Husserl's Concept of the Noema: A Daubertian Critique[1]

Karl Schuhmann

1. A note on Daubert

Next to the concept of intentionality, there is one other concept of Husserlian phenomenology which enjoys a certain notoriety, above all in American philosophy: the concept of noema. The first to apply this concept in a fruitful way was Aron Gurwitsch, who, drawing on insights of Gestalt psychology, already incorporated it in his dissertation *Phenomenology of Thematics and the Pure Ego* (published originally in German in 1929). It was introduced into American thought when Gurwitsch gave prominence to it in his *The Field of Consciousness* of 1964 (published originally in French in 1957). In 1969 Gurwitsch's interpretation was challenged by Dagfinn Føllesdal who, drawing on the Fregean notion of *Sinn*, interpreted the noema as an abstract intensional entity.[2] The difference between these two conceptions has aptly been characterized as that between noema as percept and noema as concept,[3] and it has since become customary to speak of two "schools" of interpretation. In what follows I want to outline what is in all probability the earliest discussion — and criticism — of the noema as conceived along Gurwitschian lines. It was worked out around 1930, i.e. immediately after the publication of Gurwitsch's German dissertation, and is remarkable not only for its early date but also for the fact that it is part of a larger realist (yet still phenomenological) theory of cognition which is in some respects — though not in all — comparable even to the framework in which a non-Gurwitschian approach like that of Woodruff Smith and McIntyre has been worked out.[4]

The philosopher who developed this conception was Johannes Daubert (1877—1947), a philosopher who played a major role in the early phases of phenomenology. It was he who, from 1902 onward, propagated Husserl's newly published *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901) to his fellow students in Munich. He thereby initiated the Munich school of phenomenology, which is actually the starting-point for the whole Phenomenological Movement as we know it today.[5] Though on very close terms with Husserl, Daubert's distinctive influence made itself felt above all among the members of this Munich (and later also of the Göttingen) branch of phenomenology,[6] helping to determine both its ontological realism and its interest in problems of logic and philosophy of language. This influence developed exclusively by way of discussions and of lectures Daubert gave to his fellows, for in fact Daubert never published anything throughout his life, notwithstanding several attempts to do so at the insistence of his friends, and in particular of Husserl. He did, however, commit his ideas to paper, composing heaps of manuscripts written in a very peculiar and extravagant type of shorthand. Daubert did this in the years between 1902, when he first encountered Husserl (who himself became famous for his mountains of shorthand manuscripts) and 1914, when he volunteered for the army after the outbreak of World War I. After the war, he apparently gave up philosophy in order to run a farm on the outskirts of Munich. In 1929 he sold this rather extensive estate, with which he could no longer cope, in order to buy a smaller one, which he succeeded in doing, however, only in 1932. In the intervening period he made a fresh start in philosophy, preparing a great number of drafts for an article he planned to write on the phenomenological notion of evidence, an article which was to appear in a *Festschrift* for one of his old Munich friends. But once again he failed to produce a final version, and all we have is a shorthand convolute of about 170 folio pages, which, together with Daubert's earlier manuscripts, is preserved at the Bavarian State Library in Munich.[7] It is this convolute, catalogued under the sigil "Daubertiana A I 3", which lies at the base of the following discussion of Daubert's thought.

In this collection of notes and drafts, Daubert not only treats evidence as such, but also touches on a range of themes concerning the theory of cognition in general. Another prominent feature is that Daubert takes into account a considerable amount of phenomenological literature, both old and new. For my present purpose I

Topoi **8**: 53—61, 1989.

will mention only Husserl's *Ideas* I of 1913 and Gurwitsch's already mentioned dissertation of 1929. In Part Four of *Ideas* I Husserl had put forward a doctrine of evidence based on the distinction between noesis and noema. Thus, Daubert also had to go into this aspect of Husserl's thought.[8] The most recent guide available to understanding the noema then, however, was Gurwitsch's dissertation, and so Daubert carefully studied this work in commenting upon and criticizing the Husserlian doctrine.[9]

2. The noema in Husserl

A brief sketch of Husserl's theory of the noema is in order here before we turn to Daubert's own interpretation of this concept. This presentation must be based entirely on the theory as it appears in *Ideas* I, as this was the only Husserlian source available at the time.[10]

Husserl introduces the noema in the framework of his well-known "transcendental" approach to the structure of consciousness. As Husserl avows, already in a pre-transcendental setting all consciousness can be shown to be intentional, i.e. to be consciousness *of* something. Performing what he calls a transcendental or phenomenological reduction, Husserl now goes on to explain how intentionality comes about. Consciousness taken as such is essentially noetic, i.e. it consists in the apprehension, by way of noeses, of certain "stuffs" and sensuous elements it finds present in itself. It is the task of noeses to refer this stuff to objects by characterizing it in certain ways (by "understanding" it *as* this or that). The noesis is the function thanks to which, for instance, a sensed redness or roughness is apprehended *as* pertaining to this or that red or rough thing and as presenting an adumbration of it. The noesis is thus *the* intentional function, it constitutes the object-directed "sense" of conscious acts, such as apprehending an object, intending (meaning) or representing it, taking a stand with regard to it (be it in believing, valuing or the like), and so on.

All such noetic moments, now, refer in different ways to something objective which as such is no part of consciousness, but to which consciousness is directed. All experiences, that is, have what is called a *noematic correlate*. The noema is the counterpart of the experience. It is something intrinsically and necessarily connected thereto and running parallel therewith — notwithstanding the noema's essential transcendence with regard to consciousness. The noema of a perception, for instance, is not the complete and real thing out there, for between this thing and my perception the relevant intrinsic and necessary connection does not exist. Rather, it is the perceived thing *as such* and insofar as it is given under this aspect and in this concrete adumbration. The very difference between the natural attitude and the phenomenologically reduced attitude consists in this: that in natural life we do not care about noemas but are interested in things as they are in themselves; in phenomenological reflection, in contrast, we focus on the fact that "things" are there for us only as perceived, as judged, as imagined, etc. — in short, only by virtue of noemata and their noetically constituted "senses".

Husserl gives an example which is designed at one and the same time to help explain the relation both between the natural and phenomenological attitude, and between thing and noema. Suppose I see a tree out there in the garden. The tree is something existing at a certain place in space; my seeing it is a psychic state in me, this real person. Perceiving the tree produces a real relation between two realities, the perceiver and the tree. Now, this perception could turn out to be a hallucination. The tree would in that case not exist; but my perception would still be there as something taking place in a real person. If, however, we perform the phenomenological reduction and reflect upon the natural, straightforward perception of the tree, then all questions of real existence will be bracketed, and thus the question as to whether or not the tree exists becomes irrelevant. And then we see that in any event the tree is intended and perceived *as* this very tree. Hence the reduction leaves the content of the natural experience completely unchanged. In the reduced perception there is nothing more, but also nothing less, than was present already in the natural perception. A real tree is now understood as a tree-noema carrying the character of reality, whereas a hallucinated tree simply carries the noematic character of being hallucinated. The tree has become a "tree" between inverted commas. All statements, that is, now refer to it only insofar as it is perceived or is the correlate of my perception, not insofar as it is something existing independently out there. The tree, understood as a thing experienced in the natural attitude, "can burn up, can dissolve into its chemical elements etc. But the sense — which is the sense of *this* perception — cannot burn up, it has no chemical elements, no forces, and no real properties at all" (184).

Having thus sharply distinguished between noema (of a perception, etc.) and object, Husserl now goes on to establish how these two are related. The noema, he had already stated, is the *sense* of the object, the significance it has for us in our experiences. All we know, and can ever know of the object, is this noematic sense. The noema, then, "represents the real thing of nature" (279); it bundles together the significance this real thing displays in my various experiences of it. Of course, a thing is "more" than any given noema, i.e. than is revealed in any given experience of it. It is something real, whereas the noema is no reality at all. But this "more" of reality now turns out to mean just that the thing can be apprehended also in other noemata than the given one. The real thing, Husserl now says, is nothing better than "an idea in the Kantian sense" (297). At the same time it is the given noema alone which makes the concrete noetic experience an experience of just this concrete object as it appears in just these given adumbrations.

3. Straightforward experience and reflection

Husserl introduces the noema by way of a specific reflection upon the structure of consciousness, and then in a second step confronts his results with what is experienced in the natural attitude. Daubert prefers to join the battle only at this second point, where Husserl describes our natural way of being directed at things.

Daubert agrees with Husserl on one fundamental issue: psychic acts do occur in real people, they are about real objects, and there is no necessary interrelation between these poles. To Daubert, however, this does not mean that a perception would remain intact if its object did not exist; rather, it means that the object remains unchanged no matter whether it is or is not perceived. Thus, when Husserl says: "it is evident that perception and the thing perceived are not really and in essence united and connected" (73), Daubert echoes with: "there exists no essential relation between the perception of the thing and its existence" (8r).[11] But when Husserl goes on to affirm: "the world of transcendent '*res*' depends entirely on actual consciousness" (92), Daubert counters with: "the things we experience have no internal relation to consciousness. It is not nonsense to think an in itself without perception" (8r). Consciousness, in Husserl's Platonizing (and of course also Cartesianizing) scheme is somehow a "higher" type of being because it would remain unaffected by the non-existence of its objects. These objects, on the other hand, become constituted only in acts of different sorts. Against this, Daubert affirms: "if we had no organs to apprehend things, then we would not know them — but they would still exist" (127v). A stone remains what it is, irrespective of whether another stone is in contact with it; and in the same way it is not affected by the fact that a real person is conscious of it.

The common ground presupposed by Husserl's and Daubert's contrary views lies in that according to both of them the physical objects of consciousness are transcendent to the acts in which we are conscious of them. Acts and objects can never "meet" so as to form a unified contiguous and continuous whole; they remain forever apart as entities of a different order or category of being. "There is a fundamental difference", Husserl says, "between an experience's mode of being and a thing's mode of being" (76). Or, in Daubert's more traditional phrasing: "the consciousness of redness is not itself red" (16v).[12] But for Daubert this is only to say that conscious acts neither add to nor detract anything from the proper content of their objects. "One cannot read off from the face of a thing that it is intended by us" (4r).

In Husserl, now, it is the object that is dependent on consciousness. In Daubert, in contrast, the object is autonomous, and the act depends on it for all it is and can be. Perception, for instance, if it is to be perception at all and not hallucination, depends completely on the presence of a real thing. The object's mode of existence determines the way in which it can be apprehended. From the nature of the centaur it follows that it can only be imagined, and from that of the sound that it cannot but be heard — one cannot smell a cardinal number.

This means, more specifically, that a perceptual act can only exist *together with* the thing perceived. The latter, as it were, saturates the former, gives it the capacity to be the act that it is. Husserl's very project of performing a reduction by suspending reality while keeping perception intact is in consequence impossible and contradictory. "I cannot suspend the object, since for an act its object-directed interests are essential" (56v). Indeed, perception is not essential for things to exist, but existing things are essential for perception. Things are inseparable from perception, if perception is to exist at all.

It is because of its independence of acts that the object appears as transcendent to them. And it is

because of the act's dependence upon the object that the experiencing act must manifest that simplicity and straightforwardness which consists in its being focused exclusively on this very object, and not, for instance, on itself (by way of a reflection). Hence Daubert says:

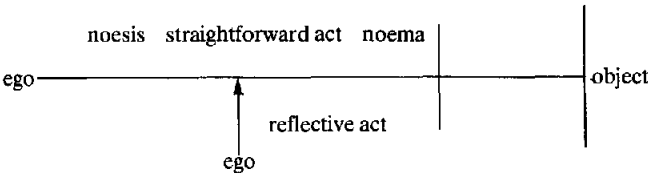
> In the straightforward attitude I have but one direction of my life, namely the one toward what is transcendent. I am "self-forgetful" or more precisely "not reflecting". To live in the straightforward attitude is to live in what is objective. However, even in the straightforward attitude life does not consist of objects, but of experiences. But to have experiences is not yet to know that one has them. (11r)

The "full natural attitude" does not consist of such object-directed attitudes alone, however, but is rather "a complex consisting in part of straightforward attitudes, and in part of naturally[13] reflecting ones" (11r). How is this "natural reflection" to be understood? According to Daubert, reflection is nothing peculiar, not somehow of a "higher" order, and not something to be understood along Cartesian lines, i.e. in terms of an opposition between two diametrically opposed modes of ("inner" and "outer") experience. Reflection must, rather, be understood in terms of the basic model of the experience of things other than consciousness itself. An experience reflected upon is in the same sense transcendent to the reflection which turns toward it as is a thing with regard to an act of perception. Furthermore, when act B reflects on act A, then it is exclusively A, the first of the two experiences, and the one which has become an object, which bestows content and certainty upon the reflection which picks it out. The doctrine concerning the transcendence of one act to the other is, it is true, not worked out in detail in Daubert's manuscipts. But then all the more does he insist on the second aspect, namely that acts, including acts of reflection, can never be self-guaranteeing or self-certifying: they cannot serve as their own "truth-makers".

To reflect upon a straightforward experience is to shift one's attention from the object of the experience to the original experience itself. To cognize it as such is at the same time to make its original object recede from the focus of consciousness. This object becomes in a sense irrelevant and neutralized; at any rate, it loses its decisive role. But all this differs in no way from what happens all the time in regard to ordinary objects of experience, for instance, when I am no longer interested in one thing and turn to another. This is a perfectly "natural" and legitimate procedure; and so also is reflection. Things become problematic only when Husserl sets out to affirm that his phenomenology "moves *entirely* in acts of reflection" (144; my italics). For this is to forestall and to forfeit all direct relation to the world, and is as a consequence to become ensnared in reflection and so to abandon all contact with reality. It is to "reduce" reality throughout, as Husserl indeed, and rightly, affirms of his own procedure.[14] But then Husserl's other claim, that in such an *epoché* nothing of our original straightforward experience gets lost, and that everything remains as of old (183), is exposed as an illusion. On the contrary: "I cannot reflect at one and the same time on the act of consciousness and on its object. Here the objects differ, and so do the acts. In a rigorously reflective attitude I could not attain to any transcendent object at all" (7r). With regard to the natural attitude, a "pure" reflection as aimed at by Husserl is of the same cognitive value as, for example, a dream or a series of hallucinations — its value is close to zero.

4. Immediate awareness and noetic consciousness

In the text just quoted (7r), Daubert sketches the following diagram of the Husserlian conception of consciousness:



We are to think of this diagram as depicting two acts, one straightforward, one reflective, succeeding each other in time. In the straightforward act, first of all, the ego, by performing a noesis, reaches out to an object by means of a noema. In the reflective act, however, it gets hold only of the straightforward act as such, uncovering both the noesis through which it became realized and the noema connected with it; but with this it loses sight of the original object.[15] Daubert himself will for the most part go along with this conception, but now he will give it his own interpretation.

Both in the case of the straightforward and in the case of the reflective act the respective object lies beyond the act itself. One may conclude from this that neither act is proof against error and illusion.[16] How, then, can we ever be sure that we have attained reality? Here

Daubert introduces the notion of immediate awareness (*Innesein*), a notion which has no parallel in Husserl.[17] To be sure, Daubert subscribes to the Husserlian view that the idea of an act as something aiming at a target that transcends it yields the correct understanding of the scheme of intentionality. But to him intentional experience is not the last word. Intentional experience is something secondary or derivative which in every case presupposes a deeper level of pre-intentional "immediate awareness". Reality, and objectivity in general, he argues, are not to be found in intentional acts taken as such, i.e. insofar as they are intentional, but only insofar as they in fact touch their object and are immediately connected with it in immediate awareness. "Reality is to be found in the most elementary relation of my body to an external thing" (74v).[18] I am aware of myself immediately not as an ego, but as a living body,[19] and reality is given to me in the first place not as a set of objective entities I can only observe from without, but as things upon which my body acts and with which I interact in space (35v).

From this Daubert draws several important conclusions with regard to the doctrine of intentional consciousness as advocated by Husserl. First, the Husserlian notion of a pure ego — and on this issue Daubert sides with Gurwitsch — is untenable. "The ego as the subject of acts (in the sense of a pure consciousness-of), both as an apprehending and as a thinking subject, is nothing real. From this ego there leads no way to reality" (99v).[20] Secondly — and here he sides in a sense with Husserl — the same applies also to the object-pole: "The intentional world insofar as it is intended, is nothing real. Here Husserl is correct" (99v). Thus Daubert accepts in principle Husserl's description of intentional consciousness as *ego-cogito-cogitata*.[21] But now, if neither the ego nor what it is intentionally conscious of have a place in reality, then the same must be said also of the intentional acts themselves. And indeed Daubert unequivocally states that all acts (including noeses and the noemata related to them) "fall under non-being" (118r).[22]

Intentional consciousness is the basic theme of all phenomenology and therefore of Daubert's phenomenology, too. Must we then draw the conclusion that phenomenology has to deal with nothing more than spurious relations between two no less spurious poles? Surely not. Daubert wishes only to stress that, if one seeks to make the structure of intentional consciousness the ultimate foundation of all psychic life, then, as indeed in the case of Husserl himself, one will end up with a void idealism. There is, however, another possibility. This is to view the really existing subject of all psychic life as my living body,[23] and to see psychic occurrences as events taking place therein (as accidents inhering in the bodily substance). When referring to psychic occurrences, etc. as *real* occurrences, Daubert speaks by preference of *experiences*, preserving the term "act" for those cases where the scheme of intentionality applies. It is experiences, now, which furnish all the certainty we can ever dispose of. "Only this much is certain: my real being here and the reality of the experiences" (121v). And in these experiences we are immediately aware of our own body and of the world in which we are actively and passively engaged.

Immediate awareness becomes consciousness properly speaking, and psychic experiences function as acts, in that moment where intentionality enters in. This occurs when I go beyond what is directly present by taking into account elements which in one sense or another "are not", i.e. are not given here and now. Thus, as Gurwitsch had shown,[24] the ego comes to the fore only in that "general reflection" which subsumes the given experience under a whole complex of non-present experiences (under the whole stream of experiences), and psychic experiences turn into acts when they put the thing they are occupied with *at a distance*, making of it an object beyond immediate reach, for example, by adding to it possibilities regarding what is unknown, etc. (80r; Husserl was wont to speak in this context of "horizons"). In all these cases, nothing real is superadded to that of which we are immediately aware, and this is why Daubert, with regard to the threefold structure of intentional consciousness, had said that this consciousness is the field of non-being. That which body, experience and thing acquire within intentionality, is not a new and additional reality, but rather a new sort of functional connection.

Intentional consciousness preserves everything contained and revealed in immediate awareness. It has, however, become incorporated into a more elaborate version of psychic life, a kind of superstructure presupposing the solid fundament of our bodily existence in the world. The key to the switch from the one level to the other is, according to Daubert, the *noesis*. Noeses are that which binds the two types of consciousness together; they secure the unity of our psychic life.

For Daubert, too, the noesis identifies that which is immediately given, subsumes it under categories and

concepts, inserts it into the horizon of what had been given before; in short, it develops frameworks into which to inscribe and by which to classify the things of which we are immediately aware.[25] Instead of speaking of noesis, therefore, Daubert often prefers the more general term of *Dafürhaltung*, holding something to be this or that, taking it as such and such, shaping it in such and such a manner. "There flows into all intentional experience and perception an intentional holding, and it is this which in the proper sense is pregiven" (8r). Indeed, such holdings are for instance prior to single things, in the sense that they are instruments we must already dispose of if we are to recognize a thing as being of this or that sort, etc. It is holdings which first yield *objects* to us in the strict sense of the term.

With regard to such holdings or shapings two aspects must be distinguished. The first concerns the noesis properly speaking; the second will lead us to its noematic correlate. Our holding something to be this or that is first of all distinguished from our being immediately aware of it: holdings interpret what is given along certain lines and in connection with certain schemes or rules. In this sense they may be said to be something superadded by the subject. They are a kind of strategy by which we approach what is immediately given. They are, we might say, a part of the subject's tacit knowledge, a matter of knowing how, not of knowing that. Hence Husserlian phenomenology with its reflection on noeses and what is necessarily connected with them, indeed moves exclusively within the sphere of pure or mere subjectivity. "Strictly speaking Husserl investigates nothing but holdings, including holding something to be real or transcendent. But when I analyze exclusively the content of such holdings, I remain in a certain sense forever in the sphere of immanence" (1v). Or, as Daubert says elsewhere: "Husserl's analysis of consciousness, when phenomenologically reflecting upon acts and their intentional contents, is an analysis of holdings, together with their intuitive fulfillings, their positings and neutralizations. This is indeed a special sphere,[26] it is completely free from all presupposition of reality. But from here one gains no access at all to real being" (10r). Holdings are not something real to be taken as such, they result from the "sedimentation" of previous experiences *in the subject*. In that sense, the subject may to a certain degree freely dispose of them.

This very subjectivity and plasticity of holdings means, however, that they are at a distance from reality as it is immediately given in our concrete experience. It is this distance which opens up the possibility of error, illusion and hallucination — the very phenomena which for Husserl had been so important in his argument for transcendental idealism. Yet, as Daubert insists, they are in fact unable to serve Husserl's purpose, since occurrences of this sort relate only to *our holdings*, and these are mere functions and nothing real at all. Errors etc. are not accidents of our bodies in the sense psychic experiences are; and nor are they ways in which things would exist in different "possible worlds". "Errors and deceptions result from a thematically wrong coordination between the intention and the mode of being peculiar to the object" (118v).

5. The noema and the real thing

What, now, as concerns the noematic correlate of such noetic holdings in the Daubertian conception? All holdings, even erroneous ones, Daubert tells us, are functions endowed with a certain directedness, they all aim at a real object they hold to be such and such. Indeed, the object plays a role with respect to holdings, even a decisive one. It, too, *functions* in its turn, but now as that which is "authoritative" (*massgebend*) for all the relevant holdings.[27] Here, too, Daubert criticizes the Husserlian doctrine. The possibility of error remains, to be sure, forever open. But so does the possibility of correcting error. This is so because there is a standard by which to test our holdings: the very object as it appears in immediate awareness. By virtue of this standard we can in principle both detect and correct the errors which may occur in our intentional acts. "A holding, according to its sense, demands something which would be authoritative for it; something that in its turn cannot be some further holding" (10r).

Now errors may both occur and be corrected in all types of intentional consciousness. This means that, while all intentional consciousness is interspersed with noetic holdings, such consciousness presupposes also certain modes of immediate givenness throughout. Already that fundamental layer of intentionality which is perception

> is almost inextricably united with "ideas" (= holdings). At any rate we do not have on one side the idea of the thing, and next to it the thing perceived. In every perception things are apprehended "in the sense of . . .". It is even the case that we often do not accept the momentarily appearing colour, and this in favour of the colour the thing "really" has (88r).

In carrying out such a correction, it is not the awareness-component of perception which "explodes" (to use Husserl's term: 287); it is the (as it turns out: erroneous) holding-component which is replaced by a more adequate one (10v). And, to underline this once more, the standard of adequateness here is taken from the thing of which we are immediately aware.

If the noesis is a conscious activity of holding on the basis of bodily experience, then its correlate, the noema, must be said to be the thing which is held "in the sense of . . .", the result of an adequate and successful holding. The noema, for example, of perception is indeed, as Husserl said, the perceived *as perceived*. But here, again, Daubert censures Husserl for his loss of the object and consequent reductionism. It is impossible, Daubert argues, to separate the realm of senses from the realm of things, for the former would be destroyed if the latter became annihilated. The noema

> has its sense and thereby refers to the object. Yet the noema is not the *origin* of sense; rather it takes it from the object. We demand always to understand the *object* and to apprehend it in *its* correct sense (13v; my italics).

Thus "the sense is there prior to my apprehension. Every apprehension presupposes the given object and *its* sense" (146r, my italics). Certainly — and here Daubert agrees once more with Husserl — a noema is never an object, let alone a physical thing. But Daubert goes on to argue that for this very reason it can never occur without some object to which in one sense or another it would be attached.

> The object belongs to the essence of the noema, as this is in fact nothing but an apprehension of an object. Thus the object is in this sense immanent to the noema and cannot be bracketed therefrom (147r).[28]

Husserl had advanced two principal arguments in support of his thesis that the object belongs to a sphere apart from the realm of noematic senses. First, the object can, together with all its characters, including that of reality, be *represented* by noematic senses (214). And secondly, one and the same object may become the target of different noemata, because it is nothing but an X to be *determined* by a multiplicity of overlapping noematic senses (273f.).

To the first argument Daubert objects that reality (the "character" or "property" of being real) can under no circumstances become a merely noematic character of our perception. "For it concerns the thing, and precisely the thing which can also be represented or meant. But we surely do not mean by thing a possibility of perception" (9r). To mean or to represent a thing, this is to say, is not to reflect on the possibilities of one's perception; it is to refer to a *thing*. And from this it follows that noemata are not at home in the sphere of immediate awareness any more than noeses are. For there they would serve no function. Something fully present "has no noema at all" (17v).

Daubert's refutation of the second argument proceeds in three steps. First, objects cannot be determined in completely arbitrary ways; our freedom of determination is strictly limited by the things themselves. Husserl, of course, also recognized this rather obvious fact. But to him it meant only that noematic senses referring to the same objective X must be compossible and compatible. Yet according to Daubert, it is not the mutual harmony of noemata which serves here as standard (how, otherwise, could we measure the appropriateness of any single noematic sense?). It is, rather, the object itself which sets the standard for the sense or senses in which it may be taken up. "It is my affair to apprehend the object in this or that way, but it is the object which fixes the limits of apprehension" (138v). The object may be apprehended under several *Gestalten*, but all are prefigured by the materials making up this object. The object therefore remains authoritative throughout — authorizing, so to speak, even the freedom of my apprehension.

Secondly (and more specifically with regard to perception) things, according to Husserl, are always given in adumbrations. The thing-noema is by definition forever inadequate, and the thing, therefore, becomes rather a Kantian idea. But, Daubert says, this is to reason too quickly. Even though one-sided adumbrations characterize the way in which things are *accessible* to us, this is not yet to say that it is such adumbrations which constitute the very *sense* of things (8v): "what is constituted in my acts, is not the object, but its cognition" (139v). If one confuses these two things, one ends up with a view that things would change according to our knowledge of them. And as Daubert remarks: "if Husserl were right, the thing-units of practical life would dissolve away" (65r).

In a third step Daubert shows that Husserl's conception by no means yields an adequate description of our experience of real things. If no single thing-noema can ever guarantee the reality of the thing to which it refers, then even an infinite number of such noemata will not

do this either. At first blush this might seem to be grist to Husserl's mill. Did not Husserl after all maintain that our belief in reality remains forever unwarranted, and that the thesis that the world of our experience exists independently is a thesis that remains true always "until further notice" — so that the real thing is equal to a Kantian idea? But this would be to mistake the force of Daubert's argument. Maybe not in the last instance, but at any rate in the first instance the thing is given as real: a fact that cannot be put aside. Or, to put it in convenient historical terminology: when calling the thing a Kantian idea, Husserl refers to the fact that for Kant such ideas are not "constitutive" but "regulative". But being real is *constitutive* for the physical thing. In fact, we are used to becoming aware of the thing's reality in its very first adumbration, and not by piling up heaps of such adumbrations, one on top another. Hence Daubert says: "Husserl's conception of the thing is entirely wrong. For already the thing is present in each property, and this applies to every adumbration" (44r). Or, to express it in positive terms: "notwithstanding its incomplete givenness, the thing as thing-unity, can be given in an adequate way" (171r).

Thus, also in his last argument Daubert sticks to what he had affirmed from the very start. Neither perception nor any other intentional act could apprehend anything we could be certain about, if we were not immediately aware of things, and if awareness were anything other than saturatedness by objective content. It is therefore impossible to treat noemata as possessing some mode of being of their own, and separate from the objects they refer to. Things are not improved if, in order to "fasten" noemata in some way, one ties their existence and stability to that of noeses (which again, when taken in themselves, are devoid of any reality, but in their turn draw all their validity from the soil of the awareness in which they are rooted). Husserl had affirmed that a tree can burn up, whereas the sense of my perception of the tree cannot. But, Daubert insists, the sense of my perception consists exclusively in perceiving this very tree; it cannot be separated from it. "Precisely that which I perceive and which is given to me by way of perception is real and has its place in reality; it has its chemical structure, it burns up etc. There is nothing behind it" (143r).

Notes

[1] I am deeply indebted to Barry Smith for his helpful criticism of earlier versions of this paper.

[2] D. Føllesdal, 'Husserl's Notion of the Noema', *The Journal of Philosophy* **66** (1969), 680—87.

[3] Hubert Dreyfus, 'The Perceptual Noema: Gurwitsch's Crucial Contribution', in Lester Embree (ed.), *Life-World and Consciousness. Essays for Aron Gurwitsch*, Evanston/Ill. 1972, 135. Robert C. Salomon, 'Husserl's Concept of the Noema', in Frederick A. Elliston and Peter McCormick, *Husserl. Expositions and Appraisals*, Notre Dame — London, 1977, 169, speaks of the "orthodox" and the "heretical" view.

[4] See David Woodruff Smith and Ronald McIntyre, *Husserl and Intentionality: A Study of Mind, Meaning and Language*, Dordrecht, 1982, esp. 365ff. on "direct" realism and perceptual acquaintance.

[5] For some information on Daubert's philosophical activities see Karl Schuhmann, 'Structuring the Phenomenological Field: Reflections on a Daubert Manuscript', in William S. Hamrick (ed.), *Phenomenology in Practice and Theory*, Dordrecht — Boston — Lancaster, 1985, 3—6.

[6] On Munich and Göttingen phenomenology see Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement*, The Hague — Boston — London, 1982, ch. IV: 'The Original Phenomenological Movement'.

[7] For a survey of Daubert's manuscripts see Eberhard Avé-Lallemant, *Die Nachlässe der Münchener Phänomenologen in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, Wiesbaden, 1975, 125—38.

[8] In fact, in MS A I 3 Daubert treats almost all major themes occurring in Husserl's *Ideas* I. However, thus far only his discussion of Husserl's idealism has been dealt with. See Karl Schuhmann and Barry Smith, 'Against Idealism: Johannes Daubert vs. Husserl's *Ideas* I', *The Review of Metaphysics* **38** (1985), 163—93 (henceforth: *Against Idealism*).

[9] A. Gurwitsch, 'Phänomenologie der Thematik und des reinen Ich. Studien über die Beziehungen von Gestalttheorie und Phänomenologie', *Psychologische Forschung* **12** (1929), 279—381 (henceforth: *Thematics*). Daubert's relation to this work would merit a separate treatment. In what follows, only a few hints can be given.

[10] Quotes from *Ideas* I will be marked by page-number of the original edition of this work which will be given (between brackets) in the text.

[11] Quotes from the convolute Daubertiana A I 3 will be marked by page-numbers of the convolute (between brackets in the text), together with an "r" for indicating recto pages or "v" for verso pages. In what follows, A I 3 will be quoted rather extensively, since the convolute is not only as yet unpublished but also untranscribed and therefore virtually inaccessible for scientific purposes.

[12] An argument of this type occurs for example already in Spinoza's *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (ed. Gebhardt, vol. II, 14): "The idea of the circle has no circumference or centre, as has the circle, and the idea of a body is not the body itself".

[13] The qualification "natural" serves to contrast this reflection with the one which, according to Husserl, is peculiar to transcendental phenomenology.

[14] For a closely related view see Barry Smith, 'Frege and Husserl: The Ontology of Reference', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* **9** (1978), 111—25, esp. 115ff.

[15] This Daubertian doctrine presupposes Gurwitsch's doctrine of "restructuring the theme" (*Thematics*, 340f.).

[16] Husserl's Cartesian argument had stressed the fact that transcendent experience is open to illusion, whereas immanent experience is, he maintained, "a simple seeing of something given as absolute" (81) and hence indubitable. Here, too, Daubert, in contrast, generalizes the scheme of straightforward perception: "in

immanent perception there exists, properly speaking, no simple seeing at all" (8v). Straightforward experience, that is, is much less subject to error than is the reflective one.

[17] On *Innesein* see *Against Idealism*, 781f., where further quotes from MS A I 3 are given.

[18] This is the basic tenet of what Daubert calls his "intuitivistic realism" which he contrasts not only with Husserl's idealism, but also with naive as well as "critical" realism (of the Oswald Külpe brand).

[19] This is why Daubert interprets the *sum* ("I am") in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* as follows: "'I am' is the immediate awareness of my living reality, of my reality in the world" (99v). This conception of my living body "in the world" is manifestly influenced by Heidegger's *Being and Time* of 1927. Daubert sympathized with Heidegger's general project of establishing a non-idealist phenomenology, though he judged the way in which Heidegger had carried it out a failure. In Heidegger's central notion of *Dasein* as that which "in its being has an ontic relation to this being" (*Sein und Zeit*, §4) Daubert saw raising its ugly head the old idealist (e.g., Hegelian) conception of consciousness as self-relatedness. Daubert's relation to Heidegger has not yet been fully investigated.

[20] Cf. *Thematics*, 375f.: "Living in the straightforward direction of the look, we are not conscious of the phenomenological ego."

[21] Though this precise formula occurs only in Husserl's *Crisis* of 1936, its gist is already present in *Ideas* I. See, e.g., 65: "If an intentional experience actually occurs, i.e. is performed in the manner of the *cogito*, then in it the subject 'directs' itself to the intentional object".

[22] Or, as Daubert states elsewhere in A I 3: "consciousness taken as an act has no existence of its own" (142r). On the Daubertian doctrine of the non-existence of intentional consciousness, see *Against Idealism*, 769—71. Suffice it to mention here that this doctrine is pivotal for Daubert's refutation of Husserl's (and in fact any) idealism. Thus, the text just quoted continues: "hence it is a naive supposition to proceed on the assumption that consciousness were a being and even an absolute being" (118r), as Husserl had affirmed (92).

[23] This conception will easily call to mind Merleau-Ponty's notion of the *corps-sujet*.

[24] *Thematics*, 376.

[25] Note, however, that in Daubert the noesis refers to real things and not to hyletic data, as it does in Husserl. Daubert hereby broadens the concept of noesis in a way comparable to Gurwitsch (*Thematics*, 357). However, behind Daubert's move there are not so much Gestaltist motives at work, as is the case with Gurwitsch, but rather empiricist ones *à la* John Stuart Mill.

[26] According to Daubert, and in agreement with what Husserl had said in the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*, the sphere of intentional acts is the domain of phenomenology, understood in the sense of descriptive psychology.

[27] On Daubert's notion of *das Massgebende* see *Against Idealism*, 788—90.

[28] Thus, Daubert would subscribe to the view of Lenore Langsdorf, 'The Noema as Intentional Entity: A Critique of Føllesdal', *The Review of Metaphysics* **37** (1984), 777: "'Noema' simply designates that portion of the organized structure of our experiencing that pertains to the experienced object". He would, however, doubt that this is indeed an adequate rendering of *Husserl's* view.

Tolsteegsingel 14,
3582 AD Utrecht,
The Netherlands