FORM OF APPREHENSION AND THE CONTENT–APPREHENSION MODEL IN HUSSERL’S LOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

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ABSTRACT. An act’s form of apprehension (Auffassungsform) determines whether it is a perception, an imagination, or a signitive act. It must be distinguished from the act’s quality, which determines whether the act is, for instance, assertoric, merely entertaining, wishing, or doubting. The notion of form of apprehension is explained by recourse to the so-called content–apprehension model (Inhalt-Auffassung Schema); it is characteristic of the Logical Investigations that in it all objectifying acts are analyzed in terms of that model. The distinction between intuitive and signitive acts is made, and the notion of saturation (Fülle) is described, by recourse to the notion of form of apprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

In § 27 of the Sixth Logical Investigation Husserl sums up the various modes of intentional relation of an act to its object. The most important of these is given by what Husserl calls the act matter. For many purposes, and certainly for the purposes of this paper, one can think of Husserl’s notion of act matter as a generalization of Frege’s notion of sense (cf. Føllesdal, 1969). It is a generalization in the sense of having wider applicability, being applicable not only to linguistic acts—those acts we carry out when reading, writing, or conversing—but to all acts, to perceptions, for instance; all acts involve a certain conceptual element by virtue of which the object is presented as having such and such properties, roughly parallel to how a definite description presents its signification as having such and such properties. Another mode of intentional relation is given by what Husserl calls the act quality. This is the aspect of the act determining whether it is assertoric, merely entertaining, a wish, a doubt, an appreciation, etc. Again we can draw on Frege for illustration by what may be more familiar, namely on his notion of force. In Frege’s ideography assertoric force is signified by the vertical stroke, and we may think of that sign as replaced by other signs signifying other kinds of force: merely entertaining, doubting, wishing, etc. (cf. Stenius, 1960, p. 163). Again Husserl’s notion is a generalization of Frege’s in the sense of having wider applicability: all acts, and not only linguistic ones, are said to have a quality; when we speak of

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1 All page references to Husserl’s work are to the respective Husserliana (Hua) volumes. References to the Logical Investigations (Husserl, 1901) are of the form ‘LU’ + investigation number + section number, and to the Ideas (Husserl, 1913) of the form ‘Ideen’ + section number. Translations are my own.

2 Stepanians (1998) is an extensive study of Frege’s notion of force and Husserl’s notion of quality in the Logical Investigations (he does not treat of the more developed theory of act quality, or “thetic character,” in the Ideas).
assertoric quality in the following that must therefore be understood in this broad sense, applicable to perceptions as well as to linguistic assertions.

The most important outcome of the rather unwieldy argument that stretches over chapters 3–5 in the Fifth Investigation is the clarification of the notion of an objectifying act, as well as a view on the grounding structure that holds between acts of various act qualities.3 An objectifying act is an act whose quality is either assertoric or (exclusive ‘or’) merely entertaining (LU V § 38). The grounding structure among acts is summed up by the formula that an act is either itself objectifying or else grounded in an objectifying act. Examples of acts with assertoric quality are judgements and typical cases of perception (an example of a non-assertoric perception will be given shortly). Acts of make-believe are typically merely entertaining. A wish, for instance that Christmas this year be white, is non-objectifying and therefore, according to Husserl’s account, grounded in an objectifying act, presumably in an act merely entertaining Christmas this year to be white. The appreciation of this year’s Christmas’s being white is also grounded, but rather in an act asserting Christmas this year to be white, some complication, say, of the perception of snow outside and the knowledge that today is Christmas.

Together the matter and the quality of an act make up what Husserl calls the act’s intentional essence (LU V § 21). Husserl is anxious to point out, however, that the phenomenological description of an act is not exhausted by giving its intentional essence (ibid.). Importantly, it is not determined by the intentional essence whether the act is a perception, an imagination, or a representation through signs. In the Logical Investigations Husserl calls that aspect of the act determining this its form of apprehension (Auffassungsform). The form of apprehension supplies a third mode of intentional relation. In the following I aim to shed some light on this often overlooked aspect of an act’s intentional content. It is intrinsically involved with the so-called content–apprehension model (Inhalt–Auffassung Schema), so I will also examine how Husserl understood that model in the Investigations. To be sure, this model of analysis of acts has often been touched upon in the secondary literature, but the more detailed discussions of it have typically focussed on its role in Husserl’s theory of perception (and not in the theory of acts more generally),4 or else on its revision during the years leading up to the Ideas.5 I have not found any critical treatment detailing its workings and pervasive role in the Investigations.6 I hope to offer at least the beginnings of such a treatment, though more will have to be said, especially about the role of act matter as the sense of apprehension (Auffassungssinn); the focus here will be on the interconnection between the content–apprehension model and the notion of form of apprehension. On the way I will point out how various difficulties arising from the framework of the Investigations are solved by the revised framework of the Ideas.

3Stepanians (1998, ch. 9) and Mayer and Erhard (2008) are helpful guides to these chapters.
4For instance, Mulligan (1995) and Hopp (2008); what the classical studies of Sokolowski (1964, esp. ch. 2) and De Boer (1966, esp. pp. 161–183) have to say about the apprehension model in the Investigations centers around perception.
5For instance, the Einleitung des Herausgebers in Hua X pp. xxx–xliii and Hua XXIII pp. lx–lxiii.
6Mention should be made of Lohmar (1993), but that is more systematical than exegetical, and pertains rather to the later Husserl.
2. ACT QUALITY AND FORM OF APPREHENSION

An act’s form of apprehension must be kept apart from its quality. The act quality, remember, determines whether the object is asserted, merely entertained, wished, doubted, etc.; the form of apprehension, on the other hand, determines whether it is meant expression-wise, perception-wise, picture-wise, remembrance-wise etc. As I will presently argue Husserl thought of these as different dimensions of variation, and to my mind it is also clear independently of any Husserlian doctrine that they should be kept apart. Sometimes in the secondary literature, however, one finds that these two modes of intentional relation are confused. Thus the *Historical Dictionary of Husserl’s Philosophy* defines act quality as

> that moment in the act that determines the act as a particular kind of act, for example, perceiving, remembering, judging, wishing, willing, and so forth. (Drummond, 2008, p. 34)

It is correct that Husserl thought of the generic classification of an act as given by its quality; but it is not correct that perception and remembrance are kinds of act in this sense. This is clear, for instance, from LU VI § 27 where quality and form of apprehension are listed as “different modes of an act’s relation to its object.” It is also clear from LU V § 27 (pp. 457–458) where the difference between a perception and an imagination is said to be a difference “that concerns neither matter nor quality.” Further one could point to the the discussion of “noetic–noematic structures” in Ideen §§ 99–117: the title of Ideen § 102 is “Übergang zu neuen Dimensionen der Charakterisierung,” which section forms the transition from the discussion in §§ 99–101 of what in the *Investigations* was called form of apprehension to the discussion in §§ 103–117 of what was there called quality.

One sees that act quality and form of apprehension indeed should be kept apart by noticing that the two are always combined with each other, and that the same quality may combine with different forms of apprehension, and the same form of apprehension with different qualities. Let us consider some examples. Both perception and remembrance may combine with assertoric quality; indeed a perception will in the typical case be of assertoric quality. There are, however, cases of non-assertoric perception, for instance illusions which are recognized as such (and which therefore are not, properly speaking, illusions). Thus I see a bent stick, but I know it to be an illusion since the stick is halfway under water. This act is therefore non-assertoric, since it (or one of its categorial transformations) does not count for

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7 For other examples see Mulligan (1995, pp. 170–171) and Sokolowski (1964, p. 47). What Searle (1983, p. 4) calls the mode of an intentional state encompasses both quality and form of apprehension, since he classes belief as well as imagination as such modes.

8 LU V § 37 (p. 497): “Wir müssen bedenken, […] daß die Unterscheidung von „Grundklassen“ der Akte sich, wie ohne weiteres klar ist, nur auf die Aktualitäten bezieht.” The term “Grundklasse” stems from Brentano (1874), who distinguished three such basic sorts of act.

Ideen § 117 (p. 269): “Das ist ja auch die Quelle aller Parallelisierungen der verschiedenen Bewußtseinsarten und aller Klassifikationen derselben: man klassifizierte eigentlich die Setzungsarten.”

9 In the first edition of the *Investigations* Husserl seems to have been undecided whether perception can occur with anything other than assertoric quality—cf. LU V § 40, pp. 511–512. In the second edition, however, he seems to admit that “sinnliche Scheine” are perceptions with neutral quality (loc. cit.). In the 1904 lectures on perception he thinks of “Täuschungen” as perceptions with neutral quality (cf. Hua XXXVIII p. 15): “Von dem Seinscharakter, der Qualität, sehen wir aber wie jetzt immer ab. Ob uns der Gegenstand als wirklich seien erscheint oder als Täuschung u.dgl., das sei gleichgültig. Wir halten uns nur an die Wahrnehmungsvorstellungen.”
me as a justification of the judgement that the stick is bent. In other words, on
the basis of my perception of the bent stick I do not take myself to be in a position
where I can assert that the stick is bent. I do take myself do be in a position
where I can assert that I see a bent stick, but that assertion is not made on the
basis of the original perception of the bent stick, but rather on the basis of my
inner perception of my seeing the bent stick, which is an assertoric act. It could be
objected that my experience of the bent stick is not a perception at all, but rather
“as-if perception.” In the Ideas Husserl gives an account of imagination according
to which it is modified perception, and therefore, in a sense, as-if perception (cf.
the end of section 3.1 below). Hence it could be suggested that my intentional
relation to the bent stick is one of imagination. That is, however, not what a faith-
ful description of the experience tells us. The bent stick is there, right in front of
me, and this presence (as will be discussed in more detail later) is precisely what
differentiates perception from imagination. In the Investigations as well as in Ideas
Husserl did not admit any kinds of acts halfway between perception and imagina-
tion as one might want as-if perception to be if it not be imagination; hence on
Husserl’s analysis my relation to the bent stick must be one of perception. Indeed,
this view of the matter seems to me the right one given the first-person perspective
characteristic of phenomenology. In that perspective, if an experience gives itself
as a perception, then that is what it is. In particular, the experience I have of the
bent stick gives itself as a perception, hence it is a perception. To insist on this is
not to deny that there is a connection between perception on the one hand, and the
notions of truth and reality on the other (cf. section 5.2 below), but rather to assert
that these notions may initially be bracketed in the phenomenological description
of perception; indeed, in the following pages they enter only cursorily.

The quality of a remembrance may sometimes be that of doubt, as when we
say that we “don’t remember exactly.” It can sometimes be neutral (the quality of
merely entertaining), as when remembering a bent stick halfway under water. It can
certainly also be assertoric, for our past is not shrouded in a veil of doubt, there are
events we remember as indeed having taken place (whether we are right in so taking
them is, again, another question). Even though remembrance and perception can
thus both occur with assertoric quality, they are nevertheless different kinds of act
(in one sense of kind). Different from these again is the act of picture-seeing, in
which I am related for instance to the Eiffel Tower through a photograph of it. It
is clear that picture-seeing may combine with both assertoric and neutral quality,
namely depending on whether or not we take the portrayed thing as existing.
Besides these various sorts of intuitive acts there are acts in which I am intentionally
related for instance to the Eiffel Tower by reading or otherwise grasping its name.
Likewise in reading or otherwise grasping a sentence about the Eiffel Tower I will,
on Husserl’s theory (e.g. LU I § 12), be related to a state of affairs involving it.
That the form of apprehension characteristic of this kind of act—linguistic acts, or
representations through signs—can combine with different qualities is reflected by
grammar: Christmas is white, is Christmas white, would that Christmas be white.

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10Ideen § 141 sketches how a remembrance can (at least ideally) be confirmed—and thereby
how the rightness may be established of taking the remembered event as having taken place—
through the continuous unfolding of the event’s “horizon” up to the present.

11Cf. LU V § 40 (p. 511): “der Erscheinungsgesicht eines Gem¨ aldes mit seinen gemalten Figuren
u. dgl. bleibt derselbe, ob wir diese als Vorstellungen wirklicher Objekte nehmen oder sie rein
¨ asthetisch, ohne Setzung auf uns wirken lassen.”
From all of this one sees that forms of apprehension and act qualities combine with each other quite freely, and thus that the two notions should be kept apart.

3. THE CONTENT–APPRHEHENSION MODEL

3.1. Perception. The notion of form of apprehension is intrinsically tied to the so-called content–apprehension model, which is Husserl’s account in the Investigations of how acts “come to be.” This model plays quite an important role in the Fifth and the Sixth Investigations, and it is unfortunate that it is never properly introduced in the Investigations, although it is alluded to at various places throughout the work. The first place it shows up, in LU I § 23, is also one of the more quotable passages outlining the idea:

The perceptive representation comes to be in this way, that the experienced complexion of sensations is animated by a certain act character, a certain apprehension, a meaning; and when it is thus animated the perceived object appears, while the complexion itself appears no more than does the act in which the perceived object as such is consituted.

Thus in a perception we experience a certain complexion of sensations; these sensations are, however, not the object of the perception, but only the input, as it were, of a certain apprehension, the output of which is the intentional object as perceived.

One motivation for assuming such a two-layered model of perception which has been emphasized for instance by Føllesdal (1988) is the observation that perception is underdetermined by the sensations one is experiencing while perceiving. This seems to be a lesson to draw from consideration of the duck-rabbit, the Necker cube, and other like examples; they seem to show that the same manifold of sensations can underlie different perceptions. Equally important, however, is the dual phenomenon: that different manifolds of sensations can underlie perceptions of the same thing equipped with the same properties. Think how crowded the world would be if a difference in sensations entailed perception of different objects! The objects surrounding us exhibit a considerable degree of constancy, while the sensations we experience are forever in flux; hence what we perceive cannot be explained by exclusive appeal to this flux of sensations, but something more is required for the constitution of objects of perception, and that surplus lies with apprehension; thus again:

12See especially LU I § 23; LU II §§ 1, 10; LU V §§ 2, 14, 15b, 45 Anmerkung; LU VI §§ 6, 14, 25–27, 54; LU Appendix §§ 4–6. See also Ideen §§41, 85, 97–98, 135.

13LU I § 23 (p. 80): “Die Wahrnehmungsvorstellung kommt dadurch zustande, daß die erlebte Empfindungskomplexion von einem gewissen Aktcharakter, einem gewissen Auffassen, Meinen beseelt ist; und indem sie es ist, erscheint der Wahrgeommene Gegenstand, während sie selbst so wenig erscheint wie der Akt, in dem sich der wahrgeommene Gegenstand als solcher konstituiert.”

14Sokolowski (1964, p. 57, fn. 1) refers to similar accounts of perception in Eisler’s Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe (1899) and at p. 63 in Natorp’s Einleitung in die Psychologie nach kritischer Methode (1888), a book we know Husserl studied carefully, as he criticizes it in LU V §§ 8, 14.
Apperception is for us the surplus which is to be found in the experience itself, in its descriptive content apart from the mere presence of sensation; it is the act character which, as it were, animates the sensation and which in accordance with its essence brings it about that we see this tree, hear that bell, smell the scent of flowers, etc.\footnote{Hyle of the latter kind is discussed already at LU V § 15, and play an important role in Husserl’s theory of non-objectifying acts (cf. Melle, 1990).}

It is characteristic of Husserl’s treatment of acts in the Investigations that all objectifying acts are seen to arise according to the content–apprehension model. This contrasts for instance with the analysis of acts in the Ideas, a brief discussion of which may be inserted at this point. By the time of the Ideas Husserl has abandoned the universal pretensions of the content–apprehension model, but he retains it in the analysis of perception, namely in its analysis into hyle and noesis. Hyle is “the phenomenological residuum [i.e., what is left after the phenomenological reduction] of what is mediated by the senses in normal outer perception” as well as sensuous data associated with pleasure and pain\footnote{Cf. LU V § 14 (p. 399): “Apperzeption ist uns der Überschuss, der im Erlebnis selbst, in seinem deskriptiven Inhalt gegenüber dem rohen Dasein der Empfindung besteht; es ist der Aktcharakter, der die Empfindung gleichsam beseelt und es seinem Wesen nach macht, daß wir diesen Baum sehen, jenes Klängeln hören, den Blütenduft riechen usw.”} through a noesis hyle is infused with sense and that is how a perception comes to be (Ideen § 85). In the Ideas imagination, remembrance, picture-seeing, and representation through signs are, however, not analyzed simply into hyle and noesis—rather, they are seen as modifications of perception (Ideen § 99). Modification is then not to be understood as a factual–psychological process: in accordance with the first-person perspective typical of phenomenology, to say that an experience is the modification of another is rather to say something about the character of the experience itself\footnote{This point is emphasized in the reworking of the Sixth Investigation; cf. Hua XX/1 p. 125, esp. fn. 1.}. Thus, according to the analysis of the Ideas, in imagination it is as if I am perceiving the imagined scene, as if my eyes were relocated to a point of view of the scene\footnote{Recently this phenomenon seems to have been rediscovered by Martin (2002, p. 404): “to imagine sensorily a \( \varphi \) is to imagine experiencing a \( \varphi \).”}. In this way, as an “immanent” characteristic, imagination is modified perception, which itself is an original mode of intentional relation, and hence no modification (Ideen §§ 136–137). In the Investigations, as we shall see, the difference between imagination and perception is accounted for rather by reference to the content–apprehension model, and especially to the notion of form of apprehension.

3.2. Apprehended content. Arguing as we did above that something over and above sensation is required for perception is not to argue that sensations play no role in determining perception—there are only so many ways in which a perception can apprehend a given manifold of sensations. Thus Føllesdal (1976, p. 100) suggests that we think of sensations (or hyle) as boundary conditions (as in the theory of differential equations) on the apprehension; the role of sensations in perception

\footnote{Apperception’ is sometimes, as here, used as a synonym for ‘apprehension’ (although Husserl is critical of this use of ‘apperception’—cf. LU VI § 26 p. 622). In the first edition of the Investigations frequent use is moreover made of the term Deutung (interpretation), which in the second edition for the most part is replaced by Auffassung.}
is to restrict the class of admissible apprehensions. Føllesdal’s suggestion is an alternative to Husserl’s terminology in the *Investigations*. Husserl there speaks of the sensations underlying a perception as being equal to, and indeed as of the same kind as, aspects of the object perceived:

*Only that content can serve as the intuitive representative of an object which is equal or similar to it. [...] As what we apprehend a content is not completely up to us, since the content to be apprehended sets limits by a certain sphere of similarity and equality,* that is, by its specific constitution.\(^{20}\)

This was a view Husserl would later criticize; thus in his reworking of the Sixth Investigation, which has been published only relatively recently, he says: “this manner of speaking is incorrect, one finds here no real similarity and therefore no possible equality, indeed that is excluded by the nature of the matter.”\(^{21}\) Yet he continues to assume a certain correspondence between aspects of the sensations and aspects of the perceived object, as is reflected by the term *Abschattung*, in English ‘adumbration’,\(^{22}\) which he continues to use (cf. *Ideen* §§ 41, 97). The relation of adumbration should then not be understood as one of similarity, as the name might suggest, but rather simply as the correspondence that holds between apprehended sensations, which make up an actual part of consciousness, and aspects of the object perceived, which in general is no actual part of consciousness. To the particular shades of white that I see in the dice in front of me, shades of white that a faithful description of the object of my perception would report, there corresponds as an actual part of my consciousness certain sensations the apprehension of which establishes my perception of the white of the dice. Instead of speaking of similarity here perhaps one could speak of homeomorphism, since two homeomorphic figures need not be very similar, and need indeed not even be figures of the same kind (since it is only structural features that matters for homeomorphism). All of this, I should add, Husserl must have thought was evident by phenomenological reflection; in such reflection we can see that there are certain actual elements of consciousness which correspond for instance to colours in the perceived object—think of the variation in shades of colour which are nevertheless perceived as one and the same colour.

Returning to the different modes of intentional relation listed in LU VI § 27: the fourth and final of these—thus besides quality, matter, and form of apprehension—is determined by the apprehended contents, for instance, the sensations underlying a perception. Given that all acts have act matter, or sense, it is natural to ask whether for instance two perceptions of the same object from different perspectives

\(^{20}\)Cf. LU VI § 26 (p. 623): “Als intuitiver Repräsentant eines Gegenstandes kann nur ein Inhalt dienen, der ihm ähnlich oder gleich ist. Phänomenologisch ausgedrückt: als was wir einen Inhalt auffassen [...] das steht uns nicht ganz frei [...] weil uns der aufzufassende Inhalt durch eine gewisse Sphäre der Ähnlichkeit und Gleichheit, also durch seinen spezifischen Gehalt, Grenzen setzt.” Here the intuitive “Repräsentant” is the manifold of sensations viewed as underlying an intuitive act. See furthermore LU VI § 37 (p. 647) and especially the 1904 lecture on perception, Hua XXXVIII p. 12 ff. where Husserl also speaks of the similarity in question as being generic.


\(^{22}\)Cf. the Grimm lemma on *abschattung*, which gives *adumbratio* as the Latin equivalent.
are acts of different matter. The answer is that they may be, as when seeing new sides of the object makes us see it as having new properties, but they need not be. This white dice is an object I know quite well, so when I turn it around I will not come to see it as having any new properties (for instance, one of its pips being faded). So perceptions of various sides of the dice are perceptions having the same matter; we may assume that they all have the same quality, and of course they are all perceptions, that is, they all have the same form of apprehension; yet their phenomenological descriptions do not coincide, since each perception sees different sides of the dice, in the sense that different sides of it “meets the eye.” It is this difference in mode of givenness that Husserl wants to capture as the last on his list.

3.3. Extension of the content–apprehension scheme to all objectifying acts. So far we have discussed the content–apprehension model in the case of perception, but as was said above, it is characteristic of the Investigations that it sees this model as applying to all objectifying acts. Recall that an objectifying act is an act whose dominant quality is either assertoric or neutral; hence wishes and appreciations are examples of non-objectifying acts. Acts that a scientist carry out in his work, and acts of knowledge more generally, are objectifying acts, which explains their interest to epistemology and to the phenomenological clarification of knowledge. Of special significance in this regard is the division of objectifying acts into intuitive and signitive. The classification of an act as the one or the other is determined by whether it in some way presents or displays its object. While an intuitive act displays its object, a signitive act does not in any way display its object, it is, in Husserl’s later terminology, a void intention (Leerintention). Thus, given that you are intentionally related to my friend Herman exclusively through reading his name and description here, you are related to him signitively. Herman himself is not in any way displayed in those acts. Such intentional relation through signs is the paradigmatic example of a signitive act, but other types of intentional relation can also be considered signitive or void. One such type is the relation I have to the rear side of the dice I am currently seeing; in one sense of seeing I see only the front side of the dice—and I am related to the whole thing. The explanation of this given in the Investigations is that the partial intention relating me to the rear side is void while that relating me to the front side, the side which is displayed in my act, is intuitive. Or, suppose the light in my room suddenly goes off. I “see” nothing but darkness, yet I continue to be intentionally related, albeit signitively, to the dice.

In the (very long) opening sentence of LU I § 23, from which we quoted above, Husserl speaks of “objectifying apprehensions,”

in which, by means of an experienced complexion of sensations, the intuitive representation (perception, imagination, depiction, etc.) of an object (e.g. “an external” thing) arises for us.

Thus Husserl says quite generally that intuitions, and not merely perceptions, arise from the apprehension of content; perception, imagination, and picture-seeing, that

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23For a similar example, see Hua XX/1 pp. 155–156.
24LU VI §§ 14, 23.
25For this example, see HUA XX/1 p. 147.
is, all arise through the apprehension of sensations or sensation-like things. One of the problems facing such a view is how to account for what I here call “sensation-like things,” what Husserl typically called phantasmata, namely that which underlies imagination in the same way sensations underlie perception. Are these phantasmata of the same kind as sensations, so that all difference between imagination and perception is to be found in their different form of apprehension? Around 1907 Husserl attributes such a view to his younger self:

...my original view, my representation theory, which operated with experienced “contents” (e.g. sensible contents) viewing them as the case might be as apprehended in this or that way. All mere differences of apprehension, which would simply attach to, thereby “animating,” contents otherwise experienced and existing in consciousness.  

It is likely that Husserl here is referring to the view he held in the Investigations. One must, however, be careful with self-characterizations from Husserl’s hand, for they are not always accurate;  

but what he here calls the representation theory does at least not contradict anything he says in the Investigations: the only time the relation of sensations to phantasmata is explicitly raised there Husserl leaves it open whether they are of the same kind (LU V § 44 nr. 9), and indeed, the characterization of “sensible phantasmata” in LU VI § 22 is made by recourse to their apprehension only, as the representation theory would dictate. The 1904 lecture notes on imagination and picture-seeing make explicit mention of the representation theory (Hua XXIII p. 94), and the final part of those notes are devoted to the problem of the relation between sensations and phantasmata, but the discussion is inconclusive (ibid. pp. 92–108). By the time of the Ideas, in any case, when Husserl has come to think of imagination as the modification of perception (in the phenomenological sense of modification described on page 6 above) he also views the material underlying acts of imagination and remembrance as modified hyle: “one has to see that the phantasma by its very nature is imagination of the corresponding sensation.” In this way, one could say, Husserl has managed to keep the tenor of the representation theory while at the same time accounting for the impression that the material underlying a perception seems to be something the mind receives, whereas the material underlying an imagination seems to be something the mind

27Hua X p. 319: “…meine ursprüngliche Ansicht, meine Repräsentationstheorie, die mit erlebten „Inhalten“ (z.B. sinnlichen Inhalten) operierte und sie je nachdem als so oder so aufgefaßt ansah. Alles bloß Unterschiede der Auffassung, die sich an den übrigen erlebten und im Bewußtsein seienenden Inhalt nur anschließte, ihn „beseelend“. Aber eine solche Interpretation dürfte ganz unhaltbar sein, und es ist die besondere Aufgabe, hier völlig Klarheit zu schaffen.” According to the editor, this text was most likely written in 1907–1908 (cf. Hua X p. xxxix).

28See for instance his equation in Ideen § 129 of the notion of noematic kernel with that of act matter. It is clear that what corresponds to act matter in the Ideas is not the noematic kernel, but rather the noematic sense (Ideen § 130); noematic kernel is rather “saturated sense” (Ideen § 132), what in the Investigations is sometimes called Repräsentation (cf. LU VI § 26 p. 621, also LU V § 44 nr. 1).

29Ideen § 112: “Man müßte eben erst sehen lernen, daß es sich hier um einen Bewußtseinsunterschied handelt, daß also das Phantasmata […] seinem Wesen nach Phantasie von dem entsprechenden Empfindungsdatum [=Hyle] ist.”

See moreover the instructive Appendix XII to the Lectures on Inner Time Consciousness (Hua X pp. 126 ff.), as well as Hua XXIII Text Nr. 8.
produces or reproduces; that perception is at least partly a matter of reception, and imagination at least partly a matter of origination.

In LU VI §§ 25–27 the content–apprehension model is extended to linguistic, or signitive, acts, and thereby to all objectifying acts.

Every concrete complete objectifying act has three components: the quality, the matter, and the representing content. According as this content functions as a purely signitive or as a purely intuitive representative or as both at once the act is purely signitive, purely intuitive, or mixed.\(^{30}\)

The terminology in this quote needs explanation. To indicate that the sensation-like content which is apprehended in an objectifying act in a way represents the intentional object within the stream of consciousness Husserl here and elsewhere uses the term ‘representing content’ for it (cf. LU VI § 22 p. 609–610), and he uses the term ‘representative’ for the representing content in its apprehension (cf. LU VI § 25 p. 620). It must then be emphasized that the material underlying an act, its apprehended content, can be taken to represent an object only by virtue of its apprehension, since by itself it is simply lifeless stuff; moreover, one should recall Husserl’s criticism in the Fifth Investigation (Appendix to section 11 and 20, p. 436 ff.; cf. LU I § 23) of the “picture theory” of representation: the apprehended content does not represent the intentional object in the way a picture represents its object, an act of perception, for instance, is not established by some inner eye’s observing the manifold of experienced sensations, but rather by these being informed by sense in an apprehension. As we shall see in more detail later this apprehension is either perceptive, imaginative, or signitive, and accordingly the representing content functions as an intuitive (perceptive or imaginative) or as a signitive representative. The notion of a mixed act will be explained in the following paragraph: it is an act in which the same material functions as the basis for both an intuitive and a signitive apprehension, as is typically the case with outer perception. According to the quoted passage, then, not only intuitive acts, but all objectifying acts—including linguistic acts and the signitive elements of outer perceptions—“come to be” in that certain material—the representing content—is apprehended, and thereby “animated” by sense.

3.4. Apprehended content in signitive acts. The thought that seems to have motivated Husserl’s extension of the content–apprehension scheme to signitive acts is that all such acts require foundation in some material: “the meaning cannot, as it were, float in the air,” but needs a supporting material.\(^{31}\) So even when I make a judgement, in the sense of an inner assertion, one can identify a sign, in this case presumably something like the, perhaps very vague, imagination of a sign.\(^{32}\) This seemingly reasonable contention, that no acts of meaning can take place without material support, seems, however, to be contradicted by Husserl’s discussion in LU VI § 15 of “signitive intentions without meaning function.” For that section opens by answering in the affirmative the question whether “the same or essentially

\(^{30}\)LU VI § 25: “Jeder konkret vollständige objektivierende Akt hat drei Komponenten: die Qualität, die Materie und den repräsentierenden Inhalt. Je nachdem dieser Inhalt als rein signitiver oder rein intuitiver Repräsentant oder als beides zugleich fungiert, ist der Akt ein rein signitiver, rein intuitiver oder gemischter.” The original has Sperrschrift throughout.

\(^{31}\)LU VI § 26 (p. 622): “Die Bedeutung kann sozusagen nicht in der Luft hängen…”

\(^{32}\)Cf. LU I § 8, whose title is “Die Ausdrücke im einsamen Seelenleben.”
similar acts which we otherwise find in meaning [i.e. linguistic] function could not also appear without this function, detached from all acts of expression. The aim of the section in question, however, is to argue that there are kinds of signitive intention other than linguistic acts, that is, other than those acts involved in the uttering and understanding of expressions. As we just noted, outer perception involves, in the ordinary case, signitive partial intentions. Namely, those partial intentions by means of which the perception is directed towards aspects of the perceived object not “meeting the eye” (for instance the rear side of the dice) are signitive; these partial intentions are signitive for they do not display their object. In general the material apprehended in such signitive partial intentions is the very same material as that which is apprehended in the purely intuitive partial intentions. Outer perception is therefore what Husserl calls a mixed act, an act which apprehends the same material both intuitively and signitively, the former apprehension constituting that aspect of the object meeting the eye, and the latter “the rest” of the object.

More problematic in this regard is Husserl’s remark in LU V § 19 that “the physical side” of an expression could be “entirely omitted.” Indeed, on the basis of this remark Sokolowski (1964, pp. 42–43) holds that according to Husserl, “the act of meaning can sometimes occur even when no word-forming act accompanies it. There can be meaning without words.” If true this would seem to contradict Husserl’s claim that no meaning can “as it were float in the air.” This could be a point at which Husserl’s view changed in the process of writing the Investigations; but one would then expect him to have made suitable revisions in the second edition (where revisions were made to every page of the section in question), yet the remark is left unchanged. I therefore suggest to read the remark in question as alluding to the fact that corresponding to any signitive intention there are intuitive acts of the same matter and quality; to say that the sign can be omitted from a signitive act is to say that it can be replaced by an act of the same intentional essence without any underlying sign (for Husserl this is true so long as one restricts oneself to acts whose meaning is non-selfcontradictory). Since the matter of an intuitive act may be regarded as its meaning in the same way as the matter of a linguistic act is its

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33 LU VI § 15 (p. 592): “Es ist also an der Zeit, die Frage zu erwägen: können nicht dieselben oder wesentlich gleichartige Akte, als welche wir sonst in der Bedeutungsfunktion finden, auch außer dieser Funktion, von allen Ausdrücken losgelöst, auftreten?”

34 The non-ordinary case would be what Husserl calls the “reduced act,” the act purged of all signitive elements (cf. LU VI § 23). This notion was later criticized; cf. e.g. Hua XX/1 p. 93: “Die erscheinende Seite ist ja indenkbar ohne ergänzende ‘Seiten’, die notwendig also migemeinte, aber nicht apparierende sind.”

35 LU VI § 15 (p. 594): “Demgemäß werden wir in den inadäquaten Wahrnehmungen und Einbildungen ganz richtig Komplexionen von primitiven Intentionen sehen müssen, unter welchen sich neben perzeptiven und imaginativen Elementen auch solche von Art der signitiven Intentionen finden.”

36 Cf. LU VI § 25 (p. 620): “Ziehen wir nun auch gemischten Akte heran, die man allgemein unter dem Titel Anschauung mitbäfickt, so ist ihre Eigenheit damit bezeichnet, daß sie einen repräsentierenden Inhalt haben, welcher in Hinsicht auf den einen Teil der vorgestellten Gegenständlichkeit als abbildender oder selbstdarstellender Repräsentant, in Hinsicht auf den ergänzenden Teil als bloße Hindeutung fungiert.”

37 LU V § 19 (p. 421): “Mag immerhin der physische Ausdruck, der Wortlaut, in dieser Einheit als unwesentlich gelten. Das ist er auch insofern, als anstatt seiner ein beliebige anderer Wortlaut und in gleicher Funktion hätte stehen können; ja er könnte sogar gänzlich in Fortfall kommen.”
meaning, it is indeed true that there can be, as Sokolowski holds, meaning without words.

In any case, in light of chapter 3 of the Sixth Investigation it is clear that Husserl’s “official” view must be that no acts of meaning can be carried out without material support. Thus he can claim:

The purely signitive act would exist as a mere complexion of quality and matter, if it could exist of itself at all, that is, if it could constitute by itself a concrete unit of experience. That it cannot do; we always find it appended to a grounding intuition.\(^{38}\)

We already quoted (p. 10 above) a passage in which Husserl says that all objectifying acts involve not only matter and quality, but also representing content. The current quote says explicitly of signitive acts that they involve representing content. What is this content underlying signitive acts? The picture that emerges for instance from the First Investigation (cf. e.g. LU I §§ 10, 23) is that meaning acts are grounded in intuitions, that is in full acts, either the perception or the imagination of a sign. In LU VI § 25, however, with the richer framework Husserl now has at his disposal, this view is modified:

It seems we should say that it is not the grounding intuition as a whole, but only its representing content, which furnishes support for the signitive act.\(^{39}\)

The sign is not constituted by a full intuitive act, but only by what would be the representing content of that act, but which instead is the representing content of a signitive act. Husserl’s declared reason for holding this is that the various aspects that determine the sign as an object of nature (ink on paper, inscriptions in stone) are irrelevant for its functioning as a sign and may vary arbitrarily while the sign qua sign stays the same; it is only the shape that matters, and Husserl must have thought that this is somehow already contained in the representing content (he did hold that there are sensations corresponding to the shape (Gestalt) of the object—cf. e.g. Ideen § 41 p. 85). Thus in the final analysis, the sign is said to stand to a signitive act in just the way sensations stand to a perception; just as what is apprehended in a perception are sensations, so what is apprehended in a signitive act is a sign. This parallel does not elucidate the notion of sensation through the notion of sign, rather it elucidates the notion of sign through the notion of sensation; so it does not commit Husserl to the view he has already rejected, that apprehension is a perception of sensations as the sign of something else, but is only meant to shed light on the role the sign plays in signitive acts.

4. Form of apprehension

The application of the content–apprehension model to the analysis of perception was motivated by the underdetermination of perception by what “reaches the eye”: on the basis of the same manifold of sensations I may see two different things.

\(^{38}\)LU VI § 25 (p. 619): “Der rein signitive Akt bestünde als eine bloße Komplexion von Qualität und Materie, wenn er überhaupt für sich sein, d.i. für sich eine konkrete Erlebnisseinheit bilden könnte. Das kann er nicht; wir finden ihn immer als Anhang einer fundierenden Anschauung.” Cf. Hua XX/1 p. 94.

\(^{39}\)LU VI § 25 (p. 619): “Wir werden, scheint es, sagen dürfen, daß es nicht die fundierende Anschauung als Ganzes, sondern nur ihr repräsentierender Inhalt ist, was dem signitiven Akte wesentlich die Stütze verleiht.”
and on the basis of two different manifolds of sensations I may see the same thing. Consider now a case where what was first an arabesque takes on the character of a sign, for instance the name ‘Herman’; or a case where what was first a portrait of Herman is now a mere assemblage of paint. In these cases the intentional object varies. At first I see an arabesque hence the object of my act is a certain formation of curves and lines on the board; when this arabesque takes on the character of the name ‘Herman’, my act rather becomes directed towards Herman, although the apprehended content is the same as before. When I see a portrait of Herman I am again directed towards Herman, but when I study an assemblage of paint, it is rather this paint which is the object of my act, although the apprehended content is the same as when I saw the portrait. That the object varies in these cases means that the acts also vary. But here it is not a matter simply of seeing different things, for when I relate to Herman through his name I do not see him (he is in Florence and I in Amsterdam), neither do I see him, in the proper sense of seeing, when I look at a portrait of him. Rather what I do in these cases is to carry out not merely different acts, but different kinds of act, and indeed on the basis of the same apprehended content. In the Investigations this particular difference in kind of act is explained as a difference in kind of apprehension, or in Husserl’s terminology, as a difference in form of apprehension.

The kinds of act just discussed correspond to the different forms of apprehension recognized in the Investigations: signitive, imaginative, and perceptive. At this stage Husserl treats remembrance as a species of imagination, namely as an imagination with assertoric quality (cf. LU V § 21, p. 435), thus disregarding the complication with time; and he does not properly distinguish between picture-seeing and imagination in the sense of “making a picture in one’s mind,” as he will do in the 1904 lectures (Hua XXIII). In any case, perception and imagination (in this unspecified sense) together make up the class of intuitive acts. Above we distinguished intuitive acts from signitive acts by saying that intuitive acts display their object in some way, while signitive acts in no way display their object; this “intuitive” characterization can now be supplemented with a technical one by recourse to the notion of form apprehension: intuitive acts are those whose form of apprehension is either imaginative or perceptive, signitive acts those whose form of apprehension is signitive.

Husserl gives two characterizations of the different forms of apprehension, one in LU VI § 14 in terms of the relation of fulfillment, which he calls an indirect characterization, and another in LU VI § 26 in terms of the content-apprehension scheme, which he calls internal. As far as I can see these two characterizations amount to the same; as Husserl says in conclusion to the indirect characterization they concern the relation between the representing content—sign in the case of signitive acts, “adumbration” in the case of intuitive acts—and the object meant in the act. In the case of perception this relation is one of identity: the act displays the object itself. In the case of imagination it is one of analogy: what the act displays—what Husserl elsewhere (e.g. LU V § 44) calls the picture object (Bildobjekt)—is similar or analogous to the object meant. Thus towards the end of LU VI § 22 Husserl gives a characterization of different kinds of representing content underlying intuitive acts:
Since the character of imagination lies in the analogizing depiction, in "re-presentation" in a strict sense, while the character of perception may be termed presentation, we may employ as distinguishing names for the representing content in the two cases: analogizing or depicting and presenting or self-displaying.\(^{40}\)

That is, because the perceptive apprehension is one of identity and the imaginative one of analogy, the underlying contents may be termed presenting or self-displaying in the former case and analogizing or depicting in the latter. In the so-called internal characterization of forms of apprehension in LU VI § 26 the relation between the representing content of an intuitive act and its object is said to be "internal, necessary," which he glosses in the quote given on page 7 above, namely by saying that the representing content somehow has to be equal or similar to the object. In the case of a signitive act, on the other hand, the relation between its representing content and the object is "arbitrary, external" (LU VI § 26 p. 622), the representing content has nothing to do with the object (LU VI § 14 p. 588), which is Husserl’s way of describing the arbitrary nature of the sign.

We have already referred to Husserl’s later criticism of the talk of similarity or equality between representing content and what they represent in their apprehension. In the terminology of the Ideas (§§ 9–16), representing content and spatial objects belong to different regions, so they cannot be compared for similarity (one commits a "category mistake" by attempting to do so). But there is a further problem concerning the notion of self-presentation: in the Investigations this is an ambiguous notion. On the one hand it means the form of apprehension characteristic of pure inner perception. An inner perception is said to be pure when it does not relate what one thereby perceives, for instance a pain, to something external, for instance a part of one’s body. According to the Investigations pure inner perception is the only kind of adequate perception, a perception in which “the content of sensation is at the same time the object of perception; the content signifies nothing else, but stands for itself.”\(^{41}\) Elsewhere, however, Husserl is anxious to point out the difference between representing content and the properties of objects it represents in its apprehension; in particular he is anxious to emphasize that while the latter are perceived, the former is not perceived, but only experienced; indeed he criticizes Brentano for confusing in his notion of physical phenomenon representing content and the properties it represents.\(^{42}\) Hence, what self-presentation means in the case of pure inner perception cannot be the self-presentation of a perceptive apprehension, for in the case of an outer perception Husserl insists that the apprehended content is different from the object perceived. On the other hand, therefore, ‘self-presentation’ is used to describe the character of any perceptive apprehension, be it that of an outer, or that of a pure inner, perception. Apprehension of this kind can therefore not apprehend the content as itself. The “itself-ness” characteristic of perception must be otherwise explained, namely simply as a mark of the object

\(^{40}\)LU VI § 22 (pp. 609-610): “Da der charakter der Imagination in der analogisierenden Abbildung, in der „Re-präsentation“ in einem engeren Sinne liegt, der Charakter der Wahrnehmung aber auch als Präsentation bezeichnet werden kann, so bieten sich als unterscheidende Namen für die darstellenden Inhalte im einen und anderen Fall die Namen: analogisierende oder abbildende und präsentierende oder selbstdarstellende.”

\(^{41}\)LU Appendix § 6, pp. 769–770: “der empfundene Inhalt ist zugleich der Gegenstand der Wahrnehmung. Der Inhalt bedeutet nichts anderes, er steht für sich selbst” (cf. LU VI § 37).

\(^{42}\)Cf. LU Appendix and Ideen § 85. See also the related criticism of Locke in LU II §§ 8–11.
displayed in a perception: an object perceived is displayed to one as present, as
itself-given.

It is a task of the phenomenologist to find immanent characteristics by means of
which he can distinguish perception from imagination. That perception is “veridi-
cal” is not an immanent characteristic, as the case of the bent stick shows.43 That,
however, in perception the object is present, it is there “in flesh and blood,” is an
immanent characteristic, and one that distinguishes perception from imagination.
What I perceive may be more or less vividly presented, and more or less completely
presented, but it is always present; what I imagine, on the other hand, no matter
how vividly I imagine it, will never be present, it will always be re-presented.44
It must have been this characteristic of perception which Husserl sought to cap-
ture by his description of the perceptive apprehension as one of self-presentation.
Perhaps misled by the case of pure inner perception where what one perceives is
an actual part of consciousness he in fact treated self-presentation as presentation
through identity. Thus he could regard adequate perception, where “the content
of sensation is at the same time the object of perception,” as a limiting case of
perception tout court, namely as perception purged of all signitive elements, and
not as another sort of perception altogether. That is namely what he would do in
the Ideas. In the Investigations inner perception, like all other acts, was analyzed
according to the content–apprehension scheme: “Outer perception is apperception,
hence the unity of the concept requires that inner perception is that as well.”45 In
the Ideas, however, Husserl treats inner perception, or reflection as he now calls it,
as the modification of another act, namely as the modification of the act reflected
upon.46 Thus he can retain the notion of perception’s being self-presentation, while
not viewing inner and outer perception as being of the same kind.

We saw that instead of thinking of the relation between representing contents
and what they represent in their apprehension as one of similarity or of “having
nothing to do with each other,” as the case might be, we may be less specific and
simply say that the role of representing content is to restrict the class of admissible
apprehensions. From our discussion now of the various forms of apprehension it is
clear that these restrictions will vary with these different forms. When we switch
back and forth between seeing a sign as a sign, that is, reading it, and seeing it as a
mere arabesque, the limits set in the first case are quite different from those set in
the second case. While the perceptive apprehension of signs, say of those you are
now reading, is rather restricted, their signitive apprehension is, given “the arbi-
trary nature of the sign,” in principle unrestricted. Of course, the fact that they are
understood to be words, clauses, and sentences of English sets strict limits—but it
is not essential to their being signs that they be signs of English, in principle they
could also have been signs of German or Volapük or whatnot. Likewise, the ap-
prehension of a canvas of paint imaginatively as a painting or perceptively as clots

43Cf. LU V § 2 (p. 358): “Diese Unterschiede zwischen normaler und anomaler, richtiger
und trägerischer Wahrnehmung gehen den inneren, rein deskriptiven, bzw. phänomenologischen
Charakter der Wahrnehmung nicht an.”
44Husserl here uses the suggestive contrasting terms Gegenwärtigung and Vergegenwärtigung.
45LU Appendix § 6 (p. 762): “Außere Wahrnehmung ist Apperzeption [first edition: Interpre-
tation], also fordert die Einheit des Begriffs, daß es auch die innere sei.”
46Cf. Ideen § 78, and also Hua XX/1 p. 153: “Wenn gelegentlich auch bei den immanenten
Anschauungen von Auffassung oder gar Repräsentation gesprochen wird, so darf das nur als eine
façon de parler gelten.”
of paint are associated with quite different sets of restrictions. Hence we see that
not only the representing content subjects its apprehension to various restrictions,
also the form of apprehension does that. Together with the experienced sensations
the form of apprehension determine a class of admissible apprehensions; together
they set certain boundary conditions on what the apprehension may apprehend the
content as. This, I suggest, is the essential role played by the form of apprehension.
Indeed, describing matters this way seems to me more helpful than the character-
ization given by Husserl that the form of apprehension is “the phenomenological
unity between matter and representatives” (LU VI § 26). Rather, form of appre-
hension is one of two factors determining the kinds of matter that may infuse the
representatives with sense.

5. Some further remarks

5.1. The role of matter. The sense which animates representing content in its
apprehension is the matter of the act. As Husserl says in LU VI § 26, “the matter,
as it were, gives the sense [direction] in which the representing content is to be
apprehended.” It is by virtue of act matter that *I see a tree* and *smell the scent of
flowers*, and not merely experience something or other. It is, moreover, by virtue of
act matter that I see the same tree on the basis of various manifolds of sensation.47
More generally, it is by virtue of act matter that my act is directed towards such
and such an object with such and such properties. Indeed, since objects are for me
what they are only through the acts in which these objects are given to me,48 and
therefore only through the matter of those acts, Husserl can entitle Ideen § 55 by
the formula: *Alle Realität seiend durch „Sinnggebung“.*

However that may be (and for some, I think, it may not be), we now get a pic-
ture of how matter, representing content, and form of apprehension interrelate. In
apprehension matter is applied, as it were, to content, in much the same way as a
function is applied to an argument.49 What results is what Husserl calls a repre-
sentation (*Repräsentation*—cf. LU VI § 26 p. 621). Such a representation contains
a meaning component, namely the act matter, determining what is represented
and with what properties; it contains a representative, the representing content,
through which the object appears in the act; finally, it contains a form of apprehen-
sion, determining whether it is a perception, an imagination, or a signitive act. To

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47Madary (2012) argues that Husserl explains perceptual constancy in terms of an intention-
fulfillment structure; but the fact that one perception fulfills another presupposes (at least ac-
cording to the theory of the *Investigations*) that the two perceptions have the same matter, and
*a fortiori*, that these two perceptions, independently of any intention-fulfillment relation, intend
precisely the same object. Hence it cannot be by virtue of the intention-fulfillment structure charac-
teristic of outer perception that objects show constancy, for that structure *presupposes*
constancy of objects.

48LU I § 10 (pp. 48–49): : “daß alle Gegenstände und gegenständliche Beziehungen für uns
nur sind, was sie sind, durch die von ihnen wesentlich unterschiedenen Akte des Vermeinens, in
denen sie uns vorstellig werden, in denen sie eben als gemeinte Einheiten uns gegenüberstehen.
Für die rein phänomenologische Betrachtungsweise gibt es nichts als Gewebe solcher intentionaler
Akte.”

49Cf. Husserl’s notation $W = A_{G} p$ in the 1904 lecture (Hua XXXVIII p. 39); it indicates that
a perception (*Wahrnehmung*, $W$) is the apprehension $A_{G}$ of presenting content $p$; the subscript
$G$ presumably indicates the object determined by the apprehension. Husserl goes on to say that
this formula does not reveal the full nature of a perception; but the fact that he introduces this
notation suggests that at least heuristically he thought of apprehension of content as a function
applied to an argument.
get the full cognitive essence of the act—which is the unity of representing content, matter, and quality (LU VI § 28)—we have to add the quality of the act. It might be instructive to take up again the comparison with Frege. In Frege’s ideography a judgment is indicated by ⊢ A. Here A (and also −A) is judgeable content, and the vertical stroke | indicates that the content A is asserted. As noted in the Introduction, from the Husserlian point of view the vertical stroke indicates assertoric quality, and it could be replaced by other strokes indicating other qualities; how should we treat the Fregean judgeable content A from that point of view? We have two alternatives: either we can think of A simply as the act matter, and ⊢ A and its variations obtained by substituting | with signs for other qualities as the intentional essence; or we can think of A as the full representation encompassing not only the meaning component, but also the appearance of the object together with its mode of appearance (its appearing perception-wise, imagination-wise, signitively). This is only one of many points at which one recognizes the very rich set of distinctions offered by Husserl’s analysis of acts.

5.2. Form of apprehension and knowledge. With the notions, firstly, of representing content and, secondly, of form of apprehension we are in a position to understand the technical description of Husserl’s notion of saturation (Fülle), which is so central to the account of knowledge as it is developed in the Sixth Investigation. In LU VI § 21 Husserl defines saturation as follows:

The saturation of a representation is the collection of those determinations belonging to it by means of which it re-presents its object through analogy or else grasps it as itself given. This saturation is therefore a characteristic moment of the representation beside quality and matter.\(^\text{50}\)

From this quote and the discussion that follows it, it is clear that the saturation of an act is simply its intuitive representing content, that part of the material underlying the act which is apprehended by either a perceptive or an imaginative apprehension. In the terminology of the Ideas the saturation of an act is thus the adumbrating hyletic data of a perception as well their modification in imagination. In fact, the short discussion of saturation in the Ideas (§ 132) locates it not in the hyle, but in the object itself in its givenness (in the noema); this is quite natural, since prima facie, saturation would seem to concern the appearance of the object—namely as the saturation of the appearance—rather than actual elements of the experience of being appeared to. Husserl seems to have sensed this already in the Investigations, for following the quoted definition he gives an alternative explanation of saturation in terms of those characteristics of the object not merely meant by the act but also displayed in it.\(^\text{51}\) The tension apparent here presumably has the same source as the problems we discovered regarding the notion of self-presentation, namely an insufficient distinction between what the Ideas calls noetic and noematic content (Ideen § 88). The distinction is certainly present in the Investigations, under the name of descriptive versus intentional content (LU V § 16), but the noematic viewpoint is

\(^{50}\)LU VI § 21 (pp. 607–608): “Die Fülle der Vorstellung aber ist der Inbegriff derjenigen ihr selbst zugehörigen Bestimmtheiten, mittels welcher sie ihren Gegenstand analogisierend vergegenwärtigt oder ihn als selbst gegebenen erfaßt. Diese Fülle ist also neben Qualität und Materie ein Charakteristisches Moment der Vorstellungen.”

\(^{51}\)Cf. the discussion of intuitive saturation in the 1913 reworking of LU VI (Hua XX/1 pp. 120–121), which explicitly points to the distinction between these two levels.
not upheld with sufficient consequence, whence notions such as saturation, which naturally seem noematic, are given a noetic definition.

Wherever one locates an act’s saturation, what this notion is meant to capture is the extent to which the act displays its object, so that richer saturation goes hand in hand with better display. It is only intuitive acts which have saturation, hence they must be involved in any act of knowledge; indeed, at one place Husserl says, using a term philosophers today often associate with Frege, that the cognitive value \((\text{Erkenntniswert})\) of an act is constituted by its saturation.\(^{52}\) A signitive act is void, it has no cognitive value, precisely because it lacks saturation. This is not to say that all intuitive acts are of equal cognitive value. Firstly, the saturation of acts will be of varying quality; for instance, it might be more or less complete with respect to the object meant, and it might have more or less clarity. Seeing a landscape in broad daylight, seeing the same landscape by dusk, or again, on an especially foggy day, are perceptions of varying clarity; the bespectacled among us know very well what a decrease in clarity means. The saturation of one intuition is more complete than that of another if it displays its object more completely; so if some object obstructs my view of the landscape I will have a less complete perception of it than if that obstruction were not there; likewise there will in general be perspectives from which the object is more completely perceived than it is from other perspectives.\(^{53}\) Yet even if an intuition has maximum clarity and completeness, one may not speak of optimal cognitive value unless the intuition is a perception. Secondly, therefore, whether the intuition is a perception or an imagination will influence the cognitive value. Only perception marks its object as present and can justify the judgement that the object perceived in fact exists; imagination will at most justify a judgement that the object is possible (LU VI ch. 4). Hence perception, and not intuition in general, is the crucial element of knowledge. In fact, it seems fair to say that for Husserl visual perception was paradigmatic for acts of knowledge. An important part of developing epistemology was for him therefore to generalize the notion of visual perception, or to say what, for various kinds of objects, it means to see objects of that kind. In the \textit{Investigations} that led to the notion of categorial intuition and in the \textit{Ideas} (§ 138) to the notion that to any region or category there is a mode of consciousness giving objects of that region or category in an original manner. Going into the details of that will, however, have to be the task of another paper.

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\(^{52}\text{LU I § 11: “...aus der Anschauung [...] kann die Intention nicht die Fülle schöpfen, die ihnen Erkenntniswert ausmacht.”}\)

\(^{53}\text{On all of this see LU VI § 23 (p. 614) and the more detailed discussion in the 1913 reworking Hua XX/1 pp. 131–132; both passages are discussed by Tugendhat (1970, pp. 80–85); cf. also the famous example of the violin at Ideen § 44 p. 93.}\)


