Husserl Stud
DOI 10.1007/s10743-011-9093-y

Representationalism and Husserlian Phenomenology

Michael K. Shim

© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011

Abstract According to contemporary representationalism, phenomenal qualia—of specifically sensory experiences—supervene on representational content. Most arguments for representationalism share a common, phenomenological premise: the so-called "transparency thesis." According to the transparency thesis, it is difficult—if not impossible—to distinguish the quality or character of experiencing an object from the perceived properties of that object. In this paper, I show that Husserl would react negatively to the transparency thesis; and, consequently, that Husserl would be opposed to at least two versions of contemporary representationalism. First, I show that Husserl would be opposed to *strong* representationalism, since he believes the cognitive content of a perceptual episode can vary despite constancy of sensory qualia. Second, I then show that Husserl would be opposed to *weak* representationalism, since he believes that sensory qualia—specifically, the sort that he calls "kinesthetic sensations"—can vary despite constancy in representational content.

1 Introduction

Representationalism is a popular view in contemporary philosophy of mind.[1] According to representationalism, the phenomenal quality—"phenomenal

[1] See Harman (1990), Dretske (1995), Tye (1995, 2000), Byrne (2001). The view is also known as "intentionalism." To avoid unnecessary confusion with Husserl's view on intentionality, I will avoid this alternative term. The sort of conception of intentionality advocated by contemporary representationalism is markedly different from the Husserlian conception. Most contemporary representationalists regard intentionality as a kind of causal relation, a view that is famously rejected by Husserl (see Hua XIX, p. 405; Hua III, p. 89, footnote). At bottom, I think it is this diversity in conceptions of "intentionality"

M. K. Shim (✉)
Department of Philosophy, California State University Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90032, USA
e-mail: mshim@exchange.calstatela.edu

Published online: 05 May 2011

character," "subjective feel," or "what it's like"—of any experience supervenes on some representational content.[2] In other words, if there is any change in what it's like for you to perceive some object, then there is a corresponding change in the perceivable properties of the object that are available to you. Representationalism is attractive to many philosophers since it promises a physicalist theory of consciousness. What for the physicalist has traditionally been most recalcitrant about consciousness is phenomenal quality. In contrast, there is widespread confidence about the functional explicability of representational content. So, the representationalist speculation goes, if there is a tight determinative relationship between qualia and content, then there can also be a functionalist qua physicalist explanation of qualia.

In this paper I argue that Husserl should be considered *anti-representationalist* by showing how Husserl would react to a premise common to arguments for representationalism—namely, the so-called "transparency thesis." Unlike representationalism, which is a theory about the nature of consciousness, the transparency thesis is a phenomenological claim about what experiences are like. In Sect. 2, I show how the transparency thesis motivates two versions of representationalism—weak and strong. In Sect. 3, I begin the Husserlian response to representationalism through an extended discussion of what Husserl calls "hyletic data" (or "sensations"). Hyletic data are the phenomenal qualia of specifically sensory experiences and, according to Husserl, hyletic data need *not* supervene on what is perceptually available about an object. In Sect. 4, I offer a defense of the Husserlian view against strong representationalism by pointing out that mature human experiences often feature a cognitive or conceptual operation—which Husserl calls "apprehension" (*Auffassung*) or "apperception"—that can vary independently of sensory qualia. In Sect. 5, I argue against weak representationalism with a discussion of what Husserl calls "kinesthetic sensations" or the subject's awareness of her own bodily, sensorimotor operations during perceptual episodes.

2 The Transparency Thesis

Michael Tye offers as good a statement as any of the theory of representationalism. Tye writes:

> Representationalism is a thesis about the phenomenal character of experiences, about their immediate subjective "feel." At a minimum, the thesis is

Footnote 1 continued
that leads to disagreement about whether sensory qualia are representational or intentional. For the contemporary representationalist, if sensory qualia are causally functional, then they are "intentional." For Husserl, who denies that intentionality is a causal relation, causal functionality is insufficient for intentionality. Nevertheless, since—as we will see—the representationalist insists on the supervenience of qualia on representational content, which is a relation about which the subject can be personally aware, the Husserlian counterexamples to this global claim succeed in undoing the main thesis of contemporary representationalism. Or so I will argue.

[2] This initial supervenience formulation of representationalism is consistent with both the strong and weak kinds of representationalism that I will introduce in Sect. 1.

> one of supervenience: necessarily, experiences that are alike in their representational contents are alike in their phenomenal character (Tye 2000, p. 45).

Then he immediately adds that a "primary motivation" of representationalism is a phenomenological premise: namely, the so-called "transparency thesis."

According to the transparency thesis, the "phenomenal character of an experience" is "diaphanous" and difficult—if not impossible—to distinguish from the properties of some object that are perceptually available to the subject. The "phenomenal character"—or the quality—of an experience is whatever it's like to perceive or feel anything. You see a red truck, you hear an explosion, you feel warm, you are anxious. There is something that it's like to undergo such episodes. According to the transparency thesis, this phenomenal character or quality of an experience—which, as I will argue in Sect. 3, corresponds to what Husserl calls "hyletic data"—is *transparent* to the *content* of that experience. Tye offers the following illustration of the transparency thesis:

> [Y]ou are directly aware of blueness and squareness … Now shift your gaze inward and try to become aware of your experience itself … apart from its objects. Try to focus your attention on some intrinsic feature of the experience that distinguishes it from other experiences, something other than what it is an experience *of*. The task seems impossible: one's awareness seems always to slip through the experience to blueness and squareness, as instantiated together in an external object (Tye 1995, p. 30).

Gilbert Harman offers a similar illustration:

> Eloise is aware of the tree as a tree that she is now seeing … we can suppose she is aware of some features of her current visual experience. In particular, she is aware that her visual experience has the feature of being an experience of seeing a tree … On the other hand … she is not aware of those intrinsic features of her experience by virtue of which it has that content … When you see a tree, you do not experience any features as intrinsic features of your experience. Look at a tree and try to turn your attention to intrinsic features of your experience. I predict you will find that the only features there to turn your attention to will be features of the presented tree (Harman 1990, pp. 38–40).

From observations like the above, Fred Dretske contends that "introspection becomes an instance of *displaced perception*—knowledge of internal (mental) facts via an awareness of external (physical) objects." Introspection, the attempt to become aware of phenomenal quality, Dretske concludes, "is *not* a process in which one looks inward," since the phenomenal qualia "one seeks to discover by introspection are not there" (Dretske 1995, pp. 40–41). Instead, what one thereby finds just is the representational content, the perceptual properties of some external, physical object available to the subject. Michael Tye articulates the view like this: "By being aware of the external qualities," Tye writes, "you are aware of what it is like for you" (Tye 2000, p. 47). In short, the transparency thesis predicts that when you try to pinpoint what it's like for you—that intrinsic, non-relational quality of

experience—you will fail to find anything separable from the constituents of that content—i.e., the perceptual properties of the object available to you at some particular time t.

What is important to keep in mind about the nature of such "representational content" is that it is a representation of some *relational fact*. As Harman puts it, an experience may be credited with "representational content" if such an experience "represents things as being in a certain way … perceptual experience represents a perceiver as in a particular environment, for example, as facing a tree with brown bark and green leaves fluttering in a slight breeze" (Harman 1990, p. 34). Accordingly, the content of such an experience is a function of some *relationship* between the perceiving subject (and her circumstances, environmental, physiological, etc.) and the perceived object. In other words, according to representationalist arguments based on the transparency thesis, the *content* of such visual experiences just is *the visible properties of the perceived object F as they are available to the perceiving subject S at some particular time t*.

What I want to stress is that, on this notion of "content," *what* you perceive as constrained by *how* you perceive "represents things as being in a certain way." To illustrate, when you are looking at the front-side of a house, *what* you perceive is the house. However, on the relevant sense of "content," what you perceive is constrained by, for example, your location vis-à-vis the house, the profile (i.e., the front-side) of the house that is available to you at t, etc. In other words, when you try to spell out the "content" of such a perceptual episode, your story will include visual properties of the house, like color, shape, size, number of windows, the texture of the painted surface, etc. Since such information about the house can be available to you only if you can see and are not blind, only if you are facing the house from some particular angle, only if the lighting conditions are favorable, etc., your experience will imply these further conditions. What the representationalist means by "content," then, is a function of some *relational fact* between you the perceiver and the house that you perceive. And in this relational sense, representational content is susceptible to a functionalist explanation.

The transparency thesis motivates both *weak* representationalism and *strong* representationalism.[3] According to weak representationalism, phenomenal quality supervenes on representational content such that, where q is what it's like of experience E and r is the content of E:

(1.1) If there is change in phenomenal quality q, then there is change in representational content r.

Although both weak and strong representationalists agree on (1.1), Michael Tye points out that there is an explanatory shortcoming to weak representationalism. As Tye puts it, weak representationalism "is a thesis that cries out for further development" (Tye 2007, p. 608) since weak representationalism does not explain *why* qualia should supervene on content. In contrast, the strong representationalist does offer an explanation of (1.1). According to the strong representationalist (1.1) is true because phenomenal qualia just are identical to, or constitute, some

[3] I borrow this "weak–strong" taxonomy from Crane (2009).

representational content.[4] More precisely, if q is what it's like of experience E and r is the content of E, and q is identical to or constitutive of r, then:

(1.2) There is change in phenomenal quality q if and only if there is change in representational content r.

In other words, in addition to (1.1), the strong representationalist also advocates the converse of (1.1), namely:

(1.3) If there is change in representational content r, then there is change in phenomenal quality q.

In light of the above clarification of what contemporary representationalism is all about, my contention is that Husserl should be considered an *anti-representationalist*. But in order to understand why Husserl would deny both (1.1) and (1.3), we have to find Husserlian notions that at least functionally match the two main notions in the formulation of representationalism: namely, "qualia" and "content."

3 Hyletic Data

To show how Husserl would argue against representationalism, I want to start with an interpretation of what he calls "hyletic data" (or "sensations"), according to which hyletic data should be considered the phenomenal qualia of specifically sensory experiences. This interpretation needs to be motivated, since the claim that hyletic data functionally match what contemporary philosophers mean by "phenomenal qualia" is hardly a widespread view. In particular, I am concerned to distinguish the Husserlian theory about "hyletic data" from traditional sense-data theories.

First,

(2.1) Hyletic data are "*Erlebnisse*" (commonly translated as "lived experiences").

More precisely, *Erlebnis* means the "living through" or undergoing of some experience.[5] Unlike what an experience may be about, which is "transcendent" to that experience, the living through of that experience is "immanent" to the experience. In contemporary jargon, *Erlebnis* in general seems best rendered by the talk of "qualia" and its cognates.[6] Accordingly, since hyletic data are *Erlebnisse*, they are a kind of qualia. Since hyletic data are the *Erlebnisse* of sensory experiences, like perception, proprioceptive episodes, and other such sensory episodes, hyletic data are sensory qualia—what it's like to see, hear, smell, feel pain or anxiety, and the like. Indeed, in a happy coincidence, Husserl himself encourages this exegetical choice in *Thing and Space*, where he writes: "I distinguish … the

[4] See Kind (2003, 2007) for a clear statement of strong representationalism.

[5] It should be noted that hyletic data are not, for Husserl, paradigmatic of *Erlebnisse*. In general, Husserl focuses on *intentional Erlebnisse*.

[6] As suggested by Keller (1999, p. 34).

appearance from what appears, and in the appearance … I find sensory *quale*, the pre-empirical sensory datum" (Hua XVI, p. 144: italic in original).[7]

Most philosophers accustomed to talk about "phenomenal qualia" identify such qualia with the sort that I have specified above. However, in recent philosophy of mind, some philosophers have argued that there are "cognitive qualia."[8] For example, let us say you are learning German. As Mark Twain (2010) points out, once you have learned to pronounce the German alphabet, German is an easy language to pronounce. Let us say you read aloud a longish passage G in German once you have mastered the German alphabet but *prior to* your understanding what any of the words mean. You agree that there is something that it's like to hear your own voice make noises from G in German. Now let us say that you have just recently mastered the German language enough to understand G. If when reading aloud from G after you have mastered the German language what it's like to hear your own voice make German noises is identical to what it was like the first time—*but* in addition to that aural qualia you also think that there is something that it's like to *understand* what you're reading, then you believe in cognitive qualia. The point I want to emphasize about Husserl is this. Even if Husserl recognized the existence of such cognitive qualia, Husserl would *not* refer to them as "hyletic data." By "hyletic data," Husserl means *only* sensory qualia.

Second, another reason for interpreting "hyletic data" as phenomenal qualia (of the sensory sort) is to avoid confusing hyletic data with traditional sense data. A reader might confuse hyletic data with sense data, if only because—as in the passage above—Husserl often talks about hyletic data by using the phrase "das sinnliche Datum." However, there is a traditional, widespread conception of sense data with which Husserl would not agree in his conception of hyletic data. In particular, the sense data of perception are usually thought to be a kind of proxy for the object perceived. On this view, sense data are *what* you directly perceive, and objects are only *indirectly* perceived through sense data. The difference is this. Husserl is very clear that

(2.2) Hyletic data (of perception) are not themselves perceived.

Husserl consistently insists that, in perception, *what* one perceives just is the transcendent object. Since hyletic data are immanent and nothing objective, hyletic data cannot be perceived. In the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl writes that hyletic data or sensations "are lived through [*erlebt*] but they do not objectively appear; they are not seen, heard, or perceived in any sense."[9] In visual perception, for example, Husserl writes: "I see a thing … I do not see my sensations" (Hua XIX, p. 396). In *Ideas* I, Husserl writes: "'sensory' *lived experiences* [*Erlebnisse*], 'contents of sensation,' such as color data, touch data, sound data, and the like, *which we will no longer confuse with the appearing moments of things*, colorfulness,

[7] All translations from Husserliana are mine.

[8] See Siewert (1998), Horgan and Tienson (2002), Pitt (2004).

[9] Hua XIX, p. 399. For similar claims elsewhere in the *Logical Investigations*, see also Hua XIX, pp. 80–82, 134–135, 207, 358–359, 525–526, 763–764.

noisiness, etc., which rather 'present' themselves through such lived experiences."[10] In this light, one might jump the gun and claim Husserl's endorsement of the transparency thesis: hyletic data are transparent to the content of experience. And that is why, although somehow instrumental to experience, hyletic data are *not* what you perceive. However, in opposition to the transparency thesis, Husserl is also clear that in a "reflective turn of regard" one can enjoy second-order awareness of hyletic data.[11]

Representationalists are often anxious to distinguish their view from traditional sense data theories.[12] On the one hand, if there are such mental stand-ins then sense data are good candidates for what is intrinsically mental about experiences that can be distinguished from external objects. Since such a view would pose a direct threat to the representationalist thesis, the representationalist is concerned to deny the existence of such mental entities. On the other hand, given what it is that the representationalists mean by "content," there is some risk of confusion between the two views. More specifically, just as the sense data theorists believe sense data are directly perceived, the modern representationalist believes that what she calls "content" just is what is directly perceived. Once again, representational content of a perceptual episode just is the perceivable properties of some object as they are available to the perceiving subject. More to the point, since Husserl believes hyletic data are instrumental to experiences, and phenomenologically palpable in at least second-order awareness, and yet distinguishable from the perceptually available properties of any object, hyletic data are some feature of experience distinguishable from what the representationalists mean by "content." So hyletic data are something like the intrinsic qualia of experiences.

Third, Husserl writes that hyletic data "*have in themselves nothing of intentionality*" (Hua III, p. 172: Husserl's emphasis). Earlier in *Ideas* I, Husserl writes that, "*not* every genuine *moment* in the concrete unity of an *intentional living through* [*Erlebnis*] itself has the basic character of intentionality, thus the quality of being 'consciousness of something' "(Hua III, p. 65: my italics).[13] This additional claim echoes a view Husserl already promulgated in the *Logical Investigations*, in which hyletic data are referred to as "sensations" or "feelings," which "can function as the building blocks of acts" (Hua XIX, p. 397) but "are not themselves intentions" (Hua XIX, p. 407). In lecture notes from 1904/1905, Husserl writes tersely and simply: "A sensation is no act, no intentional lived experience [*Erlebnis*]" (Hua XXXVIII, p. 25).[14]

[10] Hua III, p. 172: my italics. See also Husserl III, pp. 65, 73–76, 82.

[11] See Hua XIX, p. 165, Hua III, pp. 67–69, 83–84.

[12] For example, Harman (1990), Tye (1995, 2000) and Byrne (2001), all discuss sense data theories in formulating their view.

[13] See also Hua III, pp. 168, 203–204, 207, 303; Hua IV, p. 57, Hua XIX, pp. 356–357, 383, 406.

[14] Especially this last citation should make clear that hyletic data are not the only sorts of *Erlebnisse*. Indeed, as I have already pointed out, *intentional Erlebnisse* are more central to Husserl's project. If, as I have claimed in (2.1), "qualia" is a good rendering of "*Erlebnisse*," then an exegetical consequence of my view is that Husserl recognizes the existence of intentional qualia. Accordingly, for Husserl there is something that it's like—for example—to performing an intentional act.

Accordingly, there is at least one specific sense in which we can understand what it means that hyletic data are not intentional. Although hyletic data may be a "moment" or a functional part of an intentional experience,

(2.3) Hyletic data themselves are not intentional *acts.*

Instead, Husserl frequently claims that in perception hyletic data are "interpreted" or "animated" by what is properly act-like about intentional episodes. In the period of the *Logical Investigations*, Husserl claims that there is a cognitive feature to perceptual episodes that he calls "apprehension" (*Auffassung*) or "apperception," which plays this act-like cognitive role. In the period of *Ideas* I, he assigns this act-like role to what he calls "noesis." (In Sect. 3, I will get into greater detail about how apprehension works in conjunction with hyletic data.)

Fourth, I want to draw attention to a class of hyletic data that Husserl calls "kinesthetic sensations." No doubt many philosophers would be baffled by the characterization of hyletic data thus far offered. What about a perceptual episode can be perceptually instrumental without being intentional, yet phenomenologically distinguishable from the appearance of the perceptual object? If correctly understood, I think a discussion of kinesthetic sensations should help us get some grip on how hyletic data may operate in perception.

Kinesthetic sensations are proprioceptive sensations. To that extent, I suppose they are at least akin to pains and itches. However, what distinguishes kinesthetic sensations from pains and itches is that they are the proprioceptive sensations involved in the bodily operations of perception. An example that Husserl frequently uses to illustrate kinesthetic sensations is the experience of eye movements in visual perception.[15] Typically one's eyes are constantly moving in their sockets during visual perception. The way you move your eyes is instrumental to how you visually perceive any object. There is also something that it's like to move the eyes the way you do. However, you typically do not notice what that's like unless you deliberately reflect upon it. But when you do reflect upon it—by, for example, retracing the eye movements just involved in reading these sentences—the phenomenal qualia of the eye movement should be phenomenologically palpable. In this light, kinesthetic sensations seem to fit the above characterization of hyletic data especially well.

Here is an example to illustrate what Husserl is getting at. Let us say you are viewing a tennis match from a certain distance. For a while you sway your head from side to side to track the tennis ball. At some point you get tired of that and start moving your eyes in their sockets to track the tennis ball instead. But *what* you see—namely, the tennis ball as it bounces back and forth between the players (during, let us say, an especially long rally)—remains more or less constant. You may not even have noticed that you ceased swaying your head and began shifting your eyes instead. So you may not have noticed the difference. But surely there is a difference in what it's like to track the tennis ball by moving your head and tracking the tennis ball by moving your eyes. Even if you did not notice during the first-order perception, you can become aware of it upon reflection. Surely moving your head

[15] See Husserl IV, pp. 55–58, 144–151; Hua III, pp. 202–203; Husserl XVI, pp. 91, 149–150.

just feels different than moving your eyes. In short, there is a difference in kinesthetic sensations, a difference that you *can* become aware of upon reflection even if you have not been aware of it while attending to the tennis match.

Here is a different example, this time from Husserl himself (Hua IV, pp. 144–151). According to Husserl tactile experiences are Janus-like in that they involve two different sets of information. For instance, when you touch the surface of a table your fingertips record information about the tactile properties of the table itself—e.g., that it is smooth and cool, etc. Especially if the purpose of this operation is to gather information about the table, the tactile properties of the table are all that you notice. But Husserl claims that, in addition to picking up information about the tactile properties of the table, there is also proprioceptive sensation involved in the operation of touching the table. To demonstrate this, Husserl famously offers the following illustration. Rub your left hand with your right hand. Your right hand conveys information about the tactile properties of your left hand, which is probably not much different than the information you can gather by rubbing someone else's hand. But on your left hand, there is also the sensation of *being touched*. According to Husserl, this proprioceptive sensation of being touched is also involved in the right hand that is doing all the touching. And this proprioceptive sensation is distinguishable from the tactile information being gathered by the right hand. But typically you do not notice this bit of kinesthetic sensation. If that is right, again kinesthetic sensations seem to fit especially well Husserl's characterization of hyletic data. They are instrumental in perception, but they are not what you perceive; nevertheless, you can become aware of them upon reflection.

In summary, hyletic data are phenomenal qualia of specifically sensory episodes that you live through or undergo in experiences. Unlike whatever object of an experience, hyletic data are immanent to the experience. In perception, hyletic data are distinguishable from whatever it is that you perceive and, therefore, hyletic data are distinguishable from what the representationalists seem to mean by "content." Although hyletic data are typically unnoticed in first-order perceptual experiences, in opposition to the transparency thesis Husserl claims you can become aware in second-order reflection that hyletic data are distinct from what you perceive. What seems to fit this bill especially well is a group of hyletic data that Husserl calls "kinesthetic sensations." Although talk about kinesthetic sensations is not helpful when it comes to, for example, color sensations, I think they do help us get some phenomenological grip on Husserl's claims about hyletic data.[16] Now, since hyletic data are supposed to be distinct from what the representationalist means by "content," we already know that Husserl would be opposed to strong representationalism. In the next section, through a more detailed discussion of "apprehension," I will show *why* Husserl disagrees with strong representationalism.

[16] See Hopp (2008, esp. pp. 228–233) for some compelling reasons to be suspicious of the hyletic data of color experiences.

4 Apprehension

To repeat, according to strong representationalism, phenomenal quality q of experience E is *identical* to or constitutive of the representational content r of E. Therefore, according to strong representationalism, (1.3) if there is change in r then there is change in q. In this section, I will show that Husserl would deny (1.3) because he would claim that there *can* be constancy in hyletic data despite alteration in what the representationalist means by "content."

According to Husserl, there is an act-like, cognitive feature to perception that he calls "apprehension." It is by virtue of apprehension that what is immanent to consciousness can be directed towards some transcendent object. Since hyletic data are immanent, hyletic data are a feature of our consciousness. Hyletic data are what we live through or undergo during episodes of sensory awareness. In contrast, any object of perception is transcendent: it is not a part of our consciousness. On this view, it would be a kind of category mistake to regard some bits of hyletic data as the object of perception. Instead, apprehension bridges this gulf between what is immanent and what is transcendent. In *Analyses Concerning Passive Synthesis*, Husserl characterizes apprehension in this way. Apprehension is an "achievement of consciousness" that enables the "merely immanent content of sensible data, the so-called data of sensations or hyletic data … to exhibit that which is objectively 'transcendent'" (Hua XI, p. 17). In turn, the transcendent object is "exhibited," Husserl adds, by virtue of what he calls "adumbration" (*Abschattung*).

At least for normal adult humans, perception can (and—albeit arguably—*typically* does) involve the identification of a particular as an instance of some conceptual type. It makes perfectly good sense to credit you with seeing "a tree" or "a house," smelling "the scent of flowers," hearing "the bellowing of dogs," and the like. In a fairly minimal sense, if perception can be guided by, or can impact, higher-order cognitive states like belief, then there must be some cognitive feature to perception. For example, if your companion pointed over your shoulder at a crowd and exclaimed, "That guy is really tall!" you can direct your gaze into the crowd and identify the person she is talking about. Your companion's exclamation can serve as a kind of rule-like set of instructions for what to look for in locating the target. You know how to visually find a male person who is especially tall, even if he should be in a crowd of other male persons. And in this particular example, there is something clearly act-like or achievement-like in your perceptual operation.

One exegetical reason for regarding apprehension as some *cognitive* feature is this. What Husserl calls "act-matter" in the *Logical Investigations* is clearly some kind of conceptual content, and the similarity of its characterization to what Frege calls "sense" is widely acknowledged. Accordingly, act-matter is some kind of abstract, generic and rule-like mode of presentation that makes up the difference between believing that it is raining outside and believing that it is not. And according to Husserl, act matter just is "the sense of the objectifying apprehension (or briefly the *sense of apprehension* [*Auffassungssinn*])" (Hua XIX, p. 430). That is why I think apprehension is some kind of cognitive capacity: it is, as Husserl says, that which "bestows sense" or "interprets" sensations in the perception of objects.

The way I propose to show the connection between apprehension and adumbration is this. Occasionally, Husserl talks about the "surplus in the meaning" (*Überschuß*) of perception (Hua XIX, p. 660). This "surplus in the meaning" is some extra-sensory, conceptually motivated perceptual content, which in *Thing and Space* Husserl calls a "character of apprehension" (Hua XVI, pp. 45–46, 51). One of Husserl's own examples is this. Any time you see an object like a tree, you see the object only from some particular angle, with only one side or aspect of the tree available to you. So at any given time whatever hyletic data you enjoy vis-à-vis the tree will be restricted to some particular profile of that tree. Nevertheless, according to Husserl, "apprehension gets … not only to the side [available] but instead to … the entire tree" (Hua XVI, pp. 51–52). If it is right that in perception one typically intends more than what is sensorily available at any given time, then that *more*—the "surplus"—must be extra-sensory. Since apprehension is some cognitive capacity, I take this surplus to be some conceptual content. In turn, this conceptual content motivates the adumbration of an object as possessing further properties not available to the perceiving subject at some particular time. For a better sense of the role played by apprehension in perception, here are a couple of passages from Husserl.

To functionally isolate the role of apprehension in perception, Husserl offers us the following in §23 of the First *Logical Investigation*, where he writes:

> Let us conceive [*fingieren*] of a consciousness prior to all experiences [*Erfahrungen*], so that it is possible for it to enjoy sensations as we do. *But it does not see things and physical events, it perceives no trees and houses, not the flight of birds nor the bellowing of dogs.* As soon as one tries, one feels compelled to articulate the matter as follows: *to such a consciousness the sensations mean nothing, they do not count as indications of the properties of objects*, the complexity [of these sensations] does not point to the objects themselves. *These [sensations] are simply lived through [erlebt], but lack an objectifying interpretation* … (Hua XIX, p. 80: my italics)

Accordingly, what such a creature lacks is apprehension, the capacity to identify perceptual particulars under some set of concepts. Instead, the conceived creature is purely hyletic. Since hyletic data are non-intentional, this sort of creature cannot be directed toward any perceptual object. Even though such a creature may undergo the sort of sensations that we enjoy in perception, lacking apprehension, such a creature cannot construe those sensations as indicative of any perceptual object.

How might the strong representationalist react to this example? Given her identification of qualia and content, it may seem as though the strong representationalist would react like this: since qualia (i.e., the sensations) exist, so must exist representational content. In contrast, it seems Husserl would deny that there is any representational content at all in the above example. As a matter of fact, however, things are not that clear cut. According to Michael Tye, the chief advocate of strong representationalism, a necessary requirement of perceptual content is that it be "poised" to "impact" some properly cognitive state like belief or desire (Tye 1995, pp. 137–144; 2000, pp. 60–63). If the creature conceived in the above passage lacked such a cognitive capacity, it seems Tye would reply that such a creature lacks

any perceptual content. However, since for Tye content is identical to phenomenal quality, Tye would then wind up having to deny that such a creature is conceivable at all!

So let us try a different example, one about which there can be enough convergence between Husserl and strong representationalism about what can count as "content" for it to make sense that Husserl is opposed to strong representationalism. A favorite example of Husserl's is this. Staring at figure F in a wax museum, there can be some period of uncertainty as to whether F is real human being or a mannequin, and this uncertainty may be reflected in the representational content *of the perceptual episode* despite constancy of the sensory quality of staring at F. In Husserl's own words, from *Analyses Concerning Passive Synthesis*:

> During the doubt, whether a real human or a mannequin, two perceptual apprehensions obviously oscillate [*überschieben sich*] … The visual appearance… was earlier endowed with a *halo of apprehensional intentions*, which gave the sense "human body" and "human as such." And now slides over it the sense "clothed wax mannequin." To what is actually seen nothing has changed … both cases have in common the apperceived clothes, the hair, and the like, but in one case is flesh and blood, in the other wax. Should we return to the ultimate structures, we can also say for it that *one and the same supply of hyletic data is the common underlying basis for both overlapping apprehensions*. (Hua XI, pp. 33–34; my italics. See also Hua XIX, pp. 458–461; Hua XVI, pp. 45–47; Hua XXIII, pp. 40–41, 48–49.)

Accordingly, since "the same supply of hyletic data is the common underlying basis for both overlapping apprehensions," it seems there is constancy in hyletic data. However, there is a conflict in apprehensions: a conflict between seeing F as a human being and seeing F as a mannequin. If the content of perception is sensitive to this conflict in apprehensions, then according to Husserl it is possible that, where q is the quality of experience E and r is the representational content of E,

(3.1) There is change in r despite constancy in q.

And (3.1) contradicts (1.3), so it also contradicts (1.2). That is how Husserl would be opposed to strong representationalism.

How might the strong representationalist react to this argument? To avoid acknowledging the mannequin scenario as a counterexample, the strong representationalist might deny that there is any alteration in the representational content *of the perceptual episode*. Instead, if there is any "oscillation" going on then it is an oscillation between two conflicting beliefs. Although the sensory information involved must be "poised" to impact the cognitive system in order to count as representational content, the strong representationalist would then further insist that the perceptual content is poised to cohere with either belief. The representational content of the perception remains just as constant as the hyletic data, but it is one's belief about the object that alternates between "that F is a human" and "that F is a mannequin."

The disagreement, then, would boil down to this. Recall that by "content," the representationalist just means *what* you see as constrained by the perceptually relevant circumstances of the perceiver. And according to the strong representationalist, there is no change in seeing F as a human and seeing F as a mannequin. Either way, what you see just are the visible properties of F. In contrast, Husserl contends that there is a difference in *what you see* because there is a difference in *how* you see F.

In the version of the human-mannequin example in *Thing and Space*, Husserl is very clear on the latter point: "the same complex of sensational contents can ground *different perceptions*, *perceptions of different objects*, just as every mannequin illustrates, insofar as from a fixed point of view two perceptions stand in conflict, that of the mannequin and that of a human, *both made up of the same stock of sensations*" (Hua XVI, p. 45: my italics). So for Husserl the change is between different perceptual contents. Indeed, as I have highlighted, the change in apprehension results in an *objective* change. According to Husserl, therefore, *what* you see changes with the change in apprehensions: *what* you see when you see F as a human is different from *what* you see when you see F as a mannequin. But is Husserl's claim plausible?

Let me return to the connection I pointed out earlier between apprehension and adumbration. Apprehension is not an exclusively perceptual capacity. A belief about some object in the absence of any perceptual information is also an instance of apprehension. So a strictly cognitive account of the human-mannequin example is also possible. According to the strictly cognitive account, S believes that F is a human. By virtue of the concept "human," this piece of belief is holistically related to some additional set of beliefs. For instance, if S believes that F is a human, S must also believe that F is organic, capable of animation, perspiration, speech, etc. Alternatively, one can also say that S *anticipates* about F that it will betray such further properties.

As I understand him, Husserl contends that what S believes about F can have an influence on how S looks at F. Accordingly, by virtue of S's belief that F is a human, S will look for cues in support of that belief. Such visual cues, which are in line with what S anticipates about F, are what Husserl means by "adumbration." F is adumbrated—or, the profiles (*Abschattungen*) of F appear—as possessing properties that F *would* have if the belief that F is a human turned out to be correct. As Husserl puts it, there is a kind of "halo" around an object adumbrated in some particular way. In contrast, in support of the belief that F is a mannequin, there would be a different set of beliefs exclusive of the first set—and, along with it, a different set of (putative) visual cues that adumbrate F. In this light, I take Husserl's claim to amount to this: F adumbrated as a mannequin just *appears differently* than F adumbrated as a human. But the hyletic data *can* remain constant.

Now, representationalists in general, and Michael Tye, in particular believe that the content of perception is *non-conceptual*. One reason is that "content" is usually modeled on beliefs (and desires), and the content of such cognitive states is propositionsal, which is typically expressed by a that-clause. For example, if you believe that it is raining outside, then you endorse as true the proposition expressed by "that it is raining outside." But at least at face value, the content of sensory

experiences does not seem to be propositional at all.[17] So most representationalists claim that sensory experiences are non-conceptual.[18] Accordingly, I take it that what the representationalists mean by "phenomenal quality" is also non-conceptual or non-cognitive. So for the representationalist the phenomenal quality that is supposed to supervene on the perceptual content cannot be of the cognitive sort.[19] (In fact, Tye in particular denies that there are such "cognitive qualia" [Tye 1995, p. 140].) And that is in line with Husserl's characterization of hyletic data, which are also strictly sensory and non-cognitive.

On the other hand, recall that Tye agrees that there can be some influence or "impact" between the perceptual system and the cognitive system. And this influence need not be strictly in the direction from perception to cognition; there can be influence the other way around as well, from cognition to perception. To take Tye's own example, believing that the duck-rabbit figure is a duck can influence how the duck-rabbit appears: i.e., because you believe the figure to be a duck, you wind up seeing a duck instead of a rabbit (Tye 1995, p. 140). So I do not think the representationalist would stand in the way of the Husserlian claim that what you believe about F can have an influence on how you see F, on how F perceptually appears to you.

However, a consequence of these commitments is that the strong representationalist cannot afford to claim *both* that perceptual content is sensitive to cognitive influence *and* that there is a corresponding phenomenal quality that tracks any change due to that cognitive influence. As soon as the strong representationalist concedes that a change in cognition (i.e., from "that F is a human" to "that F is a mannequin") can have an influence on perceptual content, she has to nevertheless insist that what has changed in the perceptual content is non-conceptual. But what could that non-conceptual change possibly be? More precisely, how would you specify the change, for example, from a duck to a rabbit except by the activation of some cognitive capacity, such as "it looks like a *rabbit* now." On the other hand, if she admits that the change in perceptual content is indeed conceptual, either she has to then admit that there exist cognitive qualia that track this change in content or that phenomenal qualia remain constant despite alteration in perceptual content. Embracing the first disjunct—that there are cognitive qualia—forces the strong representationalist to admit that there are some qualia (namely, the cognitive sort) that are distinguishable from the content—contra strong representationalism. Embracing the second disjunct would have a similarly self-defeating impact on strong representationalism, since the second disjunct is a straightforward contradiction of (1.3). In short, as soon as the strong representationalist gives in to the claim of any cognitive influence upon perception robust enough to be meaningful and plausible, she must give up either her anti-conceptualism about phenomenal qualia or her identity-thesis between qualia and content.

[17] Byrne (2001) is a notable exception. Byrne simply claims that the content of sensory experiences is, in fact, propositional.

[18] See Dretske (1995), Tye (1995, 2000).

[19] See my earlier discussion of "cognitive qualia" in Sect. 2.

Another prospective objection from the strong representationalist is this. What she calls the "content" of perception just is what the subject perceives. But apprehension must be some subjective, psychological condition or process, and not anything that can be discerned in that which one perceives. So the Husserlian reaction must be quite beside the representationalist's point.

But recall that what the representationalist means by "content," as motivated by the transparency thesis, is a function of some relational fact. What the subject perceives is not exhausted by the properties of the object alone. Instead, the subject's own circumstances vis-à-vis the object also constrain what it is that she perceives. In this sense, the content implies not only facts about the object but some facts about the subject as well. Regarded in this way, opposing apprehensions may influence the content just as the location of the subject can influence the content, just because apprehensions may be construed as (partially) constitutive of the subject's perceptually relevant circumstances.

5 Kinesthetic Sensations

Not only does Husserl think that hyletic data can remain constant while the representational content alters, he also frequently claims that hyletic data can change while the representational content remains constant. Consequently, Husserl would also be opposed to weak representationalism. Again, according to weak representationalism, where q is the sensory quality of experience E and r is its representational content, (1.1) if there is change in q then there is change in r. In contrast, then, according to Husserl, it's possible that

(4.1) There is change in q despite constancy in r.

And (4.1) contradicts (1.1), and that is why Husserl would be opposed to weak representationalism as well.

Variability of this sort may at first appear perplexing. How can representational content remain constant while the phenomenal quality has changed? Would that not sort of be like Byrne's test subject who claims that the color chip remains blue between t_1 and t_2, but that at t_2 what it's like for her to see the color chip is as though of seeing something red (Byrne 2001, pp. 206–207)?

To illustrate this claim of variability in hyletic data despite constancy in representational content, Husserl frequently offers the following sort of example (Hua XIX, p. 359; 1973, pp. 44–45). In contrast to the color of a ball identified as uniformly red, the sensations involved in the experience of the red ball may be subtly variegated. Hopp (2008) has recently offered some compelling reasons to be suspicious of such claims, and I am largely sympathetic to his worries. An additional reason to worry about such examples, however, is available precisely because of Husserl's own commitment to apprehension in perception. The divergence between the variant sensations and the constant representational content may be diagnosed as a kind of quantitative asymmetry between, respectively, the amount of sensory information on offer and the relative paucity of the apprehensional repertoire of concepts. Cognitively, the subject inattentively assumes the ball

to be uniform in color with the simple color-concept "red"; but, upon closer inspection, the subject notices the variegation, for which she may very plausibly lack the requisite concepts. On this diagnosis, the representationalist should feel no threat. There is variegation, the representationalist may straightforwardly reply, just because there are corresponding alterations in lighting conditions, variegation in the color patterns of the object itself, minor alterations in the location of the perceiver, etc. In short, the variegation is a function of any number of environmental and circumstantial variables that figure into the relationality of what the representationalist means by "content." Otherwise, the *seeming* divergence between qualia and content may be merely a matter of cognitive inattentiveness.

But recall that group of hyletic data that Husserl describes as "kinesthetic sensations," which seem to fit Husserl's criteria for hyletic data especially well. The experience, for example, of muscle movement in the eye sockets as one tracks a moving object is instrumental in the perception of that object. And there must be something that that's like. But the muscle movement is not what is perceived. Nevertheless, upon reflection, one can become attentive to it. And when one reflects upon the muscle movement, the content of that second-order awareness would be noticeably distinguishable from the content of the first-order perception that it enabled. If change in kinesthetic sensations without any change in representational content were conceivable, then (4.1) should be conceivable.

Given the relational set-up of representationalism, it may appear at first glance as though kinesthetic sensations can be accommodated by the representationalist as just another condition implied by the representational content. Just as one cannot see the front-side of the house unless one were located in the right way vis-à-vis the house, it may seem plausible to claim that what one sees when visually tracking a moving object would not obtain without the right kind of bodily movement. If you are tracking the launch of a rocket by tilting your head backwards, it may seem that you could not track the rocket and see what you see without tilting your head backwards.

But this is clearly not the case. What you see by tilting your head backwards can obtain by pivoting back on your lower spine instead. Tilting your head back and pivoting back on your lower spine differ in hyletic data—i.e., they differ in kinesthetic sensations. But it is plausible that what you see in either case cannot be distinguished from one another. If that is right, the representationalist's "content" of perception can remain identical despite change in hyletic data. And any number of such banal examples is easily conceivable. Accordingly, Husserl's view seems to be right, that some set of kinesthetic sensations is perceptually instrumental in that it may be sufficient for some perceptual episode, but it may not be necessary.

Recall that by "content," the representationlist does not mean just the properties of the perceived object. Instead, representational content is a function of the relation between the perceivable properties of the object and the perceptually relevant circumstances of the perceiving subject. Nevertheless, *that which* is perceived as constrained by these subjective circumstances just is the phenomenologically salient content involved in the transparency thesis. Now, if hyletic data should exist at all, they must count as (partially) constitutive of the subject's circumstances. In this light, Husserl's line against weak representationalism appears to be that, just as a

token content may be compatible with different environmental factors also constitutive of the subject's circumstances—e.g., looking at an eclipse through UV-protected goggles as opposed to UV-protected windowpanes—a token content can be compatible with different sets of hyletic data. However, unlike conceiving the former kind of compatibility, to conceive of the latter kind of compatibility just is to conceive against the core claim of weak representationalism—namely, that (1.1) if there is change in phenomenal quality q of experience E then there is change in the representational content r of E.

A related point to be emphasized is this. The introduction of kinesthetic sensations poses a threat to the transparency thesis in another way. Again, according to the transparency thesis, the phenomenal quality of a perceptual episode is introspectively indistinguishable from the content of that episode. Although the kinesthetic sensations that are instrumental in perception usually go unnoticed, it seems clear that one can become aware of them in a second-order way upon reflection. What it's like to move your eyes, your head, your hand, etc., in a certain way, is clearly discernible with the appropriate degree of attention. And what you find in attending to the kinesthetic sensations involved in perception will be nothing like the content of perception enabled by the corresponding bodily operations. If you happen to be visually tracking the rocket by tilting your head back, then what it's like to tilt your head back is a part of what it's like to see the rocket taking off. However, *what you see* in looking at a rocket take off is nothing like what it's like to tilt your head back. Husserl writes in *Thing and Space* that kinesthetic sensations

> play an essential role in the apprehension of any external thing, but they are neither apprehended themselves nor do they either properly or improperly make the matter presentable … Nothing qualitative corresponds to [these sensations] in the thing, and they also do not adumbrate the physical object … And yet, without their aid, there is no physical object there, no thing (Hua XVI, p. 160).

The representationalist reply to this objection is, as a matter of fact, pretty predictable. Michael Tye, for instance, regards proprioceptive episodes like pains and itches as non-conceptual representational content (Tye 2000, p. 50). According to the representationalist, pains and itches relate the subject to the corresponding conditions of her body. Should the representationalist acknowledge the existence of kinesthetic sensations, then, she must believe that kinesthetic sensations relate the subject to the corresponding sensorimotor exercises.

Nevertheless, the representationalist must resist the idea that kinesthetic sensations can vary independently of representational content, since that would be to give up on the claim of the supervenience of qualia (of at least a particular sort) on content. In her defense, the representationalist would have to make a claim like the following. Although palpable upon second-order reflection, kinesthetic sensations are phenomenologically first-order irrelevant. In other words, one generally does not take notice of kinesthetic sensations—because, for instance, one is so absorbed in the object that one is perceiving.

As I have already noted, Husserl would agree with the view that kinesthetic sensations are generally not first-person *noticed*. But there is a subtle difference

between not *noticing* (*aufmerken*, *achten*) and phenomenological impalpability. Consider again in the above citation that, without the "aid" of kinesthetic sensations there would be "no physical object there, no thing." I take this to mean that to be aware of a perceptual object just is to be aware of the kinesthetic sensations involved. It is just that one is not paying attention to the kinesthetic sensations. But I take Husserl's point to be that there can be change in kinesthetic sensations despite stability and constancy in *what one does notice*, namely the object that appears. If that is right, then qualia (of the specifically kinesthetic sort) do not supervene on what is—based on the transparency thesis—to be counted as "representational content."

6 Conclusion

In this paper I offered a defense of why Husserl would have disagreed with at least some versions of contemporary representationalism. First, I presented two versions of contemporary representationalism. Second, I explained what Husserl means by "hyletic data" to show that they functionally match what most contemporary philosophers mean by "phenomenal qualia." Third, after pointing out that Husserl would be explicitly opposed to strong representationalism, I endeavored to show why. The basic reason is that there can be change in representational content despite constancy in hyletic data. Such variability is conceivable if we agree that a change in cognitive exercise relative to the perceptual object can generate a change in perceptual content. Finally, by pointing out a group of hyletic data that Husserl calls "kinesthetic sensations," I showed that there can be change in hyletic data despite constancy in representational content. So weak representationalism turns out to be suspicious as well.

Acknowledgments Early work on this paper was made possible from a generous creative leave grant from the Office of Research and Development at California State University, Los Angeles during the spring quarter of 2009. I am grateful to Mark Balaguer, David Pitt and Charles Siewert, who read ancestors of this paper and offered invaluable comments and criticisms. Drafts of this paper were publicly delivered on two occasions. First at a meeting of the California Phenomenology Circle at UC Riverside, where I benefited from helpful comments and questions from, in particular, Ronald McIntyre, Samantha Matherne and Mark Wrathall. Second at the inaugural meeting of the Workshop in Phenomenological Philosophy at Seattle University, where I benefited from further comments and questions from Steven Crowell, John J. Drummond, Burt Hopkins, Walter Hopp, Anne Ozar, Abe Stone and Jeffrey Yoshimi. The paper was much improved by such feedback. However, whatever remains faulty in this paper is entirely my responsibility.

References

Byrne, A. (2001). Intentionalism defended. *Philosophical Review, 110*, 199–240.

Crane, T. (2009). Intentionalism. In B. P. McLaughlin, et al. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of philosophy of mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dretske, F. (1995). *Naturalizing the mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Harman, G. (1990). The intrinsic quality of experience. *Philosophical Perspectives, 4*, 31–52.

Hopp, W. (2008). Husserl on sensation, perception, and interpretation. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy, 38*(2), 219–246.

Horgan, T., & Tienson, J. (2002). The intentionality of phenomenology and the phenomenology of intentionality. In D. J. Chalmers (Ed.), *Philosophy of mind: Classical and contemporary readings* (pp. 520–533). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hua IV. Husserl, E. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie*: Zweites Buch*: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*. M. Biemel (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952.

Hua XI. Hussserl, E. *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis*. M. Fleischer (Ed.). Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1966.

Hua XVI. Husserl, E. *Ding und Raum*. U. Claesges (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973.

Hua III. Husserl, E. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*: Erstes Buch: *Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*. K. Schumann (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.

Hua XXIII. Husserl, E. *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen*. Eduard Marbach (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980.

Hua XIX. Husserl, E. *Logische Untersuchungen*: Zweiter Band. Ursula Panzer (Ed.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984.

Hua XXXVIII. Husserl, E. *Wahrnehmung und Aufmerksamkeit*. T. Vongehr and R. Giuliani (Eds.). Dordrecht: Springer, 2004.

Keller, P. (1999). *Husserl and Heidegger on human experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kind, A. (2003). What's so transparent about transparency? *Philosophical Studies, 115*, 225–244.

Kind, A. (2007). Restrictions on representationalism. *Philosophical Studies, 134*, 405–427.

Pitt, D. (2004). The phenomenology of cognition or what it's like to think that p? *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 69*(1), 1–36.

Siewert, C. (1998). *The significance of consciousness*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Twain, M. (2010). The awful German language. In R. Blount Jr. (Ed.), *A tramp abroad*. Washington D.C.: Library of America.

Tye, M. (1995). *Ten problems of consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Tye, M. (2000). *Consciousness, color and content*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Tye, M. (2007). Intentionalism and the argument from no common content. *Philosophical Perspectives, 21*, 589–613.