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Fulfillment in Perception: A Critique of Alva Noë's Enactive View

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

FULFILLMENT IN PERCEPTION: A CRITIQUE OF ALVA NOË'S ENACTIVE
VIEW

By

Kristjan Laasik

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

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VIEW

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In an apparently original and radical departure from mainstream ideas, Alva Noë argues that perception does not kind of active engagement with the environment. According to Noë's enactive view, visual perception requires "sensorimotor knowhow": the perceiver needs to have certain perceptual skills and expectations. In his influential book *Action in Perception*, Noë develops the enactive view as solution to the "problem of perceptual presence," the problem of how to conceive of "the presence of that which, strictly speaking, I do not perceive" (Noë 2004, p. 60). According to Noë, the problem arises in various cases, e.g., the unattended parts of the perceptual scene, as well as objects' back sides. Noë argues that it can be solved by appeal to the idea of sensorimotor knowhow.

In a challenge to Noë, I argue for the thesis that his enactive view, as he states it in *Action in Perception*, does not succeed in solving or even adequately motivating the problem of perceptual presence, unless a Husserlian strand in his view is complemented by further Husserlian notions, especially fulfillment. For example, Noë has difficulty establishing that there even is a problem concerning the presence of the object's back side. The prevalent view is that the object's back sides are not perceptually present, i.e.,

they are not, *in any sense*, seen by the perceivers, and Noë has offered no argument to the contrary.

Noë's problem of perceptual presence is, in fact, ambiguous: there are two quite different problems and it takes quite different resources to solve them. *First*, there is the problem that the unattended parts of the perceptual scene may not be *genuinely* present to us: Noë presents us with empirical data which suggest that what seems to be plainly in view can be, "strictly speaking," not seen by us. We may be subject to an illusion when we regard ourselves as having experience of the entire detailed scene. But Noë argues that the entire scene is genuinely present in the sense that it is readily accessible, by shifting one's attention or making eye movements.

Second, in cases like the object's back side we are dealing with a different problem altogether. Noë concedes that the back side is not, "strictly speaking," seen by the perceiver. Nevertheless, he argues, it is perceptually present, giving rise to the problem of how to account for its perceptual presence. Noë's solution is that it is present by virtue of our having perceptual expectations about it. Notice that we cannot appeal to possible access to solve this problem: it may be impossible for the perceiver, say, to go round a house, to take a look.

Husserl is centrally concerned with the latter problem, and the view Noë develops to solve it is rightly interpreted as a sketch of Husserl's view, but it needs to be complemented with the crucial idea of fulfillment. When I look at an object, I experience the front side differently from the back side. This phenomenal difference can be captured by calling the experience of the front side "intuitive" and the experience of the back side "empty." When I turn the object around, there is fulfillment, i.e., what was experienced

emptily comes to be experienced intuitively. The back side can be regarded as perceptually present in the sense that we can have fulfillments (or disappointments) with regard to it. Husserl investigates perceptual content as determining fulfillment conditions, and not as determining accuracy conditions, as in the mainstream views. He engages in a kind of conceptual analysis, e.g., of the concept of shape or color, by investigating the fulfillment conditions pertinent to shape or color. Noë's perceptual expectations are part of the Husserlian framework: they function to set the fulfillment conditions. Noë has given us parts and aspects of a comprehensive Husserlian framework. I aim to contribute to our understanding of it, and thereby of Noë's enactive view.

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Introduction

According to Alva Noë's enactive view of perception, visual perception requires "sensorimotor knowhow." This means that the perceiver needs to have certain perceptual skills and sensorimotor expectations, i.e., expectations concerning how the object would appear to him if he moved in certain ways in relation to it. For example, I might have a sensorimotor expectation to the effect that if I moved to look at the tennis ball from the other side, it would appear yellow, though a shade darker than it appears now.

Noë's view has been received with considerable excitement and interest, and has generated a great deal of discussion in recent years, since it appears an original and radical departure from mainstream ideas in philosophy of mind and philosophy of perception. For example, most philosophers believe that perceptual experiences "represent" objects and their properties, but Noë regards his idea of sensorimotor knowhow as providing an alternative to mainstream representationalist approaches: if we can speak about perceptual representations at all, it will be in some novel sense that duly appreciates the role of sensorimotor knowhow in perception. Noë also argues that the idea of sensorimotor knowhow enables us to close the notorious explanatory gap, viz., by solving the problem that no matter how much objective neurophysiological investigation we engage in, and no matter how good an account we thereby develop, it still seems that we have not explained why the subpersonal neurophysiological processes should give rise to subjective experience, or give rise to qualia. In his influential book *Action in Perception* (Noë 2004), Noë has also articulated a distinctive view of perceptual constancy, and he regards it as being at the very core of his book.

These are some examples of ideas that Noë has contributed to interdisciplinary debates in philosophy and the cognitive sciences. It is widely believed that he may have succeeded in developing a new paradigm for interdisciplinary study of mind and perception, a framework that is remarkably integrative and transformative. It does not like boundaries, or at least ones that we may have drawn without sufficient critical reflection, viz., between perception and thought, perception and action, the personal and the subpersonal level, the mind and the world.

In *Action in Perception*, Noë develops his view as solution to what he calls the “problem of perceptual presence.” In Noë’s words, the problem of perceptual presence is the problem of how to conceive of “the presence of that which, strictly speaking, we do not perceive” (Ibid., p. 60). In the present dissertation, I will argue for the thesis that Noë cannot solve or even adequately motivate the problem, unless a certain Husserlian strand in his view is complemented by other Husserlian ideas, especially the idea of fulfillment.

I will briefly explain the “problem of perceptual presence” and my views regarding the way Noë approaches it. He claims that the problem arises in a variety of different cases, viz., the unattended aspects of the perceptual scene, the back sides and occluded parts of objects, and the constant properties. I believe that there are two quite different problems, instead of just one “problem of perceptual presence,” and they are solved by appeal to quite different resources. On one hand, there is the problem that the unattended parts of the perceptual scene may not be genuinely present to us: Noë presents us with empirical data which suggest that they are, “strictly speaking,” not seen by us. This gives rise to the problem that we may be subject to an illusion when we regard ourselves as having experience of the entire detailed scene. For example, when we look at

Andy Warhol's "Marilyn Diptych," an entire wall's breadth of Marilyns, we may regard ourselves as having experience of the entire wall, but Noë points to empirical results suggesting that outside the narrow focus of our attention we really only experience a few lines and patches of color. If we believe otherwise, we are confabulating. However, Noë argues that he can solve the problem by appeal to possible access. The entire scene is genuinely present in the sense that it is readily accessible: I can turn my attention from one Marilyn to another, and move my eyes, thereby accessing different parts of the painting. (I will call this problem the "problem of perceptual presence*.")

However, in cases like the object's back side, but also the occluded parts, and the constant properties, we are dealing with a different problem altogether. Take, for example, the object's back side. Noë concedes that it is not, "strictly speaking," seen by the perceiver. Nevertheless, he argues, its presence is genuine, giving rise to the problem of how to account for its being part of our perceptual experience. Noë's solution is that it is present in the sense that we have sensorimotor expectations about it. (I will call this problem the "problem of perceptual presence" (no asterisk).)

The first problem is solved by appeal to the idea of possible access, the second by appeal to sensorimotor expectations. Notice that these resources cannot be combined in either of the two cases I have discussed. In the former case, the wall of Marilyns, I already take the Marilyns to be present, I take them to be in view. I do not expect that they will come into view if I move in certain ways or direct my attention to them—although I can certainly have expectations concerning some details, ones that I do not take to be in view now, or expectations concerning how my perspective of the Marilyns will change if I move in certain ways. In the second case, viz., the object's back side, I

need sensorimotor expectations but I cannot say that the presence of the back side of a house, say, requires that it be accessible. Something may prevent me from going over to the back to take a look.

These problems are quite different from each other, and solving them takes two quite different sets of ideas. The problem of perceptual presence* arises if one pursues a kind of Dennettian line, allowing for the possibility that cognitive science can provide evidence to the effect that we are confabulating about the nature and extent of our experience, as well as blurring the line between the personal and subpersonal levels. The problem of perceptual presence (without the asterisk) is rightly interpreted as the central problem of Husserl's philosophy of perception, and Noë attempts to solve it by giving us a sketch of Husserl's view. However, crucial parts are missing from that sketch, especially the idea of fulfillment. Unless we complement Noë's view with further Husserlian ideas, Noë cannot even establish that there is a problem concerning the presence of the object's back side. The prevalent view is that the objects' back sides simply are not perceptually present, they are not seen by perceivers in any sense, and Noë has offered no argument to the contrary.

Husserl's philosophy centers on the ideas of intuition and fulfillment. When I look at an object, the way I experience the front side differs from the way I experience the back side. To capture this phenomenal difference, let us call the experience of the front side "intuitive" and the experience of the back side "empty." When emptily given aspects of the object come to be given intuitively—e.g., when I turn the object around—there is what we may call "fulfillment." The back side is perceptually present to us in the sense that our experience of the object is open to fulfillments with regard to the back side.

I believe that Husserl regards perceptual content as determining fulfillment conditions, and not as determining accuracy conditions, as in the mainstream views. I am not aware of anybody's presently defending such a view of perceptual content, and I do not know of anybody who has clearly and explicitly attributed such a view to Husserl, in current philosophical context. A great deal of work will need to be done to flesh out and explicate the view, involving interpretation of central aspects of Husserl's philosophy, such as the phenomenological method. In my dissertation I will explore the view to the extent that I need, in order to argue for my claims concerning Noë's enactive view. As I have said, I believe that one of the two major strands in Noë's view is rightly interpreted as amounting to a kind of sketch of Husserl's view. I welcome Noë's use of Husserlian ideas, but we need to do more work to better understand these ideas.

In my first chapter I will argue that Noë does not succeed in solving or even adequately motivating the problem that he calls "the problem of perceptual presence." Indeed, this problem is ambiguous, and Noë's approach to it encounters various difficulties.

In my second chapter, I will argue that Husserl investigates the content of perceptual experience as determining fulfillment conditions, not as determining accuracy conditions. I will develop a distinctive interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology, viz., that it needs to be regarded as investigation of fulfillment conditions and the necessary aspects of how they are set. I will argue that the entire interpretation needs to be developed on the basis of these core ideas. I will also argue that several interpreters of Husserl's phenomenology have not developed adequate accounts of these important ideas, and their interpretations prevent us from grasping the parallels between Husserl's

and Noë's views. The idea of fulfillment conditions is one that Noë does not have, but it complements his views naturally and he needs it, in order for his view to work.

In the third chapter, I will argue that the view Noë develops as his solution to the problem of perceptual presence (without the asterisk) is rightly interpreted as a sketch of Husserl's view. The problem of perceptual presence can be adequately motivated and solved if we complement the Husserlian strand in Noë's view with other Husserlian ideas, especially the idea of fulfillment.

Chapter 1: Alva Noë's Enactive View of Perception

1. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter I will argue that Noë does not succeed in solving or even adequately motivating the problem he refers to as “the problem of perceptual presence.” Indeed, his view of the problem is ambiguous and faces difficulties on either of the two readings of the problem.

In section 2 I will argue that Noë's solution to the “problem of perceptual presence” runs into various difficulties, and that the ways he motivates the problem are not convincing either. In section 3 I will therefore proceed to disambiguate between two readings of the problem Noë aims to address. There are, in fact, two quite different problems where Noë sees just one: the problem of perceptual presence* and the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks). They are solved, respectively, by appeal to what I will refer to as “virtual presence” and “presence as absence.” Something is virtually present if it is accessible, something is present as absent if we have the relevant sensorimotor expectations about it. I will argue that Noë's views remain problematic even when disambiguated.

In sections 4-7 I will consider different cases and versions of Noë's “problem of perceptual presence,” always working to disambiguate the problem and determine whether we are dealing with the problem of perceptual presence* or the problem of perceptual presence. In section 4, I argue that Noë does not succeed in dissolving the explanatory gap, which he aims to do by eliminating qualia and arguing that all perceptual presence is virtual. In section 5, I argue that Noë's idea that perceptual

presence comes in degrees, and that ultimately more or less everything in the world around us is present to us, although by a very small degree, pertains solely to the idea of virtual presence, and not at all to the notion of presence as absence. It is acceptable to claim that virtual presence comes in degrees, or that there are degrees of access, but inflating or globalizing perceptual presence is completely unnecessary and undesirable. In section 6 I argue that Noë's application of the idea of presence as absence to the problems of perceptual constancy faces a difficulty, and it is hard to see why we should not go with an alternative view, the so-called "complex view," that does not encounter the same difficulty. In section 7 I will raise a problem for Noë's application of the idea of presence as absence to the problem of how we experience the past phases of a piece of music that we have been hearing.

2. "The Problem of Perceptual Presence"

In *Action in Perception* (Noë 2004), Noë develops his enactive view as solution to what he refers to as the "problem of perceptual presence." It is the central problem of the book. In the present section I will discuss the problem as Noë conceives of it, hence my use of the quotation marks in the section title and when talking about Noë's problem throughout the section. I will argue that Noë does not succeed in solving or even adequately motivating the "problem of perceptual presence" in some of his core cases. The difficulties that arise for Noë will lead me, in the next section, to consider the possibility that Noë's "problem of perceptual presence" may be ambiguous, and that in fact there are several problems that should not be conflated.

The aim of the present section is to introduce the reader to the issues and give the reader a sense of what Noë does and the kind of terminology that Noë uses. We will find that Noë alternates between different terms and ways of phrasing his views. For example, he speaks about what is available or accessible to the perceiver, and what the perceiver takes to be accessible, as well as about perceivers' sensorimotor knowhow and sensorimotor expectations, and about presence as absence and virtual presence. These and other terms that Noë uses, and between which he alternates, sometimes raise considerable interpretative challenges, such as worries that by switching from one expression to another Noë may not just be paraphrasing his ideas but moving from one idea to a quite different idea.

I wish to make a dialectical point before I proceed to examine Noë's views. First, Noë raises the "problem of perceptual presence" in several different cases. In this and the next section I will discuss certain core cases. Namely, when he raises the problem by appeal to phenomena such as change blindness and inattention blindness, he discusses the "problem of perceptual presence" in relation to aspects of the perceptual scene. We need to think in terms of the larger scene that opens up before us when we have perceptual experience. There are probably several objects there and there may be movements and changes. Second, he talks about the back side of the perceptual object. Now we are considering a single object, such as a tennis ball or a tomato, and issues pertaining to change are not salient. According to Noë, there are other relevant cases and versions of the "problem of the perceptual presence," but I will discuss them in separate sections of the present chapter. What we can take away from this and the next section pertains to certain core cases. There will be reason to believe that the same issues and

themes are going to be relevant in discussing the other cases, but we must be open to the possibility that the other cases raise some new issues, or that Noë's arguments may prove successful in some special cases, even if they do not succeed across the board or in the cases I discuss in the first two sections.

Done with the preliminaries, we may now proceed to the problem itself. The task of accounting for the presence of the unattended aspects arises from Noë and O'Regan's discussion of the phenomena of change blindness and inattentional blindness (O'Regan and Noë 2001, p. 954; Noë 2004, pp. 51-53). Change blindness is the failure of subjects to notice changes in the perceptual scene that happen ostensibly in full view. For example, the subject looking at a photo of a street may fail to notice the disappearance of a street curb in full view, as photos change in the slide show. The phenomenon occurs due to visual disruptions, such as eye saccades, or masking events to which subjects are exposed in laboratory conditions. The interpretation of change blindness is a contentious matter, but Noë and O'Regan argue that what it shows is that aspects of the perceptual scene, even though they seem to be in full view of the subject, are actually merely available to him. He only actually sees the aspects to which he is attending, and the rest are merely available in the sense that he can easily turn his attention to them, especially if alerted by changes in the visual scene, outside the scope of what he is attending to at present. The masking event basically interferes with his ability to keep track of the visual scene outside the narrow scope of his present attention, and thereby renders aspects like the street curb temporarily *unavailable* to him.

In the case of inattentional blindness, Noë and O'Regan's interpretation is essentially similar. They regard inattentional and change blindness as kindred

phenomena. Inattentional blindness occurs when experimenters invite the subjects to focus on a certain task requiring them to attend to what goes on in the visual scene. For example, in a well-known case the subjects are required to count the passes among people playing basketball in a film clip shown to them. While they are so occupied, a person in a gorilla suit walks into the scene and moves around in full view of the subjects watching the film clip, many of whom fail to notice him. Once again, for Noë and O'Regan, this shows that what we actually see is restricted by the scope of our present attention, and the rest of the visual scene is at best available to us, although in some cases it may even become unavailable, as when we are engrossed in counting the passes and fail to see the gorilla. For example, the gorilla in the experiment is unavailable in the sense that it is nomically impossible for us to turn our attention to it and make perceptual contact with it, given the makeup of our visual system *and* the demands made on our attention elsewhere, as we strive to count the basketball passes.

I will quote certain passages where Noë states and exemplifies the “problem of perceptual presence.” His starting point is with cases like change blindness and inattentional blindness, but he finds the problem in other cases, too. In the first quotation, he refers to a kind of skepticism in his statement of the problem. It is a skepticism with regard whether we ever have the kind of rich and detailed perceptual experiences that we take ourselves to have. The possibility that we do not is referred to by Noë as the Grand Illusion scenario. I wish to set this idea aside for now, in order to give it due attention later, especially in the next section. Noë introduces the “problem of perceptual presence” as follows,

If we are not to fall back into the grip of the sceptic's worry, we must explain how it is we can enjoy perceptual experience of unattended

features of a scene. Let us call this the problem of perceptual presence (Noë 2002, p. 8)

One of the results of change blindness is that we only see, we only experience, that to which we attend. But surely it is a basic fact of our phenomenology that we enjoy a perceptual awareness of at least some unattended features of the scene. So, for example, I may look at you, attending only to you. But I also have a sense of the presence of the wall behind you in the background, or its color, of its distance from you. It certainly seems this way. If we are not to fall back into the grip of the new skepticism, we must explain how it is we can enjoy perceptual experience of unattended features of a scene. Let us call this the problem of perceptual presence.

More generally, we can ask: In what does our sense of the presence of the detailed environment consist, if not in the fact that we see it? How can it seem to us as if the world is present to us visually in all its details without its seeming to us as if we *see* all that detail? (Noë 2004, p. 59-60).

We can see that the setup of the “problem of perceptual presence” involves the premise that there are two phenomenally distinct kinds of experience. That the difference between the two is indeed phenomenal, as opposed to say, just a matter of their subpersonal etiology, can be gleaned from the last paragraph of the quotation. On one hand, there is the experience of actually seeing something, or seeing something, “strictly speaking” (Ibid., p. 60). On the other hand there is the experience of something’s being present even though one is not experiencing it as actually seen. Further, it is part of the setup that the presence of what is not attended to, or what is “strictly unseen” (Ibid., p. 65.), is *perceptual*—Noë says that this is a “basic fact of our phenomenology.” So the “problem of perceptual presence” is not about furnishing an account of how such presence can be perceptual, and it does not appear to be the problem of accounting for such presence in terms of subpersonal etiology. Instead, it is the problem concerning what, as Noë affirms, amounts to genuine perceptual presence. The “problem of perceptual presence” is, in Noë’s own words, the problem of what our sense of this kind of presence consists in.

Having introduced the problem in *Action in Perception*, he at once proceeds to articulate the problem in the case of the parts of the object that are out of view,

To begin to see our way clear to a solution of the problem of perceptual presence, consider, as an example, a perceptual experience such as that you might enjoy if you were to hold a bottle in your hands with eyes closed. [ftn. 36] You have a sense of the presence of a whole bottle, even though you only make contact with the bottle at a few isolated points. Can we explain how your experience in this way outstrips what is actually given, or must we concede that your sense of the bottle as a whole is a kind of confabulation?

Or consider a different case: A cat sits motionless on the far side of a picket fence. You have a sense of the presence of a cat even though, strictly speaking, you only see those parts of the cat that show through the fence. How is it that we can in this way enjoy a perceptual experience of the whole cat?

These are instances of the problem of perceptual presence. We have a sense of the presence of that which, strictly speaking, we do not perceive....

Crucially—and this is a phenomenological point—the cat and the bottle seem present as wholes, *perceptually*. The strictly unseen environmental detail seems perceptually present even though we do not see it all at once. We do not merely *think* that these features are present. Indeed, this sense of perceptual presence does not depend on the availability of the corresponding belief (Ibid., p. 60).

As we see in the first sentence of the quotation, for Noë it is precisely cases like the ones he describes in the quotation that should help us see our way to the solution of the problem. However, the quoted passages do not yet state the solution. Rather, the solution is explicitly stated a few pages later.

If we get clearer about the phenomenology in the way I am suggesting, then we can see that our sense of the perceptual presence of the cat as a whole now does not require us to be committed to the idea that we represent the whole cat in consciousness at once. What it requires, rather, is that we take ourselves to have *access*, now, to the whole cat. The cat, the tomato, the bottle, the detailed scene, all are present perceptually in the sense that they are perceptually accessible to us. They are present to perception as accessible. They are, in this sense, *virtually* present.

The ground of this accessibility is our possession of sensorimotor skills.... In particular, the basis of perceptual presence is to be found in those skills whose possession is constitutive, in the ways I have been

proposing, of sensory perception. My relation to the cat behind the fence is mediated by such facts as that, when I blink, I lose sight of it altogether, but when I move a few inches to the right, a part of its side that was previously hidden comes into view. My sense of the perceptual presence, now, of that which is now hidden behind a slat in the fence, consists in my expectation that by moving my body I can produce the right sort of “new cat” situation (Ibid., pp. 63).

In a nutshell, Noë’s answer is that the unattended aspects of the scene and the parts of the object that are out of view are all “virtually present.” The idea of virtual presence is articulated in two central respects. First, there is what Noë refers to as accessibility: something is virtually present to the perceiver if it is possible for him to access it, to enter into the appropriate causal relation with it. Change blindness, on the contrary, is a case where some aspect of the scene, such as the street curb before us, is not even virtually present: we are not actually accessing it and it is not even possible for us to access it right now, because of a saccade or a masking event. Second, there is the idea that that we have relevant kinds of expectations about what we are not actually seeing. They are expectations to the effect that if one moved in certain ways in relation to the object or the scene, it would present certain aspects to view. These expectations are called by Noë sensorimotor expectations. Noë also phrases his solution in terms of “sensorimotor knowhow” or “sensorimotor understanding,” expressions that seem to combine the ideas of accessibility and sensorimotor expectations.

Having thus given an exposition of Noë’s problem and sketched his solution, I will raise certain issues for the ways in which he deals with the problem. But in order to do that, I need to draw attention to a further aspect of his solution, one that has not been fully articulated in the present discussion thus far. We have learned that it is Noë’s view that some perceptual presence is virtual, but in fact he makes the stronger claim that

“experiential presence is virtual all the way in” (Ibid., p. 216). At first blush one may wonder whether this really means the same as to say that *all* perceptual presence is virtual. But this is exactly what Noë means. He reaffirms this in a later text, “The radical claim of *Action in Perception* is that *all* perceptual presence is the presence of access” (Noë 2008, p. 697). According to Noë, *all* perceptual presence is virtual presence.

I wish to postpone the main discussion of that idea until later, but some remarks need to be made now, as one is well justified in wondering what Noë’s arguments are for this radical claim, and what use he makes of it, and whether we could perhaps modify Noë’s view by omitting it, thereby rendering the view less vulnerable to objections. Noë argues for the radical view by carrying out an elimination of qualia, in the sense of atomic, unstructured building blocks of experience. Since there do not seem to be such qualia anywhere, across the board, it follows, according to Noë, that all perceptual presence is virtual. It is an important point for him because he also uses it to argue that there is no explanatory gap, i.e., the problem about explaining qualia, that I will discuss later. If some qualia were spared, he would not be able to tackle the explanatory gap in the way that he does. Therefore, Noë is committed to the claim that all perceptual presence must be virtual. I will have more to say about this in a later section, titled “Qualia and the Explanatory Gap.”

However, if one considers cases like inattentional blindness and change blindness, Noë’s interpretation centrally involves the idea that we can access only very little at any one time, because the scope of our attention is very narrow, and we access what we attend to. *Prima facie*, this seems to suggest that most, but not all, perceptual presence is

virtual. This is still interestingly radical, so let us also consider this possibility in the following critical objections to Noë's views. I will now proceed to my objections.

First, suppose that Noë's solution to the "problem of perceptual presence" involves the idea that *all* perceptual presence is virtual presence. Let us conjoin this with the idea that virtual presence is the notion that accounts for the phenomenal contrast between what we experience as actually seen, such as the object's front side, and what we experience as perceptually present but not actually seen, such as the object's back side. Now the claim that *all* perceptual presence is virtual is just unacceptable, because there is no pertinent difference between the experience of the back side and the front side: both are present virtually.

Secondly, the idea that a good deal of presence is merely virtual is suggestive of the idea that perception involves active exploration, insofar as we need to keep manipulating and examining the objects, turning our attention now to this and now to that. However, if all presence is virtual, then, surely, however much we perceptually examine an object, we are still in the realm of the merely available. We have entirely lost our grip of what it is we gain by examining the object, e.g., by attending to some aspect of the perceptual scene or by turning the object around and examining the back side. It would have been natural to think that if some aspect of the object is at first virtually present, examination could make a difference by enabling us to see it "strictly speaking," or to actually access it, but if all presence is virtual this cannot be the case.

A third problem is that if Noë claims that all perceptual presence is merely virtual, i.e., all that is present is present as merely available, it begins to seem more probable that everything is unavailable, rather than available. There is a kind of instability in the idea

that everything is merely available to us. If it is true that everything is merely available then it follows that we never actually avail ourselves of anything. But if that is true, why might it be the case? Unless an adequate explanation is provided, it seems somewhat plausible that everything is, in fact, unavailable.

Alternatively, it may be the case that when Noë claims that all presence is virtual, he operates with two different notions of virtuality, so that in a certain sense all perceptual presence is virtual and in another sense it is not: there is a notion of virtual presence that contrasts with the experience of “actually seeing,” but the presence of what is “actually seen” is, in fact, itself virtual*. We might say that it is virtual* because it too involves sensorimotor expectations or accessibility, but of some special kind. But if the experience of “actually seeing” also involves sensorimotor expectations and accessibility, then we must also have, or at least be able to conceive of having, experiences in which *these* expectations, in turn, are fulfilled, *that* access accomplished. This is because our grasp of the very idea of virtuality of presence hinges upon our grasp of the phenomenal contrast between virtuality of some kind, and the experience of actually seeing—otherwise it could not be the notion that enables us to solve the “problem of perceptual presence,” as Noë presents it. This problem could be resolved if we had a conception of the experience of actually seeing as a goal that we can approach though never attain, but Noë has not explained how we can experience ourselves as gaining anything in our perceptual exploration of the environment. He therefore has not explained to us how some version of the idea of different degrees or stages of virtuality could help him account for the phenomenal contrast between what is experienced as actually seen and what is experienced as not actually seen but nevertheless perceptually present.

The difficulties I have just described arise if we assume with Noë that *all* perceptual presence is virtual. But perhaps we could refrain from drawing that conclusion from cases like inattention blindness? After all, there is something we attend to, e.g., the basketball and the passes, so perhaps we could try the idea that more perceptual presence than we previously thought is virtual presence, or that even *most* perceptual presence, shockingly enough, is virtual, while refraining from the claim that *all* perceptual presence is virtual?

But suppose that most perceptual presence is virtual, for the reasons that Noë gives, focusing on the idea that the scope of our attention at any one time is much narrower than was previously thought. In other words, we are saying that most of what is perceptually present to us is merely available or accessible, and aspects of the perceptual scene can be accessed by turning our attention to them. There is still a difficulty, however. If we never actually access larger aspects of the perceptual scene at any one time, or the scene as a whole, it strongly suggests that these larger aspects of the scene are in fact, not available to us. Instead, there is an exclusive disjunction of smaller aspects of the scene that are available. Saying that the scene is available in its entirety is like bragging that I have a credit line of million dollars with American Express. It is indeed possible that I will, over time, receive a million dollars from Amex, but only if I keep paying them back the money whenever I reach my real credit limit of five thousand dollars.

These are some difficulties for the way in which Noë proposes to solve the “problem of perceptual presence.” In part they can be dealt with by disambiguation of the “problem of perceptual presence” and in part we need to make use of the relevant

Husserlian resources, all of which I will proceed to do in due course. However, I now wish to consider the ways in which Noë motivates the “problem of perceptual presence.” Why exactly should we believe that there is a problem at all? It will be seen that the motivation Noë provides for the problem is twofold, and is, in my view, problematic in several ways. Neither of the lines of argument that he provides is compelling on its own, and the two ideas sit uncomfortably with each other.

On one hand, there is the idea that there are aspects of objects, such as the back side, that are perceptually present though not in view. The problem consists in giving a further account of what this kind of presence consists in, but it is never in question whether the unattended aspects, or aspects like the back side, are indeed perceptually present to us, because “it is a basic fact of our phenomenology” that they are (Noë 2004, p. 59).

In essence, Noë argues that it should be intuitively clear to us that aspects like the back side are indeed perceptually present to us, and provides no further argument (Ibid., pp. 59, 60). To paraphrase this idea, Noë argues that it should be intuitively clear to us that aspects like the back side are part of perceptual content, regarded not in some technical or arcane sense but simply as the way in which things seem to us, insofar as we are having the perceptual experience. Let us consider this idea. Perceptual content, still understood in the same non-technical way, is considered to be what determines the accuracy conditions of the perceptual experience. When we have a perceptual experience, things seem to us to be in a certain way, and that determines the conditions under which the perceptual experience is accurate of the world, or of reality.

If we say that the back side, with its properties, is part of perceptual content, then not only our experience of the front side but also of the back side of the object should be part of what determines the accuracy conditions of the perceptual experience. But this does not seem intuitively compelling at all. When I have a perceptual experience of a house, and I judge or have a hunch to the effect that the back side of the house is blue, how should we describe the situation if it turns out that the back side is not blue? It does not seem right to say that I have misperceived, or that the perceptual experience failed to be accurate of the back side? Rather, whatever I thought of the back side is something in addition to the perceptual experience I had, not part of it.

Noë might say that he rejects this notion of perceptual content or indeed any notion of perceptual content. But this seems an unlikely response from him, since he uses the term “content” all the time in *Action in Perception*. If he rejects the idea that content determines accuracy conditions, he should spell out his alternative conception and we should weigh it on its merits.

Alternatively, it could be suggested that I mischaracterize the view when I regard the presence of the back side in terms of the perceiver’s taking the back side to be of some specific shape or judging it to be blue. Perhaps all Noë means is that it is part of the content of perceptual experience that the object has a back side, leaving it completely indeterminate what the back side is like, e.g., what shape or color it is? If that were his view, there would be various ways to account for the presence of the back side. For example, one might adopt the view that part of the content of perception is the proposition that there is a back side. Or one might argue that part of the content is the proposition that if one were to move around to the back of the object, he would see

another side. Or it might be argued that the perception constitutively involves one's having an expectation with the content that if one were to move around to the back of the object, he would see another side.

But I do not believe that Noë merely means that it is part of the content of perceptual content that the object has the property of having a back side, or that we expect that there is a back side of some kind or another. Rather, I believe it is the view that the back side is present at least somewhat determinately. For example, consider the analogy with the case of aspects of the scene that are in view but not attended to. Noë would not say that what lies outside the focus of our attention is experienced completely indeterminately, a homogeneous something or other. I therefore do not believe that this is his view when he regards the back side as perceptually present, though not, "strictly speaking," seen. But when we accept that, we see that his view is indeed a radical departure from current views. None of the current views that I have listed above addresses the presence of the back side over and above the idea *that* there is a back side of some kind or another. For example, if we added to the content of the expectations regarding to the back side, e.g., by saying that perceptual experience constitutively involves the expectation that the back side is blue, we are back with the problem of motivating the view that such an expectation renders the blue color of the back side *perceptually* present.

In sum, I do not believe that there is some easy way to set up the "problem of perceptual presence" with regard to the object's back side, by drawing upon mainstream ideas. But setting this aside, there is, on the other hand, the idea, which Noë also uses to motivate the "problem of perceptual presence," that unless we solve the problem we

cannot block the Grand Illusion scenario, “If we are not to fall back into the grip of the sceptic’s worry, we must explain how it is we can enjoy perceptual experience of unattended features of a scene. Let us call this the problem of perceptual presence” (Noë 2002, p. 8)

This is one of the passages I quoted before, to introduce the “problem of perceptual presence.” The skepticism pertains to our perceptual experience, as Noë argues that cases like change blindness and inattentional blindness raise the concern that the extent and nature of our experience differ drastically from what we take them to be. For example, you believe that you are seeing an entire wall covered with pictures of Marilyn Monroe. But, according to Noë, you are “strictly speaking” seeing just one or two Marilyns at the focus of your attention. For the rest, you just experience a few lines, a few small bits—so if you believe that you are experiencing an entire wall covered by faces of Marilyn, you are confabulating. There must be many details and many parts of the wall that you believe yourself to be right now experiencing but may *not* be experiencing *at all*. This is a kind of Dennettian line: we should take seriously the possibility that we may be confabulating and deceiving ourselves about the extent and nature of our experiences. But this way of thinking should appear at least *prima facie* problematic. It would be considerably less contentious if Noë argued that change blindness and inattentional blindness support the view that the etiology of our perceptual experience is such that we do not appear to be causally connected with the scene in the appropriate ways, and that our experience therefore is not properly *perceptual*. But Noë intends to make a stronger claim, *viz.*, change blindness and inattentional blindness raise

the worry that significant parts of the experience are not there, or that the extent of our experience is considerably smaller than we think.

Moreover, the two lines of argument that Noë develops to motivate the problem seem to issue in a contradiction. The first way of motivating the problem *depends* on the idea that it is not possible to challenge the phenomenological datum that both the front sides and the back sides of objects are perceptually present to perceivers. The second way of motivating the problem *depends* on the idea that it is possible to challenge these phenomenological data, to the extent that not even the front sides are perceptually present, and we are therefore threatened by the Grand Illusion.

In sum, I find much that is puzzling or problematic in the way that Noë deals with the “problem of perceptual presence.” In view of that, I will proceed to consider the possibility that the problem is ambiguous, and there are, in fact, several problems instead of one.

3. The Problem of Perceptual Presence* and the Problem of Perceptual Presence

We need to distinguish two problems where Noë sees just one. And in solving them we need to distinguish two notions of perceptual presence where Noë makes no such distinctions. I will start this section by distinguishing two readings of the “problem of perceptual presence,” viz., the problem of perceptual presence* and the problem of perceptual presence, to be solved respectively by appeal to the idea of virtual presence and the idea of presence as absence. As for the expressions “presence as absence” and

“virtual presence,” Noë uses them interchangeably, most of the time. I will, however, use them to refer to distinct and indeed quite different ideas.

In a nutshell, here is the distinction. On one hand, we have a problem that is plausibly regarded as arising for the unattended parts of the perceptual scene. Noë argues that the change blindness and inattention blindness cases support the view that we are not accessing the unattended parts of the scene, leading to the problem that our detailed experience of such parts could be a Grand Illusion. But Noë solves this problem by arguing that the unattended parts of the scene nevertheless are perceptually present to us, or experienced by us, in the sense that they are readily accessible for the perceiver. I call this problem the problem of perceptual presence.*

On the other hand, there is a problem concerning the back side of the object. It is perceptually present, Noë believes, even though it is not actually seen. The problem is how to account for the perceptual presence of the back side, how to account for our experience of it. The solution is that it is present to us by virtue of our having perceptual (sensorimotor) expectations about it. This is the problem the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks).

Notice that you cannot combine the ideas of possible access and sensorimotor expectation in dealing with either of these cases. With regard to what I take to be in view, such as the Marilyn picture to which I am not attending, I can have various expectations, but it is certainly not present to me by virtue of my expecting that it will come into view if I move in a certain way. I take it to be in view already. On the other hand, the back side of the object can plausibly be regarded as perceptually present by virtue of my having sensorimotor expectations about it, but it need not be possible for me to access the back

sides of all perceptual objects. The house could have guards around it, or there could be other environmental resistance.

This is the gist of my disambiguating idea, which I will proceed to discuss in greater detail in the present section. The basic distinction I make in this section is between a theme in Noë's thinking that focuses on the personal-level aspects of perceptual experience, involving the problem of perceptual presence and presence as absence, and another theme that focuses on the subpersonal aspects of perceptual presence, involving the problem of perceptual presence* and virtual presence. The reason why this is not the whole story about Noë's views is that Noë develops the second set of ideas in such a way as to bring in personal-level issues, as he moves from the idea that we are not, at all times, causally connected with the entire scene to the idea that we might be drastically deceived about the extent and phenomenology of our experience. This is where the discussion becomes rather complex and hard to get a firm grip on. He solves this version of the problem of perceptual presence* by invoking a view in which the perceiver continually needs to engage in actions, so as to explore, manipulate and access aspects of the perceptual scene, and the view is a kind of vehicle externalism, i.e., a view according to which we do not need internal perceptual representations because the information is stored externally in the perceptual environment. And there is no Grand Illusion because even though we do not have experience in the sense in which we might have thought we did, viz., we do not find ourselves accessing everything all the time, we do have experience in the sense that we take aspects of the perceptual scene to be accessible, and they are indeed accessible.

Now there are various different ideas here, and it is because of the view's complexity that I work towards it from simpler ideas in the present section, and why I leave several cases and versions of the "problem of perceptual presence" to be discussed in the other sections of the chapter. The chief concerns of the present section will be whether Noë succeeds in adequately motivating this more complex version of the problem of perceptual presence*, and whether we are finally able to regard the problem of perceptual presence* and the problem of perceptual presence (no quotation marks, no asterisk) as one and the same problem or at least aspects of one and the same problem. I will answer both questions in the negative.

Before I proceed to the discussion proper, let me say something about what I take to be the significance of what I am doing in the present section. Surely, one might say, it is important to clarify philosophical views and point out ambiguities where there are any, but, looking at the bigger picture, what do we gain by it in the given case? It looks like Noë puts to us a certain complex vision, a paradigm, a set of deeply interwoven ideas. Is it my ambition to undermine it?

I believe that the disambiguation is profoundly significant. We will later see that it cuts between the set of Husserlian ideas in Noë's enactive view, and a set of other, non-Husserlian ideas: a kind of Dennettian line, drawing upon results from the cognitive sciences and seemingly continuous with the cognitive sciences. The disambiguation thus ultimately points to two very different ways of doing philosophy. On the one hand, we have a kind of transcendental philosophy, concerned with something like the intelligibility or givenness of objects and the world, and proceeding consistently by analysis of structures of experience. On the other hand, we have one of the sundry

versions of post-Quinean metaphysics, that draws upon a variety of resources, such as aspects of the first-person perspective, philosophical theories concerning various topics, and, last but not least, scientific findings, in order to support views concerning perceptual experience and its contents. This is a very general indication as to my general perspective of philosophy, not a foray into Daniel Dennett's philosophy specifically. While Dennett's views may not well lend themselves to the characterization that I have just given, viz., as a kind of scientifically informed metaphysics, Noë's use of them certainly does.

Presence as Absence and Virtual Presence

Let us proceed to discuss the distinction between virtual presence and presence as absence. At times it seems as if Noë distinguished between the two notions, something that is helpful for the purposes of the present exposition, but I am quite certain that in most of his discussions he uses the two expressions interchangeably. However, as I will use these notions, virtual presence is not a phenomenally distinctive kind of presence, but is instead distinguished by being correlated with the possibility of accessing the relevant parts of the perceptual scene, or entering into an appropriate kind of causal connection with them. Presence as absence, on the other hand, is a peculiar kind of phenomenally distinctive presence, as exemplified by the phenomenal difference between one's experience of the front side of the object and one's experience of the back side of the object.

Presence as absence is due to the perceiver's having sensorimotor expectations: the back side of the object is present to me now in the sense that I expect it to come into view upon my moving in certain ways in relation to the object. If not the same idea, it is

at least rather close to the idea of my *taking* the object's back side, with what features I regard it as having, *to be available*. This gives us a neat way to formulate the distinction between presence as absence and virtual presence: the former involves our taking something to be available, while the latter involves something's being, in fact, available.

This is how Noë introduces the term “virtual awareness” or “virtual presence,”

We have the impression that the world is represented in full detail in consciousness because, wherever we look, we encounter detail. All the detail is present, but it is only present *virtually*, for example, in the way that a web site's content is present on your desktop.... It is *as if* all the content at the remote server is present on your local machine, even though it isn't really. The thought was first articulated by Minsky, who wrote: “We have the sense of actuality when every question asked of our visual systems is answered so swiftly that it seems as though those answers were already there.” ...

The idea that visual awareness of detail is a kind of *virtual awareness* is consequential. (It plays an important role in chapters 4 and 7 of this book.) It is tantamount to the rejection of the orthodoxy that vision is the process whereby a rich internal representation of experienced detail is built up. If experiences are not Machian—as these considerations would seem to demonstrate—then efforts to explain how the brain can give rise to the sort of detailed internal representations needed to subserve such experiences are misdirected. To experience detail virtually, you don't *need* to have all the detail in your head. All you need is quick and easy access to the relevant detail when you need it. Just as you don't need to download, say, the entire *New York Times* to be able to read it on your desktop, so you don't need to construct a representation of all the detail of the scene in front of you to have a sense of its detailed presence (Noë 2004, pp. 49-50).

But now, in the following quotation, Noë introduces the term “presence as absence.” Noë discusses an experiment involving the so-called Kanisza triangle. Subjects who are presented with a suitable configuration of three lines claim that they can literally see, rather than just imagine or judge there to be, a triangle with the apexes blocked from view.

Crucially—and this is a phenomenological point—the cat and the bottle seem present as wholes, *perceptually*. The strictly unseen environmental detail seems perceptually present even though we do not see it all at once. We do not merely *think* that these features are present. Indeed, this sense of perceptual presence does not depend on the availability of the corresponding belief.

The last point is illustrated by a consideration of figure 2.7, an illustration of Kanisza's. We naturally perceive this figure as the depiction of a triangle partially occluding three disks. We don't merely *think* the presence of the occluded bits: after all, they are evidently *not* present but blocked from view (or rather, not drawn); it *looks* as if they are blocked from view. We experience the presence of the occluded bits even as we experience, plainly, their absence. They are present *as absent*. [ftn. 37] Our sense of the perceptual presence of the disk is not significantly altered by the explicit recognition that there are not really occluded bits present.

This phenomenon is an example of what psychologists call *amodal perception*. We experience the occluded portions of the disks in the Kanizsa figure as *amodally* present in perception. They are *perceptually* present without being actually perceived. This phenomenon—perceptual presence, amodal seeing—is very widespread in perception (Ibid., pp. 60-61).

Setting aside, for now, the more complex development of Noë's ideas in terms of our not having internal representations, it can be seen that, in these passages, the terms “virtual presence” and “presence as absence” stand for quite different ideas. Our grasp of the notion of virtual presence depends importantly upon the analogy of the web site. So, consider a web site consisting of several web pages. By clicking on the relevant links I can access each as easily as if it were stored on my computer, even though it is not. This circumstance may be brought to my attention when for some reason the internet connection goes down without my knowledge. If this happens, I may think that I have all the latest information before me, but in fact it may be updated on the server and I will be none the wiser. And when I finally click to refresh the page or to access another, comes the realization that I have not been privy to the latest developments on the website.

Notice that in the case of the website, the presence of what is stored on my computer, and what I can access on the internet, and what I cannot for some reason access on the internet (although the page still displays on my screen), is, in each case, different only with respect to its etiology. The page on the screen looks just the same, wherever it may be saved or stored, or whether it be available or not. Of course someone may suggest that this is simply a limitation of the analogy, and that Noë meant the actually accessed, and the accessible, and the inaccessible, to be also *phenomenally* different from each other. But notice that when we consider the cases of change blindness and inattentional blindness, the analogy holds without qualification. Many perceivers believe that they are actually accessing many aspects and details of the perceptual scene at any given time, and there seems to be nothing in their experience to disabuse them of this view. On the other hand, if many aspects of the perceptual scene are available to the perceivers most of the time, and then there arise circumstances that render some of them unavailable, as in the cases of change blindness and inattentional blindness, the perceivers do not experience the difference. On the contrary they are—I know I was—genuinely surprised when they subsequently learn that they have missed the gorilla on the scene. Therefore, there is a quite legitimate place, in the context of these two phenomena, for an idea of virtual presence as not a phenomenally distinctive kind of presence but the presence of that which is accessible to us, in the sense that it is possible for us to enter into the appropriate causal relation with the perceived environment or the remote server, as our attention is re-directed or the connection refreshed.

On the other hand, when something is present as absent we have a phenomenally distinctive kind of experience about it, as with the missing parts of the Kanisza triangle or

the back side of the tomato. The experience of what is present as absent is phenomenally distinctive as the experience of something's being present as out of view, or not appearing to us right now. Perhaps the best way to conceive of the difference is to think about how we experience the object's front side and back side: the front side appears to us as being in view, while the back side does not. The back side is present as absent, the front side is not: it is just present as being in view.

I have used two quotations where the distinction between presence as absence and virtual presence seems rather clear, and they may lead one to expect that Noë must be consistently distinguishing between the two ideas in *Action in Perception*. Instead, he seems to move back and forth between them from paragraph to paragraph, and from sentence to sentence. I will illustrate this, based on the following quotation,

If we get clearer about the phenomenology in the way I am suggesting, then we can see that our sense of the perceptual presence of the cat as a whole now does not require us to be committed to the idea that we represent the whole cat in consciousness at once. What it requires, rather, is that we take ourselves to have *access*, now, to the whole cat. The cat, the tomato, the bottle, the detailed scene, all are present perceptually in the sense that they are perceptually accessible to us. They are present to perception as accessible. They are, in this sense, virtually present.

The ground of this accessibility is our possession of sensorimotor skills.... In particular, the basis of perceptual presence is to be found in those skills whose possession is constitutive, in the ways I have been proposing, of sensory perception. My relation to the cat behind the fence is mediated by such facts as that, when I blink, I lose sight of it altogether, but when I move a few inches to the right, a part of its side that was previously hidden comes into view. My sense of the perceptual presence, now, of that which is now hidden behind a slate in the fence, consists in my expectation that by moving my body I can produce the right sort of "new cat" situation.

In this way, we can explain our sense of the perceptual presence of, say, the whole tomato. Our perceptual sense of the tomato's wholeness—of its volume and backside, and so forth—consists in our implicit understanding (our expectation) that movements of our body to the left or right, say, will bring further bits of the tomato into view. Our relation to the unseen bits of the tomato is mediated by patterns of sensorimotor

contingency. Similar points can be made across the board for occlusion phenomena.

In general, our sense of the perceptual presence of the detailed world does not consist in our representation of all the detail in consciousness now. Rather, it consists in our access now to all of the detail, and to our knowledge that we have this access. This knowledge takes the form of our comfortable mastery of the rules of sensorimotor dependence that mediate our relation to the cat and the bottle. My sense of the presence of the whole cat behind the fence consists precisely in my knowledge, my implicit understanding, that by a movement of the eye or the head or the body, I can bring bits of the cat into view that are now hidden. This is one of the central claims of the enactive or sensorimotor approach to perception... (Ibid., pp. 63-64).

In the first paragraph, Noë first says that in order for the cat to be present as a whole, we need to “take ourselves to have access” to the whole cat. In the very next sentence he says that the cat and other items are present perceptually in the sense that they “are perceptually accessible.” He then says that they are “present to perception as accessible,” which seems to be ambiguous between the ideas of presence as absence and virtual presence.

In the second paragraph he discusses the skills that render access possible, or, equivalently, render aspects of the scene available. But then, at the end of the paragraph he concludes these remarks by asserting that his “sense of the perceptual presence” of the occluded parts “consists in my expectation that by moving my body I can produce the right sort of new cat situation,” thus moving from the idea that I call “virtual presence” to what I call “presence as absence.”

In the third paragraph he makes a remark about our sensorimotor “understanding (our expectation).” The term understanding may hide ambiguity. Is “understanding” just expectation or does it amount to some kind of knowledge? One might suggest that it is

just knowhow, but in this case Noë is explicitly talking about “understanding (our expectation) that,” which suggests that he does not have in mind mere knowhow.

In the fourth paragraph Noë appears to make a very strong claim indeed, when he claims that the presence of the detailed world “consists in our [possible—K.L.] access now to all of the detail, and to our knowledge that [sic!] we have this access.” However, Noë at once qualifies this by saying that the relevant kind of knowledge consists merely in mastery of sensorimotor contingencies. That means roughly the same as having the skills to access something. Therefore, in the fourth paragraph we again have the idea of virtual presence, and possibly even some stronger claim involving *knowledge that*—another illustration of how Noë varies the terms in which he expresses his view, thereby raising the concern that the substantive ideas may vary as well, with the expression “knowledge that” perhaps pointing to a higher-level, more intellectualized conception than expressions like “sensorimotor knowhow” or “mastery of sensorimotor contingencies.”

Compared with the previous two quotations, this one contains a more complex mix of ideas. Noë moves back and forth between what is available and what we take to be available, as well as invoking various other notions, such as sensorimotor understanding and mastery of sensorimotor contingencies. For an interesting case of what I take to be shifting meaning, consider the way he talks about representations or representing something “in consciousness” in the first paragraph and in the fourth paragraph. In the first paragraph he says that the whole cat is not represented “in consciousness at once.” I take this to mean that the cat has a back side that is present as absent. And, indeed, in the next sentence we read that it is present in the sense that “we take ourselves to have

access” to the whole cat at once—which is roughly the same as to say that we have sensorimotor expectations regarding the cat’s back side. But when Noë speaks about representation “in consciousness” in the fourth paragraph, the case he refers to is that of the “detailed world.” This brings to mind the larger detailed scene which becomes unavailable to access in the cases of change blindness and inattention blindness, hinting that the relevant idea may be virtual presence. And Noë does indeed say, in the next sentence, that we need to have “[possible—K.L.] access now to all the detail.”

But it is impossible to tease apart the ideas of virtual presence and presence as absence with any consistency in this paragraph, as the key expressions point now in one direction, now in the other. Moreover, there is the added problem that when Noë speaks about what is “accessible” or “available” he may mean either that the perceiver can enter into the appropriate causal relation with these items, or that it is possible for him to bring them to appear to him, or both. In some cases, to be sure, it could not be both, because the relevant aspect of the scene is already in full view, even though we are currently not accessing it in the sense of being causally related to it in the appropriate way.

But let us for now assume that, when Noë uses words like “accessible” or “available,” the key etiological point is there, and let us focus on it for now, setting aside whatever else may be read into these words. Let us just take this idea, what I refer to as “virtual presence,” and consider it in relation to, on the other hand, the ideas of presence as absence or presence by virtue of sensorimotor expectations. Is there some way to account for Noë’s moving back and forth between the two ideas, such that it does not render the view pervasively ambiguous? Could it be the case that, for some relevant cases or situations, these terms are co-extensive: whenever an item is present as absent it is also

virtually present and vice versa? By no means. On the one hand, back sides of objects can be present as absent but not accessible. By accessibility I mean access that is nomically possible, given a detailed description of the circumstances. It is often the case that we cannot move around the object we are seeing, so as to view it from all angles. It may be that my movement around the building is prevented, and it really is not possible for me to access the back side. On the other hand, there are objects that it is possible for me to access, and let us further say that I can access them by exercising certain skills, but this does not mean that they are present as absent to me. I may have the key to a suitcase or to a room and know how to use it, but without giving any thought to or having any expectations about what is in the suitcase or in the room, or what might come into view upon my exercising my skills. For a different kind of case, it may be that the front sides of the objects are perceptually present to me. They are in full view but I am not actually accessing them. Instead, it is possible for me to access them. The front sides are virtually present but experienced as being in full view. Therefore they are virtually present but not present as absent.

Having presented this discussion of “accessibility” or “availability,” I wish to address a worry that someone may have, concerning the above discussion. Perhaps the problems and difficulties are generated by a misreading of Noë’s idea of possible access? Could it be the case that Noë simply means that access is nomically possible given the nature of the object, not any contingent local barriers or the armed guards of my example? To reply to this, Noë may well have this conception in mind in some of his discussions, but there are central cases where he must mean something different. Namely, I take him to be making the point that in the inattentional blindness case the gorilla is

temporarily rendered inaccessible, and that change blindness occurs because the change in the street curb in the photo is temporarily inaccessible. In neither case is there anything in the nature of the gorilla or the changing street curb to render it inaccessible. The inaccessibility has to do precisely with the intervening contingent circumstances, and the idea of possible access is meant to contrast with such cases of what might be called sensorimotor breakdown, in order to account for how we successfully engage with realistic environments.

In sum, the terms “presence as absence” and “virtual presence” are not co-extensive. But there is another *prima facie* plausible explanation. What if Noë speaks about these notions interchangeably because he embraces both, and generally appeals to both of them when solving problems, so that it does not even matter if he moves back and forth between the different terms or the different ideas? Both are always at work. In order to consider whether this might be the case, we need to think about what work it is that these ideas are meant to do. Clearly, as Noë sees it, they are first and foremost meant to solve the “problem of perceptual presence.” We must therefore turn our attention to Noë’s problem, disambiguate it and consider which resources go into solving either of the problems.

A Basic Disambiguation of the “Problem of Perceptual Presence”

I call this a basic disambiguation because it distinguishes two fundamentally different kinds of problem that are implicit in Noë’s discussions of the “problem of perceptual presence.” It does not yet capture, in its full complexity, the entire idea that Noë develops around the problem of perceptual presence*—basically, the problem of

how to deal with the circumstance, highlighted by cases like change blindness and inattentional blindness, of many aspects' of the perceptual scene not being accessed by the perceiver at any one time. It will be distinguished from the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks), viz., the problem of how to account for the peculiar kind of perceptual presence of, e.g., the object's back side.

To get us going, the "problem of perceptual presence" can be viewed as two unrelated problems that are addressed by invoking different resources, viz., the ideas of presence as absence and virtual presence. On the one hand, there is the problem of perceptual presence*. It arises from a certain interpretation of the phenomena of change blindness and inattentional blindness. These phenomena offer some support for the view that perceivers mostly are not actually accessing what they experience as being in view. But the accessing, or there being the right causal relation, appears to be a necessary condition for an experience to be a perceptual experience. We can therefore see a problem in the following: the extent of our *perceptual* experience may, in fact, be a great deal smaller than we thought it was. Instead of *perceptually* experiencing an entire wall of Marilyn's we only *perceptually* experience one or two Marilyn's, and bits and fragments of the rest.

The problem of perceptual presence* is solved by appeal to the idea of virtual presence: we are not actually accessing many aspects of the scene but the access is possible. Noë often makes the same point by saying that the relevant aspects are available. It is open for Noë to strengthen the idea of virtual presence so as to require accessibility by exercise of sensorimotor skills. But can he appeal to sensorimotor *expectations* in solving that problem? It is not obvious that he can, because the most

striking and intriguing instances of not accessing something are ones where what we are not accessing is in full view, or is at least taken to be in full view. I do not expect that the front side of the tomato will become visible to me upon making movements. I take it to be in full view now. The same goes for the case of the persons passing a basketball back and forth. I take all the participants on the scene to be in full view now. I do not expect that by turning my attention from one aspect of the scene to another, I will successively bring them into view. The failure to see the gorilla in the inattentional blindness case does not amount to not having expectations concerning the gorilla. Rather, it involves a situation where our attention is otherwise occupied and it is therefore not possible for us to access the person in the gorilla costume. Normally, the gorilla would have grabbed our attention, when unexpectedly appearing on the scene.

Now for the problem of perceptual presence, the problem I do not mark with an asterisk. It is that we do not, in fact, experience all that is perceptually present to us, as being in view. How should we account for the perceptual presence of what is not in view? The solution is that what is perceptually present in such a way, e.g., the object's back side, is present as absent, i.e., present by virtue of our having the relevant sensorimotor expectations.

But could we also invoke possible access in solving this problem? Could we, for example, require that the back side, in order for the problem to be solved in a satisfactory manner, needs to be *both* present as absent and virtually present? But I have already said that it happens all the time that the back sides of objects are, in fact, not accessible for us. However, consider qualifying the idea of possible access. Let us try the idea that the back side needs to be present as absent, and accessible in what might be called the *normal*

circumstances. Clearly, I have the skills to overcome some resistance on part of the environment, in order to make my way so as to access the back side of the object, and yet we should not be expected to have the skills to overcome extremely difficult obstacles. But I think there is no principled way to demarcate between these two kinds of situations. The sensorimotor skills function precisely so as to enable us to overcome the resistance of the environment: the perceiver knows how to get around in the environment so as to explore the objects perceptually. It seems to me that there is no principled way to say what the skills should accomplish and what they need not accomplish. For example, you cannot say that the cases where the obstacles to the perceptual exploration are extremely difficult are also the unusual and unrealistic cases. Suppose that I am perceptually exploring some building. It might be surrounded by guards armed to the teeth, and fiercely determined, by use of their lethal weapons, to prevent anyone from snooping around. This is a completely realistic case of extreme obstacles to perceptual exploration.

Perhaps we could require access that is possible in some weaker sense of possibility than nomic possibility? But whatever this exact sense of possibility may be, it is now hard to see how there would not be possible access also in cases like inattentional or change blindness. After all, the failure to access, and the “impossibility” of access, were due to contingent aspects of the functioning of our visual system. But I believe that Noë wants to say that inattentional blindness and change blindness do indeed render something inaccessible. Also, if we move into the realm of what is, say, metaphysically possible, it seems to render our perceptual skills completely irrelevant to the account, as our grasp of them requires the backdrop of the workings of a realistic environment.

It might also be suggested that when Noë says that access needs to be possible, he merely means that certain counterfactuals need to be true. It needs to be true that the object would look a certain way to me if I were to move around it, but of course this counterfactual is true if I do not and perhaps even cannot make these movements. Perhaps virtual presence should be understood in this way? But if that is the idea, we once again have to accept that nothing has gone wrong in the cases of change blindness and inattentional blindness, as everything continues to be virtually present. A commitment to performing the task of counting the passes makes it impossible for me to re-direct my attention to the gorilla, in response to the usual cues. But a counterfactual stating that if I were to do it, I would spot the gorilla, is nevertheless true.

In fact, Noë, in one part of his book, does state his view in terms of counterfactuals, along the lines I have just sketched (Noë 2004, pp. 69-75). But my point is that this represents a different idea from the views he develops on the basis of the phenomena of change blindness and inattentional blindness. Change blindness and inattentional blindness rarely happen to perceivers, because perceivers can readily access different parts of the scene that they take to be in view by exercising skills. But the counterfactuals concerning what would appear to them if they moved in certain ways could nevertheless be true, even if they lacked the skills to navigate the perceptual environment in the relevant ways.

We can therefore distinguish two different problems where Noë sees just one problem. They are solved by appeal to completely different resources in either case—although one might, of course, say that these resources are jointly applied to deal with the conjunction of the two problems.

Further Disambiguation

I have thus far been discussing two strands in Noë's enactive view, but I should once again emphasize that the problem I have referred to as the problem of perceptual presence*, as well as the idea of virtual presence as I have discussed it, do not amount to an authentic rendition of how Noë develops one of the two major strands in his view. Noë does not believe that the problem simply consists in the problematic etiology of some of our experiences. Instead, he believes that an aspect of the problem of perceptual presence* concerns the personal level, as the extent of our experience is considerably smaller than we thought it was. The experience is very fragmentary and scant—and we may be confabulating to the effect that it is continuous and detailed. This is the threatening Grand Illusion scenario. I would suggest that we capture this by rephrasing the problem of perceptual presence*, for the purposes of the discussion in this section, as the problem that, given the way Noë's findings and arguments shatter our current received ideas regarding what kind of perceptual experience we have, there is reason to believe that we are subject to the Grand Illusion. But the problem is solved by appeal to the idea of virtual presence, or presence by possible access, which now has a peculiar phenomenal aspect, to be clarified in the following discussion. I believe that Noë fails to adequately motivate the problem we have just formulated, and we also end up having no handle on the new idea of virtual presence.

Before I get into the discussion, I need to caution the reader in a certain respect. Namely, I need to emphasize that I am aware that Noë does not ultimately accept that the visual world is a Grand Illusion. I will not be misinterpreting Noë in that respect.

Instead, I will be highlighting the ways in which Noë argues that there is a problem, viz., of the looming Grand Illusion, that we should all take seriously. The problem will appear as a serious problem only if certain received ideas and commonly held intuitions are first undermined. In the following I will be discussing the reasons why Noë believes that these commonly held views and intuitions are indeed untenable and must go. Ultimately, he does not believe that we are subject to Grand Illusion—but we are saved from this threat by appeal to ready sensorimotor access, not because there proves to be a way to reinstate the commonly held intuitions that were putatively undermined by discoveries in the cognitive sciences.

What are Noë's arguments for the idea that we may be subject to the Grand Illusion? He has a sustained discussion on the Grand Illusion scenario on pp. 53-59 of *Action in Perception* (Noë 2004), where he mentions the various phenomena, such as change blindness and inattention blindness, that he regards as shattering our received ideas of experience, especially that our experience is detailed and continuous, rather than scant and fragmented. However, then he describes the conception of experience that gives rise to the Grand Illusion problem as the snapshot conception of experience, and argues that ordinary perceivers actually do not embrace this conception, but, rather, believe that they “have access to environmental detail as needed (Ibid., p. 59). That is to say, Noë argues that ordinary perceivers, at least implicitly, take perceptual presence to amount to virtual presence, and that this is indeed the correct idea.

I would reconstruct Noë's reasoning as comprised of three arguments. First, there is the argument from scant, limited access to the perceptual scene. Second, there is the argument from our not having internal perceptual representations, especially not ones that

are detailed and snapshot-like. Third, there is a phenomenological argument: when we scrutinize our experience we find that certain received ideas of it are not true. Let me consider all these arguments.

First, there is the argument from the idea that we have relatively limited access to the perceptual scene at any one time. This is an idea to which the cases of change blindness and inattention blindness seem to offer a measure of support. Supposing that this is the case, what can we conclude from this fact? We certainly cannot conclude that perceivers are not having detailed and continuous experience, if they protest that they do and all that we have to go by is facts about subpersonal processes.

Moreover, the fact that our access to the perceptual scene is scant (or, in a sense, embattled) does not lend strong support to the claim that we do not have internal representations. *Prima facie*, the opposite seems to be true. If we have ample and easy access to the perceptual scene, then it seems relatively more plausible that we could regard perceptual information as stored externally, instead of in internal representations. On the other hand, if actual access at any one time is scant and limited by the narrow scope of our attention, then it seems relatively more plausible that we need some kind of internal representations to make up for that shortcoming. Scant access does not mean that representations need to be scant: there could be mechanisms for filling in the missing bits.

Now for the second argument, from the idea that we do not have internal representations. Jesse Prinz has argued that the array of cases from the cognitive sciences that Noë refers to does not actually offer strong support for the idea that we have no detailed internal representations (Prinz 2006). Alternative interpretations are always at

least equally well supported. I do not know that Noë has replied to these points, and they seem rather convincing to me. I have nothing to add to them.

But suppose now that it is true that we do not have detailed internal representations. This is, first and foremost, a claim on the subpersonal computational level. It does not contradict or even render implausible the idea that we have experiences of the detailed scene, as being in view. All it tells us, if true, is that we need to reconsider our ideas regarding subpersonal perceptual information processing.

It is telling that Noë cites Dennett in this context, bringing up Dennett's example of the perceiver standing before a wall covered with Andy Warhol's images of Marilyn Monroe. "[O]wing to the limitations of foveal and parafoveal vision, you don't take them *all in at once*" (Ibid., p. 55). Instead,

the brain detects a few Marylins and then "jumps to the conclusion" that the rest are Marylins too. If this is in fact what happens, then the brain does not produce a representation sufficient to give rise to the experience of hundreds of Marylins. Your impression that you see hundreds of them is an illusion! Note that there is no perceptual illusion; you correctly judge that there are hundreds of Marylins. The illusion is one of consciousness: You don't really experience them at all, even though you think you do (Ibid.).

This is a view with which Noë basically agrees, as a criticism of our received views of perceptual experience, but clearly it confuses the personal and subpersonal levels. It demotes "experience" to a mere "impression" because there is reason to believe that we have not formed the requisite internal representations. In my view, the by far less contentious interpretation of the case is that it gives us reason to revise our views concerning the subpersonal information processing but has no obvious bearing on the phenomenal character of our experience or the extent of what appears to us.

Third, there is the phenomenological argument. Noë tells us that there is a certain received idea according to which our perceptual experience is like a snapshot: the entire scene is uniformly and continuously filled with detail. But when we scrutinize our experience we find that it is not such, indeed our discoveries are so drastic that the Grand Illusion scenario will loom. It seems to me that Noë moves here from one extreme view to the other. He talks as if careful scrutiny of our experience would show that the extent of experience is much smaller than we thought it was, or would reveal great fragmentation of the experience. Where are the results of subjects reporting this?

It does seem plausible that our experience is of uneven determinacy. What is at the center of our attention is liable to be given more determinately, and what is on the margins of our attention, less determinately, and experience is open to closer determination. Basically, the argument is flawed because it presents us with a false dilemma. Either what Noë refers to as the snapshot conception is true, i.e., everything is uniformly given in the most complete detail, or else very, very little is actually given or in view, at any moment. Since ordinary perceivers would presumably agree that the snapshot view is false, they would have to agree with the other extreme view.

In essence, there are two ways of conceiving the problem of the Grand Illusion, i.e., our more advanced version of the problem of perceptual presence*. On one hand, it may be the problem of how to deal with the fact that the snapshot conception is false. This is hardly a problem that requires us to have recourse to the very radical idea of virtual presence. Ordinary perceivers and most theoreticians can simply stick with how they currently regard their experience. On the other hand, the problem may be that our currently prevalent ideas of experience are false, making room for the idea of virtual

presence, which, at some level, it would be argued, has always been how the perceivers regard their perceptual experiences anyway. But I disagree that the second problem arises. As far as the phenomenology goes, our experiences can be of different degrees of determinacy, but this does not mean that perceivers are not having the appearances they take themselves to be having. We do not have to accept that perceptual presence is virtual presence. And while it is plausibly part of the phenomenology of perceptual experience that perceivers *take* many aspects of the scene *to be available to them*, this can only show that a good deal of perceptual presence is presence as absence. It does not amount to an argument for the idea that perceptual presence is virtual presence, especially if this claim is made about all or almost all perceptual presence.

We might also consider a different phenomenological argument as part of the setup of the Grand Illusion problem, viz., the argument from the elimination of the qualia, understood by Noë as a theoretical term, denoting atomic entities that are the fundamental building blocks of our experience. This is also the argument that Noë uses to argue for the dissolution of the explanatory gap, and I will take it up again in a later section of the present chapter. For now, the dialectics of the argument from the qualia are analogous to those of the argument from the snapshot conception that I have just discussed. Either we attack the notion of qualia in the strong sense in which Noë describes them, in which case it concerns a notion of qualia that most theoreticians and perceivers do not embrace, or it is an attack against a weaker notion of qualia, often captured by the phrase “what it is like.” Then the attack is not successful, as I will show in a later section.

In sum, I do not see that there is sufficient evidence to accept that a consideration of cases from the cognitive sciences, as well as of our ideas about experience, and of the

phenomenology of experience, raise the problem of Grand Illusion, a problem that needs to be solved in terms of a new idea of perceptual presence, viz., virtual presence.

Noë's ideas regarding the Grand Illusion therefore seem untenable, and we fall back upon the distinctions articulated in the previous subsections of the present section. Yet even if Noë could convincingly raise the specter of the Grand Illusion, the resulting problem would be quite different from the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks). In the former case, the problem is that it may be an illusion that we are having a detailed experience of what we take to be *in view*, or of what we take to be *appearing to us now*. In the latter case, the problem is that we do not have an account of what we take to be present, though *not in view* or *appearing to us now*. The ideas that solve these problems would need to be quite different.

Review of the Earlier Criticisms

In the previous section, titled "The Problem of Perceptual Presence," I made a number of critical points about the ways in which Noë motivates and solves the "problem of perceptual presence." Has the disambiguation laid all these concerns to rest? To a considerable extent it must have, since much of the criticism was based on taking claims that Noë makes about the problem of perceptual presence* and virtual presence, and challenging them in relation to the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks) and presence as absence. For example, the idea that most or even all presence is "virtual" was clearly meant by Noë in the sense of *virtual presence*, and is at least prima facie very puzzling with regard to *presence as absence*.

But let us consider the two sets of ideas separately. As for the way Noë deals with the problem of perceptual presence*, setting aside all the exaggerated claims concerning a Grand Illusion, I have little to say. There is only one new concern that I would raise, that, I think, calls for a refinement of the view. Namely, Noë and O'Regan's solution to the problem is in terms of not only possible access but ready access. Whenever something changes, whenever it becomes important to us, we are able to turn our attention to it. This claim of ready access is explained by Noë and O'Regan by appeal to the idea of "grabbiness" (O'Regan and Noë 2001, p. 1012). Whenever something changes, it is liable to grab our attention. The problem is that, *prima facie*, in order for there to be grabbiness there needs to be actual access, I need to be continually accessing an item so as to receive information on whether it changes or stays the same. So grabbiness depends upon access that is not merely possible but actual. It would be helpful if Noë and O'Regan's view were spelled out with a greater emphasis on the kinds of actual accessing that renders possible the ready access of the rest of the perceptual scene.

As for the problem of perceptual presence (no quotation marks, no asterisk), there remains the difficulty that we do not know why the presence of the back side should even be regarded as properly perceptual in the first place. We also have yet to articulate an account relating the idea of presence as absence to what we gain by exploring the object, and how the themes of sensorimotor expectations and movements are interrelated. These issues will be dealt with by recourse to Husserlian ideas in the following chapters.

4. Qualia and the Explanatory Gap

Noë argues that his enactive view enables him to deal satisfactorily with the problem of the explanatory gap, i.e., the problem that no matter how much objective neurophysiological investigation we engage in, and no matter how good an account we thereby develop, it still seems that we have not explained why the subpersonal neurophysiological processes should give rise to subjective experience, or give rise to qualia. Noë's approach is to argue that the problem of the explanatory gap arises on our adopting a certain view of qualia, viz., as atomic entities of which we have incorrigible knowledge. He eliminates qualia in that sense, although he maintains that we do have perceptual experiences with phenomenal character. In Noë's view, the explanatory gap is dissolved by the elimination of qualia. It is my view, and not only mine, that Noë has not successfully dealt with the explanatory gap. I will further argue that Noë's discussion of the gap has no connection with the set of ideas focusing on the problem of perceptual presence and presence as absence, but is, instead, closely related to the ways in which he purports to motivate and solve the problem of perceptual presence*, in particular, the difficulty-ridden version that is motivated by the Grand Illusion scenario.

Again, the problem of the explanatory gap is the problem that even if the subpersonal account is as good as we are ever going to have, it still will not suffice to explain experiences, since it is still conceivable that the subpersonal processes are taking place without there being the requisite experience. In their co-authored paper, Noë and O'Regan claim,

The most important claim in the target article was that the sensorimotor approach allows us to address the problem of the explanatory gap: that is, the problem of explaining perception, consciousness and

qualia in terms of physical and functional properties of perceptual systems (O'Regan and Noë 2001, p. 1020).

Our claim, simply put, is this: there is no explanatory gap because there is nothing answering to the theorist's notion of qualia. That is, we reject the conception of experience that is presupposed by the problem of the explanatory gap. (Note that we can make this claim even though we do not deny, as we have been at pains to explain above, that there are experiences and that experience has qualitative character.) (Ibid., p. 962)

Thus Noë and O'Regan challenge the problem of the explanatory gap by arguing that it is generated by the acceptance of a certain notion of qualia and that "there is nothing answering to the theorist's notion of qualia," i.e., atomic, unstructured entities of which we have incorrigible knowledge. Noë discusses the relevant notion of qualia also in *Action in Perception*, arguing that there are no qualia,

The content of experience, I would like to argue, is virtual *all the way in*. Notice that although the whole facing surface of the tomato is present to you, in contrast with the far side, which is out of view, you can no more embrace the *whole* of the facing side at once in consciousness than embrace the *whole* tomato in consciousness all at once. This is clear on reflection, I think. Further evidence comes from work on change blindness. In a recent demonstration conducted by Kevin O'Regan (mentioned in chapter 2), the color of the object you are staring at changes *while you examine it*. So long as attention is not directed to color in particular, perceivers tend not to notice even such a patent and gross change as this!

This shows that we cannot factor experience into an *occurrent* and a *merely virtual* or *potential* part. Experience is fractal, in this sense. At any level of analysis, it always presents a structured field, with elements that are out of view. There is always room, within experience, for shifts of attention.

The point is this: A perceptual experience does not analyze or break down into the experience of atomic elements, or simple features. Experience is always of a field, with structure, and you can never comprehend the whole field in a single act of consciousness. Something always remains present, but out of view. ...

Qualities are available in experience as possibilities, as potentialities, but not as givens. Experience is a dynamic process of navigating the pathways of these possibilities. Experience depends on the skills needed to make one's way (Noë 2004, pp. 134-135).

Cases like change blindness and inattentional blindness might at best have suggested that there is some issue with our experience of these aspects of the perceptual scene to which we are *not attending*. Now, however, Noë makes the sweeping argument that whenever you scrutinize your experience in search for qualia, its ultimate building blocks, you will not find them. Instead experience will prove fractal in the sense that there is always more structure and more of what is not being accessed but is merely accessible. Therefore, we may have lost sight of experience altogether. This is a version of the Grand Illusion scenario. But Noë does not intend to dissolve the gap by straightforward elimination of experience. Instead, he says that all presence is virtual, “Qualities are available in experience as possibilities, as potentialities, but not as givens” (Ibid.). And experiences thus conceived still have phenomenal character.

But the problem is that the notion of qualia that he eliminates is a very strong notion, and a philosopher who admits to there being an explanatory gap need not subscribe to this strong notion of qualia. She need not say that qualia are atomic entities to which we have incorrigible access. Rather, she may say that there is something it is like for us to have a perceptual experience, or that our experiences have a phenomenal character. This weaker notion suffices to generate the gap. Therefore, Noë’s virtual presence either is not a personal-level notion or will generate the gap. This is only to agree with what Martin Kurthen argues, “[T]o dismiss qualia in favor of ways of acting will not suffice to avoid the gap as long as the existence of experiences with qualitative character is affirmed” (Kurthen 2001, p. 991).¹

¹ The same point has been argued in Rowlands 2002, pp. 21-23.

Noë's attempt to close the gap therefore faces problems that are related to the ones I raised for the problematic version of the problem of perceptual presence* in the previous section. But could the other strand in Noë's thinking, the one concerned with presence as absence, be relevant to the issues, perhaps by helping Noë reply to criticisms? I would not say so, because clearly the experience of something as being present as absent suffices to generate the explanatory gap. Rather, the problem of perceptual presence arises from the idea that we have several kinds of experiences, or that there are several kinds of perceptual presence, and the solution explicates that phenomenological datum. However, it may well be that what apparent plausibility Noë's discussion has depends upon his invoking ideas that pertain to the other, Husserlian, line of thinking. In the course of our experience, there are processes of closer determination, but there are also processes of fulfillment, which I can only explain in the next chapter. There are, in our experience, certain processes in which certain potentialities are actualized, but they are processes in which our experience is transformed, and not processes in which we strive towards having a genuine experience in the first place.

I have, in the present section, given an exposition of O'Regan's and Noë's argument and other philosophers' criticisms, and these criticisms do not appear to depend on the kind of disambiguation that I have carried out in the present chapter. However, it will be important for me to distinguish between the Husserlian and other ideas and themes in Noë's enactive view. In this way, the present discussion forms part of my project, and I will directly follow up on it in Section 4 of Chapter 3.

5. Presence by Degrees

In the period following the publication of *Action in Perception*, Noë has developed a very unusual inflationist view, according to which more or less everything is perceptually present, by different degrees. For example, my friend who is in Paris, while I am in Miami, is perceptually present, although to a very small degree. I will argue that the idea of an all-encompassing perceptual presence by degrees needs to be understood in terms of the set of ideas focused on the problem of perceptual presence* and virtual presence, and not the other major strand in Noë's thinking, viz., concerned with the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk) and the idea of presence as absence. I will further argue that although it makes good sense to talk about presence by degrees in relation to the idea of virtual presence, the inflation (or even globalization) of the idea of perceptual presence on the basis of these ideas is completely unnecessary and undesirable.

In *Action in Perception* Noë ends the section where he introduces the “problem of perceptual presence” with a discussion of our relation to the room next door. The discussion is meant to distinguish between the perceptual and the non-perceptual relation to objects, and thereby fend off the potential objection that enactive view has the implausible consequence that we see all kinds of distant things insofar as they are accessible or we can have expectations about them. He contrasts two cases: our relation to the room next door is *not* perceptual because it involves the exercise of the mastery of movement-dependent contingencies but *not* of the object-dependent contingencies. By contrast, our relation to the front side and the back side of the tomato in front of us is perceptual because it is both movement- and object-dependent, in a sense that will be

explained presently, although our relation to the front side is more movement- and object-dependent than our relation to the back side.

In a later text he develops this account of presence by degrees with a new emphasis. He now says that we *do* have a quasi-perceptual relation to the objects that are out of view, but the relevant differences are of degree, both where movement-dependence and object-dependence are concerned. So his focus is now on arguing for a kind of inflationist view of perceptual presence, but such that the front sides of seen objects are the most present, their back sides less present, and the unseen environment present to even lesser degree. Noë himself admits that it has the consequence that if I am now in Miami and a friend of mine is in Berlin, I can now perceive him—but to a very small degree (Noë 2009, p. 480).

I will argue that the ideas of presence by degrees and global perceptual presence, as Noë develops them, have no application to the notion of presence as absence. Let us start with the case of the room next door. Noë says,

You also have a sense of the presence of the room next door, for example. But your sense of its presence is not a sense of its *perceptual* presence. It doesn't seem to you now, for example, as if you *see* the space on the other side of the wall. This is explained by the fact that your relation to the room next door is not mediated by the kinds of patterns of sensorimotor dependence in the way that your relation to the tomato and the cat and the detailed environment is. ... For example, you can jump up and down, turn around, turn the lights on and off, blink, and so on, and it makes no difference whatever to your sense of the presence of the room next door. ...

[W]e need to differentiate two different kinds of sensorimotor relation. Our sensory relation to the world varies along two dimensions. The relation is *movement*-dependent when the slightest movements of the body modulate sensory stimulation. But when you see an object, your relation to it is also *object*-dependent; that is, movements *of the object* produce sensory change. In general, when you see x, your relation to it is both movement and object-dependent. (The object dependence of sensory stimulation, we have noticed, plays an important role in explaining the

ability to perceive change.) To perceive an object, in general, is to deploy sensorimotor skills of both sorts; perceivers are familiar with not only the sensory effects of movement, but also the sensory effects produced by environmental changes.

The bearing of this distinction on the first problem is as follows: Your relationship to the room next door is not perceptual, even though it is movement-dependent, because the relation is not object-dependent. Movements or changes in the room next door will not provoke (visual) sensory change. In addition, although your relation to the room next door is movement-dependent, it is less movement-dependent than your relation to the tomato in front of you. Blinking affects your relation to the tomato in front of you, but not to the room next door (Noë 2004, pp. 64-65).

The distinction between movement- and object-dependent contingencies is already there in Noë and O'Regan's co-authored work. Notice that this distinction makes good sense when we consider virtual presence. The mechanisms whereby I see objects as *I* move, and the ones whereby they draw my attention as *they* move or change, are plausibly quite different, and it makes sense to group together the movements in objects and changes in objects. However, when we consider presence as absence, this distinction no longer seems apt. Now there seems to be a connection between my movements and the object's, and the object's changes are a quite different topic. For various sensorimotor expectations it would seem to make little difference whether the perceiver moved or the object. For example, the perceiver may have the expectation that if either he moves towards the object or the object moves towards him, it will appear larger. But if we talk about changes in the object, consider that the expectations relevant to these changes would be quite different from sensorimotor expectations. They would be expectations about how the object interacts with other objects, or about processes in the object.²

² For further discussion of the difference between the sensorimotor expectations and these other kind of expectations—I would call them “environmental expectations”—see the next section on perceptual constancies. The former kind of expectation is particularly relevant to the perception of constant shape, the latter kind of expectation to the perception of constant color.

With the room next door, I may or may not have expectations with regard to it. It surely depends considerably on what I take myself to be perceiving, in the room where I am. But now with the relevant expectations that I may have about the room next door, they can begin to be fulfilled only when I go to that room and actually see it. In this respect there is no difference between the expectations that have to do with my movements, or movements of the object, or changes in the object.

When we consider accessing the perceptual information however, it does make sense that our relation to the room next door is movement-dependent but not object-dependent. For example, if I walked half-way through the corridor, it would have brought the room closer to me for access, but if something changed in the room next door, it would not have made a difference with regard to my access to the room.

In *Action in Perception*, Noë may have implied that by discussing the cases of the tomato and the room next door, he was distinguishing generally between our accessibility relation to objects that are actually in view and objects that are completely out of view. In fact, it is only in the case of something like the room next door that there is such a difference: the idea fails to generalize. Consider a tomato that is on the table in front of me, completely occluded by a piece of paper. It is movement-dependent, since if I moved to remove the paper, I would thereby access it, but there is also object-dependence in the sense that the tomato could roll out from behind the paper or it could perhaps even somehow start to expand, so as to become visible behind the paper.

So let us set aside the example of the room next door and consider the view of perceptual presence by degrees more generally. Perhaps we can somehow find room in

the view for the idea of presence as absence, even though the distinction between movement-dependence and object-dependence seems geared towards virtual presence?

In a recent paper, Noë says,

Perception and thought are both ways of achieving access to things. Where they differ is in the methods or skills of access that they each deploy. We can get at this issue by considering a problem that actionism might seem to face. The theory seems to have the embarrassing consequence that we are perceptually conscious of everything. After all, your relation to any existing spatiotemporally located thing is such that were you to make appropriate movements you, would bring it into view, and were it to make appropriate movements, it would perturb your standing dynamic relation to it.

This unwanted consequence is easily avoided, however. Movement- and object-dependence are conditions whose satisfaction can be measured. My relation to the tomato in front of me is *highly* movement-dependent: even the slightest flicker or blink of my eye affects my sensory relation to the tomato. My relation to the back of the tomato is slightly lower on the movement-dependence scale, i.e., I need to move *more* to change my relation to the back of the tomato. My relation to distant objects is only minimally movement-dependent. Object-dependence too admits of measurement. The slightest movements of the tomato on the table in front of me will modulate my relation to the tomato. Only quite enormous changes in the hallway outside this room will make a visual difference to me; and only an unthinkable large event near the Eiffel Tower would be able to capture my visual attention.

From the actionist standpoint there is no sharp line to be drawn between that which is and that which is not perceptually present. The front of the tomato is maximally present; the back a little less so; the hallway even less so (Noë 2009, p. 479).

As Noë sees it, the difference between perception and thought is a matter of degree, and the difference is one of ease of access. Noë does not seek to avoid the “unwanted consequence” of global perceptual presence entirely. Rather, he softens its effect by appealing to the notion of perceptual presence by degrees.

But this just cannot apply to the idea of presence as absence. Suppose something is completely out of view and quite far from me, but I know this item very well and it is familiar to me, and on the other hand there is some unfamiliar object that is quite near me

and easily accessible. In that case I would have much more detailed and salient sensorimotor expectations regarding the more distant and less accessible object. My experience of it would be richer in the sense of being more determinate, so why would it be less present (or more absent) in experience?

But Noë might say that the sensorimotor expectations contain the aspect of expecting that something will come into view if one makes a greater or a smaller effort, to move to position oneself in certain ways relative to it. Alternatively, more or less force would have to be exerted to bring the object into view while I remain stationary. I would reply that the reference to effort can be part of the sensorimotor expectations but it need not be. We can have sensorimotor expectations regarding how an object will look if I move in certain ways in relation to it, but without its being part of the expectations that my moving in these ways will cost me a greater or lesser amount of effort. The expectations can be indifferent regarding how the movement is accomplished and even with regard to whether it is the object or the perceiver that moves. And even where the reference to the efforts involved is part of the expectations, it seems strange to hold that due to the greater amount of effort involved in accessing it, one object is experienced as being *more* out of view, more absent than another—for example, it is not the same as to say that one object is *farther* out of view than the other. Similarly, it does not make sense to say that my perceptual relation to objects diminishes, or that they become less present and more absent, when I get tired, or when I miss the bus, or when I squander my money and cannot travel to France to see the Eiffel tower.

When we talk about virtual presence however, the idea of making certain distinctions in terms of degrees of presence is applicable. When something is in full view,

I keep mining it for information as I make eye movements and so on. The back sides of such objects are less present, and the objects that are out of view are even less present. But even here it seems that the idea of presence by degrees does not really help us make general distinctions between different cases, along the lines that I have mentioned before. For example, if I were looking at a distant mountain across the plain, I would have to travel for hours or days to significantly change my perspective of its front side. However, with the completely occluded tomato in front of me, I could very easily pick it up and thoroughly examine it. We get the same issue when we think of the back side of the visible distant mountain and the completely occluded tomato in front of me.

We thus can certainly speak about presence by degrees, understood as degrees of access, but it is not clear what motivates using these ideas to inflate or globalize our notion of perceptual presence. Noë speaks as if it followed from his core ideas that this needs to be done, but I also get the sense that he regards it as a not unwelcome upshot of his enactive view. For me it is a strange idea, and I do not believe that it follows from his core ideas. What has happened, as far as I can understand, is that Noë has opted to regard as a sufficient condition what might be plausibly regarded as a necessary condition. With something that is *in view*, the problems of access and etiology that Noë raises may perhaps give us reason to believe that being in view *and* being (at least) virtually present (i.e., accessible) are severally necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for this item's perceptual presence. But now Noë has said that whatever is accessible is perceptually present, even if it is some distant item that is completely out of view, i.e., the mere

accessibility is not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition for perceptual presence.³ It is quite unnecessary for him to make this move.

6. Perceptual Constancies

It is a central theme of *Action in Perception* that the phenomena of shape and color constancy are special cases of the “problem of perceptual presence,” and Noë engages with the problems by invoking the resources of his enactive view. Although Noë, as we have come to expect, presents his view in various terms, speaking about access, sensorimotor expectations, and counterfactuals, I believe that his approach to the problems of perceptual constancy really only depends on the idea of presence as absence, not the idea of virtual presence. The problems of perceptual constancy are special cases of the problem of perceptual presence, not the problem of perceptual presence*. Since Noë has himself said that the “heart” of his book is in the chapters where he chiefly deals with perceptual constancy—“[t]he heart of the book is chapters 3 and 4” (Noë 2004, p. 34)—it appears that the core parts of *Action in Perception* have, in essence, no connection with the philosophy that Noë and O’Regan develop on the basis of their interpretation of cases like change blindness and inattention blindness. I will argue that Noë’s view of perceptual constancy cannot, on the face of it, deal with the issue of pervasively contradictory perceptual contents, e.g., when the tilted round plate

³ When I speak about the view that accessibility is a sufficient condition for perceptual presence, I have in mind accessibility that involves something like beliefs, awareness, or information concerning the object and its location. I am not aware that Noë has explicitly dealt with this question, but it seems to me that if there is, for example, a bear in the cover of the woods, and I have no idea that it is there, then it is not accessible or perceptually present, although I may come into contact with it by chance.

simultaneously appears both elliptical and round to me—he needs Husserlian resources for that.

Noë's View

The problem of perceptual constancy is one of the important issues discussed in philosophy and psychology of perception. Indeed, there is not just one issue but several. A.D. Smith discusses, on one hand, the physiological issue of how variable stimuli give rise to constant perceptual properties. The present section will not be concerned with that issue. On the other hand, there is the phenomenological issue of how variable sensations give rise to constant perceptual properties (Smith, A.D., 2002, pp. 170-171). We can further divide the issue according to the different perceptual properties that exhibit constancy phenomena, i.e., constancy despite variable sensations.

As for the second issue, the philosophical debates focus on whether it is the variable appearances or the constant properties that are part of the content of perceptual experience. The competing accounts of shape and color constancy are called the *simple view* and the *complex view*. Adam Pautz states the views as follows, invoking the case of "the experiential property which S has while viewing a particular white ball illuminated from above so that it looks white on top, white but shaded in the middle, and black at the bottom. ... The simple view says that the phenomenal content of the experience of the shadowed region attributes being grey. The complex view is the negation of this. The phenomenal content only attributes being white and some property of the form being subject to the occlusion of a light source to so-and-so degree" (Pautz 2009, p. 503).

According to the simple view, perceivers do not perceptually experience the constant properties, they only judge the object to have them. According to the complex view, the constant properties are indeed perceived by us. So according to the mainstream approach we are facing a dilemma here, and need to pick one of two options. We cannot say that *both* the perspectival appearances and the constant properties are perceptually present, or that the variable appearances are perceptually present in one sense and the constant properties in another. But this is what Noë claims, when he articulates his view that his account of perceptual constancy should be regarded as solving the “problem of perceptual presence” for the constant properties,

The phenomenon of color constancy is a striking example of the phenomenon “presence in absence” described in chapter 2. Consider that although we can perceive a wall that is illuminated unevenly as uniform in color, it is also the case that when a wall is in this way illuminated unevenly, it is also visibly different with respect to color across its surface. For example, to match the color of different parts of the wall, you would need different color chips. Standard ways of characterizing color constancy as a phenomenon have a tendency to explain away the fact that we experience the wall as uniform in color even when we experience the surface as visibly differentiated with respect to color across its surface. The problem of color constancy, then, is better framed as a problem about perceptual presence. We experience the presence of a uniform color that, strictly speaking, we do not see. Or rather, the actual uniform color of the wall’s surface is present in perception *amodally*; it is present but absent, in the same way as the *tomato’s* backside, or the blocked parts of the cat (Noë 2004, p. 128).

In chapters 3, 4, and 5 of *Action in Perception*, Noë focuses on shape and color constancy, and accounts for our perception of the constant shape and color properties in largely similar terms, drawing upon ideas like “presence in absence” and sensorimotor knowhow. There are however certain differences between the two cases, as is suggested by the following two quotations, which I will briefly comment on. Noë describes the two cases as follows,

We experience color as that which is, in a wide range of cases, *invariant* amid that apparent variation.

In this way, then, color perception and shape perception are on a par. You experience the roundness of the plate in the fact that it looks elliptical from here and that its elliptical appearance changes (or would change) in precise ways as your relation to the plate, or the plate's relation to the environment, changes. In exactly the same way, we experience the color of the wall in the fact that the apparent color of the wall varies as lighting changes (Ibid., pp. 127-128).

The color of an object is a way its appearance varies as relevant conditions change, for example, as ambient light darkens over the course of a day, or as the source of illumination moves, or as the object moves from one sort of lighting (say, daylight) into a different sort (e.g., moonlight, or firelight). Colors are ways colored things change their appearances as color-critical conditions change

Colors are patterns of organization in how things look. They *are* looks. ...

The shape of a thing is independent of its look or feel in a way that the color of a thing isn't independent of its look. For this reason, it is possible to give an account of shape that is independent of an account of apparent shape, but it is impossible to give an account of color that is independent of an account of *apparent* color (Ibid., p. 141).

From the first quotation we glean a difference that is left implicit by Noë, or at least not emphasized. Insofar as sensorimotor knowhow consists in expectations regarding how something will look to me if I move in relation to it, it has obvious application to the problem of shape constancy, but in the case of color constancy we need to draw upon our knowledge regarding how the object will look to us if the lighting changes. So in a sense Noë broadens his account in order to accommodate the case of color constancy. He does this by paraphrasing talk of sensorimotor knowhow in terms of exercise of the mastery of sensorimotor contingencies, so as to be able to describe the lighting case as exercise of the mastery of certain environmental contingencies, basically meaning that the perceiver needs to have expectations regarding how the look of the object changes if the lighting changes.

The second quotation makes what amounts to a metaphysical point. Both colors and shapes are real, but the existence of shapes is independent of our perceptual relations to them, while the colors are relations, and dependent on there being a perceiving subject. Noë develops his metaphysical ideas at some length, especially concerning color. However, I will set this metaphysical aspect of Noë's view aside altogether. I do not see that it makes a difference with regard to any of my concerns in the present work.

Instead, I wish to argue that Noë's account of perceptual constancy draws upon the set of ideas focused on the problem of perceptual presence and presence as absence, and not the problem of perceptual presence* and the idea of virtual presence. Indeed, considering the first of the above quotations from *Action in Perception* (Noë 2004, p. 128), it is telling that Noë uses the expression "presence in absence" and that the analogous cases he cites are the tomato's back side and the occluded parts of the cat, rather than something like the unattended aspects of the scene that is in view.

However, consider also that Noë emphasizes that our perception of shape and color properties differs in the respect that the former depends upon mastery of sensorimotor contingencies, while the latter depends upon mastery of environmental contingencies. This reveals a quite different perspective from the one that underpins the distinction between object-dependent contingencies and movement-dependent contingencies, as discussed in the previous section. The distinction between sensorimotor contingencies and environmental contingencies is a distinction between different aspects of presence as absence. There is presence as absence by virtue of sensorimotor (or movement-related) expectations and presence as absence by virtue of environment-related expectations. On the other hand, when we discuss virtual presence instead of

presence as absence, it is natural to group the relevant contingencies differently, based on which mechanisms facilitate access. On the one side we have movement-dependent contingencies, which pertain to how the *perceiver's* movements will facilitate access, and on the other side we will have object-dependent contingencies, which pertain to the ways in which the object can be “grabby,” viz., by either moving or changing, e.g., by interacting with its environment.

But the best way to drive home the point that perceptual constancy has to do with presence as absence, not virtual presence, is simply to point out that we cannot always access constant properties in many different ways. For example, it might be impossible for the perceiver to move so as to be able to see the constant property from certain perspectives—but nevertheless he sees a constant property.

Without this disambiguation I could have raised criticisms for Noë's view that I now cannot raise. For example, I might have said that the view fails to yield a general and principled account of shape constancy. We might have a case where the surface that has a certain shape is small, completely in view, and I am attending to it. Or we might have a case where my attention is elsewhere. Or we might have a different case where the surface that has the shape is large and I can only attend to parts of it at the same time. I might have pointed out that the idea of virtual presence applies to all these cases quite differently, and said that I failed to see a general principled account of shape constancy. But of course I cannot make this criticism if the view is explicitly articulated in terms of presence as absence, not virtual presence.

How does Noë's view compare with the mainstream views, the simple and the complex view? Clearly, it is quite different from the simple view. It is more similar to the

complex view in that both the complex view and Noë's view accept that constant properties are present to perceivers, but also try to do justice to the perspectival element in perception. However, they try to do it in different ways. Where the complex view says that the round, tilted coin is present to us as round and *tilted*, Noë says that it is present to us simultaneously as both round and *elliptical*. Basically, the complex view avoids an important problem that has been raised for Noë's view by Charles Siewert, viz., that the view renders perceptual contents pervasively self-contradictory (Siewert 2006, pp. 4-5). The complex view avoids the problem by asserting that the plate appears round to us, and by doing justice to the perspectival aspect of perceptual experience in claiming that the plate also appears tilted, without having to sort out the idea that the plate appears, in some sense, simultaneously both round and elliptical. The question is whether Noë can deal with this problem. I will argue that he cannot—and later in the dissertation I will argue that it can be dealt with by invoking Husserl's ideas.

I wish to make a dialectical observation before I proceed to Sean Kelly's views. Consider, for a moment, the difference between the object as a whole and the constant property. Both cases raise the problem of perceptual presence, but it is interesting that the difficulties that one is able to raise for the way Noë deals with these issues are not the same. In the case of the object as a whole, the problem seems to be that we need a reason to regard the back side as perceptually present. In the case of the constant properties, the analogous idea is not quite as compelling. Intuitions are quite divided on whether we see the constant shapes or constant colors, or whether we are restricted to the perspectival appearances. On the other hand, it may not be so easy to get a handle on the contradictory perceptual contents objection if we consider the object as a whole.

To comment on this disanalogy, I need to briefly don the robes of the Husserlian phenomenologist. From this perspective, it may be said that, although the cases of the constant properties and the object as a whole are in important and fundamental respects analogous, ordinary experience gives rise to divergent intuitions regarding the two cases. So as to be better attuned to widely shared intuitions, I will therefore concentrate on one kind of objection when dealing with Noë's views of the back side of the tomato and the occluded parts of the cat, and on a different kind of objection when dealing with constant shape and color.

Sean Kelly's Views

I will now go on to discuss Sean Kelly's views, regarded by Noë as amounting to an implicit criticism of his account. Noë therefore objects to certain aspects of Kelly's views that he regards as being at odds with his enactive view and especially with his view of perceptual constancy. I will argue that the discussion ends in an impasse. Later in the dissertation I will argue that Husserlian ideas enable us to pursue it further. In sum, Kelly's views are pertinent here, because they raise worries regarding Noë's views of perceptual constancy, and we will later see how these worries can be resolved by invoking Husserl's views, supporting the idea that a major aspect of Noë's view needs to be contextualized among Husserlian ideas.

Kelly's view is an interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's view, and Kelly tries to develop certain ideas that, in his view, Merleau-Ponty did not manage to fully articulate. He even suggests that "Merleau-Ponty didn't quite get his own view right" (Kelly 2005, p. 76). What Kelly has in mind concerns chiefly the role of "indeterminacy" in perceptual

experience. He quotes Merleau-Ponty as stating that indeterminacy has a “positive” role in perceptual experience. Kelly has found such points and statements highly suggestive of a certain view of the normativity of perception, which I will discuss presently.

According to Kelly, Merleau-Ponty has a notion of indeterminacy that stands in danger of being lost in translation. Kelly therefore makes a point of being very clear regarding what he means by indeterminacy,

Merleau-Ponty describes an “indeterminate vision”, the kind of visual experience we have of the hidden side of an object, for example, as a “vision de je ne sais quoi”. In the standard English translation of Merleau-Ponty’s text this is rendered as a “vision of something or other”. But this translation precisely covers up the difference between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. According to Merleau-Ponty I do not have a vision of some *thing* or another, a thing which is itself determinate but which I have not yet determined. Rather, on Merleau-Ponty’s view, I have a positive presentation of something indeterminate, a presentation of *an I do not know what*. The correct translation of the phrase, therefore, is quite literal: my experience of the backside of an object is “a vision of I do not know what”.

Even with the corrected translation, however, the distinction between the two views can be difficult to discern. Let me therefore state it as clearly as I can. The difference is properly understood as a distinction in the scope of the indeterminacy. Husserl thinks that it is indeterminate, from the point of view of the current visual experience, what the features of the backside of the object are. Merleau-Ponty, by contrast, thinks that my current visual experience contains something that is itself an indeterminate presentation of the back. For Husserl it is not yet determined what I see; for Merleau-Ponty what I see is indeterminate (Ibid., pp. 80-81).

We find Kelly saying that, according to Merleau-Ponty, something is indeterminate if we, in a sense, do not know it, or do not relate to it cognitively. Kelly applies this idea of indeterminacy to the ideas of best lighting and best perspective. Both are indeterminate. The best lighting is the one that gives us the color as it is itself, as opposed to some imperfect perspectival appearance of the color. The best perspective is the one in which the thing itself is given. According to Kelly, we cannot have the best

perspective, since it is a kind of “view from everywhere,” and this we cannot attain. However, he takes as his cue Merleau-Ponty’s statement to the effect that, in a manner of speaking, objects “see each other” and interprets it as amounting to the point that in our perception of the object, the other possible perspectives of it are implicit. In that sense the view from everywhere is part of our experience, even though we never attain it. It is thanks to this aspect of our perceptual experience that we experience things as having constant shapes and as being three-dimensional, even if in a certain sense, the appearances we see fall short of these constant shapes and that three-dimensionality. For example, if we go to a Hollywood Wild West movie set, we experience the facades as parts of houses with rooms inside and with back sides, etc. However, once we try to walk into the saloon for a cool drink and recognize the movie set for what it is, our attitude changes. In this special attitude, quite different from our usual engaged attitude, we are able to see the facades as just facades, we are able to see the perspectival appearances as amounting to nothing more than just that.

With the best lighting and the best perspective, we have articulated the idea of a normative, indeterminate background that plays an important positive role in perceptual experience. The best lighting and the best perspective are indeterminate, but so are the color itself and the thing itself—and Kelly says that it is qua indeterminate that they can be normative. For example, (and this is how Kelly phrases it) the thing itself can be regarded as norm (Ibid., p. 95).

Noë regards Kelly’s view as amounting to a challenge to his view of perceptual constancy, and clearly it is, insofar as Kelly claims that in our usual engaged attitude we

experience just the constant colors and the constant shapes, and things in their entirety—but not also the perspectival appearances.

Noë has three objections to Kelly's Merleau-Pontyan view and to this challenge. First, he argues that Kelly appeals to more or less optimal vantage points in the perception of an object, but there can be such optima only relative to certain purposes. Vision, on the other hand, is not intrinsically related to any such purposes, "seeing is all-purpose" (Noë 2005, p. 239). Therefore, insofar as we are considering vision, and not our practical undertakings, there are no grounds for privileging some viewpoints over others the way Kelly does.

Second, Noë points out that in order to realize that our perspective falls short of the norm, the optimum, we need to be aware, in some sense, that the object is now presenting a perspectival, suboptimal appearance to us. Therefore, we ought to be able to see, for example, the elliptical P-shape (i.e., perspectival shape) of the round plate.

Third, the factual and perspectival dimension in experience should not be associated with different, incommensurable attitudes, viz., the engaged attitude and the disengaged attitude. Rather, what I take myself to be seeing depends on the direction of my attention. As it is, we are unable to attend simultaneously to the roundness and the ellipticity of the plate due to the limitations on our attention. But this does not mean that we are not simultaneously and pervasively aware of the non-perspectival roundness and the perspectival ellipticity of the plate (Ibid., pp. 239-241).

Which of these critical points are successful? What is the dialectical significance of their succeeding either severally or jointly? It seems to me that if Noë's second critical objection succeeds, then also the third succeeds, since if we cannot be given constant

properties without being given perspectival properties or perspectival appearances, then there cannot be any special attitude, such as Kelly's engaged attitude, in which only constant properties are present to us, and not also the perspectival properties. As for the first objection, I must set it aside till the third chapter, as I lack the resources to seriously consider it.

But consider the second objection again. Here we have, once again, the issue of whether it is Noë's view or the complex view that should be regarded as the better view. Noë says that Kelly's view will need to be sensitive to what our present, limited perspective is. But it looks like Kelly can do this by accepting the complex view, which incorporates the perspectival idea without affirming that, say, the tilted round coin looks to us both round and *elliptical* at the same time. Instead, he can say that the coin looks *tilted* and round. Is there some reason to believe that this option is not open to Kelly? What does he lose by not accepting Noë's view and what would he gain by accepting Noë's view? And, above all, if one does accept Noë's view, how is one to deal with the problem of the contradictory contents? Let us discuss the last issue further.

Charles Siewert's Views

Let us see how Siewert raises the challenge of contradictory contents. Siewert considers the two alternative views of perceptual constancy, the simple and the complex view, and calls them the "Protean" and the "Constancian" view. The question is whether it is possible for us to synthesize the two views in the way that Noë does, and say that the coin looks simultaneously both elliptical and round. Siewert regards this as not possible,

The problem, as I see it, is this. If you conjoin the Protean view of the flux in appearance with the constancy in appearance ..., you will be

committed to the view that visual appearances are, in a sense, pervasively self-contradictory. For you will be saying that in ordinary vision, things look at once both *changing in shape and unchanging in shape*. You will run into what I'll call the Problem of Contradictory Visual Appearances (Siewert 2006, pp. 4-5).

Siewert poses this explicitly as a problem for Noë and considers various ways in which Noë might try to defend his two-dimensional view. I will present Siewert's arguments and then comment.⁴

First, Noë might say that the plate looks elliptical in apparent or perspectival shape, and round in what Siewert refers to as "plain old" shape. As the plate turns, the former changes, and the latter remains constant. But the problem is that if we say that something looks elliptical in apparent shape, then "in apparent shape" is simply redundant. We are, in effect, simply saying that the object looks elliptical—which leads us to say it looks elliptical and it looks round, and we are back with the contradiction, says Siewert.

Second, we might say that the perspectival shape is the shape as it looks from here. We experience the plate as round, and it looks elliptical from here. But the problem is that it looks round *from here*, too. Hence, it looks round from here and elliptical from here.

Third, we could say it has the properties of roundness and ellipticity-from-here. But what is the difference between the property of ellipticity-from-here and the property of ellipticity? For example, we cannot say that the ellipticity-from-here is distinguished by being the shape of the patch needed to occlude the object from here, since we can also say that the patch is just elliptical.

⁴ The arguments can be found in Siewert 2006, pp. 6-8.

Or we could say that having the property of ellipticality-from-here simply means that the object would be exactly hidden by an elliptical patch, if viewed from here. But now we have simply eliminated our perspectival property. We are saying that the object has a constant shape and would be hidden by different patches, if viewed from different places. We have sided with Constance.

Siewert finally suggests that Noë should want to side with Constance, given his enactive view, because then the visual properties of objects could be regarded as something to be attained by means of sensorimotor skills and probing, and we could view the sensorimotor knowhow as constitutively involved in perception,

The issue between Noë and Siewert concerns the ways in which we can capture the perspectival aspect of perceptual experience, and the ways in which we should not go about it. I find all of Siewert's points quite convincing: either we phrase the point about perspective in such a way that we get the complex view, or else there is a problem. Some formulations hide the problem. For example, I may say that present to us are the coin's non-perspectival property of roundness and the perspectival property of ellipticality, but then it is open for Siewert to point out that also the putative non-perspectival property is present perspectivally, so in what sense is it non-perspectival?

At this point it is not clear how Noë can avoid the problem, and it is even less clear why he should stick to his view, rather than going with the complex view instead. What renders his view a principled alternative to the complex view? These issues will be dealt with in the third chapter, with use of the relevant Husserlian resources.

7. Sensorimotor Knowhow and the Past

In a paper published in 2006, Noë replies to a challenge posed for his enactive view by Andy Clark. Clark argues that the idea of presence by possible access does not work with regard to what is already in the past. For example, one cannot access the past phases of a piece of music by exercising sensorimotor knowhow, seemingly yielding a counterexample to Noë's idea that all perceptual presence needs to be regarded in terms of possible access. Clark poses the problem as having to do with the themes of virtual presence and accessibility; Noë ostensibly accepts his way of posing the issue but gives a reply in terms of presence as absence and related ideas. I will argue that even on these terms his reply is not entirely satisfactory.

Andy Clark invites Noë to account for my present experience, in my hearing the long drawn-out sound of the steam whistle, in terms of the past phases of the experience. Undoubtedly, I must be experiencing the sound as having lasted for a while, and as having been experienced by me for a while, and yet I do not have access to the past phases of the sound event. Clark indicates that this should be a problem for Noë's enactive view, since the view understands perceptual presence in terms of sensorimotor access,

If the perceptual experience depicts the sound as, in some real sense, right now (this instant) sounding 'as if it has been going on for a long time', then this is one case where we cannot, even in principle, unpack that aspect of the phenomenology by invoking capacities of access or exploration. For that which makes the note long is all in the past (we can assume it is ending right now) and simply cannot be 'present to perception as accessible'" (Clark 2006, p. 23).

Noë, in "Experience of the World in Time," responds to the challenge as follows,

You don't need access to past sounds to experience the sound event (the temporal extent of the sustained note). What you hear when you

experience the temporal extent of the note is not the sounds that have already passed out of existence (any more than you *hear* the sounds that are yet to come). What you experience, rather, is, to a first approximation, the *rising* of the current sounds *out of the past*; you hear the current sounds as *surging forth* from the past. You hear them as a continuation. This is to say, moving on to a better approximation, you hear them as having a certain *trajectory* or *arc*, as unfolding in accordance with a definite law or pattern. It is not the past that is present in the current experience; rather, it is the trajectory or arc that is present now, and of course the arc describes the relation of what is now to what has already happened (and to what may still happen). In this way, what is present, strictly speaking, *refers to* or is *directed toward* what has happened and what will happen. Just as in a way the front of the tomato is directed toward the back—indicates the space where the back is to be found—so the present sound implicates a temporal structure by referring backwards and forwards in time (Noë 2006, p. 29).

Andy Clark poses the problem as concerning the idea of perceptual presence as accessibility. Noë says that the past phases of the sound of the whistle, or of a piece of music do not need to be accessible, but, rather, they are present to us in terms of an arc, or a trajectory, that describes the relation of that which is present to what has already happened and to what is expected to happen. He says that this is analogous to the difference between hearing the acoustic properties of someone's speech right now and understanding the meaning that is borne by his speech as it surges from the past through the present into the future.

Helpfully, he says that the arc is a *rule* similar to the rules he talks about in *Action in Perception*, as part of his discussion of perceptual constancy (Noë 2004, p. 196). Namely, it is part of his account that at the core of the constant properties there needs to be a kind of rule. I have said that he conceives of perceptual constancies in terms of expectations regarding which appearances one would have if one moved in relation to an object with a certain shape, or if the lighting changed. These expectations need to be thought of as rule-governed. Of course the perceiver can have any number of

expectations when facing the cubical object, but the expectations relevant to his perception of the constant cubical shape are the ones that are governed by the rule pertaining to cubical shape, a rule governing how the appearances of a cubical object will change if one moves around it and examines it from different perspectives.

We have now learned that the case of the past phases of a piece of music is analogous to the case of the constant shape and color properties. But this is not an adequate response to Clark's challenge. Noë should admit that there is much that is perceptually present to us but that we cannot access, the back side of a heavily guarded building for example, or the back side of an airplane flying over. Instead of admitting that this is a quite general problem and considering which consequences it may have for his view, Noë changes the topic and gives a reply based on an analogy with our perceptual experience of constant shape and color.

I will argue that Noë's reply is not satisfactory, even if we accept that the problem at hand is a version of the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk), to be addressed by appeal to the idea of presence as absence, rather than virtual presence. To see this, consider a case where John has been in the room, listening to a recording of Lohengrin Overture from the beginning to somewhere around the middle, when the door opens and Mary comes in. Mary instantly recognizes the piece as Lohengrin Overture, reaching into its fifth minute. (Both John and Mary know the overture well.) Like John, she now experiences the overture as surging forth from the past and has expectations regarding how it will continue. Yet she does not experience the overture as having been experienced by her for more than four minutes already, while John, on the contrary, does experience the overture as having been experienced by him for several minutes already.

Therefore, the appeal to the arc of meaning by itself does not fully account for our experience of the long drawn-out steam whistle as something we have been hearing for quite a while now. Both John and Mary experience the arc, but only John experiences the overture as something he has been hearing for a while now.

Perhaps Noë could reply that John's arc (or rule) for the overture has become changed by his having actually listened to the piece, and that there is therefore a shade of a difference between his experience and Mary's. But there is the problem that the difference between John's and Mary's experiences is not one of nuance. On the contrary, the difference is obvious and clear. One of them has been experiencing only the second half of the piece and the other has been experiencing the entire piece. Noë's framework does not suffice to give a complete account of the difference between John's and Mary's experiences of the Lohengrin Overture. Nor can Noë tell us the difference between the experiences of a person who has been exploring a physical object for a while, from different angles, and another person who spots the object and instantly recognizes it for the kind of object it is. We need further Husserlian ideas for that.

8. Concluding Remarks

I have been arguing that Noë does not succeed in solving or even motivating what he calls "problem of perceptual presence." Indeed, the problem is ambiguous between two readings, which I have referred to as the problem of perceptual presence* and the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk, no quotation marks), tackled by appeal to the ideas of virtual presence and presence as absence respectively. But even the disambiguation does not completely resolve all the issues.

Having, in sections 2-3, discussed the two problems in certain core cases, I proceeded to look at further cases and versions of the problem in the rest of the chapter. I argued that the idea of virtual presence does not enable Noë to deal with the explanatory gap, despite his claims to the contrary, and that the inflation (or globalization) of perceptual presence as virtual presence is quite unnecessary and does not bring any benefits. I further argued that Noë's account of perceptual constancies in terms of presence as absence faces the issue of contradictory contents, and that a problem can be raised for the way he uses the idea of presence as absence to account for our experience of the past phases of a piece of music.

In sum, I hope to have shown that there are two quite separate strands in Noë's enactive view. The one focusing on the problem of perceptual presence* and virtual presence leads to difficulties when Noë attempts to develop it into an interestingly radical philosophy. The other, focusing on the problem of perceptual presence and presence as absence, also encounters difficulties, but I will proceed to deal with them by bringing to bear the relevant Husserlian resources.

Chapter 2: Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology of Perception

1. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter, I will argue that Husserl investigates the content of perceptual experience as determining fulfillment conditions, not as determining accuracy conditions. Indeed, I will develop a distinctive interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology, different from influential lines such as the East Coast Interpretation, pursued, notably, by Robert Sokolowski and John Drummond, and the West Coast Interpretation, developed, notably, by philosophers such as Dagfinn Follesdal, David Woodruff Smith, and Ronald McIntyre. I will have occasion to discuss both interpretations in the chapter. The picture I present focuses on the idea that Husserlian phenomenology investigates fulfillment conditions and the necessary aspects of how they are set. To paraphrase this in Husserlian terms, phenomenology investigates the "noematic" and "noetic" aspects of experience respectively. Consider that Noë has basically given us a sketch of such a picture, with sensorimotor expectations setting the fulfillment conditions, and with the perceptual object being discussed in terms of rule-governed series of appearances. So as to be able to adequately articulate the connections between Husserl's and Noë's views, it will be necessary for me to offer critiques of certain interpretations of Husserl's views that, from my point of view, obscure the core ideas of Husserlian phenomenology. However, the reader who is not interested in the details and fine points of Husserl-interpretation may skip these interpretative disputes, in sections 4-7, and move right on to Chapter 3 after reading sections 2 and 3 of this chapter.

In sections 2 and 3 I will introduce the noetic-noematic correlation, with more of a focus, in section 2, on the perceptual expectations which set the fulfillment conditions,

and, in section 3, on the perceptual object interpreted in terms of fulfillment conditions, in the context of the general Husserlian project. In sections 4-7, I will offer criticisms of several interesting and influential interpretations of Husserl's views, viz., by Sean Kelly, Kevin Mulligan, John Drummond and D.W. Smith. I will, in each case, consider whether the interpreter has done justice to the core Husserlian idea of the noetic-noematic complex.

2. Setting the Fulfillment Conditions

The most important peculiarity of Husserl's philosophy of perception is that he investigates the content of perceptual experience as determining fulfillment conditions, rather than accuracy conditions, a fundamental but largely unappreciated point. In the present section I will explicate this idea, with a focus on the perceptual expectations which set the fulfillment conditions.

Since this is an introductory section, I will keep Husserlian terminology to the minimum. I also will not yet consider possible objections or what textual support might be needed to counter them. The contents of the section are largely based on my general understanding of Husserl's discussions in *Thing and Space*, *Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis*, and *Ideas II*.

The Basic Ideas: Intuition, Emptiness, Fulfillment

To get us started, consider your experience of some object, say, a tennis ball, in front of you. There is a difference between the way you experience its front side and its

back side. Let us capture this phenomenal difference by saying that, in your experience, the front side is given *intuitively* and the back side is given *emptily*.

I have thus introduced these two terms to capture a certain phenomenal difference, and this will be the “intuitive” starting point of our discussion of the Husserlian view. I am not aware that Husserl has anywhere attempted to define these two notions, and, indeed, they seem to be too basic to be defined. I would not even try to define one of them through the other. I take it that the distinction between the intuitive and the empty is a well known aspect of Husserl’s view, and it is likely that a student of Husserl’s philosophy would affirm, in response to the points I have made, that all of this is familiar. But consider that I have already done something with the intuitiveness vs. emptiness distinction that not everybody does, viz., I have made it the starting point of my interpretation. It is not enough simply to be aware that there is such a distinction in Husserl: it is important to realize that it is at the core of the view, and that Husserl develops his view by building a great deal on that basis. Also, consider the philosophy of perception today. As far as I know, the distinction between intuitive and empty givenness does not play an important role in it. On the contrary, as far as I know, philosophers nowadays do not make this distinction. Perhaps we are on to something fundamental with the distinction between intuitiveness and emptiness?

But let take the next step and develop the idea further. Let us call the transfer of emptily given content to intuitive givenness “fulfillment.” For example, when I turn the tennis ball around, I attain a view of what was previously the back side, and there is thus fulfillment. In addition to this use of the term “fulfillment” I propose a related one. I will also be using the term as synonym for “fulfilling intuition.” When I turn the tennis ball

around the back side comes to be given in the fulfilling intuition. I can therefore say that the back side “comes to fulfillment.”

Expectations as Furnishing the Emptiness. Fulfillment and Closer Determination

But is there actually ever fulfillment? In order for fulfillment to occur, it must be possible for emptily given content to come to intuitive givenness. However, for all we know, it could be the case that whenever we try to transfer content from empty to intuitive givenness, e.g., by turning the ball around, the content changes, and the transfer therefore fails. For example, it could be the case that the bright yellow of the front side will always impress us quite differently from the yellow we took there to be on the back side, and that, when I turn the ball around, all kinds of details will come into view that I did not take the back side to be having.

But fortunately there is a way to get past this worry. Accept that the empty givenness is furnished by expectations. The back side of the tennis ball is emptily given to me insofar as I have certain expectations about it. For example, I might have the expectation that if I moved around it so as to take a look at the back side, it would appear yellow, though a shade darker than the front side, given the lighting in the room. Expectations are, of course, future-directed, but the point is that insofar as I have an expectation now, it furnishes a kind of experience of the back side of the object *now*. The question whether there actually are fulfillments can now be posed as the question whether such expectations ever become fulfilled, and the answer is, of course, that they do, all the time. Therefore, there are indeed fulfillments.

We have thus fleshed out our conception of emptiness somewhat. However, it is possible to conceive of alternatives to the view: for example, that we *imagine* the back side. But this is a view that Husserl explicitly rejects. On one hand, he points out that we do not actually need to have such an imaginative experience every time we perceive an object (as a whole). On the other hand, it seems that if we imagine ourselves looking at the object from the other side, then it could not possibly furnish us with the experience of the back side being given *as* the back side. Rather, we would be imagining it as the front side, the part that is actually in view. Imagination therefore does not help us deal with the problem of the back side (Husserl 1997, pp. 47-48 (55-57)). I would add that more will need to be said about what kind of expectations are adequate to the job, but I will keep it till later in the present section and in the next section, so as not to unduly complicate the present discussion.

Instead, what about the point that some further details may come into view when we turn the object around? For example, there may be some defect on the back side of the tennis ball, with regard to which I had no expectations either way. When further details and aspects of the object come into view, there is what Husserl refers to as “closer determination.” There is fulfillment (as well as disappointment) in perception, but there is also closer determination.

The notion of closer determination presupposes that of determinacy. When I speak about something’s being given determinately, it has to do with what detail is given in experience, or with one’s experiencing something as being one way, rather than another. The object is given either as round or as square, and either as having or as not having a color defect on the back side. Determinacy comes in degrees: the way I

experience the object or some aspect of the object can leave open a broader or a narrower range of ways in which it can be. If the experience leaves open a relatively narrow range of options, the object is given more determinately; if it leaves open a relatively broader range of options, the object is given more indeterminately. For example, I might experience the back side of the tennis ball as yellow, or I might have a more determinate experience of the yellow as being different in various places (perhaps due to a lost ball's exposure to weather), and the yellow surface as having a certain texture. But while my experience of something, e.g., the back side of the tennis ball, can be completely empty, it can never be *completely* indeterminate, as that would be tantamount to not experiencing anything at all: it would be tantamount to not experiencing any objects or properties. Nor can it be the case that something is given with the utmost, unsurpassable determinacy. Whether it be an object or some property of the object, it is always possible to determine it more closely. You could, for example, examine the object through a magnifying lens and notice that what you took to be a more or less perfectly spherical shape is, upon closer examination, rather more irregular and uneven.

Fulfillments occasion closer determination, and closer determination leads us to have a richer set of expectations regarding the object. There is thus a close connection between the two processes, but they nevertheless are not one and the same process. It is usually the case that the parts that are given emptily, such as the back side, are given less determinately than the parts that are given intuitively, such as the front side, but it need not be the case. For example, we might be dealing with an object, or a kind of object, with which the perceiver is very familiar, in which case not only the front side but also the back side would be given very determinately. Nor is it the case that closer

determination can occur only by fulfillment. No, it can be the case that someone informs the perceiver about what is on the back side of the object, and his experience of it therefore becomes more determinate.

The distinction between fulfillment and closer determination may seem easy to grasp, but there are, in fact, philosophers who conflate these Husserlian ideas, as I will later argue. For now, let me let me elucidate in two further respects the idea that the two processes are, in fact, fundamentally different from each other. First, there is a sense in which the processes of fulfillment and closer determination run counter to each other. Namely, closer determination, e.g., when we discover some defect on the back side of the tennis ball, leads to the formation of new expectations, e.g., concerning how that defect would look if we examined it from different vantage points. Closer determination is therefore a process that gives rise to new empty givenness. While fulfillment eliminates emptiness, closer determination gives rise to new emptiness in experience.

Secondly, fulfillment furnishes what can be regarded as intuitive evidence. Husserl has complex (and changing) views of how perceptual experience justifies perceptual judgments by giving them fulfillment, but I would just make the simple point now that insofar as an object is given intuitively, it can justify our beliefs regarding that object. For example, if I remove an occluding object, and a greater part of the tennis ball comes to be given intuitively, the perceptual experience can justify some further perceptual beliefs regarding the tennis ball, and justify perceptual beliefs to a greater degree. Determinacy and closer determination are not evidential in such a way. For example, I might be approaching the object with some preconceptions about what is on its back side, and determine it accordingly, without any kind of evidence for my

preconceived ideas. And the experience could become more determinate for whatever reason: there could be some reliable or unreliable testimony regarding, say, the object's back side, or the perceiver could pursue a train of thought that leads him to believe that the object's back side is, in fact, blue, and this will make a difference to how the object is determined in his perceptual experience. Fulfillment is evidential, closer determination is not.

The Cumulativity and Graduality of Fulfillment. Rule-Governed Expectations

We thus have an idea of closer determination as a process leading to greater determinacy in a cumulative and gradual manner. I can explore the object from different sides, and I can look at it really closely, and I can even use a magnifying glass to see the minute detail. As I explore the object in these ways, the object comes to be presented to me increasingly determinately. It seems rather uncontroversial that when I go to take a look at the rear of the house, my experience of the front side does not become significantly less determinate. Using our Husserlian terminology, we can say that the front side is now given emptily but nevertheless with some degree of determinacy. Exploration of the house yields gains in determinacy of the experience.

But this should make us wonder whether fulfillment too can increase cumulatively as I explore the object from different sides. After all, it may seem that in order to bring the rear of the house to intuitive givenness, I will have to give up the intuitively given front side. Almost every gain seems to be accompanied by a loss. However, there is a way past this difficulty. When we move from one perspective (or appearance) to the next, we are not completely letting go of the first perspective. The first

perspective is *retained*. The content that was given intuitively from the first perspective, is now given emptily, but it is given as having been intuitively given. We might phrase this in figurative terms by saying that the content that is retained still bears the stamp of *now*. But to appreciate this point in non-figurative terms, accept that the emptily given content that has been given intuitively is experienced differently from the emptily given content that has not yet been intuitively given. It is a phenomenological datum that you can always distinguish, in experience, between the appearances you have already had and the ones you are still only expecting to have. And their respective roles in our epistemic economy are different. You can appeal to experiences of past perspectives on the object to justify perceptual judgments, but you cannot similarly appeal to experiences of the perspectives that you are still only expecting to have. Of course, when a perspective is retained, it does not mean that the thing cannot change in regard to this aspect, when the aspect goes out of sight, but it still makes a difference whether you just had it in view or not.

Now we can see how fulfillment, like closer determination, can increase by degrees. Insofar as we have a perceptual experience, we have many (implicit or explicit) expectations about how the object would look to us if we moved in certain ways. As we move around the object, these expectations can become fulfilled one after another, leading to gradually increasing fulfillment of the perceptual experience. We can also say that the object increasingly comes to fulfillment. For example, you could have some object that is much larger than the tennis ball, a large building around which you are walking. As you bring more and more parts of it to fulfillment, and they are retained, the perceptual experience receives fulfillment, and it does so cumulatively and gradually.

But this more complex situation raises questions about the expectations that do the job of furnishing the empty aspects of the experience. Walking around the building, I might have all kinds of expectations as to what I will see on the other side, and indeed I might have expectations regarding what I see when I make my way to the next historic site miles away. How do we distinguish between the relevant and the irrelevant expectations? Are sensorimotor expectations somehow especially privileged over other kinds of expectations that the perceiver may have, and involved in perceptual experience in some special way that other expectations are not? In Noë's work they are a salient topic, but Noë also discusses, e.g., expectations concerning how the color would look if the light changed.

According to Husserl, there is a "rule" for the house, as well as for the tennis ball and any other perceptual object, that determines how it should look to the perceivers if they moved in relation to the object. The set of expectations that goes with the experience of the house is thus a rule-governed series of expectations. I may walk around the house and have some expectations on which the rule for the house does not bear, and they will not be part of the perceptual experience of the house.

But are only sensorimotor expectations part of perceptual experience in such a way, or can other kinds of expectations similarly be part of perceptual experience? The answer is that other kinds of expectations are also involved. At least three relevant kinds of expectations are part of the Husserlian account. Namely, we must consider expectations pertaining to

- a) what the object will look like if the perceiver moves in relation to it,
- b) what the object will look like if it interacts with its environment,

- c) what the object will look like to other subjects if perceived by them.

For example, my perceptual experience of the tennis ball may involve the following expectations,

a) If I move around the ball, the logo will come in view. If the ball rotates, the logo will come in view.

b) If tossed against the wall, the ball will bounce back. If I toss it against the wall, it will bounce back. If the lighting is dimmed, the logo will become invisible.

c) If another subject looks at the ball from the other side, he will see the logo. If another subject looks at the ball from my present vantage point, he will see it as yellow.

My reasons for distinguishing these three kinds of expectations have to do with a certain hierarchy of levels at which the givenness of the perceptual object needs to be considered, that are called “constitutive strata.” The need for these different kinds of expectations should become clearer when I discuss the “constitutive strata” in the next section, and that discussion will also enable us to make certain further points regarding the nature of the relevant expectations.

Perceptual Object and the Constant Properties

As I have presented Husserl’s view, perceptual experience involves a number of different sorts of expectations, e.g, sensorimotor and concerning the object’s interactions with its environment, and the idea of such expectations seems to do considerable work in his account. This may raise several kinds of questions. It may seem to the reader that the view renders perceptual experience rather cluttered with expectations. Are they perhaps

unconscious? It certainly does not seem that perceivers have to be explicitly and saliently aware of having what seems to be a large number of expectations. How many expectations do there have to be? Which aspects of the object depend for their presence on these expectations? For example, if the front side of the tomato is red, don't I just see the red, without any expectations needing to be involved?

I have noted that more will need to be said on the nature of these expectations, and indeed on whether it is appropriate to speak in terms of a plurality of "expectations" at all, rather than some kind of "expectancy," in singular, with regard to what is not intuitively given. I will take up these questions later; I will now consider the question concerning the redness on the front side of the tomato, and indeed perceptual constancies more generally, to make a connection with the topic of anticipations. The kinds of expectations that I have been talking about are necessarily involved in the perceptual experience of every constant property, and not just the object as a whole, front side and back. In order to see the analogy between the case of the constant properties and the case of the object as a whole, do not think about the expectations as needed just to experience the object's back side. Think about them as needed to experience the object as a whole. I have pointed out that it is not just a question of an intuitively given front side and an emptily given back side, but, rather, we need to think about the presence of the perceptual object in terms of a rule-governed series of appearances or a series of views that we either have had, are having now, or expect to have of the object. The apparatus of expectations is there, in order to enable the perceiver to experience the object as something to which there is more than just the perspective he is enjoying of it now. His perspectives of the object are changing, and indeed we might think of our changing experience as a kind of

flux, but insofar as the views change in a rule-governed manner, there is a constant object present to the perceiver. And if the perceiver keeps exploring the object by viewing it from different perspectives, the object will either increasingly come to fulfillment, or else there will be a disappointment, viz., when the object appears as looking in a way it should not, according to the rule for the object.

The situation is analogous in the case of the constant shape and color properties. Both the constant shape and color properties are given to us in rule-governed series of appearances, and, in addition to the appearance the perceiver is having now, there are others that are either retained or that one is still only expecting to have. So you should not wonder how the constant properties might be similar to the object's back side: their givenness is relevantly analogous to that of the object as a whole. That said, there are certain differences between the different cases: the constant shape, the constant color, and the object as a whole. The perception of constant shape depends upon what Noë calls sensorimotor expectations, the perception of constant color depends primarily upon the kind of expectations that have to do with what the color will look like if the lighting changes—one might call them environmental expectations.⁵ The case of the constant object is different because the rule would have to be more complex in certain ways. Namely, objects can gain and lose properties, having a certain property at one time and not having it at another time, and this gaining and losing of properties needs to take place in a regular manner.

So one way to conceive of the presence of the perceptual object is in terms of a series of appearances that is governed not by one rule but by several rules; or,

⁵ For how Husserl regards color, see Husserl 1989, pp. 46-47 (43).

alternatively, we may think of the rule for the object with its properties as being complex. Insofar as a tennis ball is both yellow and round, the series of fullnesses (or intuitions) can be viewed as governed by not just one rule but by two rules. And the rules might be complicated further, due to there being rules for how (beyond the changes in the appearances through which the constant color and shape are given) the constant shapes can change and how the constant colors can change, and there might be a further rule for the perceptual object insofar as it is of a certain kind, viz., a tennis ball. The rules involved in perceptual experience must be very complex indeed.

But let me make a different point—consider the following challenge to the analogy between the givenness of objects and their constant properties. It seems that the object as a whole would need to be explored from different sides and for its different properties, in order to bring it to fulfillment, but, with the constant color, one look will usually suffice if the lighting is good. Why is it that we, in one case, can easily understand that, when we are having a perceptual experience, there is a certain process implicitly involved, but in the other case, viz., the constant color, we do not get the strong sense that we need to understand its presence in terms of an implicit process of fulfillments? The main reason is that Husserl's account, as I have presented it and as Husserl presents it in some of his works, is rather abstract, and is not primarily meant to capture, in all the detail and complexity, the ways in which we interact with our environment in real-life contexts. The process of fulfillments is an infinite process, it can never be brought to completion. Much less can it be part of our practical or theoretic aims to pursue fulfillments beyond the point of what is reasonable. In real-life contexts it is certainly the case that one look at an object will often suffice for us, especially in the case

of constant colors, provided that we see them in a well-lighted room or in broad daylight. But by making these points we have moved from a level of considerable abstraction to a level where the issues have become very complex. That one look will suffice means that, given our theoretic and practical aims, and given our background knowledge of objects and their colors, one look will often provide us with all the perceptual evidence we need. Yet this presupposes that the lighting is good, and it does not completely exclude the possibility of a future disappointment: we could always pursue further fulfillments, only it could be an increasingly unreasonable pursuit. It is an important aspect of the Husserlian project that we should be clear on when we are discussing realistic experience and when we are not, something I will have more to say about in the next section.

Accuracy vs. Fulfillment. Content as Determining Fulfillment Conditions

When I speak about perceptual content, I do not mean it in any technical or arcane sense, but simply as the way the objects or the world seem to be, or are represented as being, when I am having a perceptual experience. According to a presently influential and, I believe, widely held view, perceptual content is what determines the accuracy conditions of perceptual experience (Siegel 2010, Chapter 2). Clearly, for whatever is part of perceptual content, or whichever way the object seems to be insofar as I am having the perceptual experience, it is possible to ask whether the real object in the world is the way it seems to be. In other words, it is possible to ask whether the appearances are accurate of the reality, or whether they correspond to the reality. But, remarkably, in an account of perceptual content, the idea of fulfillment can play a role similar to that of accuracy or correspondence, viz., we can regard content as determining fulfillment

conditions. And it should be emphasized that fulfillment is a different idea from accuracy. Accuracy is a kind of correspondence between appearance and reality, but when we talk about fulfillment we are moving within the sphere of what is given. It is only the mode of givenness that changes, as the givenness of the object or property becomes more intuitive.

I will use an example to elucidate the difference between success by fulfillment and success by accuracy. On the one hand, consider the case where I experience a tennis ball in front of me, and there is a tennis ball there, but whenever I, for whatever reason, fail to bring the back side to intuitive givenness. In this case, my initial experience of the tennis ball is successful in the sense of being accurate but it is not successful in the sense of issuing in fulfillments. On the other hand, consider the case where I experience a tennis ball in front of me, but there is no tennis ball there, and yet, for whatever reason, it is the case that if I take myself to be turning the tennis ball around, its back side comes to intuitive givenness. Now my initial experience is successful in the sense of issuing in fulfillments but not in the sense of being accurate.

For a more everyday kind of case, consider that while, on the one hand, we may ask whether our perceptual experiences are accurate of the chair in the corner, we also regard the chair in terms of what we could do with it and how we could interact with it. We have the expectation that if we move to sit on the chair it will bear us, and we may be disappointed in this expectation if the chair turns out to be a fragile museum item which collapses when we move to sit on it. In the account that I offer of perceptual content, I have adapted such aspects of our commerce with familiar objects as aspects of an account

of perceptual content, according to which perceptual content determines fulfillment conditions and the question of accuracy is set aside.

Not only is there a difference between accuracy and fulfillment, there is clearly also a difference between what is required of content in order to determine accuracy conditions and to determine fulfillment conditions. Content determines fulfillment conditions only if there is the requisite emptiness. This yields a conception of content different from what we get when we consider content just from the point of view of determining accuracy conditions. To illustrate the difference, if we regard content as determining accuracy conditions, it seems that the back side with its properties is not rightly regarded as part of perceptual content. It is natural to say that we see the front side and that we see the tennis ball, but not that we see the back side. Our representation of the object might be provided for by a device such as the proposition that the object has a back side, but that seems insufficient motivation for saying that the perceptual experience represents the tennis ball as a whole, front side and back. On the other hand, it seems natural to regard the representation of the emptily given back side with its properties as part of the kind of content that determines fulfillment conditions.

Fulfillment as Goal of Perceptual Experience

I believe that Husserl regards fulfillment, not accuracy, as the goal of perceptual experience. Perceptual experience succeeds not by accuracy but by fulfillment. But this claim, on the face of it, may well seem strange to the reader. If my view is accepted, how can perception still be conceived of as making contact with objects in the real world? The notion of fulfillment seems ill-suited to capture the idea that perception makes contact

with objects in the world, in contrast with imagined or hallucinated objects. The view I attribute to Husserl might seem to the reader a kind of phenomenalism or idealism, which many philosophers would be very reluctant to accept as their view of perception, seeming to render Husserl's view irrelevant to the concerns of most philosophers of perception today. In fact, I do not believe that Husserl is a phenomenalist or idealist, but in order to explain my view I need to present Husserl's view of perception in the broader context of his philosophical views.

3. Transcendent Things and Husserl's Project

I wish now to broaden my discussion of Husserlian phenomenology somewhat, giving an exposition of the way Husserl conceives of the objects we perceive and how this fits into his general project, with its peculiar methods and aims. To connect with the discussion in the previous section, it may seem rather strange that Husserl should regard the goal of perception, provided that it has one, as consisting in fullness, rather than some idea of correspondence with the world. In order to grasp his view, we need to understand how he conceives of the world and the objects in it, and for which reasons.

The Perceptual Object

I have argued that, for Husserl, the way we perceive the constant properties and the way we perceive the constant object are analogous. The idea, in both cases, is that there is persistence, constancy in the flux of experience, thanks to a rule that governs the changing appearances. There is a Husserlian term that captures the analogy between the constant properties and the constant object, viz., "transcendence." For Husserl,

transcendence is constancy in the flux of experience (Husserl 1997, p. 315 (355)). This contrasts sharply with Kant's notion of transcendence. For Kant, what is transcendent lies beyond possible experience: things in themselves, the Kantian *Dinge an sich*, are the transcendent things. In Husserl, on the other hand, the transcendence is achieved not beyond experience but within and in terms of experience.

Husserl conceives of objectivity in terms of transcendence thus understood. This means that, while I have just now talked about the constant object as persisting in the flux of experience, I may just as well drop the qualifier "constant": the objectivity is that which persists in the flux of our experience. I may, similarly, drop the qualifier "constant" when I talk about the properties of the perceived things. Husserl has a rather restrictive notion of property, and he does not regard perspectival appearances as perspectival properties.⁶

Consider this idea from a different angle. If we regard the object's transcendence as amounting to rule-governed persistence through the flux of experience, we can say that the object's transcendence just is conceived in terms of the relevant fulfillment conditions. It persists insofar as the perceiver is not disappointed, insofar as the sequence of appearances it affords does not violate the fulfillment conditions associated with the kind of object with which we are dealing. Now it should be easier to see why Husserl

⁶ Some support, or at least illustrative context, for this negative claim can be gleaned from reading *Thing and Space* and *Ideas II*, with a view of the terminology Husserl uses. In fact, there is a sense in which Husserl does not even regard as properties what we would call the constant "shape properties," calling them "determinations" ("Bestimmtheiten") instead. He reserves the term "property" ("Eigenschaft") for what he regards as the "causal" properties of the "material objects," i.e., properties that are experienced in terms of the interaction of the object with other objects and with the experienced environment. Color property would be an example of property in Husserl's sense. I do not intend to follow him in making a terminological distinction between shape properties and color properties, but it is important that both the objects and properties be recognized as being transcendent, in Husserl's sense of the term.

should regard the goal of perception as consisting in fullness, or fulfillment. He gives an interpretation of perceptual objectivity, such that the idea of correspondence between the mind and the reality either is not applicable or is at least less fundamental than fulfillment, and to be understood on the basis of fulfillment, e.g., as correspondence between what appears to me and what appears intersubjectively.

However, consider the following worry in regard to conceiving of transcendence in terms of fulfillment conditions. Perhaps transcendence and fulfillment conditions should not be collapsed? Would it not be correct to say that the transcendent object is what we say we are seeing when the fulfillment conditions can be fulfilled? Someone might further press this point by arguing that my view has the unacceptable upshot that if someone has a disappointment in regard to an object, it is illegitimate for her to say that she has found out that the object (or even an object) was never there. After all, I have claimed that transcendent objects are what persists in the flux of experience and the object in question did so persist, before the disappointment occurred.

Indeed, there seems to be a dilemma here. Phenomenology should consider experience and its objects from the first-person point of view, from the midst of it all, rather than from the point of view of some final wisdom that might be attained at the end of the day, at the end of our perceptual explorations. On the other hand, the phenomenologist needs to do justice to the fact that perceivers can be disappointed and accordingly reorient themselves, which would suggest that an object's being there should be understood in terms of the (non-vacuous) truth of the counterfactuals in terms of which we may capture the fulfillment conditions. My suggestion is that we should stick to the basic idea of transcendent objectivity as constancy in the flux of experience, and

view the latter idea as suitable for capturing more sophisticated forms of experience. Our decisions in regard to which notion to deploy should be guided by whether the kinds of experiences we are considering do actually involve deliberation or even just a lively sense of the kinds of disappointments that may, with some likelihood, befall the experience in its further course. In this way, I believe we have overcome the dilemma.

But why should anyone be interested in pursuing such philosophy, or in talking about objects in this very “thin” sense? I believe that it forms part of a project of conceptual clarification. We can cast light upon our concepts by considering them in terms of the associated fulfillment conditions. Husserlian phenomenology is thus one of the ways in which we may strive to *understand* the world around us. It is acceptable that in the contexts of ordinary life and scientific practice we speak and think of the world as being there independently of ourselves, but the phenomenologist may not avail him- or herself of appeals to such independent reality. For a brief illustration of the point, consider the sense of mysteriousness that is evoked by the problem of the explanatory gap, viz., the problem of accounting for how subjective experience arises from an objective, say, neurophysiological basis, or by the Cartesian problem of how we can have ideas that are adequate of the physical world. From one perspective these are examples of problems that arise when we try to bridge gaps between what we conceptualize in terms of subjective concepts and what we conceptualize in terms of objective concepts. Husserlian phenomenology, by contrast to approaches that give rise to the problems I have just referred to, seeks a kind of unbroken understanding of the world and our place in it.

Fulfillment Conditions and the Phenomenological Method

I have argued that the idea that content determines fulfillment conditions is rightly associated with a certain conception of perceptual objectivity. I will now elucidate how this idea connects with various aspects of the Husserlian project, including the so-called phenomenological method.

Firstly, there is a principle that guides phenomenological investigation, viz., the Principle of All Principles,

Enough now of absurd theories. No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the *principle of all principles: that every originary presentative intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily* (so to speak, in its “personal” actuality) *offered to us in “intuition” is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there* (Husserl 1982, p. 44 (43-44)).

Philosophers often speak about what they do in terms of developing philosophical theories and offering arguments for them, and against competing theories. But Husserl takes himself to be doing something different from that. The various philosophical theories, say, of perception or perceptual content, are rather far removed from the experiential, or intuitive grounds, by Husserl’s lights. He, however, conceives of phenomenology as being backed by intuitive evidence every step of the way, and therefore radically different from all philosophical theories. We can relate this to the present emphasis on the idea of fulfillment conditions. It seems that if we regarded perceptual objectivity in terms other than the pertinent fulfillment conditions, say, by adopting some metaphysical theory of the world that is given to us in perception, then it looks like we must either depart from the grounds of intuitive evidence or else bar

ourselves from all discussion of the objects given in perceptual experience. In either case, the result would be a quite different project from Husserl's.

In order to nevertheless be able to discuss the perceptual objects within his framework, Husserl must re-interpret the perceptual world in a certain way, so as not to violate the principle of all principles. It is well known that the phenomenological investigation begins with the epoche, or a kind of bracketing of the external world.⁷ I would suggest that one way to understand the bracketing is to say that the phenomenologist switches from an interpretation of perceptual experience in terms of accuracy conditions to an interpretation in terms of fulfillment conditions. When the world is conceived not as being there, opposite our minds and either corresponding to our ideas of it or not, but rather in terms of fulfillment conditions, then it will be possible for the phenomenologist to work towards an understanding of it as a kind of noematic totality.

But the phenomenologist, as is well known, must also perform the eidetic reduction, so as to study essences, rather than contingent phenomena. How does this connect with the idea of fulfillment conditions? The idea generally is that phenomenology, unlike empirical psychology, studies necessary, rather than contingent aspects of experience. However, we can make the connection with our theme by interpreting the relevant essences as the rules governing the fulfillment conditions. Thus, we have not chosen to disregard sensuous experience for some far removed Platonic realm of essences, but rather we are abstracting away from the fullnesses of the

⁷ Husserl's characterization of the epoche can be found in §§ 31, 32 of *Ideas I*, where Husserl talks about it as a change of attitude, and distinguishes it from skepticism. I am not aware that Husserl anywhere explicitly characterizes the epoche in the terms that I just have. The formulation that I have just put forward is my interpretation of the Husserlian epoche.

experience to consider the rule that determines the fulfillment conditions pertinent to the experience of a certain kind of object. This abstraction need not but can involve generalization. When I am having a perceptual experience of a blossoming plum tree, with each twig bent the way it is, the eidetic reduction need not consist in my now beginning to contemplate plum trees generally, generalizing away from all the detail in which this plum tree is given to me. So there is a sense in which, when we perform the eidetic reduction, we have not removed ourselves from the specifics of the experience with which we are concerned. We do not, by taking that step, find ourselves contemplating general principles in a Platonic realm. We are contemplating the fulfillment conditions of the experience of the plum tree, with each twig bent a certain way and swaying in the wind. The noema, however, captures the fullness modification and several other aspects of our experience of the object. Therefore, we may say, roughly, that the essence of the object is part of the noema.⁸

I would add that this discussion should help us to a clearer view of the topic of perceptual expectations. We can see that the expectations can perform different roles in the experience, insofar as they are determined by different rules, e.g., by essences of different generality. One could have expectations pertinent to plum trees, for example, or the familiar plum tree in one's garden. One's perceptual experience of the plum tree could also be attended to perceptual expectations that do not directly concern the plum tree at all, or have to do with what would happen if one interacted with it in complex ways.

⁸ As can be seen in §143 of *Ideas* I (Husserl 1950, pp. 350-351 (297-299)), Husserl actually develops a more nuanced view, according to which the essence of the thing is not part of the noema: so the rule that we find in the noema is, instead, a Kantian regulative idea of the thing's essence.

I have now regarded various aspects of Husserl's phenomenological method, so let me say something about the remaining aspects that I have not yet brought up. Husserl says that, in addition to the epoche and the eidetic reduction, we also need to perform the "transcendental reduction." What is it? I believe that the idea of transcendental reduction is different from the epoche and the eidetic reduction in that it is primarily concerned with the phenomenologist's general grasp of his method, rather than achieving any specific results. Insofar as he views objectivities as posits of the transcendental subject, the phenomenologist is aware of the different methodological options available to him, and why they are available, and what justifies them. Namely, by performing the transcendental reduction I regard myself as transcendental subject able to attend reflectively to different aspects of my intentional experience by virtue of the activities originating from the transcendental ego-pole, and accept that we are dealing with a sphere where pretensions to absolute certainty are legitimate throughout. It is possible that Husserl took the pretensions to absolute certainty too far, but the concern with philosophy's self-legitimation is surely reasonable. At least *prima facie*, the transcendental reduction complements other aspects of his phenomenological method, and does not, in any obvious way, conflict with them. In particular, there is no obvious conflict with the idea of the epoche, viz., suspension of judgment regarding metaphysical questions of existence.

Husserl investigates what he calls the "constitution" of perceptual objects. The idea of constitution needs to be understood in relation to the various aspects of Husserl's method that I have discussed. Claesges, editor of Husserl's *Ding und Raum*, captures it well when he says, "*A res extensa is constituted by its transferability to its optimal*

appearance” (Claesges 1964, p. 64). [*“Eine res extensa ist konstituiert durch ihre Überführbarkeit in ihre optimale Apparenz”* (Claesges 1964, p. 64).] What this means is that the study of constitution is basically the study of what it takes to bring the object, or some property or other part of it, to ultimate fulfillment. It is the study of fulfillment conditions, by application of the phenomenological method.

In the remaining part of the present subsection, I wish to draw attention to three aspects of Husserl’s study of constitution. It continues to be my aim to inform the reader of the main aspects of Husserl’s project—enabling us, eventually, to make connections with Noë’s views, in the next chapter.

First, I wish to explain the idea of constitutive strata, or levels of constitution. There is probably no answer to how many constitutive strata there are, but for an overview of the account, and to be prepared for the discussions in the following subsections, we need to distinguish three strata. First, there is the level of the constitution of the spatial object or “phantom.” Second, there is the level of the constitution of physical reality, especially the material thing. Third, there is the constitutive level of the Lifeworld, i.e., objects as having various practical and value properties. Each stratum presupposes the previous ones but not vice versa.

I wish to make a point about Husserl’s well-known concept of the Lifeworld that will hopefully cast light on the entire hierarchy of constitutive strata, and thereby on the project that Husserl pursues in his various works. Husserl talks about the Lifeworld in various senses, and it is not wrong to regard it as simply the world of our everyday concerns and activities, before it has been thematized from the point of view of one of the special sciences, and needing to be understood before we can begin to discuss the special

sciences from the phenomenological point of view. But Husserl also refers to it as a pre-predicative level of experience.⁹ This is noteworthy, because it shows how far removed the Husserlian constitutive analyses are from the perceptual experiences that we may actually have. For example, it seems plausible that when I normally perceive objects, I make judgments in which I apply certain concepts to them, but for Husserl the question is how the object can be given to me in the first place, and how I can form concepts of it and its properties in the first place. However, there is no place in many of his constitutive analyses for claims to the effect that I perceive objects as square because we apply the concept of squareness, or as hard because we judge them to be hard. Husserl is not arguing that there is, in fact, never a role for such judgments in perceptual experience, or that most of the time they do not play a role.

This leads me to my second point. Once we have gained a good understanding of the constitution of the perceptual object, it should be clear that the expectations I have been talking about, e.g., the visuo-kinesthetic (or sensorimotor) expectations, are an important topic in their own right, not to be viewed as simply a kind of judgment. The resources that go into constituting, say, the phantom, cannot include judgments, because that would render the entire account question-begging. Claesges has rightly pointed out that the phantom should be regarded as a “methodological abstraction” and we may add to this that also the resources that go into constituting the phantom are a methodological abstraction. This is why it should be expected that when we move up the constitutive strata, not only does our account of the constituted object become richer and more multi-

⁹ For example, translator David Carr draws attention to differences in Husserl’s use of the term “Lifeworld” in Husserl 1970, pp. xl-xli, along the same lines as I have just done. For an example of Husserl’s contrasting the Lifeworld with the world of science, conceived as the “totality of predicative theory” see *ibid.*, p. 129.

faceted but the same can be said of the account of the constituting resources. That is why Husserl emphasizes that there is a need for phenomenological investigations both of the “noesis” and the “noema.” The noema is the constituted object, or what is given in perceptual experience. The noesis is the constituting resources, or what is involved in the giving of the object.¹⁰

It should also be clear now that my discussion of the relevant perceptual expectations in the previous section involved a simplification, and it may have led the reader to believe that all the expectations are distinct judgment-like intentional acts, involving the application of concepts. That could not be the case, given the nature and aims of Husserl’s project. It also would seem strange, given that one’s experience normally is not cluttered with so many expectations. Strictly speaking, the expectations that are involved, say, in the constitution of the phantom, are not expectations to the effect that if I moved *the object* would look so and so. They are not expectations *about the object*. Rather, they are a kind of implicit, low-level expectancy of which Husserl accounts in terms of associative relations between series of visual sensations and kinesthetic sensations. Insofar as they involve relations of association, the account ties in with the views that were current in the psychology of Husserl’s time, and aspects of

¹⁰ In fact, there is an ambiguity in Husserl’s use of the term “noesis.” On the one hand, “noesis” means the “animating” aspect of the experiencing process. On the other hand, it means both the “animating” aspect and the animated visual sensations, i.e., not the one aspect but the entire process. For example, the contrast between the noesis and the *hyle* is drawn in Husserl 1982, p. 207 (175), and the more inclusive notion of noesis is presented on p. 233 (199).

I have just used “noesis” in the latter sense. However, I regard as highly illuminating the explication Claesges, in a discussion of *Thing and Space*, gives of noesis in the former, narrower sense, “The authentic noesis of the consciousness of the phantom is the “kinesthesia,” which, as noesis, underpins the general lawlikenesses of intentionality” [“Die eigentliche Noesis des Phantombewusstseins ist die “Kinästhesie” ... [ftn. 1], die als Noesis den allgemeinen Gesetzmäßigkeiten der Intentionalität unterliegt.“] (Claesges 1964, p. 64). This emphatic and important point is at odds with several Husserl-interpreters’ views.

Husserl's noetic phenomenology may well be compromised due to the relevant psychological views' becoming discredited. It would require a separate study to establish whether and to what extent that is the case.¹¹

The pervasive use I make of the term "expectation" requires clarification also in another respect. Namely, where I speak of expectations, Husserl might well avoid the term and articulate his view in terms of "partial intentions" instead. For example, I should seriously consider his views regarding perceptual expectations in the following quotation from the *Logical Investigations*, preceded by a discussion of one's expectations regarding how a melody will continue,

In our previous example there is also a relation between *expectation* and *fulfilment of expectation* [*Erwartung*—K.L.]. It would, however, be quite wrong to think, conversely, that every relation of an intention to its fulfillment was a relationship involving expectation. *Intention is not expectancy* [*Erwartung*—K.L.], it is not of its essence to be directed to future appearances. If I see an incomplete pattern, e.g., in this carpet partially covered over by furniture, the piece I see seems clothed with intentions pointing to further completions—we feel as if the lines and coloured shapes go on 'in the sense' of what we see—but we expect nothing. It would be possible for us to expect something, if movement promised us further views. But possible expectations, or occasions for possible expectations, are not themselves expectations.

The external perceptions of the senses offer us an indefinite number of relevant examples. The features which enter into perception always point to completing features, which themselves might appear in other possible percepts, and that definitely or more or less indefinitely, according to the degree of our 'empirical acquaintance' with the object. Every percept, and every perceptual content, reveals itself, on closer analyses, as made up of components which are to be understood as ranged under two standpoints of intention and (actual or possible) fulfillment. The same applies to the parallel acts of imagining and picture-thought in general. In the normal case intentions lack the character of expectancy, they lack it in all cases of tranquil [*ruhend*—K.L.] perceiving or picturing, and they acquire it only when perception is in flux, when it is spread out into a continuous series of percepts, all belonging to the perceptual

¹¹ For further discussion of the nature of the relevant perceptual expectations, and the role of visual and kinesthetic sensations, see Section 5 of the present chapter.

manifold of one and the same object. Objectively put: the object then shows itself from a variety of sides. What was pictorially suggested from one side, becomes confirmed in full perception from another; what was merely adumbrated or given indirectly and subsidiarily as background, from one side, at least receives a portrait-sketch from another, it appears perspectively foreshortened and projected, only to appear ‘just as it is’ from another side. All perceiving and imagining is, on our view, a web of partial intentions, fused together in the unity of a single total intention. The correlate of this last intention is the thing, while the correlate of its partial intentions are *the thing’s parts and moments*. Only in this way can we understand how consciousness reaches out beyond what it actually experiences. It can so to say mean beyond itself, and its meaning can be fulfilled.” (Husserl 1970, pp. 700-701)

Clearly, if we adopted the terminological preferences Husserl expresses in the quoted passage, we would have to speak in terms of partial intentions and not expectations, except when the perceiver saliently has the sense of expecting something. However, I believe that my regarding the partial intuitions as implicit expectations, or as implicit expectancy, is a well-justified interpretative choice. It enables us to make sense of the partial intentions, and it will enable us to make a connection with Noë’s views, insofar as they really only differ terminologically from Husserl’s views. In particular, when we move from the discussions of the *Logical Investigations* to the constitutive analyses, say, of *Thing and Space*, it will be seen that the partial intentions need to be regarded as fundamentally amounting to a kind of expectancy, viz., visuo-kinesthetic expectancy.

I also have a third point concerning the constitution of the perceptual object. Namely, someone might suggest that I was too quick in drawing the conclusion that Husserl’s constitutive analyses of perceptual experience cannot draw upon perceptual judgments and empirical concepts. Perhaps it is the case that, prior to discussing perceptual experience, we can develop an account of the relevant perceptual judgments

and concepts in terms of imaginative experience? After all, Husserl emphasizes that his method involves imaginative variation. Perhaps we can avail ourselves of the resources of predicative and pre-predicative imaginative experience prior to investigating perceptual experience? But we cannot do that. Husserl's account of the constitution of perceptual objectivity needs to be regarded in its broader significance, viz., as the constitution of sensuous objectivity generally. For most purposes, when we have performed the epoche, there simply is no difference between the imagined object and the perceived object, and that is precisely why Husserl can make use of the method of imaginative variation without having to worry that he has thereby missed some important aspects of perceptual experience. Someone might think that other kinds of experience, hallucinatory or imaginative, are somehow more basic than perceptual experience, and that this should be reflected in Husserl's constitutive analyses. It might be thought that perceptual experience could somewhat plausibly (though contentiously) be regarded as involving what is involved in these other kinds of experiences, plus something extra, viz., something that accounts for a contact with the physical world. But I believe that, from the phenomenological attitude, it is rather the perceptual experience that is more basic than the hallucinatory or imaginative experience. It is the account of the latter kinds of experience that will need to comprise what is involved in perceptual experience, plus something extra, viz., a reference to some manner of disappointment or failure of intersubjectivity. Therefore, Husserl's account of the constitution of perceptual objectivity needs to be viewed as concerning sensuous objectivity generally, and the resources on which he can legitimately draw in giving such an account are rigorously limited.

The Way out of Transcendental Phenomenology

An exasperated phenomenologist once complained that while there appeared to be several ways into transcendental phenomenology, he had not yet heard of even a single way out of it. The phenomenologist abandons the natural attitude of the rest of us, including the scientists, and assumes the phenomenological attitude in order to investigate the constitution of objects, or investigate fulfillment conditions, as I have put it. But what does one ultimately gain by doing it? Can transcendental phenomenology make a difference by helping us solve any problems aside from those of its own?

It seems to me that Husserlian phenomenology could be of broader relevance in several respects. Transcendental phenomenology amounts to a kind of elucidation of our most fundamental concepts and it can therefore conceivably reveal conceptual confusions, e.g., confusions between personal-level and subpersonal-level concepts.

However, consider Husserl's famous title, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. This title is not redundant: it refers to two different aspects of Husserl's philosophical project. On one hand, there is the general foundational project, aiming to investigate the foundations of all the sciences. This is "pure phenomenology" or "transcendental phenomenology." But on the other hand, there is also the idea of various branches of "phenomenological philosophy," such as phenomenological psychology, concerned with issues in a specific discipline, but nevertheless involving the epoche and eidetic reduction. It seems plausible to suppose that phenomenological psychology would concern itself with, e.g., the analysis of the experiences we, for one reason or other, attribute to cognitively impaired subjects or

infants. It should yield a kind of understanding that we may value for its own sake, but that may also prove to have uses or applications.

This brief discussion of what I have called the ways out of phenomenology contained brief indications of the ways in which phenomenology is relevant to our various pursuits, and how we can move back and forth between pure phenomenology and these other pursuits, and find the insights of Husserlian phenomenology helpful. With it I will bring to an end my various introductory elucidations and proceed to a discussion of the views of different Husserl-interpreters. While they all have good discussions of Husserl's views, I hope to be able to contribute by bringing the important ideas into sharper focus. In the context of my present project, these interpretative engagements are important as part of supporting my claim to the effect that there are important connections between Husserl's and Noë's views. Generally speaking, the rudimentary version of the idea of the noetic-noematic connection is there in Noë's philosophy. However, since the notions of noesis and noema are vigorously debated, it will be important to enter the interpretative debate, in order to help the reader see the point I am trying to make.

4. On Sean Kelly's Views

By discussing Sean Kelly's views in the present section, I will begin a critical engagement with several interpretations of Husserl's views. I will in all cases explore the connections between, on the one hand, what is said about topics such as sensorimotor expectations and bodily movements, especially as these topics are treated by Husserl in *Thing and Space*, and, on the other hand, about the constitution of the perceptual object.

In other words, I am interested in what these interpreters say about the noetic and noematic aspects of perceptual experience. As I will argue, I believe that all these interpreters views can be further improved.

I am in all cases considering what is said about sensorimotor expectations and bodily movements, especially in regard to *Thing and Space*, and examining the different interpretations is therefore part of my exploration of the connections between Husserl and Noë. If these interpretations of Husserl's views were right, the connections between Husserl's and Noë's views would be obscured considerably, and my arguments concerning Husserl and Noë could be challenged.

Kelly develops a kind of Kantian interpretation of Husserl's view of perception, on the basis of *Thing and Space* chiefly, and that Kantian picture is rather cohesive.¹² Nevertheless, I believe that, as an interpretation of Husserl's views, it is problematic in several important respects. Others have pointed out that Kelly's view does not have sufficient textual support, but I hope to be able to argue that it is problematic in principle: Kelly interprets as judgments those aspects of Husserl's view that really amount to something like Noë's sensorimotor knowhow. I will therefore begin by considering Kelly's ideas regarding Husserl's notion of apprehension in *Thing and Space*, and then proceed to Kelly's view of the normativity of perceptual experience and the transcendence of the perceptual object, i.e., to the larger Husserlian picture, including the noematic aspects.

¹² It has been pointed out to me that my discussion bypasses the question of the influence of Hubert Dreyfus's views on Kelly's interpretation. While I am not directly concerned with questions of influence, I concede this as a limitation of my discussion. However, while an appreciation of the influence of Dreyfus's views could lead to a more nuanced appreciation of Kelly's view, I do not believe that it could lead to a dismantling of my reading of Kelly in terms of basic Kantian ideas, and articulating the Kantian picture is sufficient to get off the ground my criticisms, viz., with regard to Kelly's take on the noetic and noematic aspects of experience.

Determinacy and Proper Givenness

I will start by presenting the relevant aspects of the view that Husserl gives in *Thing and Space*. In particular, I wish to emphasize that Husserl distinguishes between the ideas of fullness and determinacy, so that perceptual experience can determine some aspects of the object intuitively and others emptily, and insofar as both the intuitively and emptily given aspects are given in various measures of determinacy, they can therefore be said to be “apprehended” in the perceptual experience, and the apprehension needs to be conceived in low-level, non-intellectual terms. All of this should be basically familiar from the previous sections, but I am now giving textual support for the view and expressing the view in Husserl’s terms.

In what follows, I aim to show that what Husserl says contrasts starkly with what Kelly takes him to be saying, viz., giving an account of perceptual experience in terms of sense data and judgments about them. It will also be seen that Kelly conflates the Husserlian notions of determinacy and fullness. Indeed, Kelly’s views are influenced by Merleau-Ponty, and it appears that Merleau-Ponty conflates these two Husserlian ideas as well. The reader may remember that in the first chapter, in the section dealing with perceptual constancy, I gave an exposition of Kelly’s interpretation of Merleau-Ponty’s notion of indeterminacy. Kelly regards it as a novel and promising notion, interpreting Merleau-Ponty as holding that what is experienced as indeterminate is experienced not as being in one way or another, but rather as being “I know not what.” The object’s back side is indeterminate in such a way, for example. But this seems similar to the Husserlian notion of emptiness, which Merleau-Ponty appears to have conflated with indeterminacy.

If that is the case, Merleau-Ponty's notion of indeterminacy should not be regarded as a novel contribution.

In § 15 of TS, Husserl distinguishes from presentational (*darstellend*) contents the apprehension (*Auffassung*, also translated as “interpretation”). The presentational contents reside *reell* in the perceptual acts, they make up the sensation of what is actually presented to us: e.g., the sensed color, the sensed roughness, or the sensed form. However, the sensed color is to be distinguished from the perceived color, e.g., the color of the perceived house. In order for us to perceive objects, the perception must contain a certain “surplus” over what is sensed,

We call this excess the apprehension-character, and we say that the contents of sensation undergo apprehension. These contents would in themselves be, as it were, dead matter, but through the apprehension they acquire animating significance in such a way that they are able to present an object (Husserl 1997, pp. 39-40 (46)).

Husserl does not invoke the idea of the “animating” apprehension in talking about all the different kinds of intentional acts, but specifically in relation to sensuous experiences. While apprehension performs a certain function in external perception, there is no need for it to perform a similar task in “self-posing perception,” the kind of act in which Husserl carries out his reflective analyses of external perception,

Thus it is apprehension which distinguishes self-posing perception from presentational perception. Only in the latter is there carried out the relation to the perceived object in such a way that a content really [*reell*] immanent in the perception functions as presentational, as one that is not simply grasped but is apprehended as something which it itself is not but which appears with its apprehension (Ibid., p. 40 (46)).

The notion of apprehension is not first introduced in TS. Husserl already discusses the notion in the LI, §§ 26, 27. There, “apprehension” aims to capture sense in respect to what it does for the fullness, where fullness is referred to by the term

“representing contents” (*Räpresentaten*). It is thanks to being apprehended in a certain way that the representing contents can function as intuitive, or as signitive (i.e., empty). For example, a perceptual judgment may be accompanied by pictorial images, but they are not *apprehended* so as to render them capable of offering fulfillment to the judgment.

As I have explained, perceptual experience gives objects in various degrees of fullness. Husserl’s terms for fullness and emptiness in TS are “proper” (*eigentlich*) and “improper” (*uneigentlich*) appearance. Proper appearance is what is actually presented to us, e.g., the side of the house that is actually in view. Improper appearance is that which is not presented to us, as is the case with the sides that are not actually in view. Husserl accommodates this by rendering the perceptual intention complex. It consists of several partial intentions, full and empty. “*Perception* is ... a complex of full and empty intentions (rays of apprehension)” (Ibid., p. 48 (57)). The multiplicity of partial intentions, as part of an account of the degrees of and increases in fulfillment, is also already there in the LI.

In TS, Husserl makes a point of emphasizing that the notion of determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*), yielding degrees of determinacy, needs to be conceived in low-level terms. Thus, in clear air, on a sunny day, the color of the side of the house that is turned towards us appears to us in its determinateness. Seen in the dark or in fog, the color appears less determinately. Husserl emphasizes that our ability to see in varying degrees of determinacy is independent of “conceptual classification.” (Ibid., p. 49 (58)) Rather, these differences are rooted in the essential character of perception, and apprehension.

This character demonstrates its significance subsequently even in regard to identifications, fulfillments, and disappointments, for the possibilities of identification and differentiation receive an essential delimitation and

orientation through the apprehensional modes of determinateness and indeterminateness in their various functions (Ibid., p. 49 (58)).

It is apprehension that is responsible for the different degrees of determinacy and indeterminacy with which the front side and the back side are given. And given the discussions of the previous sections, it should not be surprising that determination in the perceptual experience is not tantamount to sensuous determination. Even if the back side of the object is given completely emptily in a perceptual experience, it is never given completely indeterminately in that perceptual experience,

The differences between determinateness and indeterminateness, in their myriad gradations, play an especially visible role with respect to the moments of improper appearance. If I apprehend a box, from the very outset it has for the apprehension a back side and an interior, though for the most part these are very undetermined. For example, it remains an open question whether the box is full or empty, whether the back is polished or not, etc. On the other hand, empty intentions can also be determinate, as is the case when I have to do with an object precisely known by me in the relevant aspect. ... Indeterminateness is never absolute or complete. Complete indeterminateness is nonsense... (Ibid., p. 49 (58-59)).

Thus we have the ideas of determinacy on the one hand, and what can be variously called intuition, fullness, or proper givenness on the other. Having introduced these ideas and this terminology, I will now contrast my views with Kelly's. I will be drawing upon two papers of his, "Husserl and phenomenology" and "Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty," the latter of which I have already discussed in my first chapter, since Noë regarded aspects of Kelly's view as a challenge to his own view. There is a good deal of overlap between Kelly's discussions in the two papers, but the emphases are somewhat different, and the later "Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty" presupposes the other to some extent. In the earlier "Husserl and Phenomenology" Kelly contrasts Husserl's views of perception positively with the empiricists' and Brentano's, and then

negatively with Merleau-Ponty's. The contrast with Merleau-Ponty's view is also the central theme in "Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty." In the earlier paper, Kelly emphasizes that, in order to understand Husserl's view of perception, and to assess it adequately, we need to grasp Husserl's notion of transcendence. In the latter, he articulates more fully the consequences of the putative Husserlian account of transcendence.

Kelly correctly points out that parts of the perceived object, roughly, the front side, are given intuitively, and the rest of it, roughly, the back side, is given emptily. He adds that, for Husserl, although the back side of the object, or the "improperly" given part of the object, is in no way presented to the perceiver, its givenness is nevertheless "an essential part of [the perceiver's] experience of the thing as an object" (Kelly, 2002, p. 124). But then Kelly's interpretation takes a problematic path, as he relates these observations to the notions of determinacy and indeterminacy. In his view, the properly, or intuitively, given parts are also the ones that are given determinately; and the improperly, or emptily, given parts are the ones that are given completely indeterminately.

He accepts the first conjunct on the grounds of something like the following line of reasoning. He interprets Husserl as holding the view that we have incorrigible knowledge of intentional acts, and that we can have it because they are "immanent." Moreover, the immanent aspects should be regarded as determinate, or else we could not have incorrigible knowledge of them (Ibid.). But insofar as the perceiver is presented with the front side of the object he is also presented with sense data, which are immanent and known incorrigibly. Therefore, the front side of the object is given determinately.

As for the second conjunct, Kelly admits that it is a tough nut to crack: how can something be *given* indeterminately? In “Husserl and Phenomenology,” he undertakes to solve this problem by adopting a suitable conception of indeterminacy, arguing that “the indeterminate features in my experience of the object are just those that I take the object to have, but that I have not yet had any determinate sensuous presentation of” (Ibid., p. 125). In “Seeing Things in Merleau-Ponty, Kelly reiterates this interpretation: determinacy is due to sensuous presentation and indeterminacy is accounted for by hypotheses or judgments in the absence of sensuous presentation, “I *know* or *believe* or *hypothesize* or *expect* that the object has certain hidden features, but I do not, properly speaking, *see* it as such (Kelly 2005, p. 80). He further sunders the experience of the front side from that of the back side by emphasizing that the two kinds of givenness are independent of each other. Insofar as I have determined the front side, I need not have determined the back side to any extent, since in being presented with the front side I am presented with the “material of sensation” and there is “nothing in the ‘material of sensation’ ... to indicate that the back side is any shape at all” (Ibid.). Kelly regards this account of determinate and indeterminate givenness as crucial for understanding Husserl’s idea of the transcendence of the perceptual object,

In Husserl’s account of object transcendence, the principal move is to distinguish between the features of the object that are experienced by me as *determinate* (roughly, those features for which I have sense data) and the features of the object that are experienced by me as *indeterminate* (roughly, everything else) (Kelly 2005, p. 78).

As for the nature of the “material of sensation,” Kelly says that he regards Husserl’s understanding of the *hyle*, or “the raw data of sensation” (Kelly 2002, p. 122) as “essentially Kantian” (Ibid., p. 123). He explains,

Think of the [conceptual frame for coffee mug] as a list of feature-slots that any given coffee mug is assumed to fill in some determinate way. The *hyle*, then, fill in some of these slots. They fill in, for instance, the slots for the color, shape, size, and texture of the front side of the mug. These features of the object, when they are presented in good light at the right distance (and so on) are “determinate” in my experience of them.

But not every feature of an object is clearly and determinately presented to me in every experience. Accordingly, there are some feature slots that are incompletely filled or, as Husserl says, indeterminate (Ibid., p. 123).

According to Kelly, the Husserlian view is similar to the Kantian view in asserting that for some parts of the object we have sense data and for others we do not. Therefore, some parts of the object are given completely determinately, and others completely indeterminately. It is not clear how there could be any degrees of determinacy.

Finally, Kelly attributes to Husserl the, in Kelly’s own view, false idea that our experience of that for which we do not have sense data, such as the object’s the back side, is not a “properly perceptual one,”

One natural, but mistaken, idea is that our experience of the hidden side of an object is not a properly perceptual one. This is the approach that Husserl prefers. It is motivated by the intuition that perception begins with the presentation of determinate sense data; any putative aspect of perception that is not attributable to such a presentation is not properly part of perception at all (Kelly 2005, p. 96).

To sum up, Kelly presents us with a kind of Kantian picture according to which the perceptually experienced front side of the object, with its sensuous qualities, is immanent to the experience, while the back side, and therefore also the object as such, are transcendent. The front side is given through sense data, while the back side is given through judgments or hypotheses. The front side is given determinately, while the back

side is given indeterminately. And finally, only the front side is, properly speaking, perceived, and the back side is not.

I have said that I disagree with Kelly's view, so let us consider how we could argue against it. Rather a quick argument could be made by claiming that Kelly has obviously misunderstood the sense in which Husserl uses the term "proper" in "proper givenness." We could also just point out that there is no textual evidence to support Kelly's construction, and there is evidence to the contrary. For example, let us consider some of the textual support Kelly invokes for his view,

[T]he slots for the color, shape, size, and texture of the back side of the mug are completely unfilled. Since I see the thing to be a house, I see it as having a back side that has a determinate color, shape, size, and texture. But how these features are manifested in this particular mug is indeterminate in my current experience of it. For this reason, Husserl insists that

"Indeterminateness is never absolute or complete. Complete indeterminateness is nonsense; the indeterminateness is always delimited in this or that way. I may not know exactly what sort of form the backside has, yet it precisely has some form; the body is a body. I may not know how matters stand with the color, the roughness or smoothness, the warmth or coldness, yet it pertains to the very sense of the apprehension of a thing that the thing possess a certain color, a certain surface determination, etc" [Ibid., pp. 49-50 (59) (Kelly 2002, p.123).

Kelly's idea is that the colors on the front side are presented in a properly perceptual way in the experience, but for the colors of the back side the apprehension, an additional judgment or hypothesis, is needed. Yet even on the same page as the passage Kelly quotes, Husserl affirms that the givenness of the front side and the back side of the object need equally be accounted for in terms of the *Auffassung* (Husserl 1997, p. 50 (59)). Also, the givenness of the backside, as described in the quotation used by Kelly, is relatively indeterminate but, as such, determinable. But Husserl adds on the very same page that by determinability he does not primarily mean carrying out predicative

syntheses, but, rather, a kind of determinability that first renders these predicative syntheses possible. (Ibid.) Also, Husserl says in *the very next* sentence following the passage quoted by Kelly, “When I glance at the thing it stands there as a thing [*Ein Blick auf das Ding und es steht als Ding da*]; the apprehension gives it, in a meaningful way, a form, a color, etc., and does so not only with regard to the front side but also with regard to the unseen side” (Ibid.).

One gets the very strong sense that Kelly is not right in his conception of the *hyle* as sense data and the apprehension as the judgment regarding the back side just by carefully reading *Thing and Space*: there is no textual evidence to support Kelly’s view. However, Kelly could respond by saying that even if Husserl says that perceptual experience reaches beyond sensuous determinacy, and claims that there is a low-level notion of apprehension that accounts for the givenness of both the front side and the back side alike, and even if he uses the term *hyle* rather than sense data, this cannot confute *his* interpretation of Husserl’s view. Kelly could appeal to the circumstance that we have not explained how the *hyle* differ from sense data, and how apprehension could be anything other than judgment, performing its function the way Kelly has explained, and why perceptual experience should be regarded as reaching beyond sensuous determinacy, within Husserl’s framework.

In other words, he seems to have given positive elucidations, by showing how everything hangs together in a certain Kantian framework, while we have not given such positive elucidations. It is therefore necessary to explore Kelly’s Kantian interpretative framework further and attempt to articulate its differences from Husserl’s views.

Optimality

Here I will argue that Husserl's account of the optimality of givenness is an aspect of his account of fulfillment, and discuss Kelly's denial that Husserl even has any notion of optimality of perceptual givenness.

As Husserl develops his idea that fulfillment is the norm of perceptual experience, i.e., that perceptual experience succeeds by fulfillment, he conceives of fulfillment as increasing by degrees, and this increase as culminating in a kind of ultimate, consummate fulfillment. This is what he calls "optimal" or "maximal" givenness—both words occur in TS. In LI, visual perceptual fulfillment culminates in what Husserl calls adequate givenness, an omni-sided givenness of the object all at once. This kind of givenness is a limiting case of representation, in which the representing and the represented become one, and the object is *reell* contained in the act. He does not regard such adequate givenness as attainable in practice, but regards it as possible in principle (Husserl 1970, pp. 762, 765). In TS, Husserl comes for various reasons to believe that such omni-sided givenness all at once is impossible in principle; we can only approach optimality but we can never attain it.

Husserl speaks of "optima" in plural. He uses the plural in order to discuss the best givenness relative to the different determinations of the object. By "determination" he means something like the properties of the object. I will have occasion to come back to the relation between these two ideas, but accept, for the time being, that they are, roughly, the properties of the object. He points out that whenever we achieve improvement in the givenness of one determination, we inevitably suffer setbacks in the givenness of other determinations (Husserl 1997, p. 96 (114-115))—as when I take my

eyes off one part of the object to examine another part. This is a problem, if we want to attain the best givenness of the object. This problem motivates him to consider the idea that the optimal givenness is the finite series of appearances in which the different determinations of the object are brought to adequate givenness one after another (Ibid., p. 97 (115-116)). However, he concludes that this kind of adequate givenness, too, is, in principle, impossible. The perception of objects is necessarily inadequate.

Nevertheless, as we will see, Husserl regards it as possible to speak about the actual attaining of best givenness in a series of appearances, relative to the interests of the perceiver. The “full givenness” is the one that satisfies the interest of the perceiver, “The natural interest in a flower is different than the botanist’s interest, and thus in the two cases the best [sic!] appearances are different, and the full givenness, in which the interest is satisfied, is essentially very different in each case. The flower is nevertheless the same flower...” (Ibid., p. 107 (128)).

Relative to interest, the optimal appearance is distributed in a series of appearances, and there is some latitude regarding what counts as the best givenness relative to this particular interest: a range of different givennesses will do equally well.

It must be noted that with respect to the entire thing, just as with respect to its individual determinations, we need to speak naturally not of a single maximum point but instead of a correlated group or sphere of maximum points, which are connected in the continuous series of appearances. ... It must be noted in addition that this circle of maximum givennesses is not a fixed one, insofar as it can be freely varied within certain limits. ... If I have, in regard to the box, “good light,” then it makes no matter whether the sun is higher or lower in the sky, whether it is covered by clouds or not. Nor is the appropriate viewing distance an absolutely fixed one (Ibid., p. 106 (127)).

Husserl does not give a list or classification of the different kinds of interests that he has in mind. Nor does he expand on what the satisfaction of the different interests

would have to have in common. He merely points out that there are, indeed, quite different perceptual interests, e.g., the natural and the biological interest in the flower.

If we only thought of optimality as a function of our realistic theoretic and practical interests, the connection between fulfillment and optimality might not be so obvious. Perhaps I dislike raccoons to the point that I cannot stand the sight of them, and am therefore interested in seeing as little of them as I can?

Furthermore, even if I am genuinely interested in and engaging with an object, like in the case of the botanist and the flower, it would seem that the pursuit of fulfillments starts to conflict with my interests at some point, so that the ideas of fulfillment and optimality come apart. According to Husserl, since the pursuit of the maxima, if taken beyond a certain point, does not serve any interests of ours, it is, emphatically, an unreasonable pursuit. Insofar as we wish to gain knowledge of objects, we ought to end our observations at a certain point. Husserl says that epistemic goals need to be “reasonable” and “delimited by reasonably practical interests” (Ibid., p. 111 (134)). He sums this up,

Naturally, if the task lies in the production of absolutely complete givenness, then it is a priori unsolvable; it is an unreasonably posited task. What we will conclude from this is therefore in the first instance the fact that the knowledge of reality cannot have this ideal, insofar as we may have confidence that knowledge accomplishes something actually rational and does so because it posits rational goals (Ibid., pp. 114-115 (138-139)).

On the other hand, there is the idea of a process that goes beyond the interest-related optima, yielding an infinite process,

[Adequate givenness] can be accomplished neither by an individual appearance nor by a group of appearances from a synthesis that continues on, ideally speaking, to infinity. Only this entire synthesis can accomplish it. And this is an infinite, never closed, never finished synthesis, because

in principle there always exist the possibilities of presentations that are more precise, more complete, and richer in content (Ibid., p. 112 (135)).

In view of how optimality and consummate fulfillment seem to come apart, how are we to make sense of a connection between these two ideas? Firstly, it is true that one may be interested in *not* seeing some object, or even lack any interest in an object, but there nevertheless are some interests that depend on perceptual givenness of objects. In these cases, the goal of perception consists in a measure of fulfillment, relative to but distinct from the satisfaction of the interest as such. Thus, at the end of §36, Husserl reminds us,

Under the heading of fulfillment, we obviously have to distinguish here:

- 1.) The consciousness of the attained goal, which has its foundation in the appearances which terminate in the process of fulfillment insofar as these appearances are “representatives,” i.e., inasmuch as the appearing object, precisely in this mode of presentation, is what is intended and now is self-given just as it is intended.
- 2.) The satisfaction pertaining to the interest as such, as satisfaction which is built on that interest and which has a possible correlate, in a negative sense, in the consciousness of lacking nothing (Ibid., p. 107 (129)).

Secondly, I believe that we can interpret Husserl’s view as involving an interest different from the various realistic theoretical and practical interest, viz., an interest in self-givenness or fullness as such. Presumably, in realistic situations, it is always overridden by other interests, but it could give us an understanding of the orientation of perceptual experience to objects, beyond what our interest may now happen to be. This could explain our sense that the botanist and the artist are seeing the same flower, even if the optimal givennesses with which they are most pressingly and immediately concerned, are different. Such an underlying interest makes good sense in the context of the

stratifications of the Husserlian account, where not every aspect of the account need be realistic, or saliently experienced in the intentional experiences we actually have.¹³

Having conveyed my understanding of Husserl's view, let me proceed to Kelly's interpretation. Kelly just denies that Husserl has any conception of the optimality of givenness. He interprets the increase in fulfillment that I have just described as merely a process that yields a more complete givenness of the object. However, even as the givenness becomes more complete, it can never become quite complete, which is why, according to Kelly, the Husserlian view has the implication that we can never really perceive objects but can only understand them "intellectually,"

Because the real object actually has a hidden side, and because the hidden side of the object is never presented in experience, no experience of an object could possibly present it as it really is. Indeed, the problem is worse than that. There are literally an infinite number of possible presentations of the real object that are not now being given. For Husserl (as for phenomenologists like C.I. Lewis), the real object is identified with the whole system of these perspectival presentations taken together—what Husserl sometimes calls the "nexus of appearances." Every "appearance refers, by virtue of its sense, to possibilities of fulfillment, to a continuous-unitary nexus of appearance, in which the sense would be accomplished in every respect, thus in which the determinations would come to 'complete' givenness." [fn. 32] Similarly, "[I]f we were to retain [a given] ... appearance while cutting off the other multiplicities of appearances and the essential relations to them, none of the sense of the givenness of the physical thing would remain." [fn. 33] This system of perspectival presentations, which Husserl sometimes also calls the "circle of complete givenness," [fn. 34] is the "real" object to which each perspectival presentation refers but which none by itself is able to present. It can be understood intellectually, although not presented perceptually, by imagining yourself walking around the object or by imagining it rotating before you [fn. 35] (Kelly 2005, pp. 94-95).

Thus, Kelly denies that Husserl has any conception of optimal givenness. Instead he attributes the idea of the perceptual optima to Merleau-Ponty and draws, accordingly,

¹³ For a more thorough discussion of intentionality as a striving for truth, see Rang 1973, pp. 179-187.

a contrast between Husserl and Merleau Ponty (Ibid., p. 95). Merleau-Ponty, Kelly alleges, has the ideas of optimal lighting, optimal viewing distance, and optimal perspective, but Husserl does not. Kelly adds that it takes a certain amount of interpretative work to bring out these ideas in Merleau-Ponty, and in some cases, “in some of his less formal work, [Merleau-Ponty] carelessly posits just the Husserlian view that he opposes—the view that the real thing is the sum of the points of view on it rather than the norm defined by the sum” (Ibid.).

I believe that Kelly’s claims are adequately countered simply by pointing to the relevant Husserlian discussions, where Husserl clearly discusses perceptual experience in normative terms. I have not noticed Kelly referring to §-s 36-39 of TS, i.e., the parts of the text that I have drawn upon in the present subsection. In view of their content, viz., Husserl’s explicit discussion of the perceptual optima, it is just very hard to understand how Kelly could hold this view of Husserl.¹⁴ The only response I can suggest that Kelly might make at this point is to argue that we should not take Husserl’s talk of optima at face value, because, contrary to Husserl’s purport, Kelly has some reason to doubt that what Husserl gives us really amounts to a conception of normativity.

It is therefore well that we considered Husserl’s idea of transcendence and the idea of transcendence incorrectly attributed to Husserl by Kelly. This should make it clear what it means, from the Husserlian point of view, to perceive objects. By the same token, it should make it clear what it means to succeed at perceiving objects.

¹⁴ The topic of optima, i.e., the best lighting, the best viewing distance, etc., is further discussed by Husserl in *Ideas II*, § 18b, where he calls the optimal conditions the “normal perceptual conditions.”

Transcendence of the Perceptual Object

It is the Husserlian view that we should never identify the sensed color, shape, etc., with the perceived color, shape, etc. Indeed, the expression “sensed color” may be misleading. There is no distinction between color sensations and sensed color. There is, however, a distinction between color perception and the perceived color. Visual sensations function to facilitate color perception but without being themselves perceptually given. Therefore, contrary to what Kelly believes the color of the front side is not to be regarded as consisting in immanent sensations or “sense data.” All the characteristics of the transcendent thing are to be regarded as transcendent, as is made quite clear by Husserl in the following quotation,

The perception contains the moment red, but it is not itself red; red is not a “property” or feature of perception but a feature of the perceived thing. Perception cannot, as a matter of evidence, be designated a thing. Likewise, the perception contains a moment of extension; but it would be a fundamental perversion to claim it is extended.... “Form of intuition” is a fundamentally false expression and implies, even in Kant, a fatally erroneous position. It is evident from the very outset that sensation and perception are not one and the same, that a distinction is to be made between total sensed content and perceived object, between individual contents of sensation and the actual features “corresponding to them.” If the perceived object, for instance the house in perception, is really [*reell*] transcendent, then so also are all the parts and features that constitute the house. If the house does not exist, then neither do any of its particularities; and if the house is not a piece of the perception, then neither are any of its features. Nevertheless, there corresponds to every sensed content a moment of the perceived object, and the relation is so close that we employ the same terms to designate both sides: sensed color—the object’s coloration, sensed sound—the Object’s sound, sensed structural moment—the thing’s structure, etc (Husserl 1997, p. 37 (42-43)).

He targets the Kantian “forms of intuition” because these ideas of space and time amount to an attempt to cut across the divide between sensation and perception. For example, space is for Husserl a product of constitution, but the sensations are involved in

the constituting. Therefore, it makes no sense to speak about space as the form of the sensations. Kant does not observe the distinction between sensation and perception with sufficient rigor, and therefore we get, in the Kantian *Ding für uns*, something quite ambivalent between immanence and transcendence—in Husserl’s sense of these terms.

But having accepted that Husserl wishes to make this distinction between the sensed and the perceived, what is the notion of transcendence that motivates this distinction? Husserl has a helpful summary of his view of transcendence in *Appendix V* (to § 54) of TS.

The perceptual object is transcendent, first and foremost, in the sense that it is not part of the flux of experience, it stands apart from it as something that maintains its identity through the flux. Further, it is characteristic of the transcendence of the material object that it is always given inadequately, i.e., the culmination of fulfillment, the optimal givenness, is unattainable (Ibid., p. 315 (355)). And I would add to this that, further, it is an aspect of its transcendence that it will always, in some respects, be indeterminate, there will always be the possibility of determining it more closely—which is not the same as to say that it can never be brought to the ultimate fulfillment.

So the point is that whatever is transcendent, is transcendent as an identity that persists in the flux of experience. And since the constant color and shape properties do that, we must distinguish the perceived color and shape from the sensed color and shape, and so on. We were able to see that, according to Husserl, even Kant failed to do this adequately.

I have said before that Kelly takes as his starting point the idea that Husserl regards our knowledge of intentional states as incorrigible, and therefore regards our

intentional states as “immanent” and “determinate.” In his view, Husserl’s view of intentional states as “immanent” is quite problematic and is rightly rejected by Merleau-Ponty (Kelly 2002, p. 115).

Kelly holds that Husserl’s notion of transcendence is crucially about the distinction between the determinate and the indeterminate,

In Husserl’s account of object transcendence, the principal move is to distinguish between the features of the object that are experienced by me as *determinate* (roughly, those features for which I have sense data) and the features of the object that are experienced by me as *indeterminate* (roughly, everything else) (Kelly 2005, p. 78).

And to add to this, “The improper features of the perceived object, therefore, are what account for the possibility that I can see the object as transcending my experience of it” (Kelly 2002, p. 124).

However, is this in conflict with the Husserlian notion of transcendence that I have elucidated before? Kelly might suggest that even if I am right about Husserl’s notion of transcendence, there is no disagreement between us, as he has simply pointed out an important necessary condition of transcendence, viz., indeterminacy. What is the difference?

But the difference is clear. The notion of transcendence that I have given is persistence within the flux of experience. Kelly, on the other hand, attributes to Husserl a basically Kantian notion of transcendence, consisting in the idea that “the extramental objects that we’re directed toward *transcend our experience of them* [Sean Kelly’s italics-K.L.]” (Ibid., p. 121). This echoes Kant’s idea that the transcendent things are situated beyond the limits of possible experience. There are no Kantian things in themselves in Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl does not consider our experience relative to what

may actually lie beyond experience. Instead, he only considers what is, in a manner of speaking, *experienced as lying beyond experience*: this is the idea that is articulated in terms of fulfillment conditions.

As concerns the claim Kelly makes about how perceptual experiences, according to Husserl, are given to the subject in reflection, viz., “determinately,” it is interesting to consider this in light of the point I have made earlier in the section: Husserl speaks about determinacy and indeterminacy as modes of apprehension, and there seems to be no place, in his account of the reflective act, for the notion of apprehension. Therefore, the putative motivating concern with preserving the “determinacy” of the reflective acts should appear highly problematic even on terminological grounds. But even apart from that, it seems quite implausible that the various degrees of determinacy in which perceptual experience gives its objects could somehow vitiate the reflective act. Surely, I can have thoughts directed to other thoughts that are very unclear and uncertain, but this does not “infect” my reflective thoughts with unclarity and uncertainty. Rather, the reflective act can yield a sober assessment of the first-level act’s imperfections.

To sum up, we started by considering Kelly’s take on the Husserlian idea of apprehension. I conceive of apprehension in terms of something akin to Noë’s sensorimotor knowhow, Kelly thinks about it as a judgment or hypothesis regarding those aspects of the object for which we have no sense data. I did not positively articulate my ideas regarding the apprehension, at least not in any considerable detail, but proceeded, instead, to tie Kelly’s idea with what he takes to be the basic Husserlian conception of perceptual experience. We found that Kelly puts upon Husserl’s view an untenable Kantian interpretation. Moreover, it is very significant that the idea of the apprehension

as judgment-like naturally forms part of the Kantian picture. It is clear that if we accepted Kelly's basic reading of how the objects are constituted in perceptual experience—or, rather, how they are not constituted in perceptual experience but only “understood intellectually”—we would probably fail to establish that Husserl's and Noë's views are interestingly similar. For example, someone might invoke Kelly's views to argue that Noë's idea of sensorimotor knowhow is quite different from Husserl's over-intellectualized account. This is why it was necessary to show that the Kelly's entire Kantian picture of Husserl's views encounters considerable difficulties.

5. On Kevin Mulligan's Views

I have argued that Kelly's interpretation is flawed in several respects, not least due to his interpretation of Husserl's notion of apprehension as judgment-like. While arguing that apprehension could not be a kind of judgment, and that Kelly's interpretation is not entirely adequate of Husserl's view, I did not give a positive account of what I take apprehension to consist in. I wish to do so now, and to offer certain criticisms of Kevin Mulligan's different view. A salient difference between Mulligan's and Kelly's interpretations is that while Kelly offers an intellectualizing picture of Husserl's view, Mulligan does the opposite by emphasizing the importance of non-conceptual content in Husserl's account. Also Mulligan's take on *Thing and Space* is realist, while Kelly seems to attribute to Husserl something like a Kantian transcendental idealism.

Mulligan makes various good and interesting points about Husserl's view, but he stops short of making the claim that I make, viz., that apprehension needs to be identified with a “web of [kinesthetic] motivations.” Mulligan sees a close connection between the

apprehension and the kinesthetic motivations, but he makes too weak a claim when he says that the apprehension—or “interpretation,” as he calls it—requires that there be kinesthetic motivations. In his article, he says that the “interpretation,” as Husserl discusses it, is a kind of “black box,” with sensations going in and various perceptual accomplishments coming out. Mulligan’s worry is that Husserl offers us no positive account of how the *interpretation* performs its various tasks. It seems to me that, in spite of the claims Mulligan makes about role of the kinesthetic sensations and motivations, the *interpretation* basically remains a black box for him, as he does not come up with a positive account of it.

But this result bears on my ideas concerning Husserl’s and Noë’s views. In Noë’s enactive view, perceptual experience fundamentally involves exercise of sensorimotor knowhow. Such sensorimotor knowhow, or at least the sensorimotor expectations (or, as I would call them, visuo-kinesthetic expectations) seem to be an important part also of Husserl’s view. However, if we accept Mulligan’s interpretation, someone (even Noë) might suggest that there is the following noteworthy difference between the views. For Husserl, perceptual experience involves *interpretation*, which depends on something like the exercise of sensorimotor knowhow, but for Noë perceptual experience does not (or need not) involve any kind of *interpretation* over and above the exercise of sensorimotor knowhow. Therefore, the exercise of sensorimotor knowhow is a much more prominent aspect of Noë’s view than Husserl’s. It is as if, on Noë’s view, sensorimotor knowhow did all the important work, whereas, on Husserl’s view, it formed a background for the *interpretation* that did the important work. I do not believe that there is such a difference between the two views. I will, accordingly, dispute Mulligan’s view of Husserl’s notion

of *interpretation*, and suggest that Mulligan's view is part of a larger interpretative framework that could, in certain respects, be improved. My disagreement with Mulligan in regard to the noetic aspects of perceptual experience is probably reflected in a disagreement in regard to the noematic aspects of perceptual experience. Namely, I believe that Husserl analyzes levels of fulfillment conditions (the noematic side) and the experiential resources that go into setting them (the noesis). Mulligan seems to interpret Husserl as giving an account of how we encounter real objects in a world that exists independently of us, and interpret them in certain ways. I believe that the latter picture does not adequately capture the noetic-noematic connection as Husserl conceives of it.

Mulligan's interpretation is markedly different from Kelly's intellectualizing interpretation, in that Mulligan attributes to Husserl the idea of a non-conceptual apprehension (*Auffassung*, also translated as "interpretation") of sensations (the sensuous *hyle*). However, Mulligan argues that Husserl basically leaves this notion a "black box," i.e., fails to elucidate its nature, even if Husserl does tell us what it is supposed to accomplish,

Although Husserl describes the *role* of the non-conceptual interpretation of sensations and the *relation* between interpretation and sensations, he has surprisingly little to say about the *nature* of such interpretation. The *role* of interpretation is to be the surplus which, when combined with raw sensations, "makes us perceive this or that object, e.g. see this tree, hear this ringing, smell this scent of flowers etc." But this is just to say that interpretation plays the same *role* in perception as sense in judgement which, since perceptual content is not conceptual, is not very illuminating (Mulligan 1995, p. 184).

In discussing Husserl's "distinction between seeing an object and seeing one of its sides," Mulligan reiterates the claim that Husserl fails to characterize *interpretation* positively,

Unfortunately Husserl does not characterize positively the awareness in perception of the invisible side of the house. ... On Husserl's view, then perception is entirely direct and necessarily incomplete. [ftn. 42] Once again interpretation is introduced in a black box fashion. It is what turns visual sensations into a part of a unified perceptual awareness of a three-dimensional object by orchestrating the combination of genuine and non-genuine awareness of its sides (Ibid., p. 194).

Mulligan makes the "black box" claim in the context of his discussion of *Logical Investigations*. When he considers *Thing and Space*, he draws attention to the connection between interpretation and kinesthetic motivations. However, he still does not tell us what, in his view, interpretation consists in; it therefore stays for him a "black box." He acknowledges that Husserl discusses kinesthetic motivation in great detail, but seems hesitant, in a way, to regard these discussions as properly belonging in Husserl's phenomenology,

This relation of "pointing to" or indication belongs to the family of relations Husserl calls motivation. ... Husserl takes such relations to be more than merely contingent and less than narrowly logical [ftn. 49] or necessary. They are not, he says, causal or probabilistic. But then in virtue of what do the "interpretative components" in a perceptual state "point beyond" the side of the object facing me?

Husserl's answer, developed at length in *Thing and Space* [ftn. 50], is that creatures with visual organs, but endowed with no active powers, would be incapable of perception of things and processes. To be endowed with active powers is to be capable of intentional and subintentional movement, it is to be the bearer of actual and possible kinaesthetic as postural sensations, to have information about the position and movements of one's body. The interpretative components in perception point beyond the present moment because of the connection between perception and the actual and possible states of my body (Ibid., p. 198).

Mulligan argues that the interpretative components of perceptual experiences depend on active powers and kinestheses, but he stops short of saying that interpretation *consists in* something like the "motivation" of visual sensations by kinesthetic sensations, the essential aspects of which phenomenology can investigate. As for the claim that the

motivating is not a causal process, this merely locates it in the sphere of the psychological, rather than the physical, without yet designating it as subject matter for Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl regards causal laws as belonging in the realm of the physical, and motivational laws or laws of association as belonging in the realm of the psychological, but it seems that phenomenology can only investigate necessary aspects of perceptual experience, and Mulligan denies that relations of motivation are necessary or essential. Mulligan seems hesitant of making the connection between interpretation and kinesthetic motivation too tight, although he views interpretation as dependent on “active powers.” However, even if we accept this idea, the “interpretative components” still lack a positive characterization. We have only learnt that they depend on the active powers.

I believe I can address Mulligan’s worry that Husserl fails to give a positive account of apprehension, leaving it a “black box.” I have said that Husserl investigates not only fulfillment conditions but also the essential aspects of how they are set, i.e., the noetic aspects of experience. At the core of noetic phenomenology are anticipatory complexes, to be accounted for in terms of “associations,” or, to use a closely related term, “motivations.” The difference between Husserlian phenomenology and empirical psychology is that Husserl is interested in the role these motivations play in his constitutive project, and in the essential aspects of their workings. He regards the apprehension, i.e., the noesis, as a motivational complex, a conclusion that Mulligan fails to draw. This is Husserl’s positive account.

However, as it is, we do not yet find the term “noesis” in *Thing and Space*. Instead, Husserl uses the term “apprehension.” We will see that the noetic process in *Thing and Space* is the process in which the kinesthetic sensations function to “motivate”

or “animate” the visual sensations, so that the visual sensations can function to present aspects of the object. The idea behind the talk of motivating or animating is basically that if series of visual sensations are accompanied by series of kinesthetic sensations, the perceiver starts, by association, to expect that a continuation of the series of kinesthetic sensations will be accompanied by a certain continuation of the series of visual sensations. If I move in a certain direction and the object looms larger and larger, I begin to expect that if I take another step in this direction, the object will loom even larger. This is a rudimentary account of how expectations set the fulfillment conditions of perceptual experiences. In this case, we are dealing just with visuo-kinesthetic expectations.

Apprehension is nothing but the “web of motivation” that accounts for this process. In terms of Husserl’s later terminology, we can replace the term “apprehension” with “noesis.” This is why Claesges can say in his discussion of *Thing and Space*, “The authentic noesis of the consciousness of the phantom is the “kinesthesia,” which, as noesis, underpins the general lawlikenesses of intentionality” (Claesges 1964, p. 64).¹⁵ I would point out here that in Husserl’s use of the term “noesis” there is a certain ambiguity, in *Ideas I*, for example. On one hand, “noesis” means the motivating or animating aspect, on the other hand, it means both the motivating aspect and the motivated visual sensations, i.e., not one aspect of the process but the entire process.¹⁶ It should be easy to keep track of which way he uses it in particular contexts.

I will discuss some Husserlian passages to argue for the claims that I have made, viz., that the relevant relations between the visual and kinesthetic sensations are indeed

¹⁵ “Die eigentliche Noesis des Phantombewusstseins ist die “Kinästhesie” ... [ftn. 1], die als Noesis den allgemeinen Gesetzmäßigkeiten der Intentionalität unterliegt (Claesges 1964, p. 64).

¹⁶ For example, the contrast between the noesis and the *hyle* is drawn in Husserl 1982, p. 207 (175), and the more inclusive notion of noesis is presented on p. 233 (199).

essential, and that apprehension is nothing other than a “web of motivation,” consisting in the functioning of the kinesthetic sensations in regard to visual sensations. To begin, the claims that Husserl makes in *Thing and Space* about the connection between kinesthesia and visual perception can be puzzling, and may even seem contradictory. I will bring some examples,

[The ‘sensations of movement’] play an essential role in the appearance of every external thing, but they are not themselves apprehended in such a way that they make representable either a proper or an improper matter; they do not belong to the ‘projection’ of the thing. Nothing qualitative corresponds to them in the thing, nor do they adumbrate bodies or present them by way of projection. And yet without their cooperation there is no body there, no thing (Husserl 1997, p. 136 (160)).

Here we are especially interested in the kinetic sensations. (They are not essential for the appearance of physical things.) They are not presentational in the pregnant sense; they do not constitute the matter of anything, even an appended matter (Ibid., p. 138 (163)).

[The kinaesthetic sensations] lack an essential relation to the visual sensations; they are connected to them functionally but not essentially. The bond in the case of functional unity is a bond of what is separable; it is not the bond, or, rather, the intrinsic unity, of what is mutually founded (Ibid., pp. 143-144 (170)).

I will begin with the third quotation. Husserl makes two points in it: there is no essential dependence between the kinesthetic and visual sensations, and there is a functional dependence. As for the first point, what it means is that I can have a visual sensation V without having any kinesthetic sensations, and I can, conversely, have a kinesthetic sensation K without having any visual sensations. However, they *do* depend upon each other if they are to perform certain functions. But it is important that the claim of functional dependence captures a certain essential dependence claim, different from the one I have just spoken of. If a visual sensation V is to perform a function, viz., of presenting aspects of objectivities, it is necessary that there be certain kinesthetic

sensations, and if the kinesthetic sensation K is to perform a function, viz., of “motivating” or “animating” visual sensations in a certain way, it is necessary that there be certain visual sensations. Such functioning of the visual and kinesthetic sensations is their contribution to the constituting of objectivities. So the functional dependence claim means that in their constitutive functioning, the visual and the kinesthetic sensations *are* essentially dependent upon each other.

Relatedly, Husserl says that a kinesthetic sensation K and a visual sensation i are connected with each other not “once and for all” but only “under the given circumstances” (Ibid., p. 151 (180)). He goes on to explain that by the “circumstances” he means that the K and the i need to be part of parallel series of kinesthetic sensations and visual sensations. If previous oculomotor shifts in the series have resulted in the visual image’s changing in certain ways, then K and i are connected in the sense that the perceiver has the expectation that if K, then i. For example, if I have been moving step by step in a certain direction and the red image in my visual field has been increasing in size at a stable rate, then I expect it to increase in size at the same rate when I take the next step.

I would suggest that the phrase “under the given circumstances,” i.e., when K and i are part of a series, already implies the idea of the K and i constitutively functioning in a perceptual experience. One might be inclined to interpret the phrase with the emphasis on the contrast between the isolated pair of K and i on the one hand, and there being the kinesthetic and visual series on the other. But it needs to be underscored that this is also a contrast between the inert K and I, on the one hand, and the K and i that have taken on certain functions, on the other. And it is only “under the given circumstances,” i.e., when

they are part of the respective kinesthetic and visual series, that the K and i can begin to function so as to make possible the presentation of the perceptual object. The kinesthetic series will create the expectation of further visual sensations, and the visual sensations the perceiver is currently having, thanks to being complemented with the expected visual sensations, will begin to present aspects of the object.

The first and the second Husserl-quotation can now be quickly dealt with. There, the idea is that when the kinesthetic sensations do function so as to facilitate the givenness of the perceptual object, their contribution is different from that of the visual sensations. The kinesthetic sensations are essential for the presentation of the object, but they are not themselves presentational, they do not themselves present any aspects or parts of the object. The visual sensations do that. This is what Husserl means when he says, in the first and second quotation respectively, that in a certain sense the role of the kinesthetic sensations is essential and in a certain sense it is inessential.

I have thus argued that, for Husserl, the visual and kinesthetic sensations are essentially related in their constitutive functioning. There is a further way in which Husserl articulates the idea of the essential relation between the two kinds of sensations. Every student of Husserl's phenomenology knows that Husserl uses for visual sensations the term "*hyle*," Greek for "matter." But this term implies a certain essential relation, viz., to a form, a *morphe*. In their constitutive functioning, the visual sensations are the *hyle* and the kinesthetic sensations are the *morphe*. Thus the noesis in the narrower sense of the term is the *morphe*, and in the broader sense of the term the hylomorphic unity. Why use the terms "form" and "matter" here? I think we can make sense of this terminological

choice if we appreciate the idea that the functioning of the kinesthetic sensations contributes the unity-aspect of the constituted objectivity.

We find Husserl arguing that the ways of functioning, of the kinesthetic sensations and the visual images, in the respective series, are indeed quite different from each other. Husserl's discussion in the following quotation concerns visual images f_a , f_b , f_c , and f_d , perspectives of a square obtained by fixation of gaze on the corners a, b, c, and d. (Husserl calls these images "pre-empirical figures.")

Phenomenologically, we find that in this continuous transition, f_a "refers" [*hinweist*] to its continuous neighbors, and that therefore intentions penetrate the series f_a to f_d and are continually fulfilled in the elapsing of the series. We discover, founded in these moments, a thorough consciousness of unity. ... It is quite different with the series of the K's. They do not refer to each other; they elapse, but they are not bearers of intentions that penetrate them, intentions of the kind which the f's possess. That is, they are not traversed by a consciousness of unity. ... The consciousness of unity runs only through the f's, not partially through the K's partially through the f's. On the other hand, they are not joined as a mere conglomeration but rather in such a way that if K_0 passes over into K_1 , f_0 passes over in expectation to f_1 , referring to [*hinweisend*]—and being fulfilled in—each new phase (Ibid., p. 152 (180-181)).

Thus, the f-series can be traversed by a consciousness of unity that is produced in a fusion of intention and fulfillment, but the K-series cannot. However, the K-series can be viewed as what provides the f-series with the unity. Husserl also adds that the K-series is a series of that which has the same "determination and form everywhere," the f-series, on the other hand, is a series of images that are "new everywhere" (Ibid., p. 155 (184)).

We have seen that Husserl regards the visual and kinesthetic sensations as performing peculiar roles in the constitution, in this case, of a two-dimensional "pre-empirical figure," but I concede that the entire discussion I have developed in response to Mulligan's ideas may seem problematic, because it is difficult to make sense of it in

terms of examples drawn from the familiar kinds of perceptual experience that people actually have. Presumably it happens, in realistic situations, that a person takes just one look at an object and sees it as, or judges it to be, a square, or a cube. What role, if any, does the pull of kinesthetic motivations play in such a case?

I wish to reply to this with two interpretative reminders. First, in considering some of the claims Husserl makes about the kinesthetic and the visual series, e.g., that the kinesthetic sensations have the same “determination and form everywhere” and the visual sensations are “new everywhere,” we are dealing with claims in noetic phenomenology, not noematic claims about the objects and Bodily movements as we perceive them. While hopefully it is possible to get a grip on the noetics from a reflective attitude, it should not be expected that they lend themselves to easy illustration in terms of how people would describe their experiences. In other words, these are, by their very nature, discussions that it is not possible to elucidate by real-life examples.

Second, Husserl is here dealing with what he regards as a low-level constitutive stratum, and emphatically not the varied and richly conceptualized perceptual experiences that people actually have. These abstract, low-level analyses are important, because the unity of the K-series begins to account for the unity of the perceived object (Ibid., pp. 157 (187), 159 (189)). However, the noetic resources that go into the constitution of the spatial object in *Thing and Space* may be rather different from the noetics of ordinary experiences; I would presume that the latter involve K-motivation in more complex ways.

That said, given that the K-motivation makes such an important contribution, it should not come as a surprise that Husserl identifies the K-motivation with the

apprehension (*Auffassung*) of the thing, “Apprehensions of things and thingly nexuses are ‘webs of motivation.’ they are built through and through from intentional rays, which with their sense-content and their filled content, refer back and forth, and they let themselves be explicated in that the accomplishing subject can enter into these nexuses” (Husserl 1989, p. 236 (224-225)).

In arguing for my view of the Husserlian notion of apprehension, I have discussed several Husserlian passages. But in arguing for his view, viz., that apprehension depends on kinesthetic motivation, but without being identifiable with anything like a web of kinesthetic motivation, is Mulligan able to invoke textual evidence confirming his view and disconfirming mine? I will indicate, in what may appear the clearest case of such textual evidence in his paper, that Mulligan appeals for textual support in a Husserlian passage that is, in fact, ambiguous, and does not support his interpretation over mine. Thus, in the context of giving a summary of the various jobs that the non-conceptual interpretative aspect of perceptual content has to perform, Mulligan says

“The interpretation of a thing as at such a distance, so oriented, so coloured, etc.” is, in its turn, due to the motivating force of kinaesthetic sensations and the structures of the spaces to which they belong. [ftn. 80] And these, in their turn, are a function of our interests, dispositions, and sets [*Einstellungen*—K.L.] (Mulligan 2005, p. 206).

Mulligan’s footnote 80 is a reference to § 18a of *Ideas* II. It is interesting that the English translation contains a sentence which seems to support the idea that interpretation should be distinguished from the motivational nexus that are also involved in perception, as what may be regarded a kind of enabling background. We read about the kinesthetic sensations, “The second kind are the “sensations” which do not undergo such apprehensions but which, on the other hand, are necessarily involved in all those

apprehensions of the sensations of the first kind, insofar as, in a certain way, they motivate these apprehensions” (Husserl 1989, p. 62 (57)). But this translation is based on an interpretation of an ambiguity in the German text. Husserl writes, “Fürs zweite die *“Empfindungen,”* welche solche Auffassungen nicht erfahren, andererseits aber bei allen derartigen Auffassungen anderer Empfindungen notwendig beteiligt sind, sofern sie dieselben in gewisser Weise motivieren...” (Husserl 1952, p. 57). The pronoun “dieselben” can refer either to “Auffassungen” (“apprehensions”) or to “Empfindungen” (“sensations”). I would interpret it as referring to “Empfindungen,” which yields the idea that the kinaesthetic sensations motivate the visual sensations. I have not noticed there to be anything else in § 18a that would support the translator’s—and, probably, Mulligan’s—interpretation over mine. Indeed, in light of the above explication of the relation between kinesthetic and visual sensations, my translation seems more naturally part of the Husserlian discussion.

Notice also that, as with the introduction of the notion of “active powers,” Mulligan interprets the role of the kinesthetic sensations in *Thing and Space* by rendering them dependent on “interests, dispositions, and sets,” meaning attitudes by “sets.” I take this part of Mulligan’s interpretation to be somewhat at odds with the view that is *centrally* developed in *Thing and Space*. Husserl’s chief aim, in that work, is to account for the constitution of the spatial phantom, and not to give an account of “realistic” perceptual experience, with all the interests and attitudes shaping it.

As I have noted before, if we accepted Mulligan’s construction of *interpretation* (or apprehension, or noesis), it could be pointed out that the Husserlian account gives a central role to it, at the expense of sensorimotor knowhow. However, if we make a

stronger claim about the connection between *interpretation* and kinesthetic motivations than Mulligan does, and say that the *interpretation* just amounts to kinesthetic motivation, then there is no such difference between Husserl's and Noë's views. In my view, the above discussion has indeed established that we should identify *interpretation* (apprehension, noesis) with the web of kinesthetic motivations.

Can Mulligan's view of *interpretation* be regarded as part of a bigger picture? I think it may well be significantly integrated into a realist construal of Husserl's account of perceptual experience. For example, Mulligan says that his reason for focusing on LI and TS is that these texts, "in their descriptive parts, are relatively free of the mysteries of Husserl's transcendental and idealist turns" (Ibid., p. 168). It seems that he chose to focus on these two works in order to develop a realist account, and I have explained that such an account is at odds with my take on Husserl, centering on the idea that Husserl regards perceptual content as determining fulfillment conditions, and that he has a certain view of the transcendence of perceptual objects, viz, as persistence in the flux of experience. As part of this picture, it makes good sense to say that the kinesthetic motivations are part of the processes necessarily involved in setting the fulfillment conditions, and that they are part of apprehending the visual sensations. On Mulligan's realist view, it may not be so clear why they should be brought center-stage.

6. On John Drummond's Views

I will now consider aspects of John Drummond's interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology of perception, especially in relation to Drummond's take on *Thing and Space*. I will focus on two papers in which Drummond discusses the role of the

kinestheses in perceptual experience, and the constitution of three-dimensional uniform space and spatial objectivity. I will argue that the problems into which Drummond's interpretation runs in accounting for the role of the kinestheses (or experienced bodily movements) in perception, are reflected in other problems he faces when discussing aspects of the constituted objects. I will begin with concerns related to the noetic aspects of experience, and I then relate these concerns to other worries concerning the noematic aspects of experience. As I interpret Husserl's view, content determines fulfillment conditions, and the various kinestheses and visuo-kinesthetic expectations are relevant insofar as they are needed to set the fulfillment conditions. How do they set or generate the fulfillment conditions? What is the relation between the noesis and the noema? I would suggest that the answer needs to be given in terms of the psychological ideas that Husserl draws upon: the noesis "motivates" the noema, ie., by an associative connection, the experience of what is involved in the noesis gives rise to the experience of an object and its properties, given at degrees of fullness. This, I believe, is the correct view of the noesis and the noema. It seems to me that Drummond's views differ somewhat from this picture.

Drummond is known as a proponent of the East Coast interpretation of perceptual noema, according to which perceptual noema needs to be regarded as the constituted object, and not as the Fregean sense of the perceptual act, to be distinguished from its object. The East Coast interpretation contrasts with the West Coast interpretation, according to which the perceptual noema should be regarded precisely as the Fregean sense. I agree on this point with the East Coast interpretation and with Drummond, but more needs to be said. Drummond interprets Husserl as a perceptual realist: perceptual

experience puts us into contact with external reality that is there independently of us or our perceptual acts. But if one is a realist, the givenness of the perceptual object will not be accounted for just in terms of fulfillment conditions and the noeses that set the fulfillment conditions. From a realist perspective, it would make sense that we all have some expectations regarding the perceptual object, and that the experience of the front side is different from the experience of the back side, but it is no longer clear why these are necessary aspects of the view, rather than mere contingent psychological data. These ideas no longer play the role that they do in the Husserlian conceptual analysis (constitutive analysis) pertaining to the ideas of objectivity and perceptual object. Nor are we able to grasp the idea of constitutive strata: the fulfillment conditions for one aspect of the perceptual object depend upon the fulfillment conditions for another aspect of the object—this is how we get the stratification. In sum, on the one hand, the realist view cannot account for perceptual experience just in terms of fulfillment conditions: the idea of a perceptual contact with independent reality needs to be captured as well. On the other hand, it seems that if we are realists, the fulfillment conditions and perceptual expectations are not an essential part of the picture. The Husserlian account is concerned with how sensuous experience can furnish us with the world, and to achieve that it is important to plumb the depths of experiential “emptiness.” The realist account simply accounts for our experience of perceptually salient aspects of the objects we encounter, distinguishing between the properties that are represented in perceptual experience and the ones that are not. As for the other parts and aspects of the world, they simply *are there*, according to a realist picture.

Once we have lost the Husserlian idea of constitution, it becomes rather unclear what the Husserlian phenomenologist is fundamentally trying to do. While Drummond delivers a nuanced and detailed account of perceptual experience—a *realistic* account, one might say—he does not, in the texts that I have considered, highlight the central thrust of Husserl’s view, viz., the idea of an engagement with constitutive strata, which I, therefore, will presently discuss, based on *Thing and Space* and *Ideas II*.

On the basis of Drummond’s picture, Husserl’s view might indeed look rather similar to Noë’s, in that it involves various kinds of movements, but the trouble is that the need for these movements, or anything like sensorimotor knowhow, would be motivated no better than in Noë’s enactive view.

One respect in which *Thing and Space* and *Ideas II* complement each other is that in the former work Husserl talks about shape perception, and in the latter he talks about color perception. When we talk about shape properties, let us say, the shape of a kind of blob on the front side of the tomato, the fulfillment conditions we need are expectations regarding how the perceiver’s movements relative to the tomato with the blob on it will change how the shape of the blob looks to the perceiver. So the point is that, just like the object as a whole, the blob is given us in a series of appearances, and as we go through the series the shape of the blob will progressively come to fulfillment. The blob may be on the front side and thus, in a certain sense, in full view to begin with, but we are nevertheless, strictly speaking, seeing just one appearance of it. When we explore the other appearances, it may well be that we are disappointed with regard to what we initially took the shape to be. Essentially the series of appearances in which the shape of the blob can be perceived is infinite, but for our practical purposes there clearly comes a

point when we stop exploring it further, because in terms of the satisfaction of our interests the returns would be diminishing or nonexistent.

For the shape property, the visuo-kinesthetic fulfillment conditions will do the job, but not for our perception of the color property, because there we chiefly need expectations with regard to how the red of the tomato's front side changes as the lighting changes. The fulfillment conditions pertaining to that are grouped together with various other kinds of expectations pertaining to how the object will look to us if it interacts with its environment, for example by colliding with another object.

Once again, the circumstance of the red's being the red on the front side does not prevent the idea of fulfillment from getting a foothold with regard to it. The appearance we are given in perceiving the front side of the object now is only one in a rule-governed series of appearances, which is, in principle, infinite. In practical, real-life terms it often suffices if we take just one look at the object, and once we have seen the color of the tomato in broad daylight, there can hardly be any disputing with regard to the color.

Husserl's project concerning perceptual experience divides into investigations of different constitutive strata. How are these strata to be understood? As I see it, there are two ways of identifying constitutive strata. One is by taking as our starting point the resources that essentially go into setting certain fulfillment conditions. For example, Husserl considers what can be accomplished without having recourse to the activities of the ego, and this level of investigation is accordingly called passive synthesis. On the other hand, we might take as our starting points certain constitutive accomplishments, say, spatiality, and ask what it takes in order for this accomplishment to come about.

And, clearly, certain accomplishments depend on other accomplishments, so there emerges a stratification where the dependencies are not mutual.

In TS, Husserl is concerned with the constitution of three-dimensional objective space, which is *nearly* the same as to account for the constitution of spatial objectivities. Husserl does also talk about empty space, but primarily the account concerns the givenness of spatial objects that he calls “phantoms.” The editor Claesges explains,

The first level of the constitutive analysis, to which the “Thing-Lectures” are limited, thematizes the thing “as the Object of straightforward experience,” [ftn. 29] an Object which, as such, encompasses three strata, namely the “temporal schema,” the “spatial schema,” and the “sensuous filling” [ftn. 30] of the spatial schema. [ftn. 31] These three strata, in their necessary unity, make up what Husserl called, since *ca.* 1910, the “phantom,” or the “sensuous schema,” [ftn. 32] etc. The mere phantom is, however, still not a thing. The thing in the full sense is constituted only through a “completely new stratum” announced by a “new class of inner, constitutive properties of the thing,” the “causal properties” (Husserl 1997, p. xxii (xix-xx)).

Claesges also explains on the same page that the phantom, not amounting to the full-blown thing, should be regarded as a “methodological abstraction” (Ibid., p. xxii (xx)). Husserl also uses the term “schema” to refer to the phantom. Kant uses this term too, but I think Husserl’s use of “schema” simply points back to the meaning that the term had in the Antiquity, viz., appearance.

But one should be careful not to be misled by this meaning of the term either, because it would be a mistake to regard the phantom as mere appearance. The phantom is an object, but one that falls short of the more complex objectivity of the thing: in regarding the phantom, we abstract away from the causal relations into which the thing enters. Husserl talks about things or reality precisely as objectivities that enter into causal relations with each other. In a manner of speaking, the transcendence of things in

experience is richer than that of spatial objects, and it is my view that for this reason Husserl uses different terms to talk about the experience of the phantom (an abstraction, of course), and the experience of the thing. In the former case he uses the terms *Perzeption* and *Objekt*, in the latter case the terms *Gegenstand* and *Wahrnehmung*.¹⁷

As for the “sensuous filling,” how does it fall short of the color properties? And if the phantom has color properties that depend on the causal relation with the changing lighting, have we not smuggled in causality? Husserl has a nice explanation in one of his appendices, “I took the unity that is made possible by every abstraction from causality. Thereby I do not grasp unitary features, which already presuppose causality, but instead, e.g., the unitary coloration, related to the identity of the unchanged lighting” (Ibid., p. 302 (346)). Thus, Husserl has abstracted away from changes in lighting.

The phantom is not the same as the material thing, in that it lacks causal properties. This effectively means that it does not interact with its environment. Instead, the entire analysis is conducted in terms of the object’s changing spatial relation with the

¹⁷ Be it noted that the translator of TS, Richard Rojcewicz, discusses these terms in his introduction, and his understanding of *Objekt* and *Perzeption* is completely different from mine. The translator renders “Gegenstand” and “Objekt” by “object” and “Object” respectively. As for “Wahrnehmung” and “Perzeption,” he translates these terms as “perception” and “*perception*” respectively (Husserl 1997, pp. xv-xvi). According to him, *Perzeption* is the phenomenologically reduced *Wahrnehmung*. Discussing “Gegenstand” and “Objekt,” he claims that “*Gegenstand* is the broader concept and applies to anything that can be the aim of any intention whatever; an *Object* is specifically an intersubjective *Gegenstand*” (Ibid., p. xvi).

I do not think that the translator’s characterization of *Perzeption* is adequate. Husserl says in TS that he uses *Perzeption* for non-positional perception (Ibid., p. 13 (16)). It seems to me that the phenomenologically reduced perception is still positional, although the position-taking is “bracketed.” *Perzeption* must be the reduced perception that has been further analyzed into its aspects. It seems natural for me to consider *Perzeption* the “perception” of the phantom.

If it is correct that the phantom is a proto-object or a quasi-object, and if I am right about *Perzeption*, then it is natural that we also reject also the translator’s interpretation of *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*, and argue that the distinction between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* is analogous and parallel to that between *Wahrnehmung* and *Perzeption*. Namely, *Objekt* is the correlate of *Perzeption*. If this is correct, then it appears that Husserl specifically introduces these terms in order to make a point about the status of the phantom as a proto-object.

perceiver. The account in *Ideas II* moves to the next constitutive level, in that we now account for the causal properties of the thing, and we need new fulfillment conditions for this, ones capturing the thing's interactions with its environment. The transition from the phantom to the thing can be found in *Ideas II*, Section One, Ch-s 1 and 2. Here is an informative passage that brings together the ideas of reality and causality in a discussion of the thing. Moreover, the passage relates these ideas to the idea that our posit of the thing can be, to some extent or other, "open," i.e., awaiting further fulfillments,

But if the thing *is*, then it is as the identical real something of its real properties, and these are, so-to-say, mere rays of its unitary being. It is as such an identity that the thing is posited, in a motivated way, by every experience, be it ever so imperfect and leaving so much still open, and the legitimating power of the motivation grows along with the richness of the primordial [i.e., intuitive] manifestations which show up in the progression of the experience. The thing is constant in that it comports itself in such and such a way under the circumstances which pertain to it: *reality* (or, what is here the same, *substantiality*) and *causality belong together inseparably*. Real properties are *eo ipso* causal ones. To know a thing therefore means to know from experience how it behaves under pressure and impact, in being bent and being broken, when heated and when cooled, etc., i.e., to know its behavior in the nexus of its causalities: which states does the thing actually attain and how does it remain the same throughout these states (Husserl 1989, p. 48 (45)).

What is important here is that we see what it takes to advance from the phantom to the thing. It is not a step from an inner realm into an outer where there are real things, whether they be given in experience or not, and that stand in causal relations whether these be experienced or not. Rather, the causal relations just *are* the relations between changes in the experienced thing and changes in the experienced environmental circumstances, and the reality of the thing is nothing but its persistence in these changing circumstances, i.e., in interacting with the changing environment "the way it ought to."

And Husserl's account of the constant color property is essentially the same: the quotation is also from *Ideas II*,

By virtue of this realizing apprehension (i.e., as constitutive of the real thing as substrate of real properties), the current schema acquires the character of a real determinateness of a particular sense. Over against the real unitary property, in our example the unchanged Objective color, there stands the momentary real *state* [*Zustand*], which corresponds to the "circumstances" and which changes according to rules. The state coincides with the schema; yet it is not a mere schema (the thing is indeed not a mere phantom). Corresponding to the changed apprehension is a changed correlate. That is to say, in the thing-apprehension the schema is not perceived as an extension filled merely sensuously but is perceived precisely as primal manifestation or "documentation" (originary manifestation) of a real property and, precisely thereby, as a state of the real substance at the point in time involved. The property itself comes to actually filling—i.e., originary—givenness only if an originary unfolding is achieved by the functional series in which the dependencies on the corresponding circumstances (i.e., the *causal* dependencies) come to originary givenness (Ibid., p. 46 (43)).

Here Husserl relates the givenness of the real, constant color property to the idea of the possibility of fulfillment in a series in which the object interacts with its environment. The term "originary" means the same as "intuitive."

Now we have seen how Husserl progresses from an analysis of the givenness of the phantom in TS to the givenness of the material thing in *Ideas II*. The real thing has properties (*Eigenschaften*), which is not a term I know Husserl to use of the phantom. The notion of property he uses is quite restrictive. It definitely excludes what we might call perspectival properties, e.g., the coin's appearing elliptical from a certain vantage point, but also the constant shape properties, e.g., the coin's being round: by his lights our experience of constant shape does not depend upon the object's experienced interactions with its environment. An object's shape, in ordinary experience, is certainly predictive of how the object will causally interact with its environment, e.g., how it might roll on a

surface or what kind of dent it might make in another object, but, in principle, we can conceive of shape independently of all that. It is because of the connection between the notions of property and causality that the phantom has determinations but no properties, as I have earlier pointed out. Thus, for Husserl all properties seem to be conceived in terms of dispositions of interaction. Yet let us, so as not to depart from current usage without need, stick with a more inflated notion of property and speak about shape properties as well as color properties.

For the purposes of the present dissertation I need not examine the constitutive levels further, but the stratified analysis continues, incorporating further fulfillment-conditions and leading us to higher strata of constitution. Thus, at the level of the analysis of the constitution of the material thing that he pursues in *Ideas II*, Husserl requires that the constitution be intersubjective. This idea can be understood in terms of fulfillment conditions that capture how an object would look if seen by another subject. Then, from the level of material things, we move on to the things of the Lifeworld that are distinguished by having practical and value properties, in addition to the causal properties of the material thing. Again, we need to invoke further fulfillment conditions, and I expect they will increasingly make reference to our embodiment and our practical concerns, but this is not an investigation I need at this point undertake.

Instead, let us see how John Drummond interprets Husserl's account of the constitution of spatial objects, and of the role of the kinestheses. I will look at two articles with rather complex and lengthy discussions of these topics, but my focus will be on the aspects of interest to me.

First, I believe that I can contribute to Drummond's account by further explicating the role of movements in perception, by discussing what they do and why they are important at all. Husserl's account makes reference to several different kinds of movements that are involved in perception, and Drummond duly notes this, but he then regards certain qualifications as being in order,

None of this is meant to imply that we perform *all* of these various activities in every perception or even in any single perception. This claim is false in two respects. First of all, it does not accord with our experience, and secondly, it would be *impossible* to actually perform all these activities, since there are an infinite number of directions we could take in our orbital movement. Thus, although it is not true that we ever experience *all* of the perspectival views of an object available, it is true that we do experience or can experience enough of them to constitute the bodily enclosedness of the object and its fixed position in space. ...

It is true, however, that we perform some of these K_b -activities in every perception or that the possibility of such movements generating the appertinent modifications of the object's appearance is included in our perception by association with past perceptions of similar objects in which such actions were performed. Let us take an example, one which reverses our earlier formulation of the issue and in which what can be seen as only one object will be recognized to be two similar but distinct objects. Suppose you are walking towards a modern sculpture which you have never before seen. Suppose also that as you approach it, its apparent size expands, thereby indicating its fixed position in space relative to your changing position. Approximately fifteen yards from the object, you become so fascinated by its shape that you stop. It is, you see, a unitary object with the shape of two cubes which intersect each other in such a way that corners of each occupy the same space. As you again approach the object, you become slightly confused because the two corners no longer appear to occupy the same space. Previously, your perception had been such that you assumed that there was only one object and such that, even though you did not intend to orbit the object, you assumed that, if you did orbit it, you would find that it was a single, enclosed object. This latter assumption was based on associations, automatically performed, with past perceptions where such activity was performed with those apparent results. Now, however, your attention is attracted to the specific case at hand and you begin to walk around the object. At a certain point, you see empty space between the two cubes and recognize that you could walk around each independently. Thus, you attribute your original apprehension of the object to the effects of perspectival distortion and you

modify that apprehension, recognizing that there is not a unitary object but two separate cubes (Drummond 1979, p. 32).

Husserl's account of perception involves movements in several ways. They can be needed in order to give rise to the visuo-kinesthetic expectations that set certain fulfillment conditions (say, pertinent to a posit like a statue), or they can be referred to in the visuo-kinesthetic expectations, or they can be the movements that are actually made by the perceiver and that bring about fulfillments or disappointments, as well as closer determination. In the above quotation Drummond does not explicitly make such distinctions, and one suspects that he does not sufficiently appreciate the role of the idea of fulfillment conditions in Husserl's account.

The quotation is somewhat unclear as to what is happening. Drummond describes a perceiver walking around a strange modern sculpture of unfamiliar shape, this leading to moments of fascination, confusion, surprise, and shifts of attention, all occasioned by his movements. The example of the strangely-shaped modern statue is not very well suited to bring forth the different roles of movements in perception, nor does it help that Drummond is so involved with the complexities of one's response to the statue. What would have been the difference if the visitor had caught sight of the statue from afar, and instead of going near had listened to the gallery guide's detailed description of the statue? Would there have been less of an element of fascination? What if he had been rolled around the statue in a wheelchair, or perhaps in the case of a very important visitor, the statue brought to him and rotated before him, so as to let him see it from different perspectives? My worry is that Drummond's discussion of the example does not clearly address the crucial question of what the necessary connections are, between all the

different aspects of the complex experience he describes. In particular, we are not told what role the movements perform.

As I have said in my response to the above quotation, we need to distinguish several roles that movements can have in perceptual experience, e.g., they could be implicitly involved in the fulfillment conditions or they could be the movements involved in giving rise the fulfillment conditions, or to anticipatory complexes, in the first place. Drummond's discussion does not emphasize these points. It is therefore not clear how many movements the perceiver may need to make or even on what basis one might go about considering this issue—what are these movements supposed to do for the perceiver anyway?

But to shift the discussion from the noetic to the noematic side, consider how Drummond characterizes the phantom, for the constitution of which the kinestheses are needed,

[T]he ordinary experience of the world, to the extent that it includes the experience of the causal, cultural, and ideal properties of things, is mediated by a variety of cognitive, volitional, and evaluative activities, all of which presuppose an immediate encounter with something to which we attribute these properties; that something is the purely sensible object or, as Husserl calls it, the "phantom" (Drummond 1983, p. 180).

Phantoms have *no perceptible* causal properties; they have only sensible properties and, perhaps, ideal properties and immediately grounded value-properties (such as the pleasantness of shape). In many cases, the perception of a phantom is the consequence of an experience being deficient in some respect. The child's experience, for example, might be of this sort: not knowing the causal and functional properties of a hammer, the child does not truly perceive a hammer. He or she does, however, experience the hammer-phantom, a sensible object of a certain size and shape which endures through time and occupies a certain position in space, and which is of a certain color and texture, which makes a certain sound when dropped, etc. The child's failure to see the hammer as such rests upon a lack of knowledge, specifically of its causal properties and function... (Ibid., pp. 180-181).

The phantom—like the material object itself—is an identical object given in a manifold of momentary appearances. Most obvious is that the phantom is given in a manifold of perspectival views. ... But this is not the only manifold in which the identical phantom appears. The phantom is also an identical object through its temporal extension, as well as the identity given in the multiplicity of sensible qualities, each of which is the direct object of one or some combination of senses. So, for example, my house today is the same house I saw yesterday; it has its visual qualities (shape and color), its tactile qualities...

Finally, the differences in the interests guiding our experience at the moment can affect the manner of an object's appearance, and we shall consider this circumstance more carefully (*Ibid.*, p. 181)

Drummond calls the phantom the “sensible object.” While this strikes me as an infelicitous choice of phrase, we must not be too quick to find fault with a view simply for departing from Husserl's use of the terminology. For example, both Drummond and I have opted for a different use of the term “property” than if we were to use it to translate the Husserlian “Eigenschaft.” However, there does seem to be a deeper problem: Drummond seems to regard the phantom as sensible in a sense in which we might say this about an inner, mental object that does not enter into the causal relations into which real things enter in the external world.

We know that the phantom is a half-finished proto-object. It has objectivity in the sense that it has constant shape properties that we can trace through the changing perspectives, but in the third paragraph of the quotation, in discussing the example of the house, Drummond would do well to put greater emphasis on this difference between our perception of shape and color, and the contribution that shape perception makes to securing the phantom's rudimentary transcendence. Also, in the discussion of the hammer in the second paragraph, the child, according to Drummond, experiences a hammer phantom because he does not know about the uses of hammers. But this may give rise to worrisome questions. Because the child does not know how hammers are

used, he does not see the hammer as having a constant color? Because the child does not know how hammers are used, his experience flips so that he does not experience the hammer as having *any* causal properties? This is quite implausible. As for the hammer's making a certain sound when dropped, this is clearly something that belongs in the full-blown perception of the material thing, and is not yet part of the analysis of the phantom.

In addition to this, I am quite suspicious of the idea that we ever naturally encounter phantoms at all, but I will set this aside. Instead, let us draw the conclusions. Drummond calls the phantom the "sensed object." By itself, this seems innocuous, but when the discussion is scrutinized further, this problematic way of stating what the phantom is reveals substantive problems. It seems that Drummond relies on a kind of inner-outer distinction in distinguishing between phantoms and material things, and not on a conception based on how different kinds of fulfillment conditions contribute to and enrich objectivity. We get the impression that the phantom is an inner phantasy-object that can *seem* to have all kinds of constant properties and causal properties, as with a certain color—except that they are not really causal properties, because they are phantasized and not really there. This interpretation seems incompatible with the one I have provided in the present section, and for which I have offered some textual support: the difference between phantoms and material things needs to be understood in terms of constitutive strata, i.e., in terms of fulfillment conditions. I believe that we could improve Drummond's interpretation by revising the aspects that make it difficult to sufficiently appreciate these Husserlian ideas. To remind the reader, these critical points are relevant to my larger project, because I wish to develop an adequate account of Husserl's view,

the noetic and noematic aspects, so as to explore the connections between it and Noë's enactive view.

However, Drummond aims to give an interpretation that is not only *realist*, but also *realistic*. He thus finds fault with Husserl for not presenting his analyses in realistic enough terms,

Again, we must point out that Husserl, while not quite ignoring physiological limitations, is neglecting certain physical realities in his descriptions of orbiting: in our normal perceiving, bodily movements are made on a plane (the earth, a floor, and the like); the movements Husserl suggests as theoretically possible seem possible only in underwater swimming and walking in outer space. But again—as he did in removing the left/right limits on head movements—Husserl points to an approximable activity; we can approximate these movements ... and thereby gain a good sense of the bodily enclosedness of the object (Ibid., pp. 195-196).

The point about head movements refers to another passage, where it seems to Drummond that Husserl has not been realistic enough in seeming to allow for our heads' rotating without limit in either direction. There are three points I wish to make in regard to the charge that Husserl's account is insufficiently *realistic*. First, Drummond says that Husserl speaks as if we were observing the object while floating in outer space or swimming under water. We can go under it, above it, etc. But this can be accommodated if we regard the relevant movements as being referred to in the expectations setting the fulfillment conditions. For example, in order for me to perceive the White House as a kind of house, it seems plausible that the fulfillment conditions need to provide for my entering it and finding inside an array of interconnected rooms that are in fact used to accommodate people and carry out various activities and projects. A complaint analogous to Drummond's might consist in the charge that it is terribly unrealistic to believe that I

would actually be allowed to go in there, wander through the rooms, etc. But of course that is beside the point.¹⁸

Secondly, the kinesthetic sensations that make a contribution to the constitution of the phantom also make a contribution to the constitution of the experienced body. Whatever the details of that account, we should not assume that at this low constitutive level we have an entirely realistic account of embodiment, including how our bodies move. The phantom is a methodological abstraction, and so is the perceiver of the phantom.

Thirdly, we must not assume that the fulfillment conditions are set in the same way in phantom-constitution and in actual perceptual experience, or on different constitutive levels generally. If we need many kinestheses in order to have the visuo-kinesthetic expectations at the level of phantom-constitution, it does not mean that in actual perception I cannot simply judge an object to be a tomato, or a tennis ball, or round-shaped. How fulfillment conditions are set at a certain constitutive level may not hold of a higher level, where we can avail ourselves of more resources, and where the noesis is richer.

Indeed, Drummond proposes to revise and develop Husserl's view in certain ways, so as to render it a more realistic account of how it is that we actually perceive spatiality. I find this development of the Husserlian view quite problematic. To begin, he

¹⁸ This example may remind the reader of the criticism I made of Noë's account of perceptual presence in terms of possible access, viz., I pointed out that the back side of the perceived house may not be accessible, as there could be armed guards defending it. Such a criticism would miss the point of the Husserlian view though, because here the relevant movements are implicated in the anticipatory complexes which set the fulfillment conditions. The question whether these movements are nomically possible, given the detailed circumstances, does not arise.

proposes his own notion of optimality that is meant to duly take into account our embodiment and practical interests,

Our practical interests, then, call forth certain qualities for attention and demand that the object be given such that we can best experience those qualities. The teleology of perception, therefore, is directed not to complete givenness but to "maximal" or "optimal" givenness relative to the practical interest governing the perception (DR, 128)... (Drummond 1983, p. 183).

The first condition is the suitability of the physical circumstances in which the perception occurs (DR, 132, 138). [ftn. 5] These circumstances can be either subjective (e.g., the health of the sense organ) or objective (e.g., the state of the perceptual medium). ...

Secondly, an optimal appearance requires that the object be (a) given in the center of the visual field rather than at its margins, (b) presented at a suitable distance from the perceiver, and (c) susceptible to careful and comprehensive scrutiny by the perceiver. ...

A momentary appearance not so positioned could not be precisely determined because the eye, say, would not be properly focused on the appearance. ...

It is this second general requirement for optimal givenness that leads directly to an account of the role played by optimal appearances in our immediate awareness of the spatiality of the phantom (and the material thing whose phantom it is) in perception. ...

It is in order to satisfy the second general requirement that Husserl invokes the kinesthesia, i.e., the capacity of self-movement (Ibid., pp. 183-184).

Here is how Drummond applies his idea of optimality to the constitution of space. In his article, he goes through the different kinds of kinestheses (or experienced movements) that Husserl, in *Thing and Space*, regards as needed for the constitution of space, and gives an account of their role in terms of the idea of interest-relative optima. Essentially, he argues that the different kinds of kinestheses are needed to satisfy the different kinds of perceptual interests that perceivers, in fact, have. He begins by accounting for the constitution of the oculomotoric field by invoking an example where he is reading by a river, when an airplane, flying by, draws his attention. In order to

satisfy his interest in the airplane in this situation, a movement of the eyes is needed; and it will also suffice.

He next discusses the constitution of the cephalomotoric field, and aspects of three-dimensional space. Now the situation involves an eagle that perches itself near the reader,

Let us also suppose that in order to bring the eagle to the center of the oculomotoric field, we had to move the eyes up and left, and that we find this position uncomfortable. The appearance, then, would not be optimal because it is not easily held. Consequently we also raise and turn our heads so that we can return the eyes to the more comfortable central position. In this case, we have introduced a new kinaesthetic system, the movements of the head (and upper body) (Ibid., p. 188).

Say our eagle now flies towards the bluff on which we sit and alights upon a tree. We again move our eyes and head so as to maintain the eagle in the center of the visual field, but the eagle is still too far away for us to see it well. We wish to take a “closer look,” and we consequently rise and walk towards the eagle, all the while adjusting the position of our eyes and head so as to keep the eagle in the center of the visual field. If the eagle—as is likely—is high atop the tree, this will produce an unavoidably uncomfortable position but our interest in examining the eagle demands it. Finally, we are close enough; the appearance of the eagle has expanded enough in size so that we can examine it in some detail (Ibid., pp. 191-192).

But in order to constitute objective three-dimensional space, we also need orbiting movements, which Drummond says are needed for the satisfaction of the kind of perceptual interest that we might have with regard to a statue in the museum (Ibid., p. 194). Drummond’s idea is always that the kinestheses are needed for the satisfaction of our interests with regard to the object.

In sum, Drummond’s idea is that the movements that are needed to satisfy our interests in the best way are precisely the ones needed to constitute the spatiality of the object. But this seems to have the implication that if I cannot satisfy my interests with regard to something, I have not properly speaking experienced it as a spatial object.

Moreover, we need to be able to satisfy our interests in a comfortable position, as Drummond implies in the above quotation. This suggests that when we are not able to satisfy our interests with regard to an object and be comfortable while doing it, there has been some failure with regard to our experience of space and the spatiality of objects.

It needs to be kept in mind that Drummond does not require that all these movements be actualized. I understand him as arguing that not all of these movements need even be possible. It needs to be possible to approximate some of these movements and some of them need to be actualized. Does this sufficiently improve the view? No, because it is hard to see why my perception of the spatiality of objects depends upon the possibility of my satisfying certain interests regarding them, especially if we are talking in terms of realistic and complex interests, as Drummond does. Indeed, it does not even seem that involvement of fulfillment conditions pertaining to the satisfaction of our interests is needed to perceive spatial objects. Rather, it is the other way round, which is why the Lifeworldly thing is at a higher constitutive stratum than the phantom.

We can therefore see that Drummond's realist (and realistic) interpretation of Husserl's account of phantom-constitution, in *Thing and Space*, does not sufficiently appreciate the role of the ideas of fulfillment and fulfillment conditions in perceptual experience. On the noetic side, he really should tell us why exactly we need kinestheses and visuo-kinesthetic expectations, on the noematic side we cannot quite see how the stratified account works, viz., by furnishing us with analyses of increasingly complex fulfillment conditions and thereby stepwise situating the object in the world of our experience. Therefore, if this is the interpretation we accepted, we might have reason to admit that there are considerable similarities between Husserl's and Noë's views, but it

would not at all be clear that Noë's view could be improved or rendered more defensible by bringing to bear aspects of Husserl's view, or Husserlian resources. I, on the other hand, wish to show that certain aspects of Noë's view only begin to work well if contextualized within a peculiar kind of philosophy, viz., Husserlian constitutive phenomenology.

7. On D.W. Smith's Views

I wish next to offer a critique of aspects of D.W. Smith's interpretation of Husserl's views. Smith is a notable proponent of what is known as the West Coast interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology, centering on the idea that the Husserlian noema is similar to the Fregean sense. From that point of view, the connections that I wish to make between Noë's and Husserl's views, would seem to be false or at least overstated. For example, someone might suggest that while Husserl's account focuses on the idea of the noema, interpreted as content structured by Fregean propositions, Noë appears to have a rather different view, viz., focused on sensorimotor knowhow and radically revisionary of received ideas of perceptual representation. I will therefore explain the respects in which, I believe, there is reason to disagree with the West Coast interpretation, and with Smith's views in particular. The general structure of my argument will be similar to that in the preceding sections, viz., I will consider Smith's ideas concerning the noesis and the noema, and conclude that his interpretation of both notions is problematic. The West Coast interpretation puts forward a certain comprehensive picture of Husserl's views, and it is a picture that I believe I could, in some aspects, help improve.

To begin, while there are interpreters who attribute to Husserl some form of idealism or neutrality regarding metaphysical issues, Smith gives a realist interpretation, according to which Husserl has “a realist ontology joined with a methodological perspectivism (mundane objects exist independently of our consciousness of them, but we know them only through some particular conception or meaning)” (Smith 2007, p. 22).¹⁹

The idea of the relevant “conception” or “meaning” takes us to the idea of the noema as the Fregean sense. The object to which the experience refers and the noema are distinct, the account emphasizes. Thus, on one hand, we have a real object in the world, the plum tree, and, on the other hand, we have an ideal object that makes possible the reference to the plum tree. Smith notes that there are certain Kantian motifs in Husserl’s account of the noema, but he regards them as not fundamental to Husserl’s view, and therefore makes the interpretative choice of de-emphasizing them. According to Smith, we have, at the core (*Kern*) of the noema, different concepts that determine what we take ourselves to be seeing, as well as a certain indexical aspect, captured by a “determinable X,”

Consider the experience whose form we have described repeatedly:
I see this blossoming plum tree.

The sense of the act described here factors into two components: “this,” which designates a particular object before me (“X”); and the predicate-senses “tree,” “plum,” and “blossoming” (configured together as “blossoming plum tree”)... We cannot fail to notice the variable “X,” used by Husserl the former mathematician familiar with the new Fregean logic of quantifier expressions (“some object x is such that x is a tree”) (Ibid., p. 284).

¹⁹ The claim is repeated in Smith 2007, p. 170.

For Smith, the determinable X stands for an indexical element in the noema. It is thanks to the X that we perceive not just a plum tree with certain properties, but *this* plum tree with certain properties. The X is rather like the Fregean variable x, and Smith even suggests that Husserl may have been motivated by his acquaintance with Fregean logic to introduce the symbol. Smith also emphasizes that, with the predicate senses at the core of the noema, Husserl regards the content of intentional experiences as conceptual. Thus, Smith says,

Husserl did not look to sensory experiences and their qualia as the paradigm targets of phenomenological analysis. Indeed, Husserl took our perceptual experiences to have a conceptual content or meaning that presents things around us with a much richer character than mere sensation (Ibid., p. 189).

Along the same lines, we see him offering a conceptualizing account of Husserl's notion of apprehension, "Yet we experience a temporally structured flow of sensory consciousness that is "animated" by meaningful conceptual apprehension" (Ibid., p. 211).

Since the noema incorporates the concepts that the perceiver brings to bear on the perceptual object, we can, on the West Coast interpretation, make sense of Husserl's phenomenology as a kind of conceptual analysis. In order to study the conceptual noemata, we perform the epoche, i.e., turn our attention from the perceptual objects to the meaningful content of the experiences themselves. The meanings present "objects as experienced, regardless of whether the objects represented by these meanings exist" (Ibid., p. 243). Smith further explains,

In this account of phenomenological method we make use of Husserl's basic (ontological) theory of intentionality: an act of consciousness is intentionally directed via a meaning toward an object. Phenomenology studies the experience and its content or meaning, not the object represented by the meaning. Thus we ascend from our first-order

experience of things in the world to our higher-order reflection on our ordinary experience and its meaning... (Ibid.)

... I bracket, or make no use of, the thesis of the existence of the world around me, and thereby turn my attention from objects in the world to my consciousness of objects in the world around me ... (Ibid, p. 432).

Upon studying Husserl's views, it is easy to get the sense that there may be some kind of discrepancy between the West Coast interpretation and Husserl's actual views, but it is more difficult to pin down what the actual problems are. After all, presenting Husserl's views in terms current in analytic philosophy, is by no means a problem in and of itself. On the contrary, it may amount to a considerable achievement in that it renders Husserl accessible and relevant to many philosophers. However, I will try to point out some problems for the West Coast interpretation, to highlight ways in which it could be modified and improved.

First, Husserl emphasizes that it is important to study both the noetic and the noematic aspects of experience.²⁰ The West Coast interpretation appears to have put forward a plausibly motivated view of why the phenomenologist should be interested in the noema, but it is not clear to me that it has done so for the noesis. According to the West Coast interpretation, the noesis is "the real content of an act of consciousness, "in" which the ideal content or noema occurs or is realized" (Ibid., p. 440). But now someone might wish to argue that, based on these ideas, it is difficult to make sense of the noesis, except as amounting to the contingent psychological processes in which the noema is realized, and of interest to the psychologist but not, for any obvious reasons, to the Husserlian phenomenologist, who performs the eidetic reduction to study necessary or essential aspects of intentional experience.

²⁰ See Section 3, Chapter 3 of *Ideas I* (Husserl 1950).

The West Coast Interpretation does not make it very clear why Husserl regards the noesis as important part of the subject matter of phenomenology. It is hard to believe that when he speaks about the noesis he is basically just demarcating transcendental phenomenology against psychology. I, on the contrary, have explained that noesis is the process in which the fulfillment conditions of the perceptual experience are set, and that it necessarily involves visuo-kinesthetic expectations, kinesthetic sensations, and other aspects. This is a topic for Husserlian phenomenology, rather than just for psychology, because it is possible to study these psychological processes with regard to necessary aspects, insofar as they function to set fulfillment conditions.

Second, the West Coast interpretation misinterprets the idea of the “determinable X” at the core of the noema, regarding it as capturing an indexical aspect of the perceptual experience. Smith even says that the expression “determinable X” might be there to highlight a connection with the idea of a variable, represented by “x,” in Fregean logic. That, *prima facie*, should seem quite implausible: the symbol “X” is used by Kant to refer to the transcendent thing, the *Ding an sich* (Kant 1787?, p. 232 (A250-251, B—), and Husserl probably gets it from Kant.

But this is not yet an argument against Smith’s substantive take on the determinable X. What I would say is that his idea amounts to a drastic and unjustified break with the tradition of Husserl-interpretation, represented, for example, in the following quotation from Tugendhat,

The thing is not transcendent in the sense of being separate from its givenness and thereby from the consciousness. Instead, it is given precisely so that it transcends the simple presence (and this means, for Husserl, the reell immanence).

Thus, we see that in the relation of perspective and the thing itself a new sense of “self” is given, one that does not permit of a reduction to a

relation of representation, as was apparently the case in the LI. Here, as everywhere, the meaning of the word “self” can only be gleaned from the essence of the corresponding fulfillment and disappointment... Every signitive intention is directed to a “self” and fulfills itself in perception. But the same signitive intention that is directed to a “self,” which is essentially a rule, an identical of manifold perspectives, fulfills itself only in a continuous and harmonious perceptual nexus (*Ideen* 97-). A rule is something that does not at all come to “presentation” in single adumbrations, but only in a series of perceptions; in it, however, it comes to the original self-givenness that is peculiar to it (*Ideen* II 43, 122) but nevertheless inadequate (Tugendhat 1967, p. 77).

The idea of there being an indexical aspect of perceptual content seems difficult to reconcile with the idea that Husserl’s phenomenology investigates the constitution of objectivity in experience, in terms of the relevant fulfillment conditions. Within the constraints of the phenomenological method, it is illegitimate to argue that the perceptual experience of the Statue of Liberty is a different experience from that of a perfect replica from Twin Earth, based on the idea that perceptual experiences have indexical content, or content that is individuated relative to the particulars that they are about. It might be suggested that the causal relations underpinning the indexical view would not be out of bounds for Husserlian phenomenology, since it addresses the causal interactions between objects, but I really cannot see how the swapping of the objects could make for the kind of difference that would make a difference from the point of view of Husserlian phenomenology, i.e., from a kind of first-person perspective, since swapping the object for its replica will not make any difference in regard to the experienced object’s experienced interactions with the perceiver and its environment. Smith is basically borrowing a notion, viz., indexicality, from linguistic theory and invoking it in a phenomenological account of perceptual experience, but I take this move, within Husserlian phenomenology, to be just as illegitimate as invoking, say, neurophysiological

concepts. It is probably more instructive to compare the “determinable X” with a mathematical function than with the Fregean variable “x”: it is a rule that associates the appearances one is having (argument, input) with the appearances to be expected (value, output).

However, what if it were suggested that the indexicality involved is of a more innocuous kind, and does not involve illegitimate appeals to linguistics? Can the “determinable X” simply capture the idea that, in having a perceptual experience of an object, the perceiver experiences it, *this* object, as being here, now, as opposed to, say, a remembered object? But such an idea is simply captured by the fulfillment modification and we do not need any additional apparatus to account for it: in perceptual experience, unlike, say, acts of remembrance, objects are given with some degree of intuitive fullness.

There is also a third critical point. Namely, the West Coast interpretation conceives of the core of the noema in terms of the predicate senses and the “determinable X,” but I know of no principled reason to believe that the predicate senses need to do all the work in determining what we perceptually experience. Clearly, much of Husserl’s constitutive analysis is carried out at the pre-predicative level, from the constitution of the phantom all the way to the constitution of the Lifeworldly object. The important point, for Husserl, is that *if* the experience contains these predicative aspects, *then* it needs to be made transparent by discussing the pre-predicative forms of constitution on which it depends. Given that this is the fundamental thrust of the constitutive analyses, the West Coast interpretation will either require a better argument to the effect that *all* content

needs to be conceptual, i.e., involve the predicate noemas, or the interpretation will need to be modified.

Having expressed these worries in regard to the West Coast interpretation, I wish to sum up what problems the view seems to encounter. I have said that it presents a conception of the noesis on which it is unclear what role the notion can have in the Husserlian framework. To add to that, I believe that the problem with the noesis is reflected in a fundamental problem concerning the noema, viz., the account does not entirely capture the respects in which the Husserlian analyses are concerned with the world that opens up for us in perceptual experience. Husserl's phenomenology is a study of objects, interpreted in a certain way, viz., as transcendent in the sense specified by Husserl, as constant through the flux of experience. Husserl's phenomenology can be conceptual analysis only because it is a study of the constitution of transcendent objectivity.

Smith explicates transcendence as follows,

transcendence lying beyond complete knowledge or intention; for example, a physical thing can be perceived from only one side at a time, and so its full essence is transcendent—there is always more to come, further properties that could be known or intended in further experiences of the same object” (Ibid., p. 447).

This seems to be a straightforward part of Smith's realist take on Husserl. Objects are transcendent in the sense that they are there, their being cannot be exhaustively accounted for in terms of experiential givenness. But in my view, the straightforwardly Husserlian way to put the idea is to say that we *experience* the object in terms of there being more to it than what is “properly” presented to us now—and no metaphysical

speculation going beyond this is permissible within the constraints of the Husserlian approach.

As with the other interpretations that I have discussed, believe the West Coast interpretation could be improved by a greater emphasis on the ideas which I make central, especially the idea of fulfillment conditions and the noesis-noema nexus. It may well be that there is widespread agreement between my position and Smith's, but there are points on which his interpretative emphases give rise to difficulties. For example, we could see that the West Coast interpretation makes it difficult to adequately account for noetic phenomenology, and that aspects of the realist reading are revisionary and seem to violate the constraints of the phenomenological approach. Staying with the example of the noetics, it is clearly important to have an adequate conception of it, as this is precisely where we can make a connection with Noë's hallmark ideas of sensorimotor expectations and knowhow.

8. Concluding Remarks

I have argued that Husserl investigates the content of perceptual experience as determining fulfillment conditions and the necessary aspects of how they are set. In other words, he investigates the noematic and noetic aspects of experience. With a focus on this idea, I have also developed criticisms of the views of Sean Kelly, Kevin Mulligan, John Drummond and D.W. Smith. It is important, in the context of the present project, that these two aspects of Husserl's view be well understood, since otherwise I would not be able to successfully make connections between Husserl's and Noë's views in my third chapter.

Chapter 3: Fulfillment and the Problem of Perceptual Presence

1. Introductory Remarks

In the present chapter, I will argue that the view Noë develops as his solution to the problem of perceptual presence is rightly interpreted as a kind of sketch of Husserl's view of perception. The problem of perceptual presence can be adequately motivated and solved if we complement the Husserlian strand in Noë's view with other Husserlian ideas, especially the notion of fulfillment.

In section 2, I will present the central aspects of the connection between Husserl's and Noë's views. In light of these results, I will, in section 3, proceed to discuss the problem of perceptual presence. I will argue that it is the central problem of Husserl's view of perception, and that, by bringing to bear the relevant Husserlian resources, we can tackle it.

In sections 4-6, I will continue to discuss the topics and issues raised in Chapter 1, aiming to tie all the loose ends, viz., by indicating which aspects of Noë's enactive view are Husserlian and with which difficulties the enactive view could successfully deal, based on an adequate appreciation of the Husserlian connection. The section titles will be similar to the ones in chapter 1, so as to make it easier for the reader to keep track of the connections between the chapters. In section 4, I will suggest that Noë's take on qualia and the explanatory gap can be given a kind of Husserlian construction. While not arguing that we can close the explanatory gap, I will propose a certain gloss on Noë's ideas, in an attempt to understand why Noë might have thought he could do it. In section

5, I will discuss the problems of perceptual constancy, dealing with the issue of contradictory contents and arguing that the Husserl-Noë view furnishes a principled

alternative to the so-called complex view. In section 6, I will deal with a challenge I raised for Noë's account of how the past phases of perceptual experience make a difference in the ongoing perceptual experience.

I have opted to not follow up on section 5, "Presence by Degrees," of Chapter 1, since I believe that the ideas discussed there do not relate to the Husserlian themes in Noë's enactive view. I have, however, included, in the present chapter, a section in which I offer criticisms of discussions I have come upon, in secondary literature, of the connections between Husserl's and Noë's views.

2. Noë's Enactive View and Husserl's Phenomenology

I have argued that insofar as Noë poses the "problem of perceptual presence" and proposes to solve it by appeal to the resources of the enactive view, his view is fundamentally ambiguous. On one hand, there is a problem (which I have called the problem of perceptual presence*) that Noë highlights by citing cases like change blindness and inattentional blindness. It is the problem that we do not, at any given moment, access many of the perceptual scene's aspects that we take to be in plain view. As Noë articulates the problem, it takes the form of the threat of a Grand Illusion: we could be confabulating about the extent and nature of our perceptual experience, e.g., by taking ourselves to be experiencing the face of the Marilyn on the far left while in fact we are not experiencing that face at all—but, at best, a few lines and colored patches. This problem is solved by appeal to the idea that access is possible. The face of the Marilyn on the left is perceptually present in the sense that it is readily accessible to the perceiver. It is possible to access it whenever we need to. Notice that what it is possible for us to

access need not be reflected in any kind of experience of the possibility of access. The possibility of access may just be an aspect of the subpersonal workings of the perceptual apparatus.

On the other hand, there is the problem of how to account for our perceptual experience of what, though genuinely experienced by us right now, is not appearing to us at the given moment, or is not in view—e.g., the object's back side. I have called it the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk). It is solved by appeal to sensorimotor and other expectations.

The second problem is the Husserlian problem, and it is basically solved by articulating a Husserlian view of perceptual experience and perceptual presence. Insofar as Noë does that, his view is rightly interpreted as a sketch of Husserl's view. Noë employs the idea of sensorimotor expectations, while Husserl articulates the idea of visuo-kinesthetic expectations. Indeed, there is a more specific similarity between Noë's and Husserl's expectations, insofar as in neither case are we dealing with judgment-like acts or states. Noë emphasizes that the sensorimotor expectations are low-level and pre-predicative, with the upshot that it would be wrong to charge his view with unduly intellectualizing perceptual experience. Husserl is sometimes accused of precisely this, e.g., by Sean Kelly (see section 4, chapter 2), but I disagree with Kelly's Kantian picture of Husserl's view, and have argued against it. Not only are Husserl's visuo-kinesthetic expectations low-level and pre-predicative, they *have to be* like this, given the aims and nature of the Husserlian project. Husserl is giving an account of how we can first come to experience sensuous objects—and this is presupposed by any account of how we can make judgments about them or apply concepts to what we experience. As for a positive

account of the relevant expectations and “sensorimotor knowhow,” the Husserlian conception is articulated in terms of visuo-kinesthetic motivation. Indeed, as I have argued in section 5, chapter 2, the noesis of phantom-perception needs to be regarded as a web of kinesthetic motivations, making a connection between Husserlian phenomenology and empirical psychology. Noë offers a positive account of sensorimotor knowhow in terms of the subpersonal contingencies pertinent to how the visual apparatus accesses the environment, but I am not aware that he offers a positive personal-level account of what the sensorimotor expectations are, if not judgments.

There is a further similarity in how Husserl and Noë develop the theme of expectations, insofar as Noë argues that the perception of colors, while basically analogous to the perception of shapes, nevertheless differs from them in the respect that, in the case of color, we need distinct kind of expectations, viz., expectations about how the look of the objects will change when the lighting changes, rather than just expectations pertaining to the movements of the perceiver relative to the object. He paraphrases this point by requiring mastery of environmental contingencies, i.e., knowing the way in which the look of the color changes if the lighting changes, in addition to mastery of the sensorimotor contingencies that account for the perception of shape. But this parallels Husserl’s idea that when we move from the constitutive level of the spatial phantom to the level of the material thing, which has constant color, our perception of the constant color involves an implicit grasp of how the color interacts with the changing environmental lighting conditions.²¹

²¹ The idea of the environmental contingencies that I address here is distinct from O’Regan and Noë’s idea of object-related contingencies, which I discuss in Section 5, Chapter 1. The latter idea is, first and foremost, part of a view of the subpersonal workings of the visual apparatus. It addresses attention-grabbing changes in the object and movements of the object, but *not* movements of the perceiver.

But, surely, many philosophers would agree that perception involves some kind of expectations, so let us consider further similarities between Husserl's and Noë's views, to argue that the connection is distinctive and noteworthy. The idea that expectations are involved pertains to what Husserl calls the noetic aspects of experience. There are further similarities concerning what Husserl calls the noematic aspects of experience, viz., the object as it is experienced by the perceiver. Centrally, Noë claims that there is, at the core of the constant property, a "rule" that governs how the appearances of the constant property may follow one another—a "formal concept," according to Noë. The idea that there are such rules, governing sequences of appearances, seems to me a distinctively Husserlian idea. Husserl regards both the objects and the properties we perceive as "transcendent," i.e., as constancies persisting through rule-governed series of appearances. In the case of the object, the rule also needs to govern how the object can gain and lose properties.

When we combine the idea of sensorimotor and other (environmental, Lifeworldly) expectations with the idea that perception involves constancies conceived in terms of rule-governed series of appearances, we get a two-sided, distinctively Husserlian picture, involving the noetic and the noematic aspects of perceptual experience. That picture is there in Noë's enactive view.

Let us further explore this picture. Noë emphasizes the importance of movements and skills in perception. But Husserl's account of the noetic processes also involves kinesthetic sensations and experienced bodily movements. In Husserl's view, there is a distinction between the sub-personal (computational or neurophysiological) correlate of perceptual experience and the aspects of perceptual experience that are not *given* to the

perceiver. For example, the visual and kinesthetic sensations are part of the experience, but they are not given to the perceiver. Instead, they are part of the aspects of perceptual experience that are involved in the *giving* of perceptual objects—and similarly involved are the experienced, skillful bodily movements, when we move up in the constitutive strata. The experienced and experiencing body is constituted alongside the experienced object. This is how, in Husserl's phenomenology, the idea of sensorimotor expectations is developed in conjunction with experienced bodily movements and perceptual knowhow.

However, what is missing from Noë's view is the idea of fullness modifications and the constitutive significance of the idea of fulfillment. We have already seen that, without these ideas, Noë's discussion of the problem of perceptual presence encounters difficulties. How they can be dealt with, I will discuss in the next section. Before I do it, however, I would point out that the failure to distinguish between intuitive and empty givenness may also have contributed to Noë's failure to distinguish between the problem of perceptual presence* and the problem of perceptual presence.

The difference between these two problems can be interpreted as hinging on the difference between the ideas of spurious perceptual presence and the presence of that which is emptily given. The problem of perceptual presence* arises when we are given reason to believe that the perceiver is merely confabulating when he believes and reports that he is having perceptual experience of the details of the face of the Marilyn on the left. The solution to this problem appeals to the perceiver's ability to turn his attention to the picture of Marilyn on the left. It is because the picture on the left is readily accessible that its presence is genuine, not illusory.

By contrast, the problem of perceptual presence (no asterisk), arises when we affirm that the presence of the object's back side, or of a certain perspectival appearance of the Marilyn on the left, is a genuine part of our experience, but it is experienced emptily. The solution to the problem of how to account for its empty givenness is in terms of sensorimotor and other expectations—but we need not be able to move in such a way as to bring the back side to intuitive givenness, or to look at the Marilyn on the left from a different vantage point, or to shift our attention so as to connect causally with the picture on the left, thereby accessing it. We usually are able to move around and explore different parts of paintings and different sides of objects, of course, but such “accessibility” is not needed to have, say, the empty experience of the back side.

There is a clear difference between the two problems and what it takes to solve them, and they can most effectively be brought into focus if we have understood the ideas of fullness, emptiness and fulfillment. Otherwise, it may be more difficult to see how these two problems differ from each other. This seems to be the reason why the ambiguity in Noë's view appears to have remained hidden from him and his critics. Equipped with the distinction between fullness and emptiness, however, philosophers should be in a better position to distinguish between issues concerning empty givenness, at the personal level, and issues concerning the subpersonal etiology of perceptual experience.

3. The Problem of Perceptual Presence

I will now focus on Noë's problem of perceptual presence in the context of Husserl's phenomenology. I will argue that it can be regarded as the central problem of

Husserl's phenomenology of perception, and that Husserl's view can deal with all the issues that I raised for Noë's view in sections 2 and 3 of Chapter 1.

I believe that Bernet, Kern, and Marbach are correct to regard the following problem as the central problem of Husserl's phenomenology of perception,

It is the first and most fundamental task of a phenomenological analysis of the perception of a thing to make intelligible this necessary connection between partial or perspectival givenness and the whole or uniform thing. The specifically phenomenological character of this analysis of the perspectival mode of givenness of the thing consists in one's thereby moving exclusively within the compass of phenomenologically reduced data. Partial intuitive givenness may not, then, be understood as if but a piece were given of a thing existing in itself and fully differentiated within itself in respect to its content. By the same token, partial intuitive givenness may not be understood as if there were to be found in consciousness a representative of the noumenal thing such that this representative would then be conceived, by means of a causal inference, as the phenomenal givenness of the noumenal thing.... Perceptual givenness alone can be laid claim to as the phenomenological givenness of a thing (Bernet, Kern, Marbach 1989, pp. 116-117).

The central task is to account for the constancies that emerge in the flux of experience, be they objects or constant properties. This becomes the central task when we bar ourselves from giving certain other kinds of accounts of what goes on in experience, e.g., that perception brings us into contact with a relatively stable world that exists independently of us, or that perception can be accounted for in terms of making judgments or applying concepts to the flux of sense data. We bar ourselves from giving such accounts by performing the Husserlian epoche. If we do that, we can start to deal with the task of accounting for how constant objectivity, or transcendent objects, can emerge from the flux of experience. This requires an account of how aspects of objects can be given emptily, and how objects and their properties can be given in various degrees of fulfillment. This is the central concern in all the cases that Noë regards as

instances of the problem of perceptual presence: objects' back sides, their occluded parts, and perceptual constancies. We can distinguish several versions of the problem, but they are all motivated similarly and are rightly regarded as aspects of the same problem. First, it is possible to ask how we can be given transcendent objects. Second, we can focus more specifically on the emptily given aspects, viz., the back sides and the occluded parts, and ask how they can be given. Third, we may ask what the relation is between the perspectival appearances of objects or properties, and the constant objects or properties. Fourth, we may ask how the sensations we have can give rise to perceptual experience.

Perhaps the most significant difference between Husserl and Noë is that Noë presents this problem—call it the problem of perceptual constancy, the problem of transcendence, the problem of constitution, or the problem of perceptual presence—as a puzzle we come upon simply by scrutinizing our common sense intuitions about perceptual experience. Husserl arrives at this problem, or, it might be better to say, this task, by performing the *epoché*. That context is needed, in order to understand why we should concern ourselves with this problem, or even agree that the problem (or the task) is there in the first place. Noë's approach to the problem obscures the fact that it is naturally part of a particular kind of philosophy, viz., the Husserlian constitutive analyses, based in a philosophical perspective that deserves to be better understood. And, to remind the reader, I am not merely expressing a general concern to the effect that the Husserlian problem has not been regarded in its proper context. In my first chapter I argued that Noë runs into difficulties establishing that there even is a problem of perceptual presence, concerning the central case of the object's back side, since the

natural reaction to the case is to deny that the presence of the back side is perceptual: we may have some kind of experience of the back side but we do not see the back side.

By contrast, once we have performed the *epoche*, by re-interpreting perceptual objectivity in terms of fulfillment conditions, we have set up the problem. We will need to consider the object in terms of which intuitive givens we have already had of it (and have retained), which intuitive givenness we are having now, and which ones we still only expect to have. All the occluded parts, the back sides, and the appearances we are not now having will need to be accounted for in terms of a kind of experience, viz., empty experience. And perception will be regarded as succeeding insofar as it achieves fulfillments, not in terms of a correspondence with objects in the world. If we regard perceptual content as determining fulfillment conditions, rather than accuracy conditions, it becomes clear that the back sides and the occluded parts are perceptually present. Alternatively, we may say that they are represented as part of perceptual content—although we should not think of the relevant kind of perceptual content as given in terms of Fregean or Russellian propositions.

In the context of Husserlian ideas, Noë's problem of perceptual presence is therefore adequately motivated. Let us consider the issues I raised, in section 2 of my first chapter, for Noë's solution to the problem. The difficulties were chiefly due to the way in which Noë develops the idea that is meant to solve his problem, viz., by saying that *most* or even *all* perceptual presence is "virtual." If we understand this virtuality in terms of what is not actually accessed but merely accessible or available, we need not concern ourselves with Noë's claims regarding it, since the idea of possible access is geared to solving the problem of perceptual presence*, not the Husserlian problem.

However, there is a way to cash out the claim that most or all presence is virtual in Husserlian terms, as pertinent to the ideas of presence as absence or empty givenness. Namely, we can interpret Noë's claim that *all* perceptual content is virtual as capturing the idea that while we can increase fulfillment, we never attain consummate fulfillments, such that there are no further relevant expectations to be fulfilled. All content is virtual in the sense that every object and every property is experienced at least somewhat emptily.

On the other hand, if we wish to highlight the distinction between the appearance we are having now, or perhaps the appearances we are having now and have already had, on the one hand, and the appearances we have not yet had but are only expecting to have, on the other hand, we can say that *most* content is virtual. Most content is virtual in the sense that no matter how much fulfillment the perceiver attains, there is always still a great deal of emptiness there.

This takes care of all the objections I raised to Noë's solution in section 2. In particular, I would point out that we now have a good idea as to what it is that we gain by exploring the object, viz., we thereby increasingly bring it to fulfillment.

But consider a further objection. The back side is given emptily, the front side intuitively. But the front side has a constant shape and constant color, and the givenness of constant properties also involves emptiness. So, have we just basically said that the front side is and is not given emptily? But the view is not self-contradictory in this way. What we are presented with intuitively is a certain appearance. It is an appearance of an object with a certain shape and color. Inasmuch as this is the case, the appearance is part of several rule-governed series of appearances: the appearances that we will next have should be such as not to disappoint us in regard to the object's color, its shape, or how the

object can change colors and shapes. The object's front side, in the sense of the present appearance of the object, is therefore experienced completely intuitively but the object itself is not, and neither is the front side's shape or color. The perceptual object and its properties are always experienced with a certain measure of fulfillment, falling short of the ultimate fulfillment. Noë never fleshes out his ideas in such detail, but we can do it for him—if we interpret his view as amounting to a kind of sketch of Husserl's view.

4. On Qualia and the Explanatory Gap

In my first chapter, I argued that Noë does not succeed in closing the explanatory gap, because even though he eliminates qualia in a certain strong sense, viz., as the atomic building blocks of experience, the explanatory gap can be generated by accepting that there are qualia in a weaker sense, viz., as “what it is like” to be in a certain mental state. Indeed, in making these points I was merely agreeing with the arguments made before by Martin Kurthen and Mark Rowlands (Kurthen 2001, p. 991; Rowlands 2002, pp. 21-23). For my own part, I pointed out that the reasoning Noë uses to eliminate qualia makes use of the idea of accessibility or availability. Therefore, there does not seem to be a connection with what we can now regard as the Husserlian theme of presence as absence and sensorimotor expectations. Nevertheless, I believe that we can give a Husserlian interpretation of Noë's arguments concerning qualia, and it is useful to do so, since it may put us in a better position to understand Noë's argument. Otherwise, his argument may seem so obviously problematic as to raise the worry that we have not understood it or have been insufficiently charitable towards it. I will therefore make an

attempt at a kind of Husserlian reconstruction of Noë's argument for the elimination of qualia.

In my second chapter I presented my interpretation of Husserl's philosophy of perception, but I never discussed what his view of qualia might be. As it is, I believe that a certain view of qualia is implicit in Husserl's philosophy of perception. Namely, qualia should be identified with parts of the Husserlian noema, correctly understood as the object, as experienced by the perceiver. In particular, I believe that we need to distinguish two aspects of the noema, fullness and determinacy, and we might therefore opt to call the Husserlian view of qualia a dual-aspect view.

I do not identify the structure of content with any kind of propositions, Fregean or Russellian. Instead, it is a peculiar kind of structure that we can only conceive of as phenomenal, and that Husserl investigates when he claims to investigate the "noema." On one hand, there is the fullness-aspect, and on the other hand there is the determinacy-aspect. While the fullness-aspect is obviously phenomenal, matters may be less clear in the case of the determinacy-aspect. But, as it is, nothing can be given determinately, except with a certain measure of fullness. Determinacy is not furnished by something like a proposition. Rather, it is furnished by a rule-governed series of appearances, implicitly given with the appearance I am having now, and the appearances need to be had either intuitively or emptily. It is because the determinacy-aspect is inextricably bound up with the fullness modification that it, too, should be regarded as a qualitative aspect of content. We thus have a dual-aspect view of qualia. The view can be rephrased by saying that perceptual objects and their properties can be identified with qualia—if we consider the objects and the properties from the point of view of the phenomenological attitude.

Conflation of these two ideas, fullness and determinacy, is a mistake that we encounter in Husserl-interpretation. In particular, I attributed such a mistake to Kelly, insofar as Kelly argued that the determinately given parts of the object were the same as the intuitively given parts.

I believe that we can also interpret Noë's argument about qualia as involving a conflation of fullness and determinacy. Noë argues for the elimination of qualia in what he refers to as the theorist's sense: as atomic entities that we access by introspection and that are the building blocks of our experience. His argument is that there are no such qualia because experience is "fractal." No matter how closely you look, you never come to actually access such atomic entities. Instead, there is always more structure to what we experience, and our access to what we experience is pervasively just possible, rather than actual. He goes so far as to say that nothing is actually accessed, and draws from this radical claim the conclusion that there are no qualia and there is therefore no explanatory gap with regard to qualia. Nevertheless Noë admits that experiences have "qualitative character" (Noë 2004, pp. 134-135). However, Noë apparently cashes out "qualitative character" in non-phenomenal terms, since otherwise he could not claim that he has closed the explanatory gap. And there is the further point that by eliminating qualia in a certain strong sense, Noë has not eliminated qualia in a weaker sense sufficient to generate the explanatory gap, viz., qualia as what it is like to see, say, the red tomato. Since Noë's argument seems so patently flawed, there is reason to consider whether we have understood it well, especially with regard to his notion of qualia.

Noë's claim that experience is "fractal" (Noë 2004, p. 135) can be interpreted in terms of Husserlian ideas. It means that possibilities for further fulfillment and closer

determination (*Näherbestimmung*) are always implicit in perceptual experience. The perceiver has the sense that he can look really closely, then take a magnifying glass, and then a microscope—and there will always be more detail coming into view. Either it is detail that was previously given emptily, in which case we have fulfillment, or it is detail that we did not specifically expect, in which case there is closer determination.

I believe that these considerations can lead one to conclude that there are no qualia if one conflates the two kinds of qualitative aspects of experience, that I have distinguished, i.e., if one conflates intuitiveness and determinacy. In that case, perceptual experience cannot determine fulfillment conditions, and fulfillments cannot be an implicit part of the experience, because it would require precisely that something be given determinately (with some degree of determinacy) but emptily. Furthermore, if we conflate the two kinds of qualia, it also renders problematic the idea that closer determination, as an experienced possibility, is an implicit part of perceptual experience, because the most natural way to think of closer determination is as byproduct of fulfillment. E.g., when I turn the tomato around and the back side comes to fulfillment, I may notice, and in most cases do notice, some further details about which I had no expectations either way.

If we do not distinguish intuitiveness and determinacy, it is natural to think that insofar as something is given determinately, its determinacy bears the stamp of intuitive evidence: the perceiver has the sense that, in the perceptual experience he or she is having, the object (or part of the object) is given with a certain measure of determinacy, and neither more nor less determinately. This is the quale for the object (or for some part of the object). Noë's argument can then proceed by pointing out that, contradicting the

idea that we have such qualia, possibilities for closer determination are, in fact, always implicitly part of perceptual experience. Therefore, we have no qualia.

I have here given a kind of reconstruction of how one might be led believe that there is a need to eliminate qualia, based on a misunderstanding of the Husserlian picture. I have put on the term “qualia” a Husserlian construction and then speculated as to how one might think about qualia and conceivably be motivated to offer an eliminativist account. However, while somewhat illuminating, at least to me, the account I offer in this section is quite speculative and this is its limitation. I am suggesting that if Noë’s starting point in thinking about qualia had been Husserlian, then we might see him conceivably making certain kinds of mistakes, but I have no solid evidence that Noë’s starting point in regard to the issue of qualia is indeed Husserlian. Also, I do not see that any significant philosophical gains can be made by the present articulation of the notion of qualia in Husserlian terms. What it does perhaps show is that the language of qualia or qualitative character needs modification, if we are to give a Husserlian account of how the various qualitative aspects of experience function to contribute towards a representational accomplishment. However, in the end I would reaffirm that I accept Rowlands’ and Kurthen’s reasons for believing that Noë has not successfully closed the explanatory gap.

5. On Perceptual Constancies

In my first chapter I argued that Noë’s view of perceptual constancy cannot successfully deal with Siewert’s charge that the view renders perceptual content pervasively self-contradictory. After all, Noë explicitly says that the tilted round coin appears to us simultaneously as both round and elliptical. I also pointed out that if we

wish to argue that we perceive the tilted coin as round, while also accounting for our perspective of the coin, the so-called complex view does this, while avoiding the contradiction generated by Noë's view: we can say that the coin appears tilted and round. Prima facie, it is not clear why anyone should prefer Noë's view over the complex view. If the aim is to account for the common sense intuitions that we perceive constant properties but from a certain perspective, we clearly should go with the complex view.

I believe that by interpreting Noë's view as a shorthand version of Husserl's view, we can deal with both problems, viz., motivating the Husserl-Noë view and avoiding the contradiction. First, there is no contradiction involved because we can explicitly say in what sense the tilted round coin appears round to the perceiver, and in what sense it appears elliptical. The coin appears elliptical in the sense that we are now having an elliptical appearance of it. However, it appears round because the elliptical appearance, now intuitively given, is part of a rule-governed series of appearances, given with a certain measure of fulfillment. As I continue to explore the round shape, that measure of fulfillment will increase: the round shape progressively comes to fulfillment.

Why go for such a view? Husserl's philosophy of perception is concerned with how we can experience transcendent objectivity, where transcendence is understood precisely as constancy in the flux of experience, or through the changing perspectives. It is centrally concerned with one problem, which we may variously call the problem of transcendence, the problem of constitution, the problem of perceptual presence, or the problem of constancy. The motivation of the Husserl-Noë view is fundamentally different from the motivation of the complex view. The complex view appears to be motivated by the aim of accounting for common sense intuitions regarding perceptual presence.

Husserl's view is motivated by the aim of accounting, in terms of something that itself is not transcendent, for how transcendence emerges in experience. The constant properties are transcendent. The appearances are not transcendent, but they are objective in the sense of being the appearances of something transcendent. The visual and kinesthetic sensations, in their turn, are not transcendent; nor do they belong to or make up any part of what is transcendent.

6. On Sensorimotor Knowhow and the Past

In my first chapter I raised a concern about Noë's view of the past aspects of perceptual experience, more specifically about Noë's response to a point made by Andy Clark. Clark raises for Noë's view the problem that there is a sense in which the past aspects of my experience, e.g., of a melody to which I have been listening, are with me now, viz., making a difference to how I experience the melody now. The problem for Noë's view is that the past phases of the melody do not seem to be accessible by virtue of exercising sensorimotor knowhow, and the view therefore seems to lack the resources to account for them. Noë answers that this does not pose a difficulty for his view, because what stays with the person listening to the music is a kind of arc of meaning, the rule according to which the melody unfolds, similar to the rules at the core of the constant color and shape properties.

In reaction to this response, I considered the case of two music lovers, John and Mary. John has been listening to the Lohengrin Overture from the beginning, Mary enters into the room at around the middle of the overture and recognizes the music as the Lohengrin Overture. It now seems that they both experience the music as governed by the

same rule or having the same meaning. However, there must be a clear difference between their experiences, insofar as John has been hearing the first half of the piece but Mary has not. What is that difference? It cannot be that one of them experiences the overture as unfolding according to a certain rule and the other does not, as Noë's ideas would seem to suggest. Similarly, if John has been exploring a red tomato from different angles, while Mary has just now noticed the tomato and recognized it as a red tomato, what is the difference between their experiences?

The answer is, of course, that the difference is one of fulfillment. John has attained certain fulfillments with regard to the Lohengrin Overture and the tomato, while Mary has not. Once again, we need the idea of fulfillment, and we also need the idea of retention, to make sense of problems that Noë's critics have raised for his view, and to respond to the critics. Noë's answer does not succeed in addressing Clark's challenge, unless complemented with the ideas of fulfillment and retention.

7. On Discussions in the Secondary Literature

I will, lastly, take a look at certain discussions of the connections between Husserl's and Noë's views that I have found in the secondary literature, but have not had occasion to address in the discussions so far. I will point out what I take to be the problematic aspects in each of the discussions.

To begin, Ryan Hickerson, although in an indirect way, brings up Husserl's views in his discussion of Noë's enactive view. I need to say at once that Hickerson uses the label "Husserlian" quite non-committally and in quotation marks. In a footnote, he says that the view he so labels "is similar to, though not in fact, Edmund Husserl's account of

perception” (cf. Husserl, 1900-1901/1970, pp. 565-566). He further says that he makes no claims about Husserl’s actual account but merely uses his name to label a view that he puts forward as an alternative to Noë’s. Taking this into account, the following, on my part, will not be a criticism of Hickerson’s Husserl-interpretation. However, Hickerson does claim that the view is similar to Husserl’s, and it is legitimate to investigate whether it is not merely labeled “Husserlian” but actually has some measure of Husserlian substance.

Hickerson argues that the “Husserlian” view is a viable alternative to Noë’s. He also argues that sometimes, the way Noë presents his enactive view, it collapses into the “Husserlian” view,

One view is that perception is dependent, not merely on what is sensed in any given instance, but also on what would be sensed were the perceiver otherwise situated *gegenüber* (over and against) the same perceptual object(s). On this account perceptual content is not merely sensory content, but sensory content plus what the sensory content would be were the same perceptual object(s) perceived from other possible perspectives. This is to say that perceptual content depends not only on the more or less rich array of occurrent sensation, but also on the truth of a class of subjunctive conditionals specifying what sensations would be in the variety of possible perceptual orientations toward the same perceptual object(s). Henceforth I will call this view *the “Husserlian” view*, for reasons that I do not take up here [ftn. 2] (Hickerson 2007, p. 508).

He underscores that the Husserlian view merely requires that there be actual sensations and possible sensations. It does not require possible or actual movements. It is because of this that the Husserlian view is in a better position than Noë’s to deal with “the objection of the inert perceiver,” the consideration that it seems possible to perceive while resting still.

Hickerson then rephrases his idea by explaining that Noë’s view requires sensorimotor knowledge but, on the “Husserlian” view,

the mere actual and counterfactual situation is supposed to be sufficient. ... On the “Husserlian” account sketched above, knowledge of the intermodal organization of sensations and of the counterfactual dependence of perceptual content upon it is not required for perceptual content. Perceptual content merely requires the specific intermodal organization of sensations. On Noë’s enactive approach, on the other hand, we must additionally have (implicit) understanding of how one’s movement (or possible movement) would effect changes in sensation, i.e., we must additionally have a bit of know-how in order to perceive (Ibid., p. 513).

Basically, for Hickerson, the “Husserlian” account offers a simpler “solution to the problem of perceptual presence” (Ibid., p. 514). Noë needs the actual or possible movement, or the know-how, but the “Husserlian” account does the same job without any of this additional baggage.

Noë answers Hickerson by claiming that the “Husserlian” view is unable to solve the problem of perceptual presence. In his reply, he too uses the label “Husserlian” in quotation marks and takes no stand on whether the view is actually Husserl’s view or similar to it.

How does this alternative account offer an explanation of our sense of the presence of what is hidden from view? As far as I can tell, it doesn’t. The problem after all, is not to explain in what the *presence* of occluded surfaces consists. We already know that. They are present in the sense that they are there. What we seek to explain is in what our *perceptual sense* of their presence consists. In what does our sense, *now*, of the presence of something which is now out of view, consist? We know it doesn’t consist in the fact that we now *see it*, precisely because it is now out of view. The fact that we *would see* the now hidden surface, if we moved, does not itself tell us anything about in what the current sense of its presence consists. How could it? (Noë 2007, p. 533)

It should be clear that the “Husserlian” view is importantly dissimilar to the real Husserlian view. In fact, the real Husserlian view should be contrasted with the “Husserlian” view precisely in the way Noë contrasts his view with the “Husserlian” view. The real Husserlian view does not amount to the requirement that certain

counterfactuals be true. Instead, it accounts for objects as transcendent in experience, by appeal to the noetic aspects of experience, including visuo-kinesthetic expectations, kinesthetic sensations, and so on, as I have discussed in my second chapter.

I would add that Husserl's view does not succumb to the problem of the inert perceiver, as he is not, as far as I can tell, committed to the view that perception always, at each moment, involves actual or possible movements. I do believe that his account of the noesis of the constitution of the spatial phantom requires experienced movements, but this does not mean that our actual perceptual experiences do as well. Remember, the account of phantom-constitution is a mere abstraction from the richly conceptualized and varied experiences people actually have.

Next, in his paper, titled "Disappearing Appearances: On the Enactive Approach to Spatial Perceptual Content," Rene Jagnow compares Noë's view with Husserl's, and discusses *Thing and Space*. He is centrally concerned with challenging Noë's views of shape constancy. He attributes to Noë the view that the sensorimotor expectations "determine" the object's shape, and, disagreeing with this, argues that the perceptual object's seen profile radically "underdetermines" its shape, and that therefore shape perception requires internal representations. I will not articulate Jagnow's positive view in detail. Rather, it is interesting that Jagnow sketches the Husserlian view and considers whether Noë's view could be construed as a version of it,

Some phenomenologically oriented authors are well aware of the fact that the specific shape of a three-dimensional object is underdetermined by its actually seen profile. Husserl, for example, concluded from this that perceptual experience is at its very core intentionally complex. According to him, a given perspectival profile was associated with an as of yet unfulfilled expectation about the object's spatial type (Husserl 1973, 1997, 1982). As the perceptual exploration unfolds, bringing new profiles into view, these unfulfilled typical

expectations are either fulfilled or disappointed. One may think therefore that it is possible to formulate Noë's thesis in terms of a nonintellectualized version of Husserl's view. We could say that a perceiver's practical knowledge of sensorimotor contingencies concerns typical, rather than concrete, perspectival modifications. But this suggestion would conflict with the phenomenal facts mentioned in the previous paragraphs. According to this suggestion, the element of surprise mentioned above would imply that the perceiver's practical expectations regarding the object's spatial type had been disappointed, and this, in turn, would imply that the perceiver had originally misperceived the object's shape. Yet in the cases described, the element of surprise simply accompanies the perceiver's discovery of certain specifics concerning the object's actual shape (Jagnow 2008, p. 54).

In the quoted passage, Jagnow considers the possibility of interpreting Noë's view as a version of Husserl's view, and adds that both Husserl's view and Noë's view, interpreted in this way, would fail to deal with a problem that he has described before, viz., that subjects can be surprised not because they realize they have had false expectations about aspects of the object, but simply because they have come across certain specifics that they were not expecting.

It seems that Jagnow is suggesting that both Husserl's view and Noë's view are problematic in the respect that they do not allow for closer determination of the object. According to him, Noë's sensorimotor expectations completely "determine" the object and Husserl's view allows for the object to be "underdetermined" only in the sense that we have unfulfilled expectations with regard to it. However, Husserl's view allows for both fulfillments and closer determination regarding objects, and so will Noë's, if we complement it with an explicit distinction between fullness and determinacy. If we do this, we will be able to regard Noë's talk of experience being "fractal" (Noë 2004, p. 135) in terms of potential closer determination and fulfillment.

Jagnow considers Noë's view as a "de-intellectualized" version of Husserl's view, but it is not clear to me what exactly this means. If the suggestion is that Husserl's account of perception pervasively involves acts of judgment, while Noë's relies on sensorimotor knowhow, the contrast is based on a misconception regarding Husserl's view. I have amply explained in my second chapter the reasons why Husserl's account of constitution must involve pre-predicative passive syntheses. Since the contrast between the two accounts cannot be made in this way, I do not know what Jagnow means when he says Noë's view could be regarded as a "de-intellectualized" version of Husserl's view. As far as I am concerned, the two views are fundamentally similar.

Also Shannon Vallor, in her paper, titled "An Enactive-Phenomenological Approach to Veridical Perception," briefly remarks on Husserl's views in relation to Noë's. Her aim is to develop a sensorimotor view of veridical perception and she draws upon Noë to do that. Vallor points out that Husserl, too, emphasizes the anticipatory structure of experience,

Husserl continually stressed the anticipatory structure of experience, for he recognized that in perception, objects themselves are given as temporally extended. They are always present as a unity of past and future determinations. These determinations change with time and motion—new properties continue to appear, while others retreat out of view. ... Husserl's account closely parallels the proposed definition of veridical perception, as he identifies perceptual acquaintance with 'knowing in advance how [a thing] is going to behave causally' (Husserl, 1968, p. 102). Finally, Husserl's account supports Noë's 'presence as access' view of perceptual presence, for Husserl insists that my perceptual experience of an object is never exhausted or even chiefly constituted by the determinations concretely given so far. It also includes those determinations of the object that I anticipate being given, contingent upon certain of my bodily movements. [ftn. 13] (Vallor 2006, pp. 57-58)

As with Jagnow's article, I will only concern myself with the connection Vallor makes between Noë's and Husserl's views. In this case it is a very brief point, and made

at the very end of Vallor's paper. It is an afterthought that does not play a role in the argument of the paper.

On Vallor's view, we have veridical perception when the subject has mastered a network of sensorimotor dependencies, and the patterns of dependency that the experience communicates to him are the ones that actually obtain (Ibid., p. 53). The Husserl-quotation that he has from *Phänomenologische Psychologie* is pertinent to this idea. As for the connection that Vallor makes between Husserl's and Noë's views, she unfortunately does not expand upon the ways in which Husserl's view could "support" Noë's ideas. As I have argued in my dissertation, Noë's account does, indeed, require support by complementation with further Husserlian ideas, but Vallor, as we see, makes only a very brief point about this. We have also seen that the idea of "presence as access" needs to be disambiguated, in order to distinguish between the Husserlian ideas and the other ideas in Noë's view.

Lastly, there is Michael Madary's article, titled "Husserl on Perceptual Constancy." In my assessment, Madary makes many good points in it about Husserl's view, and seems to be on the verge of making others. However, in the end his account is crucially flawed, since he does not offer an adequate discussion of the notions centered around the idea that content determines fulfillment conditions. His discussion of the relations between Husserl's and Noë's views centers on a problem Susanna Schellenberg has raised for Noë's enactive view, viz., the unification problem, "which is the problem of how different viewpoints are 'integrated into the perception of an object'" (Madary 2010, p. 6). Schellenberg argues that this problem arises for any account of perceptual constancy that requires more than one view of the object in order to perceive shape

constancy. She claims that Noë's view does indeed depend on more than one views, actual or possible, for perception of constant shape (Ibid., p. 6).

For a paraphrase of the problem, it is that unless we see the object as having a certain constant shape on the first encounter, there is, in principle, no way to distinguish between the case of having come across the same shape on a subsequent second encounter, and having come upon a different shape. Schellenberg's response to the problem is to adopt a view that depends only upon one encounter, thus not letting the problem arise. As for Madary's response, he thinks we should try to *solve* the problem,

Schellenberg and Briscoe's silence on the *unification problem* is troublesome because, as Husserl puts it, 'it may be that a single glance is not good enough' (LU VI §47). ...

Neither Schellenberg's single look account nor the two abilities discussed by Briscoe can explain a range of cases of perceptual constancy. They cannot explain cases where we need to integrate different views on an object. These cases pose a problem for anyone who subscribes to a kind of snapshot conception of perception, where each appearance is independent of other appearances. It is not clear how two independent appearances could be unified in synthesis. Husserl, on the other hand, maintained that appearances always already occur within a network of anticipated future appearances. Synthesis is possible because further appearances can match (fulfil) what is anticipated from present appearances (Ibid., pp. 7-8).

Madary concludes that Husserl's view gives us a framework for dealing with this problem, whereas contemporary views largely avoid the problem. In addition to appreciating the significance of the role played by fulfillments, he is also right about another important point that is missed by others, viz., he attributes to Husserl the correct notion of transcendence and uses it to argue that perspectival appearances are for Husserl not properties—as opposed to, say, for Noë, who calls them P-properties. The putative P-properties are for Husserl not properties because they lack transcendence: I cannot keep track of them in the flux of experience (Ibid., p. 10). I agree.

From this, Madary goes on to critically discuss Kelly's interpretation of Husserl, and duly argues that there are several reasons for rejecting Kelly's reading of Husserl (Ibid., pp. 12-15). I will not discuss them all but will focus on one theme—and this should lead us to the point where we can see Madary's mistake. Remember that Kelly claimed there is no conception of normativity or optimality of perception in Husserl.

Madary duly notes that Kelly's view is clearly false of Husserl, since in § 36 of *Thing and Space* Husserl develops a view, which involves the ideas of better and worse givenness, and optimality relative to perceivers' interests. I agree with Madary on that point, but I wish to take issue with Madary's comparison of Husserl's view on the one hand, and Merleau-Ponty's view, as interpreted by Kelly, on the other. Madary's perspective is the following,

So does Husserl's position come out the same as the position Kelly describes? Not quite. Kelly's Merleau-Ponty fits with Husserl's later emphasis on optimal perceiving and affective force, but not his earlier framework, which includes the abstract structure of intention and fulfilment. Recent Husserl scholarship has focused on this relationship between Husserl's earlier framework of static abstraction (static phenomenology), and his later emphasis on the temporally extended process of perception for particular situated perceivers (genetic phenomenology). Here is not the place to enter into a discussion of the relationship between static and genetic methods in Husserl (Steinbock 1995; Welton 2000). What is important in this context, though, is the fact that Husserl's later writings on perception included both the static abstract structure of intention and fulfilment as well as the genetic description of the particular perceiver with goals, where views on objects can be more or less optimal (Hua XI §§33 and 34, also see the static framework still in use in the Cartesian Meditations, where genetic phenomenology is an explicit theme (Hua I §§17–19)). [ftn. 33]

Of course, a different question is whether it does any good to retain both the intention/fulfilment structure as well as the appeal to normativity (Madary 2010, p. 15).

It is indeed Madary's view that we should embrace *both* the earlier *and* the later Husserlian framework, yielding a richer set of resources than just the later Husserlian

view, which Madary appears to regard as basically the same as Merleau-Ponty's view, as interpreted by Kelly. In particular, Madary argues that the normative account alone cannot satisfactorily account for the difference between our experience of the front sides and the back sides of objects, while the fulfillment-based framework can. Also, the normative account has trouble explaining perceptual constancy in circumstances where "we are genuinely indifferent about our view of particular objects. It seems a strong claim that we always perceive objects in terms of optimal viewing conditions" (Ibid., p. 16).

To address these concerns, we need to remind ourselves of our core perspective: Husserlian phenomenology is an investigation into stratifications of fulfillment conditions and how they are set. I do not believe that there are two Husserlian frameworks as Madary has suggested. It is possible to conceive of genetic phenomenology as an extension of the fulfillment-based framework. Setting aside the details—as does Madary—I understand the genetic account as inquiry into the necessary aspects of how certain noetic-noematic complexes arise.²² How is it that subjects come to have certain anticipatory complexes and constitute objects in terms of them? However, as I understand it, Husserl's views of the normativity of perceptual experience belong at the very core of his framework; I do not see that the possibility of first developing them depends on the genetic extension of the framework.

As I understand it, the goal of perceptual experience, for Husserl, is self-giveness, or fullness, which Husserl distinguishes from the satisfaction pertaining to a specific interest as such (Husserl 1997, p. 107 (129)). Husserl also explains, "The unity of a possible perceptual synthesis in general, into which the relevant appearance is supposed

²² For a more detailed discussion of genetic phenomenology, see Bernet, Kern, and Marbach 1993, Chapter 7.

to be ordered, prescribes a rule and law to the appearances that are possible in such a unity” (Ibid., p. 108 (130)). The shortcoming of Madary’s interpretation consists in not bringing together the ideas of optimality and consummation of fulfillment, leaving Madary with the two disparate Husserlian frameworks. The first problem that Madary raises, viz., concerning the givenness of the front side and the back side, does not really pose a problem for the normative Husserlian framework, because it permits appeal to the distinction between fullness and emptiness. The second problem, viz., the perceivers’ possible lack of interest, should, I believe, be addressed by appeal to a special kind of interest. Namely, we have seen that the Husserlian constitutive analyses should not always be regarded as depictions of realistic perceptual experiences. Similarly, I would propose that the relevant interest, viz., in self-givenness as such, or in knowledge as such, should be viewed as a pre-condition of our realistic theoretical and practical interests and the perceptual experiences shaped by them.

To sum up, in the present section I have briefly commented on the views of Hickerson, Jagnow, Vallor and Madary, concerning the parallels between Husserl’s and Noë’s philosophy of perception. As far as I know, these are the only discussions in the literature to explore these parallels. But, as I have argued, these discussions are not very detailed and that they contain problematic aspects. I therefore hope that my dissertation fills a certain gap in the literature.

8. Concluding Remarks

In the present chapter, I have argued that the view that Noë develops as solution to the problem of perceptual presence is rightly interpreted as a kind of shorthand version

of Husserl's view of perception. The problem of perceptual presence can be adequately motivated and solved if we complement the Husserlian strand in Noë's view with other Husserlian ideas, especially the idea of fulfillment.

In section 2 I argued that, if we disambiguate Noë's view, we see that the core of one of the two strands consists in the set of ideas connecting sensorimotor and environmental expectations with an account of perceptual constancy in terms of rule-governed series of appearances. This is also the core of Husserl's view. In section 3, I discussed the problem of perceptual presence as the central problem of Husserl's philosophy of perception. I argued that if we contextualize the problem in Husserl's phenomenology, we can adequately motivate and solve it. In section 4, I suggested that if we interpret Noë's ideas regarding qualia in Husserlian terms, we gain a better understanding as to why Noë might undertake to eliminate qualia the way he attempts to do it, and also why an argument that I tentatively attribute to Noë is flawed, viz., due to conflating the Husserlian ideas of fullness and determinacy. In section 5, I argued that by interpreting Noë's view as kind of sketch of Husserl's view, we can understand it as a principled alternative to the complex view. We can also see why the view does not render perceptual contents self-contradictory. In section 6 I highlighted the importance of the ideas of retention and fulfillment for understanding the past aspects of perceptual experience, in terms of their role in the unfolding perceptual experience. In section 7, I discussed some connections that have been explored between Husserl's and Noë's views in the secondary literature, pointing out some problems in these discussions.

Conclusion

In my first chapter, I argued that Noë does not succeed in solving or even adequately motivating his “the problem of perceptual presence.” I argued that the problem is ambiguous and Noë’s approach to it runs into various difficulties.

In my second chapter, I went on to argue that Husserl investigates the content of perceptual experience as determining fulfillment conditions, rather than accuracy conditions. Indeed, I argued that Husserlian phenomenology can be interpreted as investigation into fulfillment conditions (noema) and the necessary aspects of how they are set (noesis). On this basis, I developed criticisms of several Husserl-interpreters’ views—had their views been free from difficulties, my arguments concerning the parallels between Husserl’s and Noë’s views could not have held up well.

In my third chapter, I argued that the view Noë develops as his solution to the problem of perceptual presence basically gives us aspects of the Husserlian approach. The problem of perceptual presence can be adequately motivated and solved if we complement the Husserlian strand in Noë’s view with other Husserlian ideas, especially the idea of fulfillment.

I see the broader significance of my dissertation in highlighting the relationship between two philosophical perspectives. On the one hand, we have the Husserlian transcendental philosophy, concerned with analyzing our relation to the world and aiming to understand the world in terms of human situations and possibilities. On the other hand, we have Noë’s enactive view, which I would interpret as a version of post-Quinean metaphysics, drawing upon various different resources, such as first-person intuitions, philosophical theories, and scientific results, to support claims of a metaphysical nature—

in this case, concerning perception and perceptual experience. We have seen the latter kind of philosophy seeking to make progress by incorporating aspects of traditional transcendental philosophy. It did not work, because the two kinds of philosophy are too different. It seems to me that philosophers with an interest in the first-person perspective and the richness of experience would do well to pursue their interests namely in the framework of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology.

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