and overall coherence of his work. Its importance for phenomenology extends beyond Husserl’s writings, providing us with a way to describe the sense in which we perceive physical things and other subjects in a unitary fashion despite our perspectival limitations.⁹

References

- Crisis Husserl, E. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Carr (trs.) 1970. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Hua XIX/1–2 Husserl, E. *Logische Untersuchungen II*. Panzer (ed.) 1984. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Ideas I Husserl, E. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book*. Kersten (trs.) 1998. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Ideas II Husserl, E. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book*. Rojcewicz/Schuwer (trs.) 1989. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- LI Husserl, E. *Logical Investigations*, vols. 1 & 2. Findlay (trs.) 2001. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. 2002. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Smith (trs.). London/New York: Routledge.
- Mohanty, J. N. 1995. The Development of Husserl’s Thought. In: Smith, B./Smith D. W. (eds.) 1995. *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 45–77.

⁸ Smith 2007 refers to this as Husserl’s “holographic” writing style.

⁹ I would like to thank David Woodruff Smith, Charles Siewert, Mark Wrathall, and an anonymous reviewer for comments on previous drafts of this paper.

- Mulligan, K. 1995. Perception. In: Smith, B./Smith D. W. (eds.) 1995. *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 168–238.
- Nöe, A. 2004. *Action in Perception*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Smith, D. W. 1995. Mind and Body. In: Smith, B./Smith D. W. (eds.) 1995. *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 323–393.
- Smith, D. W. 2007. *Husserl*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Stein, E. 1989. *On the Problem of Empathy*. Stein (trs.). Washington, D. C.: ICS.
- Steinbock, A. 2001. Translator's Introduction. In: Husserl, E. *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*. Steinbock (trs.) 2001. Dordrecht: Kluwer, xv-lxv.
- Wrathall, M. 2005. Motives, Reasons, and Causes. In: Carman, T./Hansen, M. B. N. (eds.) 2005. *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 111–128.
- Zahavi, D. 1997. Horizontal Intentionality and Transcendental Intersubjectivity. *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 59 304–321.