

THE THOUGHT OF LEOPOLD BLAUSTEIN IN CONTEXT

AN INTRODUCTION

Witold PŁOTKA

Institute of Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw,
Wóycickiego St. 1/3, building no. 23, PL-01-938 Warsaw, Poland

witoldplotka@gmail.com | w.plotka@uksw.edu.pl

The thematic issue of *Phainomena. Journal of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* contributes to ongoing research on the heritage of early phenomenology by filling the gap in scholarship on Leopold Blaustein (1905–1942 [?]). This volume collects essays on and critical studies of his ideas, accompanied by a selection of English translations of his texts. As such, it is the first anthology that presents a collective effort to widen our knowledge of this scholar.

Blaustein is often connected with the phenomenological movement because of his academic training. After all, he was educated by, among others, Roman

This text was supported by the National Science Center, Poland, as a part of the SONATA BIS program (No. 2021/42/E/HS1/00108) within the research project on *The Philosophy of Leopold Blaustein in Context: Brentano, Gestalt Psychology, Lvov–Warsaw School and Early Phenomenology*.

Ingarden (1893–1970)—a prominent member of the Göttingen Circle—and he took part in Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) lectures and seminars during his fellowship stay in Germany. It is precisely in this context that Blaustein is mentioned by Guido Küng. In a chapter on Ingarden, included in Herbert Spiegelberg's *The Phenomenological Movement*, Küng refers to the beginnings of Ingarden's academic career in Poland, and he remarks that Ingarden “[...] could provoke no genuine discussion, and he did not succeed in arousing interest in phenomenology” (Spiegelberg 1994, 224); in this regard, Blaustein is called by Küng “an exception” who, upon recommendation by Ingarden, studied under Husserl in Germany (Spiegelberg 1994, 262, fn. 69). While Blaustein is commonly classified as a phenomenologist by contemporary scholars,¹ it is far from clear to what extent Blaustein was indeed a phenomenologist. This leads to the question of the reasoning behind this classification.

6

In order to address this question, it is helpful to refer to Spiegelberg's book again. In the “Introduction” to his book, Spiegelberg (1994, 2–6) considers the problem of where to draw the line between phenomenologists and non-phenomenologists, and he considers four criteria. Firstly, we can refer to self-declarations of members of the movement. If this is insufficient, we can, secondly, consider recognition by others, say, key figures, groups of insiders or outsiders. Both criteria, though plausible, can lead us to surprising and ultimately fallible results. For instance, we can recognize a scholar as a phenomenologist on the basis of her direct declaration or her students' statements who took part in their teacher's lectures, although no widely accessible textual evidence is provided. One may ask, are the students' declaration reliable? Or maybe textual evidence is not widely accessible? For this reason, both criteria are problematic, and because of this, Spiegelberg considers a third criterion; more precisely, we can decide on certain objective factors or features that are to be determined by historians. Those factors or features may encompass necessary and sufficient requirements, in order to classify a certain form of philosophizing as phenomenology. By doing so, we

1 For more on this issue see, e.g.: Woleński 1989, 310, fn. 11; Rosińska 2001; Miskiewicz 2009; Pokropski 2015; Nuccilli & Lewandowski 2024; Jakha 2025. For more on the critical examination of this classification, see Płotka 2024.

can address problems that arise with the first and second criteria; however, the requirements we define can have a limited range, and can thus be questioned by others. Finally, with respect to the fourth criterion, following Spiegelberg, we can combine all three listed criteria, and attempt to avoid the difficulties listed above.

With all of this in mind, what exactly determines the idea of comprehending Blaustein as a phenomenologist? After all, we may argue, he did not formulate any clear-cut declaration that he is a phenomenologist, nor did any other group make that claim. Moreover, given his critical account of some of Husserl's ideas, including the method of phenomenology, it is hardly plausible to recognize him as a phenomenologist in the strict sense. Of course, some may argue that labels in philosophy are pointless or even dangerous, for they are limiting. More importantly perhaps, this is also not the way we do phenomenology. By contrast, phenomenology allows things themselves (and not labels) to guide scholars. Therefore, we shall not restrict our criteria; instead, we will remain open to how things manifest themselves as such. This volume offers to adopt an analogous approach to look at Blaustein's ideas themselves: let these very ideas guide us to understanding the complexity of his thought, be it phenomenological or not. Things, however, do not manifest themselves without the right context, and we do not look at them from the point of view of a God's Eye; thus, also for Blaustein's ideas we should account for them from a certain point of view or in a relevant framework. In order to trace this framework, it is worth beginning with some notes on Blaustein's life.

It can be argued that difficulties in understanding Blaustein's ideas stem partly from his biography and partly from the diversity of his original studies in philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy. Blaustein was a Polish scholar with Jewish roots born in 1905 in Lvov (Lwów, now Lviv in Ukraine).² There, he studied at Jan Kazimierz University, roughly in the years 1923–1927. At that time, the university was the epicenter of original research being done by the Lvov–Warsaw School, a multidisciplinary school of thought that covered topics in, among other areas, logic, philosophy of science, mathematics, and descriptive psychology. As already mentioned, Blaustein's teacher in Lvov was

2 For an overview of Blaustein's biography, see Rosińska 2001, 16–23.

Ingarden, but the central figure of his education was, without doubt, Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), a student of Franz Brentano (1838–1917), who developed the project of descriptive psychology.³ Another important figure was Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890–1963) who developed the so-called directival theory of meaning, used by Blaustein in his research. Under Twardowski's supervision, Blaustein wrote a doctoral dissertation on Husserl's theory of intentionality.⁴ In 1925, while editing the final version of the dissertation, he went to Freiburg im Breisgau where he took part in Husserl's lectures. Later, he referred to these lectures and his private exchanges with Husserl, in order to address some details regarding the whole–part theory (Blaustein 1928, 83; Plotka 2026, 97–98). Blaustein's reading is rather critical, and it aims at arguing that it is difficult to explain how the ideal is instantiated in the psychic.

In the year 1927–1928, Blaustein once again traveled to Germany, this time to Berlin. His stay in Berlin can be regarded as one of the milestones of Blaustein's philosophical development at that time. There, he met, among others, Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), Max Wertheimer (1880–1943), and Kurt Lewin (1890–1947), who helped Blaustein to broaden his knowledge on Gestalt theory; additionally, he took part in lectures of Eduard Spranger (1882–1963), a student of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), who inspired Blaustein to develop the project of humanistic psychology. In Berlin, Blaustein published a book on Hebbel's dramas, which utilizes noetic and noematic analysis.⁵ After his return to Lvov, Blaustein harshly criticized phenomenology, claiming that it ultimately has to be developed as an empirical discipline about types (not essences) of lived experiences. This criticism resulted in some tensions between him and Ingarden who favored eidetic phenomenology. At the end of the 1920s, Blaustein also worked on two book projects finalized at the beginning of the 1930s.⁶ Both books discussed and developed an original theory of presentations. The term “presentation” is a key notion within Brentano's and

3 For more on this project, see: Citlak 2019, 1049–1077; 2023, 1665–1681; 2025.

4 See Blaustein 1928. The book was published recently in English translation in: Plotka 2026, 21–108.

5 See Blaustein 1929; see also the English translation of Section 1 of the book in this volume.

6 See Blaustein 1930; 1931.

Twardowski's field of descriptive psychology. Blaustein held that the Brentano–Twardowski theory had to be redesigned, in order to cover specifically aesthetic experiences, e.g., contemplating a painting, a sculpture, watching a theater play or a movie, etc. His point was that all aesthetic experiences involve specific types of presentations—classified by him as imaginative, schematic, and symbolic presentations⁷—that cannot be reduced, following Brentano and Twardowski, to any combination of presentations, judgments, and feelings.

Blaustein developed this line of reasoning in the 1930s by including new fields of aesthetics. At that time, he widely used the idea of the imaginative world of art to show that our experience of art creates a specific object, i.e., the world that is inherently present in, say, a theater play or depicted in a painting. Pushing his studies further, Blaustein published a book on the cinemagoer's experience of film in 1933 and, in 1938, another short book on the phenomenology of perceiving a radio drama.⁸ In these texts, Blaustein argued that aesthetic experiences are *sui generis* and therefore cannot be reduced to any form of our everyday experience. Watching a movie or listening to radio are technologically mediated experiences that shape our sense of the world. As a result, Blaustein attempted to describe how our psychic life is essentially embedded in worldly factors, and this embeddedness is made possible by our lived body that co-constitutes our experience of art. In his texts, he discussed the ideas of, among others, Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), Moritz Geiger (1880–1937), and Wilhelm Schapp (1884–1965). Of course, he also engaged with members of the Lvov–Warsaw School, not only with Twardowski or Ajdukiewicz, but also with, for instance, Walter Auerbach (1900–1942 [?]), Zofia Lissa (1908–1980), Stanisław Ossowski (1897–1963), Mieczysław Wallis-Walfisz (1895–1975), and Tadeusz Witwicki (1902–1970). Although Blaustein was active in the academic environment of Lvov—e.g., he cooperated with the Polish Philosophical Society—, he did not get a position at the university. His studies in aesthetics were planned to be ultimately summarized in a longer study, *Die ästhetische Perzeption*, written in German, which was completed

9

7 For an overview of Blaustein's theory, see Rosińska 2013. See also texts collected in: Blaustein 2005.

8 See editions of both studies included in this volume.

in 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II, but the manuscript of this monograph was lost during the war. We know that Blaustein, together with his wife, Eugenia Ginsberg-Blaustein and their son, was relocated to the Janowska Ghetto in Lvov during the German occupation. His exact date of death is unknown. He likely died in 1942, but some mention 1944 as well. Blaustein left more than 100 texts, including books, research articles, short reports, and reviews.⁹ In one of his texts, Ingarden (1963, 88) noted that Blaustein's death was a great loss for the Polish academic community, and he assessed Blaustein's contribution highly.

By and large, this rich, though divergent, context of Blaustein's academic training and his original studies from the 1920s and 1930s require detailed studies. The fact that Blaustein's ideas were shaped in the context of different traditions—the early phenomenology of Husserl and the Göttingen Circle, the Lvov–Warsaw School, Gestalt theory, humanistic psychology, the Graz School, etc.—makes it difficult to account for his original readings regarding the key figures of his time. However, this diversity also presents a unique opportunity for us to understand how early phenomenology was developing in the 1920s and 1930s outside Germany. Blaustein's ideas are complex, for he was a scholar who bridged the gap between different paradigms and traditions. It is precisely for this reason that his ideas require contextualization and thorough analysis. There is also another reason in favor of this approach. Some may say that in the scholarly literature, the legacy of early phenomenology is often connected exclusively with Husserl and the reception of his philosophy in the first decades of the 20th century in Germany. The story concerning early phenomenology, however, is much more complicated, multi-layered, and less obvious than this Husserl-centered perspective may suggest. This is clearly seen in Blaustein's work. His thought was influenced by various traditions. When he joined Husserl's classes, his theoretical background, which was rooted first and foremost in the Brentanian-style descriptive psychology, certainly determined his view of phenomenology.

As shown, Blaustein's ideas resonated with and were shaped in different philosophical and psychological frameworks. Because of this divergent context,

⁹ See the bibliography of Blaustein's works in: Dąbrowski 1981, 246–252.

Blaustein's philosophy does not fit clear-cut classifications. By examining his contribution, we may be able to overcome the Husserl-centered narrative about how the phenomenological movement evolved in the first decades of the 20th century. Without doubt, this approach promises interesting results. Only by exploring different frameworks that shaped Blaustein's inquiries, and by seeking new research perspectives that widen his ideas, are we in a position to understand his original standpoint adequately as well as his contribution to contemporary debates. Therefore, studies on Blaustein and his works have much to offer to contemporary readers, leading us to rethink an important part of the history of European philosophy. I do not hold that Blaustein is a key figure of phenomenology or the Lvov–Warsaw School; my point is that, in order to rethink the basics of these and other traditions, it is helpful to leave the mainstream line of reading key texts and to look at our common heritage from the point of view of peripheries, which are too often neglected in contemporary scholarship. Due to this approach, we are able to deepen our knowledge, not only of the peripheries, but also of the center. What, then, can Blaustein offer us today?

11

First of all, studies on Blaustein's thought can contribute to our understanding of how the leading ideas of philosophy or psychology of the 19th and 20th centuries migrated and ultimately were reshaped in new intellectual environments. This idea requires a commentary. Without doubt, ideas are abstract objects; however, they are present or manifest themselves in the world and they are able to resonate with us because of real and individual objects, say, books, lecture courses, and private exchanges with concrete scholars. Thus, ideas are embedded in our life-worlds, in our social and historical context, and in our interactions with others. The history of ideas often consists in tracking how these abstract objects were shaped by accidental circumstances or within concrete biographies. It is safe to say that ideas do not travel, but scholars do. With potential clarification in mind, let us note that popularizing an idea in a certain intellectual environment can mean transferring it from one place to another. How is that possible? Let us assume that we take lecture notes or we copy a course book during our fellowship stay at a guest institution and later, after we come back to our home institution, we lend out our notes or new books to someone else, and, by doing so, we popularize new accounts, which

thus far were absent among our colleagues; this makes it possible for ideas also to migrate, so to speak, together with real and individual scholars. Moreover, scholars can bring new ideas to their own intellectual environments, which can eventually lead to the confrontation of new and foreign ideas with those that are well established and thoroughly discussed. This confrontation is the ultimate basis for merging new ideas or reshaping “migrating” ideas. All these borrowings, imports, new establishments, or reformulations make ideas still a vibrant and fruitful tool in understanding our life-worlds. Of course, these considerations are very general, but they lead us to important consequences.

Given the sketched theoretical framework, it is thought-provoking and illuminating to investigate how the leading ideas of philosophy or psychology of the 19th and 20th centuries, for instance, phenomenology, descriptive psychology, Gestalt theory, and analytic philosophy, evolved and changed due to Blaustein’s academic activities. As noted above, he travelled to Germany, in order to study under the leading figures of mainstream currents of his times; however, in Lvov, he was well trained in descriptive psychology and in the 12 analytical approach. After his return to Poland, he discussed new ideas with his colleagues at Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov, and these discussions, not to mention new publications, made a confrontation of different philosophical approaches possible. Moreover, the fact that in Lvov he was educated also by Ingarden, a member of the Göttingen Circle, makes the whole situation even more compelling, leading us to questions of how early phenomenology was used and reshaped outside Germany.

We can also ask about Blaustein’s career given his Jewish origins; after all, in his letters to Twardowski, Blaustein suggested that he had problems with financing his stay in Berlin because of his Jewish origins. More than a decade later, because of this, he (and his family) was relocated to the ghetto where he died. His biography shares the tragic fate of many Jewish scholars who were unable to continue their research after World War II. Next, given that ideas are essentially embedded in our life-worlds, we can explore the institutional background of how some ideas are examined. For instance, Blaustein’s studies on cinema did not get any institutional support, whereas his research on radio experiences was supported by Polish Radio; this help enabled him to use a broader scope of methods while studying relevant experiences (e.g., using

questionnaires). Did this support make his research more efficient? Would it be possible to conduct his new projects without this support? In any case, here and in the other cases listed above, Blaustein's life and work are regarded as a nodal point for further inquiries into the history of ideas, not limited to the context just highlighted.

Certainly, scholarship on Blaustein's legacy fills the gap in ongoing studies regarding the history of ideas, but his contribution can also be examined outside of this historical context. Here, a few routes can be taken. First, Blaustein's account of intentionality is worth exploring. After all, his doctoral dissertation extensively discusses Husserl's theory of intentionality, and the main train of thought seems to lead us toward an object-directed, rather than a medium-centered account of the intentional relation. This, however, situates Blaustein close to the East Coast account of the noema, and can ultimately provide additional arguments against the West Coast reading.¹⁰ Of course, one can still examine to what extent Blaustein's theory of intentionality can be used with respect to the noesis–noema structure, given that he focuses more on Husserl's early theory developed in *Logical Investigations*. Second, pushing this line of reasoning forward, Blaustein may provide arguments for taking into account sensations as an important factor in our lived experiences. Husserl, as it is well known, classifies sensations as hyletic data and, by doing so, banishes this element from his investigations; instead, he looks to examine noetic–noematic structures. By contrast, for Blaustein, who in this regard follows Stumpf, lived experiences are founded on presenting contents that are understood as sensations; with a focus on this factor, however, we are able to develop phenomenology fully based on how we experience the world on a very basic level. One may argue that this approach can lead us toward interesting results. Third, Blaustein provides us with arguments in favor of a non-transcendental account of consciousness, which is popular among contemporary scholars. Needless to say, he does not believe that reduction guarantees us access to pure consciousness as such; rather, we should refer to the results of other non-philosophical disciplines, in order to understand consciousness adequately.

10 For more on both accounts, see, e.g.: Føllesdal 1982, 73–80; Smith & McIntyre 1982; Drummond 1990.

In this sense, Blaustein may be regarded as a proponent of a certain model of naturalizing phenomenology. Finally, we can examine to what extent Blaustein's ideas can be discussed in the context of today's debates within different disciplines, for instance, in media studies or aesthetics. In this regard, Miskiewicz (2009, 187) suggests that Blaustein's theories can be discussed in the context of McLuhan's "the medium is the message" and Wollheim's account of "seeing-in"; however, she does not provide solid arguments in favor of such readings, which leaves us some room for new accounts of Blaustein's philosophy.

We may conclude that reading Blaustein's works and writing studies about his ideas can contribute not only to the history of philosophy, but to examining numerous problems as well.

As mentioned above, in Ingarden's (1966, 88) assessment, Blaustein's "achievements are not without significance, and should not be forgotten or wasted." With the present volume, Ingarden's wish, at least in part, can be fulfilled. The texts gathered here examine and contextualize selected issues raised by Blaustein. The volume is divided into two parts: the first contains critical essays on Blaustein's thought and its context, while the second includes English translations of his studies originally written in Polish, German, and French.

The first part encompasses *nine* essays, beginning with Aleksandra Gomułczak's paper. Her work examines how phenomenology resonated within the Lvov–Warsaw School, i.e., the philosophical environment, in which Blaustein formulated his ideas. Gomułczak presents a broad perspective on the School and its relationship to phenomenology. She explores the School's methodological basics, juxtaposing them with Brentano's account of philosophy, and analyzes the way Husserl and Twardowski organized their teaching processes. Gomułczak discusses the diverse approaches of the School's members to Husserl's phenomenology, emphasizing that the School did not accept phenomenology uncritically. She addresses specific criticisms formulated by scholars, such as Blaustein, Ajdukiewicz, and Bocheński. The paper also situates the School (and its account of phenomenology) within the context of other trends in the analytical tradition, including the Vienna Circle and British philosophers.

Amadeusz Citlak also accounts for Blaustein's thought within the context of the Lvov–Warsaw School, but specifically from a psychological viewpoint. Citlak examines the extent, to which Blaustein's ideas remain relevant today, for instance, within phenomenologically oriented psychology (Gallagher, Marbach, Varela, Zahavi) and humanistic psychology. The paper shows that Blaustein was interested in understanding the specific person and, by examining this phenomenon, aimed to provide a theoretical basis for the humanities. Citlak also suggests that Blaustein can contribute to cultural psychology, presenting him as a forerunner of humanistic psychology (Maslow and Rogers). Another topic explored extensively by Blaustein, which is important for contemporary psychology studies, is the phenomenon of perception. Citlak discusses possible developments of Blaustein's ideas in this regard.

Witold Płotka's paper focuses on Blaustein's account of mediated experiences—phenomena which are co-constituted by non-mental factors. More precisely, Płotka examines the experiences of the cinemagoer and the phenomenon of listening to the radio. In both types of experience, technology clearly shapes the relevant phenomena. According to Płotka, Blaustein utilizes two parallel methodological approaches to examine technologically mediated experiences: a humanistic approach and phenomenology. The humanistic approach provides an ontological framework, while phenomenology helps one to examine the ways of manifestation. The paper addresses also the question of the role of the body and environment in technologically determined experiences. Płotka's work deepens our understanding of Blaustein's philosophy in light of contemporary philosophy of technology. Technology is regarded by Blaustein as a domain of culture, specifically as cultural artifacts.

The issue of culture is further discussed in Wojciech Starzyński's paper entitled "Between Critique and Affirmation. Blaustein's Functional Metaphysics of Culture." Starzyński argues that Blaustein developed a metaphysics in his philosophy, which questions the idea that Blaustein's philosophy should be understood as ontologically neutral. The paper juxtaposes Blaustein with Ingarden, showing that Blaustein developed a non-speculative, though normatively rich, account of culture and value. Such a conception was rooted in Ingarden's project put forward in *The Literary Work of Art*. In order to justify his point, Starzyński refers to Blaustein's reviews of Ingarden's work,

his pedagogical writings, his theory of humanistic psychology, and his studies on Hebbel. Ultimately, Blaustein is presented as a philosopher who developed the theory of intentionality in a functional manner, thereby not rejecting metaphysics, but reinterpreting it thoroughly.

Hicham Jakha's paper centers on aesthetics; more precisely, it accounts for the phenomenon of theater experience and explores the problem of how one refers to objects of this kind of experience. In order to explore this issue, Jakha situates Blaustein's philosophy in relation to Meinong's theory of assumptions. Meinong, a member of the School of Brentano, developed his original theory rooted in the ontology of fictional objects. The paper adopts two complementary perspectives: the phenomenological and the ontological one. Blaustein adopted the phenomenological view and explored the presentations that build one's experience of watching a theater play; in this vein, Blaustein classified this kind of experience as illusionary. Meinong, in turn, adopted the ontological view and examined assumptions, which were understood as phenomena situated between judgments and presentations. In Jakha's eyes, 16 Meinong's ontological approach supplements Blaustein's phenomenological account; both perspectives are necessary to account for the constitution of *ficta*.

Two further papers juxtapose Blaustein with Husserl. In "Intentionality and the Perceptual World," Daniele Nuccilli offers a systematic approach toward the theory of intentionality by examining how the phenomenon of perception should be described, including its parts and essence. Nuccilli juxtaposes the accounts of Husserl, Schapp, and Blaustein regarding the contents of sensations. The paper begins with an analysis of Husserl's early lectures on logic and theory of knowledge, arguing that these lectures mark a crucial shift in the development of Husserl's theory of intentionality, moving from *Logical Investigations* to *Ideas I*. The key notion analyzed by Nuccilli is the idea of *materia prima*. In this context, Schapp is presented as a critic of Husserl: for Schapp, sensations present the thing directly to consciousness, while intentionality plays a secondary role. Blaustein, too, seemed to emphasize the thing indicated in relevant perceptual acts.

Magdalena Gilicka focuses on Blaustein's account of Husserl's eidetic phenomenology. She situates her discussion within the context of Ingarden's

reading of Bergson's critique of essentialism. In Gilicka's view, Husserl's eidetic phenomenology should also be read in the context of Bergson who appears to be a missing link in examining the legacy of eidetic phenomenology. Gilicka discusses Blaustein's thesis that Husserl's eidetic intuition should be understood as a kind of schematic representation, where the object is given indirectly. As a result, Blaustein, according to Gilicka, was skeptical about Husserl's eidetics.

Filip Borek explores Blaustein's psychology. He combines historical and systematic perspectives by situating Blaustein in the context of Husserl and Stumpf. Borek rightly observes that Blaustein was familiar with both approaches to phenomenology, having studied under both Husserl and Stumpf. From a systematic viewpoint, the study addresses the question of phenomenology's subject matter. According to Borek, for Husserl, phenomenology concerns the real content of consciousness, while for Stumpf, it focuses on the contents of sensations. The paper explores Stumpf's criticism of Husserl's *Ideas I* with respect to the notion of hyletics and its noetic–noematic approach. Borek's reading is nuanced and shows that Blaustein cannot be regarded as a mere follower of either Husserl or Stumpf. For Blaustein, descriptive psychology encompasses functional psychology and phenomenology in the Stumpfian sense, yet it remains close to Husserl's views as well.

The part that contains critical essays concludes with Filip Gołaszewski's paper, which also concerns psychology. However, unlike the studies by Citlak and Borek, Gołaszewski offers a hermeneutical reading of Blaustein's humanistic psychology. More precisely, Gołaszewski focuses on Blaustein's late project of humanistic psychology, which is rooted in the ideas of Dilthey and Spranger. This discipline, in Blaustein's account, concerns humanistic reality that is founded in relevant experiential wholes of higher order. Gołaszewski analyzes Blaustein's writings on Goethe and Hebbel as readings in humanistic psychology that adapt the tools of hermeneutics. Moreover, he juxtaposes Blaustein's psychology with hermeneutics by tracking down key concepts, such as the hermeneutic circle and understanding. According to Gołaszewski, Blaustein appears to be a philosopher who examined the humanistic reality by searching for the deeper meaning of cultural artifacts and lived experiences.

In addition to critical essays, the thematic issue of *Phainomena* gathers English translations of Blaustein's works. Given that his texts were published

a century ago, often in discontinued journals or by niche publishers, one can notice a problem with accessibility of these writings to scholars. The second part addresses this problem. It contains a selection of Blaustein's texts originally published from 1929 until 1939. All texts show a variety of topics discussed by him, including theoretical investigations into the basics of aesthetics, his innovative research on cinema and radio, as well as his views regarding other approaches, e.g., concerning Ajdukiewicz, Kotarbiński (who both were prominent members of the Lvov–Warsaw School), Ingarden (Blaustein's teacher in Lvov), and Stumpf (whom Blaustein met during his fellowship stay in Berlin), not to mention his critical assessment of humanistic psychology. The part collects texts in historical order. It contains texts originally published in the Polish, German, and French languages. In what follows, I will present main points of the translated texts; however, I will not discuss them the historical order, but will divide them into three groups: the first group includes texts on the use of different methodological tools in aesthetics, the second group contains translations of Blaustein's original studies on cinema and radio, and the last group shows the context of his philosophy by situating his thought in relation to other scholars and research projects.

18

To begin with, the first group includes the 1929 text, published as the introductory section of Blaustein's book *The Lived Experience of God in Hebbel's Dramas*, originally written in German. The text was written during Blaustein's stay in Berlin. It adopts phenomenological tools in examining lived experiences on the basis of Hebbel's dramas. The text shows that these tools omit the fallacy of psychologism by focusing on the noetic–noematic correlation while describing phenomena connected to God. Blaustein's book is hardly accessible today, yet the translated fragment shows not only his interest in literature, but also his original fusion of phenomenology and descriptive psychology. The 1937 text "The Imaginative Work of Art and Its Way of Manifestation" was published originally in German as well. It presents Blaustein's aesthetics *in nuce* by providing the basic vocabulary, central ideas, and main arguments, which are fully elaborated in other texts. This short overview was designed to show that perceiving a work of art is a complex phenomenon, which requires one's attention to notice all the nuanced relations that manifest themselves within it. Ideas presented in the 1937 text are explored also in the 1938 article "On

Apprehending Aesthetic Objects.” This study shows that aesthetic experiences cannot be limited to artworks, since they concern everyday or natural objects as well. Blaustein argues that what makes these experiences unique is the complex structure of acts that are directed toward their objects. The article can be regarded as an informative introduction to Blaustein’s aesthetics as it presents first and foremost the theoretical basics of his approach. Nonetheless, the text includes also some examples, which illustrate the main points of his theory.

The second group of texts published in this thematic issue includes Blaustein’s writings, in which one can find an application of the method as discussed in his theoretical contributions. The 1933 short book *Contributions to the Psychology of the Cinemagoer* examines lived experiences of film spectators. Blaustein is interested here in the lived experiences’ nature and structure by describing how sensations lived by the cinemagoer become imaginative experiences of certain objects that, in turn, are inherent to the imaginative world presented in films. The text is a detailed analysis of relevant phenomena, but, in order to make his point and to justify his theories, Blaustein disputes also with the mainstream scholars of his time, for instance, with Schapp, Geiger, and Witasek. Likewise, the 1938/39 book *On the Perception of the Radio Play*, published originally in Polish and French, uses descriptive tools to analyze technologically determined aesthetic experiences. Blaustein argues that radio plays are given in perceptual acts, which he calls “acousion.” This form of experience consists of presenting its objects directly as if in the acoustic space. While listening to the radio, one apprehends auditory sensory data and, on this basis, directly experiences heard objects. In order to show this, Blaustein utilizes his idea of imaginative presentations that function as presentations of objects, which are inherent in the imaginative world of art. In this text, one finds the analysis of attention as one of the central phenomena in aesthetics.

The last group of texts includes translations that show the context of Blaustein’s thought by referring to his account of different traditions and theories. The longest text in this group is the 1935 article, originally published in Polish, “On the Tasks of Humanistic Psychology.” This study is rooted in Blaustein’s stay in Berlin, where he met Spranger, a student of Dilthey, who developed his original research program at the intersection of the humanities

20

and psychology. The published translation shows that Blaustein was sympathetic with the attitude of humanistic psychology, although he critically assessed metaphysical claims of this subsection of psychology. The text is a detailed analysis of the concept of experiential wholes of higher order. Blaustein defends the view that humanistic approach is necessary to understand the complexity of human psychic life. Next, Blaustein's reviews (from 1930) of Ajdukiewicz's and Kotarbiński's books present a unique perspective concerning his account of the Lvov–Warsaw School. Both Ajdukiewicz and Kotarbiński were students of Twardowski who contributed to the School significantly. They presented original theories, including a directival theory of meaning (Ajdukiewicz) and reism (Kotarbiński). Worth noting is that Ajdukiewicz was Blaustein's teacher in Lvov who influenced his student broadly with regard to the concept of meaning, which, in turn, helped Blaustein to critically elaborate Husserl's theory of meaning as discussed in *Logical Investigations*. Reviews published here present Blaustein's position within the Lvov–Warsaw School. Furthermore, his 1935/37 review of Ingarden's book on the literary work of art presents how Blaustein regarded Ingarden's theory. Ingarden, like Ajdukiewicz, was Blaustein's teacher in Lvov. Although there are some common points between both scholars, differences are still significant. The review published here gives an insight into the relationship between Ingarden and Blaustein. Generally, Blaustein seems to agree with Ingarden on many points, including Ingarden's critique of psychologism in literature; however, he expresses some doubts, for instance, in respect to ontological issues in Ingarden's theory of literature. The 1937/38 text on Stumpf adopts a different approach than the review of Ingarden. The text was written as a post-mortem note and for this reason one cannot find any critical remarks regarding Stumpf's philosophy. The text is nonetheless important, since it shows Blaustein's debt to Stumpf's thought. The note is a summary of Stumpf's life-long philosophical development, and it presents an attempt to situate this scholar within the leading trends of philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries.

All translations published in the present thematic issue aim at making Blaustein's legacy more accessible. Together with critical essays, this volume is an important step toward deepening our knowledge of early phenomenology that is rooted in different polemics, borrowings, criticisms, and new developments.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to the Editorial Board of *Phainomena. Journal of Phenomenology and Hermeneutics* for accepting the idea of publishing a thematic issue dedicated to Blaustein's thought.

Bibliography | Bibliografija

Blaustein, Leopold. 1928. *Husserlowska nauka o akcji, treści i przedmiocie przedstawienia* [Husserl's *Theory of Act, Content, and Object of Presentation*]. Lwów: Nakładem Towarzystwa Naukowego z Zasiłkiem Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego.

---. 1929. *Das Gotteserlebnis in Hebbels Dramen*. Berlin: Verlag Reuther & Reichard.

---. 1930. *Przedstawienia imaginatywne. Studyum z pogranicza psychologii i estetyki* [Imaginative Presentations. Study on the Borders of Psychology and Aesthetics]. Lwów: Wydawnictwo Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego we Lwowie.

---. 1931. *Przedstawienia schematyczne i symboliczne. Badania z pogranicza psychologii i estetyki* [Schematic and Symbolic Presentations. Study on the Borders of Psychology and Aesthetics]. Lwów: Nakładem Przeglądu Humanistycznego.

---. 2005. *Wybór pism estetycznych*. Ed. by Zofia Rosińska. Krakow: TAIWPN Universitas.

Citlak, Amadeusz. 2019. "The Problem of Mind and Mental Acts in the Perspective of Psychology in the Lvov–Warsaw School." *Philosophical Psychology* 32 (7): 1049–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2019.1647410>.

---. 2023. "Brentano's Psychology and Kazimierz Twardowski School: Implications for the Empirical Study of Psychological Phenomena Today." *Psychological Research* 87: 1665–1681. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-022-01744-1>.

---. 2025. "The Problem of Conceptual Coherence in Psychology: Where Should We Look for a Proper Psychological Theory?" *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*. Online First. <https://doi.org/10.1037/teo0000310>.

Dąbrowski, Mieczysław Andrzej. 1981. "Bibliografia prac Leopolda Blaustina." *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 29 (1): 244–254.

Drummond, John. 1990. *Husserlian Intentionality and Non-Foundational Realism: Noema and Object*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Føllesdal, Dagfinn. 1982. "Husserl's Notion of *noema*." In *Husserl, Intentionality, and Cognitive Science*, ed. by Hubert L. Dreyfus with Harrison Hall, 73–80. Cambridge (MA)—London: MIT Press.

Ingarden, Roman. 1963. "Leopold Blaustein—teoretyk radia i filmu." *Zeszyty Prasoznawcze* 4 (3): 86–93.

Jakha, Hicham. 2025. "On Charles's 'Quasi-Fear': A Perceptual-Phenomenological Defence of Thought Theory." *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 56 (3): 213–234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2025.2479442>.

Miskiewicz, Wioletta. 2009. "Leopold Blaustein's Analytical Phenomenology." In *The Golden Age of Polish Philosophy. Kazimierz Twardowski's Philosophical Legacy*, ed. by Sandra Lapointe, Jan Wolęński, Mathieu Marion, and Wioletta Miskiewicz, 181–188. Dordrecht: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2401-5_13.

Nuccilli, Daniele, and Rafał Lewandowski. 2024. "Husserl, Ajdukiewicz, and Blaustein on Meaning." *Horizon: Studies in Phenomenology* 13 (1): 95–114. <https://doi.org/10.21638/2226-5260-2024-13-1-95-114>.

Płotka, Witold. 2024. *The Philosophy of Leopold Blaustein: Descriptive Psychology, Phenomenology, and Aesthetics*. Cham: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-63685-1>.

Płotka, Witold (ed.). 2026. *Leopold Blaustein, Studies on Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology: Supplemented with Letters to Kazimierz Twardowski*, trans. by Witold Płotka and Rafał Lewandowski. Leiden, Boston (MA): Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004729322>.

Pokropski, Marek. 2015. "Leopold Blaustein's Critique of Husserl's Early Theory of Intentional Act, Object and Content." *Studia Phaenomenologica* 15: 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.5840/studphaen2015156>.

22 Rosińska, Zofia. 2001. *Blaustein. Koncepcja odbioru mediów* [Blaustein. A Conception of the Reception of Media]. Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka.

---. 2013. "The Model of Aesthetic Experience. The Theory of Leopold Blaustein." In *20th Century Aesthetics in Poland. Masters and Their Followers*, ed. by Krystyna Wilkoszewska, 74–94. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.

Smith, David Woodruff, and Roland McIntyre. 1982. *Husserl and Intentionality: A Study of Mind, Meaning, and Language*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Spiegelberg, Herbert. 1994. *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*. With the collaboration of Karl Schuhmann. Third revised and enlarged edition. Dordrecht—Boston (MA)—London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Woleński, Jan. 1989. *Logic and Philosophy in the Lvov–Warsaw School*. Dordrecht—Boston (MA)—London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

phainomena

REVIJA ZA FENOMENOLOGIJO IN HERMENEVTIKO
JOURNAL OF PHENOMENOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS



Phainomena 34 | 132-133 | June 2025

Transitions | Prehajanja

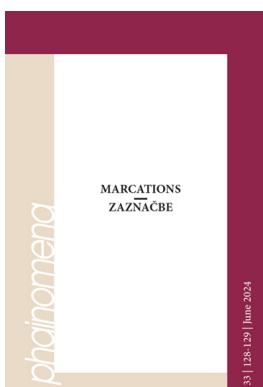
Dean Komel | Paulina Sosnowska | Jaroslava Vydrová | David-Augustin Mândruț | Manca Erzetič | Dragan Prole | Mindaugas Briedis | Irakli Batishvili | Dragan Jakovljević | Johannes Vorlaufer | Petar Šegedin | Željko Radinković | René Dentz | Malwina Rolka | Mimoza Hasani Pllana | Audran Aulanier | Robert Gugutzer | Damir Smiljanić | Silvia Dadà



Phainomena 33 | 130-131 | November 2024

Human Existence and Coexistence in the Epoch of Nihilism

Damir Barbarić | Jon Stewart | Cathrin Nielsen | Ilia Imishev | Petar Bojančić | Holger Zaborowski | Dragan D. Prole | Susanna Lindberg | Jeff Malpas | Azelarabe Lahkim Bennani | Josef Estermann | Chung-Chi Yu | Alfredo Rocha de la Torre | Jesús Adrián Escudero | Veronica Neri | Žarko Paić | Werner Stegmaier | Adriano Fabris | Dean Komel



Phainomena 33 | 128-129 | June 2024

Marcations | Zaznačbe

Mindaugas Briedis | Irfan Muhammad | Bence Peter Marosan | Sazan Kryeziu | Petar Šegedin | Johannes Vorlaufer | Manca Erzetič | David-Augustin Mândruț | René Dentz | Olena Budnyk | Maxim D. Miroshnichenko | Luka Hrovat | Tonči Valentić | Dean Komel | Bernhard Waldenfels | Damir Barbarić

ISSN 1318-3362



INR | INSTITUTE NOVA REVJA
FOR THE HUMANITIES

 *phainomena*

PHENOMENOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LJUBLJANA