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Blaustein's Phenomenological Psychology

Between Husserl and Stumpf

Filip Borek

University of Warsaw, Doctoral School of Humanities, Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, 00-927 Warsaw, Poland | Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Humanities, Pátkova 2137/5, 182 00 Praha 8 – Libeň, Czech Republic

filip.wojciech.borek@gmail.com

Abstract

The article explores the idea of psychology and phenomenology in Blaustein's writings as well as its relation to two conceptions of phenomenology: Husserl's and Stumpf's, respectively. The article is divided into five sections. In section 1, a historical background of the reception of Husserl's and Stumpf's ideas in Blaustein is discussed. Section 2 concerns the conception of phenomenology in Husserl and in Stumpf regarding its subject matter. Section 3 discusses the ambivalent status of

phenomenology in Blaustein's theoretical project. Section 4 confronts Blaustein's understanding of phenomenology with that of Husserl and of Stumpf. Section 5 summarizes the discussion of the similarities and differences between Blaustein, on the one hand, and Husserl and Stumpf, on the other hand. I argue that with regard to the question of the subject matter of phenomenology, Blaustein is closer to Husserl's phenomenology rather than Stumpf's.

Keywords: phenomenal world, phenomenology, hyletics, psychology, Blaustein, Husserl, Stumpf.

Blausteinova fenomenološka psihologija. Med Husserlom in Stumpfom

Povzetek

Članek raziskuje idejo psihologije in fenomenologije v Blausteinovih spisih ter njen odnos do dveh koncepcij fenomenologije: tako do Husserlove kot do Stumpfove. Prispevek sestavlja pet razdelkov. Razdelek 1 obravnava zgodovinsko ozadje recepcije Husserlovih in Stumpfovih idej pri Blausteinu. Razdelek 2 se ukvarja s koncepcijo fenomenologije pri Husserlu in pri Stumpfu glede na njeno predmetno vsebino. Razdelek 3 je posvečen ambivalentnemu statusu fenomenologije znotraj Blausteinovega teoretskega projekta. Razdelek 4 sooča Blausteinovo razumevanje fenomenologije s Husserlovo in s Stumpfovo koncepcijo. Razdelek 5 povzame obravnavo podobnosti in razlik med Blausteinom, na eni strani, ter Husserlom in Stumpfom, na drugi strani. Zagovarjam stališče, da je z vidika vprašanja o predmetni vsebini fenomenologije Blaustein bližji Husserlu kakor Stumpfu.

Ključne besede: fenomenski svet, fenomenologija, hiletika, psihologija, Blaustein, Husserl, Stumpf.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to situate Leopold Blaustein's philosophy in the context of Edmund Husserl's and Carl Stumpf's writings. This task is important for *historical* and *systematic* reasons. First of all, Blaustein visited Husserl in 1925 in Freiburg im Breisgau, and participated in his seminars and lectures there. Blaustein also devoted his doctoral dissertation (as well as several papers) to Husserl's philosophy. In 1927/28, Blaustein received a fellowship in Berlin, where he attended, among others, Stumpf's courses.[1] These historical connections require a detailed commentary on how Blaustein comprehended both Stumpf's and Husserl's theories, especially their conceptions of phenomenology and its proper subject matter.

From a systematic point of view, there is the issue of how to classify Blaustein's philosophy. Some scholars define Blaustein's philosophy as a form of "analytic phenomenology," comprising the method of phenomenological description and logical analysis,[2] while others interpret Blaustein's project simply as a mere reformulation of Husserl's phenomenology.[3] However, the very claim that Blaustein was a phenomenologist is not self-evident. Furthermore, while the Husserlian background in Blaustein's thought is well-explored in the scholarly literature on Blaustein,[4] the connection with Stumpf in this regard is almost entirely neglected. Recently, Witold Płotka argued convincingly in

1 For a more detailed overview of Blaustein's biography, see Płotka 2024.

2 Cf.: Woleński 1989, 310 fn. 11; Pokropski 2015, 94. This suggestion is, however, strongly misleading, since "logical analysis" is rather marginal in Blaustein (Płotka 2024, 4).

3 Cf.: Rosińska 2005, xvii; Wieczorek 2006, 157–158; Smith 1994, 157; van der Schaar 2015, 12. For an overview of different ways of classifying Blaustein's philosophy, see Płotka 2024.

4 Cf.: Rosińska 2005; Wieczorek 2006; Pokropski 2015; Gilicka 2015; Płotka 2021a, 2021b, 2024.

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favor of a more nuanced reading of Blaustein's project, claiming that it is an original synthesis of different trends in the psychology and philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries. Due to the complexity of all these theories, Płotka proposes to classify Blaustein's project as a "phenomenologically oriented descriptive psychology" (Płotka 2024, 114) or "descriptive psychology with phenomenological background" (ibid., 294),[5] emphasizing the embeddedness of Blaustein in the Brentanian tradition, and the necessity of psychological elements in Blaustein's project. Since both Husserl and Stumpf developed their own variants of phenomenology, a crucial question arises: is the "phenomenological background" in Blaustein's thought understood from a Husserlian point of view or is it closer to that of Stumpf?

This unwritten chapter in the scholarship on Blaustein—the only exception being Płotka's reading, which emphasizes the strong affinity between Blaustein and Stumpf—seems to be a symptom of a broader neglect regarding Stumpf's position in the context of Polish philosophy at the beginning of the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the Lvov–Warsaw School. Stumpf was a colleague of Twardowski, and the latter incorporated many elements of Stumpf's thought into his philosophy, referring to and commenting on Stumpf's texts during his seminars and lectures (Twardowski 1999, 22). Apart from Blaustein and Twardowski, there was a strong interest in Stumpf's philosophy among Twardowski's students, including Salomon Igel, Eugenia Ginsberg, Mieczysław Kreutz, and Stefan Baley (who worked together with Stumpf in Berlin on the psychology of music and acoustics). Thus far, this sub-current of psychology in the Lvov–Warsaw School has not received sufficient attention.[6] In this regard, my further aim here is to fill this clear gap.

In order to address the question of the "phenomenological" in Blaustein's philosophy, first, I analyze the main points of the Husserl–Stumpf debate

5 For more on Blaustein's relation to phenomenology and psychological projects of his times, see Płotka 2020, 141–167; 2023, 372–390.

6 Although Stumpf is often mentioned as an important figure in the context of Twardowski's philosophy, there is no systematic study on the relationship between Stumpf and Twardowski or, more generally, between Stumpf and the Lvov–Warsaw School. For an overview of psychology in the Lvov–Warsaw School, see: Rzepa 1997, Citlak 2023.

on the idea of phenomenology (section 2). Husserl criticized Stumpf's position, treating it as a parallel to his own *hyletics*. In his reply, Stumpf, who was enthusiastic about Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, almost entirely rejects Husserl's *transcendental* project. Next, I present a sketch of Blaustein's phenomenological psychology (section 3). I focus exclusively on the subject matter of psychology and phenomenology, but without going into details regarding methodological issues. My task is to determine the main difficulties one can identify in delimiting the proper field of Blaustein's psychology. Furthermore, I attempt to determine the similarities and differences between Blaustein's approach, on the one hand, and Husserl's and Stumpf's projects, on the other (section 4). The task of the last part of the present study is to examine the problem of who Blaustein is closer to—to Husserl or to Stumpf?

2. Phenomenology in Stumpf and Husserl

Stumpf supervised Husserl's *Habilitationsschrift* in Halle in 1886. In the winter semester of 1886/87, Husserl attended Stumpf's lectures on psychology (Stumpf 1999). He dedicated his *Untersuchungen* to Stumpf, and discussed in detail his theory of parts and wholes in the "Third Investigation." As Husserl's correspondence with Stumpf shows, they were close friends. However, despite their common philosophical roots, namely the philosophy of Franz Brentano, and some commonalities, especially to be found in the first edition of *Untersuchungen*, their philosophical projects are certainly divergent. In my overview of the Stumpf–Husserl debate on the nature of phenomenology and psychology, I focus on questions that are essential for understanding Blaustein's position regarding this debate.[7] First, I focus on the idea of phenomenology, as it is presented by Husserl in his *Untersuchungen*, and its interpretation and assessment by Stumpf. Next, I discuss the idea of phenomenology in Stumpf's writings and its uniqueness in contrast to both psychology and Husserl's phenomenology (before and after Husserl's transcendental turn).

In *Untersuchungen*, Husserl introduces a new type of method and science, the purpose of which is to ground all other sciences, especially psychology

7 For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between Husserl and Stumpf, see especially: Rollinger 1999; Fisette 2015b.

and logic. This new science is called phenomenology, and its aim is to investigate "the experiences of thinking and knowing" (Husserl 1970a, 166). As metaphysically "neutral research," it has,

> […] as its exclusive concern, experiences intuitively seizable and analysable in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts, as experiences of human or animal experients in the phenomenal world that we posit as an empirical fact. (Ibid.)

Although this kind of research is essentially different from psychology as a natural science, in the first edition of *Untersuchungen*, Husserl still describes phenomenology in terms of "descriptive psychology," (ibid., 176) not abandoning this term until 1903.[8] The very reason why Husserl ultimately avoids referring to his project as "psychology" is to distinguish it from *genetic* psychology as a form of causal-explanatory natural science.

The initial understanding of phenomenology as a kind of descriptive psychology becomes problematic not only on the methodological level, but also regarding the delimitation of the proper field under investigation in this new discipline. In the first edition of *Untersuchungen*, Husserl maintains that the proper phenomenological field consists exclusively of the "real (*reell*) content" of consciousness, excluding all "intentional content." Although Husserl finds it impossible to speak of the real content of acts without referring to the objects that are intended in these acts (ibid., 171), intentional objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*) does not belong to the "narrow phenomenological sphere" (ibid., 174).[9] Further, this phenomenological

8 *Hua XXII*, 206–208: "die Phänomenologie ist nicht ohne weiters als 'deskriptive Psychologie' zu bezeichnen." It is, however, worth remembering that Husserl himself maintained—after the transcendental turn—the possibility of so-called "phenomenological psychology."

9 It is worth noting that, in the second edition of *Untersuchungen*, Husserl significantly *expands* the scope of phenomenology and describes it as "the theory of experiences in general, inclusive of all matters, whether real (*reellen*) or intentional, given in experiences, and evidently discoverable in them" (Husserl 1970b, 343). In this sense, phenomenology covers both the "objective" as well as "subjective" side of lived experience in their dissoluble *correlation*. On the question of delimiting

sphere does not overlap with the sphere of psychic phenomena in Brentano's sense. For Brentano, the very fundament of the delimitation of the mental sphere is a distinction between psychic and physical phenomena. Husserl rejects this distinction and criticizes Brentano for ignoring several important differences concerning lived experiences (Husserl 1970b, 94–95). One of the most important insights that has an enormous significance for constructing the idea of phenomenology is the distinction between sensory contents or sensations and the objects that are intended through these contents. For Brentano, sensory contents (such as the sensation of red) are physical phenomena, and hence they do not belong to the subject matter of psychology. While for Brentano the act of sensing (*das Empfinden*) is *different* from "what is sensed" in it (*das Empfundene*), for Husserl the sensing itself and what is sensed *coincide*. As we will see later on, Husserl's account of sensation is challenged both by Stumpf and Blaustein.

Although Stumpf is sympathetic to the project of phenomenology as developed by Husserl in the first edition of *Untersuchungen*, and he recognizes the contribution of the latter not only to descriptive psychology, but also to epistemology, ontology, and logic (Fisette 2015b, 322), he disagrees with Husserl with regard to his idea of replacing descriptive psychology with phenomenology. Stumpf's critique of Husserl's bias toward psychology aims at demonstrating that—although descriptive psychology indeed has priority over genetically oriented psychological research and could be pursued *independently* of the latter (Stumpf 1906, 25)—descriptive and genetic psychology are but *two different* approaches to the *same* subject matter. For this reason, Husserl's dissociation of descriptive psychology as a different field of investigation from genetic psychology is simply misleading. It is even more problematic, if one is aware of Stumpf's understanding of phenomenology as a discipline distinguished from both descriptive and *any other* kind of psychology. In this respect, there is an important difference between Stumpf and Husserl with regard to the idea of phenomenology. Stumpf's dissociation of phenomenology from psychology could be read also as a critique of the

the phenomenological field and the aporias, to which this initial understanding of phenomenology inevitably leads, see Zahavi 2017.

second motive mentioned above that pushes Husserl to make a distinction between psychology and phenomenology.

What does Stumpf mean by phenomenology? Stumpf classifies phenomenology as a kind of analysis that investigates the "ultimate elements of sensory phenomena (*sinnliche Erscheinungen*)" (Stumpf 1910, 186).[10] By "sensory phenomena," Stumpf understands contents of sensations (*Inhalte der Sinnesempfindungen*) such as sensory qualities (colors, tones, smells, etc.), their relations and spatiotemporal configurations (which are co-perceived *in* these qualities), and so-called sensory feelings (*Gefühlsempfindungen*), e.g., pain or bodily pleasure. The phenomena belong neither to the physical world of material objects (which fall under the umbrella of physics and are governed by causal relations)[11] nor to psychic life. Thus, phenomenology itself belongs neither to the natural sciences nor to human sciences. Since the distinction between *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* is a fundamental distinction that underlies the classification of sciences, phenomenology cannot be comprehended as a form of science in the proper sense. It is rather—as Stumpf calls it—a "pre-science" (*Vorwissenschaft*) (Stumpf 1906, 39; Stumpf 2012, 270).[12] The question of the *distinctiveness* of phenomenology, not only from natural sciences, but also from any kind of psychology, deserves a closer look, since it is also important in the context of Blaustein's philosophy.

In his treatise "Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen" (Stumpf 2018), Stumpf defends the view that psychology as a study of psychic acts is distinct from the study of sensory phenomena (in contrast to, e.g., Ernst Mach's phenomenalism). According to Stumpf, psychology is not necessarily *phenomenon* psychology, but it is possible also as a *functional*

10 In contrast to R. Brian Tracz, the English translator of "Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen" (Stumpf 2018), I render the German term "Erscheinung" as "phenomenon" instead of "appearance."

11 The idea that the subject matter of physics should be identified with sensory phenomena, which at that time was proposed, e.g., by Ernst Mach, was radically criticized by Stumpf, especially in Stumpf 1906.

12 This understanding of phenomenology as a "pre-science" (*Vorwissenschaft*) in Stumpf should be contrasted with the understanding of phenomenology as a "fundamental science" (*Grundwissenschaft*) in Husserl.

psychology. As such, it is a study of the structural laws (*Strukturgesetze*) of psychic functions. The latter is the basic subject matter of psychology and is defined as acts (*Akte*), states (*Zustände*), or lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*). What is intended here is a group of such psychic acts—perceiving, noticing, imagining, judging, etc. Although phenomena and psychic functions are intermingled with each other and create a real unity, since functions "work" on phenomena, they are essentially *heterogenous* (Stumpf 2018, 10). Hence, sensory phenomena and the laws governing them are not the subject matter of *psychological* research.

Stumpf's argument in favor of dividing phenomenology and (functional) psychology is twofold:[13] logical and, as we can put it, "empirical." First, no predicate from the sphere of sensory phenomena (the only exceptions are temporal determinations) may be transmitted into the sphere of psychic functions, and *vice versa*. It belongs to the essence of tone, for instance, that it has a specific intensity. Among these essential features, however, one cannot find the property of *being heard*. From this point of view, sensory phenomena *without functions are logically possible* (functions without phenomena are also possible, though not without *any content*). Second, Stumpf shows that psychic functions and sensory phenomena *can* (they do not necessarily have to) vary *independently from each other*: a change or modification in sensory phenomena does not lead necessarily to any change in psychic functions; additionally, there can be a change of psychic attitude without a corresponding change in the content of sensory phenomena (ibid., 15). Therefore, there is no strict and absolute parallel between sensory phenomena and psychic functions––and, to reiterate, *phenomenology cannot be confused with descriptive psychology*.

Phenomenology and descriptive psychology in Stumpf's thought are a kind of research that strives to formulate general laws about its subject matter, i.e., sensory phenomena and psychic functions, respectively. Such general laws are obtained, not only by means of inductive reasoning, but first and foremost by means of the peculiar type of intuition that Stumpf calls, using Husserl's term, "*Wesensschau*." Notably, Stumpf's phenomenology and psychology

13 For a more detailed discussion of Stumpf's arguments and their impact on other philosophers and scientists, see especially Fisette 2016.

contain some *a priori* cognitions and, hence, cannot be reduced to a mere *Tatsachenwissenschaft*;[14] this topic, however, does not concern us here.

According to Stumpf, Husserl's early phenomenology, i.e., from the first edition of *Untersuchungen*, is but descriptive psychology, which in turn is a type of *regional ontology* (Stumpf 1939, 185). For Stumpf, Husserl's tendency to avoid the term "psychology" is a certain bias. Husserl changes his position in *Ideen I*. At the beginning of *Ideen I*, Husserl delimits the field of transcendental phenomenology by distinguishing it sharply from the field of psychology. The latter is defined by two features: it is an (1) empirical science (therefore a science of "matters of fact" in Hume's sense) of (2) real entities or processes. Stumpf disagrees with Husserl on this definition of psychology. According to Stumpf, psychology neither *is* nor ever *was* a science that wants to accumulate mere facts, nor does it proceed in a *purely inductive* manner. Psychology—since Aristotle—, besides inductive reasoning, can and must include "essential" or "structural laws" (ibid., 194). In this sense, descriptive psychology is or at least involves as its part a type of regional ontology. Hence, Husserl's notion of psychology in *Ideen I* is too narrow.[15]

In *Ideen I*, Husserl refers explicitly to Stumpf's idea of phenomenology as follows:

> Stumpf's phenomenology would correspond to what was determined above as hyletics, with the qualification that our determination of the latter is essentially conditioned in its methodological sense by the encompassing framework of transcendental phenomenology. On the other hand, the idea of hyletics carries over *eo ipso* from phenomenology to the terrain of an eidetic psychology which, on our construal, would suit the Stumpfian "phenomenology." (Husserl 2014, 171.)

14 The most detailed discussion of the question of a *priori* cognition is to be found in § 13 of Stumpf's posthumously published *Erkenntnislehre* (Stumpf 1939). For more on the problem of the intuition of essences in Stumpf and Husserl, see: De Santis 2011 and Pradelle 2015.

15 For Stumpf, the subject matter and aim of transcendental phenomenology, as it is presented in *Ideen I*, is no less confusing. For more on Stumpf's critique of Husserl's transcendental turn, see: Fisette 2015b and Rollinger 1999.

Husserl conceives Stumpf's phenomenology as a counterpart of what he calls "hyletics" (*Hyletik*). Generally, hyletics is the study of the domain of sensations, insofar as they are material for intentional apprehensions and are distinct from them. Nonetheless, Stumpf's phenomenology as a pre-science of sensory phenomena could be regarded precisely only as a *counterpart*, and not as an *equivalent* of hyletics. Stumpf's phenomenology could only be a part of eidetic psychology (*eidetische Psychologie*), and not of transcendental phenomenology, although there is a parallel between them. Furthermore, Husserl's comparison is to some extent misleading and does not capture the original character of Stumpf's phenomenology. As Robin Rollinger correctly observes, for Stumpf the subject matter of phenomenology is identified with "*contents* of sensations," not with sensations *themselves* (which are the subject matter of psychology) (Rollinger 1999, 95). One has to take into account, as will be discussed below in section 4, that Husserl simply ignores such a difference. The parallelism between Stumpf's phenomenology and Husserl's hyletics is, therefore, strictly limited.

Stumpf and Husserl disagree on the proper subject matter of phenomenology. Stumpf rejects Husserl's correlationism, which he understands as a form of "parallelism." According to Stumpf, if there is an unconditional parallelism between noesis and noema, if they always vary with one another, then it makes no sense to postulate different laws for the noetic and noematic sides of consciousness, respectively. The laws governing the noematic pole are, therefore, reducible to those of the noetics. Thus, it is impossible, according to Stumpf, to distinguish such phenomenology from functional psychology (Stumpf 1939, 195–196). In contrast to Husserl, Stumpf opts for a form of "interactionism," which is "more consistent with [his] critical realism" (Fisette 2015b, 352).[16] For Stumpf, sensory phenomena are not *a priori* correlated with either possible or actual consciousness as a locus of their appearing. One

16 Stumpf calls himself a "critical realist" (Blaustein's letters to Twardowski, December 11, 1927) also in one of his conversations with Blaustein. However, one can argue that Stumpf's position—since it is close to that of *Logische Untersuchungen*, which, in turn, involve some sort of "proto-transcendentalism" (Zahavi 2017, 45)—also involves some "proto-transcendental" elements. Even if these issues are important, they are beyond the scope of my paper.

can even claim, paraphrasing Stumpf's (critical) commentary on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology as "phenomenology without *phenomena*" (Stumpf 1939, 192), that Stumpf's phenomenology is a "phenomenology without *appearing*."

3. Phenomenology and psychology according to Blaustein

Blaustein's philosophy is not easy to classify. Is it a form of descriptive psychology or rather a revised version of Husserl's phenomenology? Blaustein (1930a, 229–330) places himself explicitly in the Brentanian tradition, to which one can count Husserl, Twardowski, Stumpf (Blaustein calls these three philosophers "descendants of Brentano"; Płotka 2024, 134), and Meinong. The importance and continuity of Brentano's school are also stressed by Stumpf (Stumpf 2012, 254). Blaustein shares with other Brentanians at least two fundamental claims: philosophy is a rigorous science, and it is metaphysically neutral, which involves giving priority to describing (*Beschreibung*, *Deskription*) over explaining (*Erklärung*) phenomena. For Blaustein, descriptive psychology or phenomenology should be, then, a descriptive and metaphysically neutral discipline. With these ideas in mind, one may ask: is Blaustein's philosophy a descriptive psychology in the sense of Brentano or rather descriptive psychology *qua* phenomenology in the sense of Husserl? Or maybe it is phenomenology in the sense of Husserl, but *after* the transcendental turn?

In the following, I discuss Blaustein's attempt to determine the field of descriptive psychology. I put emphasis on the elements that may be essential for its interpretation as a *phenomenological psychology* and that will enable us to see to what extent Blaustein is close to Husserl and Stumpf. I argue that Blaustein reads Stumpf's phenomenology as an eidetic-psychological counterpart of Husserl's hyletics and, in this sense, that Blaustein integrates Stumpf's phenomenology into a broader descriptive psychology.

In his reading of Husserl, Blaustein relies almost exclusively on *Untersuchungen* and *Ideen I* (Blaustein 2021 [1928], 186).[17] Blaustein defines

17 In a review of the published version of Blaustein's doctoral thesis, Roman Ingarden claims that Blaustein ultimately even blurs the difference between *Untersuchungen* and *Ideen* (Ingarden 2013 [1929], 220).

phenomenology as a "material eidetic discipline" (Blaustein 2013 [1930a], 227) that descriptively investigates "the essences of pure lived experiences" (ibid., 228) or "ideal essences of lived experiences of pure consciousness" (Blaustein 1928/29, 164b). However, such phenomenology, according to Blaustein, is not possible. Thus, Blaustein does not endorse the view that phenomenology is the "material eidetic science of the essences of pure lived experiences." For Blaustein it is rather possible only as an "empirical descriptive science of types (the lowest genera) of experiences of pure consciousness and not as *a priori* science of higher essences as ideal objects" (Blaustein 1928, 165b). What does phenomenology thus reinterpreted involve?

During the years 1928–1931, Blaustein was working on a complex and detailed "theory of presentations" (Płotka 2024, 28), although one may also note his talk on "different attitudes toward the surrounding world" given in 1926. The theory of presentations, which emerges specifically from the discussion of the relation between content, object, and acts of consciousness, is constructed within the framework of the Brentanian tradition. This theory is even explicitly labeled by Blaustein as "a part of descriptive psychology [*psychologia deskryptywna*]" (Blaustein 1930b, 5 [2011, 209]). As such, this enterprise is psychological in nature and is close to Brentano's project and its methodological psychologism.[18] Nevertheless, Blaustein's idea of psychology does not overlap with the psychology of Brentano. The topic that one may be tempted to establish as the distinctive mark of Blaustein's psychology in contrast to Brentano's work is the phenomenological character of the former.

If one is justified in classifying Blaustein's project as "phenomenological," what is, then, its proper phenomenon? For Blaustein, the field of psychology includes not only *contents* and *acts* of psychic life, but also *objects*. Therefore, Płotka suggests labeling this as "object-oriented psychology" (Płotka 2024, 135). The "objective" direction of research is, for instance, expressed in Blaustein's work on the experience of God in Christian Friedrich Hebbel's dramas, where Blaustein writes:

18 On the relation between Blaustein and Brentano, see Płotka 2024, 41 ff.

> This noematic investigation deepens that of the lived experiences themselves. Because it is precisely the way, in which the objective presents itself in the subjective, how God is reflected in the singular individuals, that justifies the differences between lived experiences of God. (Blaustein 1928, 2.)

This noematic orientation, which supplements noetic-functional research, could be treated as a genuine *phenomenological* account in Blaustein's psychology (Płotka 2024, 135). However, it is far from clear if the objects (even as noemata) can be included in Blaustein's descriptive psychology. This question is difficult, for Blaustein does not define the scope of descriptive psychology explicitly. The proper object of descriptive psychology in Blaustein's sense can only be inferred based on how Blaustein *practices it*.

In *Przedstawienia imaginatywne* (*Imaginative Presentations*; Blaustein 1930b), Blaustein focuses, not on the *objects*, but solely on the psychic *acts* with their moments, i.e., act-matter and act-quality (Blaustein explicitly uses Husserl's terminology here). Although Blaustein constantly refers to the *objects* intended in acts, they are *not* regarded as the genuine subject matter of his descriptive-psychological study. What is really at stake in such descriptions is not the object itself, but rather the act-matter, by which we are directed toward this or that object and in such-and-such a way (Blaustein 1930b, 7 [2011, 210]). Blaustein speaks in this context of the "object-oriented study of acts" (ibid., 25 [2011, 222–223]). This tendency in describing the act-matter (which is a dependent part of the whole psychic act alongside act-quality) stems from the methodological difficulties of describing the act-matter *alone*. Something analogous was expressed already in Husserl's *Untersuchungen* (Husserl 1970a, 171).[19]

The field of psychological research is, however, not limited to the study of acts (or functions in the sense of Stumpf). One of the main problems of Blaustein's theory of presentations is the question of the relation between *presenting content* and *intentional object* in terms of the adequacy or inadequacy of this relation. Presenting content (*treść prezentująca*) is simply the *content* of

19 See Zahavi 2017, 43.

sensations (play of colors, smells, etc.), through which we apprehend some objects (e.g., one apprehends red patches as an apple, etc.). The question of the relation between content and object should be taken into consideration alongside different *attitudes* (*nastawienia*) toward our surrounding world. The question of attitudes understood as "dispositions to certain psychic facts" with regard to their quality, content, and/or objects (Blaustein 1926/27, 192b) belongs to the domain of descriptive psychology *as well* (ibid., 193). The field of descriptive-psychological research should also be enriched by the question of different attitudes toward the surrounding world and the question of how the change of attitudes affects our experience of the world with regard to the relation between presenting content and intentional objects.

The problems that Blaustein has in mind here can be illustrated by appealing to his analysis of the experience of the cinemagoer, as described in his book *Przyczynki do psychologji widza kinowego* (*Contributions to the Psychology of the Cinemagoer*; Blaustein 1933). Blaustein's aim in this text is to analyze the phenomenon of watching movies in a cinema. When one watches a movie, what one "genuinely" sees are different shapes and colors on the movie screen (Blaustein 1933, 7). However, one's attention is usually not directed toward these rapidly moving images (Blaustein calls them "phantoms"); what one really experiences are rather different things and persons that one apprehends through these images. This kind of perceiving (which Blaustein calls "imaginative presentation") of the characters on the screen has an imaginative object as its target-object, which is presented via the flux of different images (ibid., 10). Certainly, one can switch one's attention from the movie and focus on the play of colors and shapes on the screen, one can, further, apprehend these as some features of the processes in the material world, but one may also wonder to what extent the displayed figure resembles the object that is displayed on the screen. These differences in the relation between the presenting content and the object intended through it are to be found also in "regular" perception as well.

Blaustein distinguishes five types of attitude (although the list is not necessarily complete), which are different *with regard to the "layers"* (*warstwy*) of the surrounding world, and which are disclosed in this or that attitude; thus, he lists the following attitudes: (1) toward the uninterpreted phenomenal world

(*świat zjawiskowy*; the world of sensory contents); (2) toward the interpreted phenomenal world (the world of appearances; *widoki*, *wyglądy*); (3) toward the material world (the world of three-dimensional bodies); (4) toward the physical world (the world of atoms, etc.); (5) toward the world of things in themselves.[20] What is of importance here is neither the classification nor the exact character of these layers, but rather their "status." Are they treated by Blaustein as some kind of hypostasized levels of one, singular reality? Do they create a chain of, e.g., mimetic relations, each level being a copy of another one? As the text clearly states, this is not the case for Blaustein. He describes different attitudes *in regard* to their correlates, which are treated precisely only, insofar as they are *intentional correlates* of different attitudes (Blaustein 1926/27, 192b). Hence, the theory of attitudes, which is formulated by Blaustein only *in nuce*, does not interpret these layers in a *metaphysical* manner; therefore, it does not presuppose any thesis either about their factual existence or about their mode of existence.[21] In my view—in contrast to Pokropski (2015, 97) or Wieczorek (2006, 161)—, Blaustein's descriptive psychology remains *metaphysically neutral*.

The question of attitudes in Blaustein has its direct link to Stumpf. Blaustein holds that our natural and naïve attitude is attitude no. 3, as listed above. Usually, we are intentionally directed toward three-dimensional things-substances, like chairs, trees, stones, etc. All other attitudes are artificial and adopted for concrete purposes. The same holds for attitudes toward the phenomenal world. Where do we encounter such attitudes? Blaustein's answer is of great importance here: the attitude toward the phenomenal world is adopted: (1) in psychology; (2) in phenomenology, *in the sense of Stumpf*; (3) in *hyletics*, in the sense of Husserl; (4) by impressionist painters (Blaustein 1926/27, 193a; Blaustein 2021 [1928], 187). However, Blaustein does not equate Stumpf's

20 Blaustein provides neither any example of such things, nor gives any further explication of this term. It is, however, probable that he took this notion in Kant's sense as a kind of limit-concept.

21 Blaustein (1930b, 10) claims that the problem of factual existence and mode of existence is rather an epistemological problem. In his dissertation on Husserl, he claims that the question of the existence of different layers of the surrounding world is the matter either for a "metaphysician" or for an "epistemologist" (Blaustein 2021, 290).

phenomenology with Husserl's hyletics, but treats it only as an *analogon*, since the former could be treated solely as a hyletics in an eidetic-psychological sense. What distinguishes Stumpf's phenomenology from Husserl's *transcendental* hyletics is the method of *epoché*, which "excludes" consciousness from the whole empirical world (Blaustein 2013 [1930a], 230). This fragment is not only important, when it comes to Stumpf's influence on Blaustein alone, but also regarding the question of delimiting the proper field of descriptive psychology. Psychology *also* deals with the phenomenal world (which in Blaustein is treated as presenting content), and therefore includes what is precisely excluded as a subject matter in Stumpf's psychology. This rich concept of psychology seems to be close to Husserl's phenomenology.

4. Blaustein: A Husserlian or a Stumpfian?

As we have seen above, the issue of the Husserl–Blaustein relationship is well-discussed in the scholarly literature, whereas the question about Stumpf's position in Blaustein's psychology has not been properly discussed thus far. According to Płotka, Stumpf had a strong impact on Blaustein's philosophy, wherein two topics are crucial: (1) the rejection of a purely *a priori* psychology as well as the emphasis put on the necessity of observations and experiments; and (2) the concept of the phenomenal world (Płotka 2024, 61). In the following, I focus only on the latter topic, and I argue that there is a clear affinity between Blaustein's and Stumpf's ideas regarding the phenomenal world. They both also used parallel terms: "*świat zjawiskowy*" (Blaustein) and "*Erscheinungswelt*" (Stumpf). Although the similarities are clear, Blaustein does not accept some of the consequences that arise with Stumpf's ideas.

Arguably, Blaustein coined the term "*świat zjawiskowy*" as a translation of the German "*Erscheinungswelt*," a term that was used by Stumpf (2018, 87; also 1892, 478). This hypothesis is put forward by Płotka (2024, 59). Blaustein's concept of the phenomenal world undergoes an analogous *de-subjectification*, much as Stumpf's "*Erscheinungswelt*" does when framed as the world of sensory phenomena. However, it is important to note that this de-subjectification is not taken in a strong *metaphysical* key, but in a *descriptive* key. The phenomenal world and its contents are not, as Husserl claims, really

(*reell*) comprised of the structure of consciousness. They are instead on the "objective side" of consciousness; after all, they are given *to* consciousness, and are not *in* consciousness. The study of the phenomenal world is, hence, not the study of the immanent content of *acts*, but of something *transcendent* to consciousness, yet still given *adequately*.

Yet, it is not clear whether Blaustein shares Stumpf's idea that sensory phenomena are—at least *logically*—independent of psychic functions directed at them. For Stumpf, this logical independence and real independent variability should not be confused with its *realness*, since phenomena are real only as contents of functions, because the concept of reality (*Wirklichkeit*) stems precisely from the psychic sphere (Stumpf 2018, 87). In this respect, Stumpf follows Husserl's metaphysical neutrality, as discussed in *Untersuchungen*.[22] The question is rather the following: could the phenomenal world be *described* without using the terms taken from the field of psychology in Stumpf's sense? Does the study of psychic functions enrich the insights developed by the study of the phenomenal world?

Though these questions cannot be easily solved in the case of Blaustein, it is evident that Blaustein treats the sensory phenomena as *correlates* of specific intentional functions and attitudes that delimit the horizon of the possible scope of these functions. The question that is decisive here is as follows: do the sensory phenomena vary *parallelly* to the changes in psychic functions or can they vary—at least to some extent—independently from each other? I do not think, however, that one is able to fully answer this question based on Blaustein's published writings. Nevertheless, Blaustein's concept of the phenomenal world displays many similarities with Stumpf's *Erscheinungswelt* as the proper object of his phenomenology: (1) it is given, not *in* consciousness, but *for* consciousness; (2) it cannot be a real part of *Erlebnis*, but is transcendent to it; (3) it is given adequately and evidently; (4) it is not what we are normally (both in everyday life as well as in sciences) directed to; (5) it is treated in a metaphysically neutral manner.

22 Stumpf explicitly refers to the "Appendix" to the sixth of the *Logical Investigations* and its § 8, where Husserl defines reality, not in terms of what is "external to consciousness," but in terms of what is "not merely putative" (Husserl 1970b, 348).

Blaustein is well aware of Stumpf's distinctions—from his "Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen"—between phenomenon psychology and functional psychology (Stumpf 2018, 81).[23] And thus, phenomenon psychology rejects any possibility of the direct givenness of psychic acts and treats only sensory phenomena as immediately given data, from which one can at last infer the acts; in turn, functional psychology claims that either *some* psychic acts or *all* psychic acts are immediately and directly given. Blaustein follows in the steps of Brentano, Twardowski, Husserl, and Stumpf, and adheres to the possibility and necessity of the study of directly given psychic *acts*. In this sense, Blaustein agrees with Stumpf, but, unlike the latter, does not postulate another discipline for the study of sensory phenomena. Therefore, Blaustein's descriptive psychology seems to encompass both functional and phenomenon psychology, without reducing phenomena to functions or *vice versa*. Blaustein *does seem to* include the phenomenal world in his psychology, and in this sense, he does not accept the classification of sciences (and pre-sciences) outlined by Stumpf and his dissociation of psychology and phenomenology. The question remains: could the phenomenal world be investigated *only* as a *correlate* or *content* of different psychic functions or could it be an independent subject matter in itself for *another* type of study? Blaustein does not seem to *de facto* dissociate these two directions of psychological research. If it is *de jure* possible in his project, it can be answered only hypothetically. Based on Blaustein's writings, it seems more probable that the study of the phenomenal world has its only value in the face of the study of it *within the context* of psychological ("functional") issues and therefore, in this respect, Blaustein's philosophy is closer rather to Husserl than to Stumpf.

5. Conclusion

In my paper, I have discussed Płotka's characterization of Blaustein's project as "descriptive psychology with phenomenological background" or "phenomenological psychology." In section 2, I described the relationship between Husserl and Stumpf, with special emphasis on the question of the

23 For this distinction in Blaustein, see: Blaustein 1930b, 10 [2011, 212]; 1931, 181.

subject matter of phenomenology and psychology. In section 3, in turn, I characterized the idea of phenomenology and psychology in Blaustein, highlighting ambiguities with regard to their subject matter. I put forward the hypothesis that this "phenomenological background" could be understood, not only in the sense of Husserl, but also in the sense of Stumpf's "*Phänomenologie*." As shown in section 4, Stumpf's idea of phenomenology—that is based on its delimitation from psychology—is not, however, what decides as to the *phenomenological* character of Blaustein's psychology. In this sense, phenomenology in Blaustein should be understood as rooted in Husserl rather than in Stumpf. Nevertheless, there are some ideas that connect Stumpf's phenomenology with Blaustein's project of descriptive psychology, like the concept of the phenomenal world. The idea of the phenomenal world treated as the content of sensations is the clearest connection between Blaustein and Stumpf. On the other hand, Blaustein presents a very broad notion of psychology, which includes the phenomenal world, but this idea is rejected in Stumpf's psychology. The proper significance of Stumpf for Blaustein should not be sought after in his *phenomenology itself*, but rather in his *general philosophical project* that encompasses phenomenology, psychology, his theory of sciences, or his experimental research project. In this sense, Blaustein's descriptive psychology has much in common with Stumpf. However, all these methodological issues invite further research.

Ultimately, the question raised at the beginning of my article, whether Blaustein's project is closer to Husserl's or to Stumpf's *phenomenology*, turns out to be partly inadequate. Stumpf's phenomenology is a pre-science that aims at formulating general laws about the sensory contents and the relations between them, which is a domain of neutral study dissociated from psychology; the latter, in turn, is the study of the structural laws of psychic functions. Psychic functions are *de facto* related to sensory phenomena, and to some extent even "stem" from them and "operate" upon them; and yet these two disciplines and the laws they formulate are *distinct* and *irreducible* to each other. For Blaustein, sensory contents are distinct from psychic functions as well, and they do not belong to the psychic world either; and yet—unlike Stumpf—he treats such phenomenology or hyletics as *a part* of descriptive psychology, without falling into the error of psychologizing sensory contents. In other words,

Blaustein's descriptive psychology encompasses functional psychology and phenomenology in the Stumpfian sense. Regarding its broadness, Blaustein's phenomenological descriptive psychology seems to be closer to Husserl's project of phenomenology.

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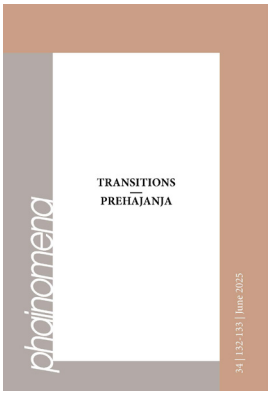

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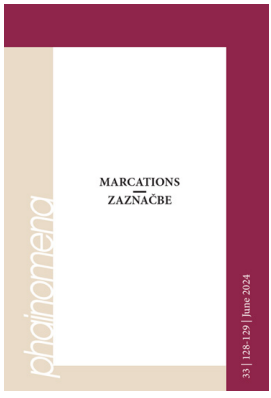

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