



A Critical Analysis of Blaustein’s Polemic Against Husserl’s Method

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to define and investigate an interpretative framework for the philosophy of Leopold Blaustein, a student of Twardowski in Lwów (Lvov, Lviv) and Husserl in Freiburg im Breisgau. The author defends the thesis that it is justified to refer to Blaustein’s philosophy not as phenomenology *sensu stricto*, but as a phenomenologically-oriented descriptive psychology related but not equivalent to the project expounded by Husserl in the first edition of *Logische Untersuchungen* as well as in his project of phenomenological psychology (as formulated in 1925). The article traces Blaustein’s critique of Husserl’s phenomenological methods, putting it in the historical context of the discussion with Ingarden. Next, the author juxtaposes Blaustein’s understanding of psychology with Husserl’s project of 1925, which makes it possible to identify not only the differences between the two projects, but also their similarities. The article also raises questions about the scope of descriptive-psychological analyses.

1 Introduction

Alongside Roman Ingarden (1893–1970), Leopold Blaustein (1905–1942 [or 1944])¹ is undoubtedly one of the key figures of the phenomenological movement in Poland before the outbreak of World War II.² In Herbert Spiegelberg’s *The*

¹ The exact date of Blaustein’s death is unknown. He died together with his wife and son in the Lwów Ghetto in 1942 or 1944. See (Ingarden 1946, 335; Jadacki 1993, 161; Rosińska 2001, 16; 2005, ix).

² On early phenomenology in Poland see Głombik (2011) and Płotka (2017).

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Phenomenological Movement, Guido Küng puts Blaustein’s conception precisely in the context of Ingarden’s philosophy (Spiegelberg 1994, 224). Writing about the failed efforts of the latter “in arousing interest in phenomenology” in Poland, Küng cites Blaustein as “an exception” (Spiegelberg 1994, 262 fn. 69). This should come as no surprise given that Blaustein met Ingarden as early as 1925,³ when—at the end of June, or at the beginning of July—he also went to Freiburg im Breisgau to hear Edmund Husserl’s (1859–1938) lectures on phenomenological psychology. Blaustein was an innovative commentator and interpreter of Husserl’s philosophy. Yet, even if his investigations often follow Husserl’s texts literally and formulate seemingly standard interpretations, they ultimately lead to original developments, especially in aesthetics. He was a pioneer, for instance, of the phenomenology of listening to the radio and watching a theatre play—he formulated a compelling analysis of the experience of a viewer in the cinema.⁴ Blaustein’s understanding of phenomenology, however, is highly critical and often goes beyond a simple repetition of Husserl’s train of thought or research results—indeed, so much so that he definitely cannot be called a mere epigone of Husserl. This is precisely why opinions in the secondary literature are divided about whether it is justified to classify Blaustein’s philosophy as a form of phenomenology. Such a classification is called into question by, for example, Mieczysław Andrzej Dąbrowski (1981, 244) and, more recently, Marek Pokropski (2015, 94). Conversely, scholars such as Stanisław Pazura (1966, 90), Barry Smith (1994, 157), and recently also Maria van der Schaar (2015, 12) unequivocally classify Blaustein as a phenomenologist. Wioletta Miskiewicz (2009, 182) goes even further, claiming that he was the founder of “an entirely new branch of phenomenology” that is “analytic, descriptive, and interdisciplinary.” The present article is an attempt to take stock of these divergent views. My fundamental aim in this paper is to define and explore in more detail Blaustein’s original reformulation of Husserl’s method. In this regard, I defend the thesis that, rather than phenomenology *sensu stricto*, a category that is more adequate here is that of a *phenomenologically oriented descriptive psychology*. Blaustein’s project seems to be related but not equivalent to the project presented (yet later abandoned)⁵ by Husserl in the first edition of his *Logische Untersuchungen* (Husserl 1984, 24 fn. 1; 1970a, 176–177). I will argue that Blaustein’s criticism of Husserl’s method paradoxically adapts some elements of the 1925 lectures devoted to phenomenological psychology.

A few remarks are necessary here. One may assume (e.g., Woleński 1989, 310 fn. 11) that, influenced by Kazimierz Twardowski⁶ (1866–1938), his teacher in Lwów

³ Ingarden (1963, 87) recollected that from 1925, when he met Blaustein for the first time during the classes he ran at the university in Lwów, they met and talked “almost daily.” After Blaustein graduated, they exchanged opinions not only in private, but also at the meetings of the Polish Philosophical Society or the aesthetic research seminars Ingarden conducted at the University in the years 1934–1939.

⁴ Blaustein paid a lot of attention to aesthetics in the 1930’s. His aesthetics adapted and reinterpreted numerous elements of Husserl’s approach. See, e.g., Blaustein (1933, 1937, 1938a,b, 1939a, 2005, 2011). On Blaustein’s phenomenological aesthetics, see Plotka (2020b, 175–180).

⁵ For discussion, see Fisette (2010).

⁶ Blaustein always had the greatest respect and appreciation both for Twardowski himself and for his way of doing philosophy. See Blaustein (1939b) and Jadczak (1993).

and the supervisor of his doctoral dissertation devoted to Husserl,⁷ Blaustein favored the method put forward in the first edition of *Untersuchungen*. Phenomenology was understood there in the spirit of Franz Brentano (1838–1917), Husserl’s and Twardowski’s teacher from Vienna, as a form of descriptive psychology.⁸ This may come as a surprise because, as a direct student of Husserl in 1925, Blaustein was, of course, well trained in the project of “new psychology,” which adapts eidetic and transcendental tools of phenomenology.⁹ As he recollected, he had many occasions to engage with Husserl and discuss the details of the phenomenological method (Blaustein 1930a). Nevertheless, he did not accept Husserl’s position and still he comprehended phenomenology as a form of descriptive psychology, criticizing its eidetic and transcendental tendencies. To claim, however, that Blaustein’s reading of Husserl was determined by Twardowski exclusively is an oversimplification and does not fit a more nuanced picture. Rather, his view of phenomenology is full of tensions and bears the marks of differing philosophical traditions. Alongside Husserl, Twardowski, and Ingarden, his conception was shaped by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz¹⁰ (1890–1963), his teacher at the John Casimir University in Lwów, Carl Stumpf¹¹ (1848–1936), a lecturer of Blaustein in Berlin in 1927–1928, not to mention Eduard Spranger (1882–1963), a student of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and a proponent of humanistic psychology who lectured in Berlin when Blaustein held a scholarship there.¹² As can be seen, the contexts that shaped Blaustein’s thought—often theoretically remote and originating in different approaches—are very complex and require classification. Of course, a thorough examination of the sources of Blaustein’s philosophy and its developmental stages definitely goes beyond the limits of the present paper. Instead, this analysis will shed new light on Blaustein’s

⁷ Blaustein’s (1928a; 1928/29) dissertation is entitled *Husserlowska nauka o akcie, treści i przedmiocie przedstawienia* [*Husserl’s Theory of the Act, Content, and the Object of Presentation*] and it is the very first monograph on Husserl published in Poland.

⁸ The fact that Blaustein developed the project of descriptive psychology is connected to Twardowski’s contribution to psychology. On the Lvov–Warsaw School and the project of psychology developed within the School, see Citlak (2019).

⁹ Back then, Husserl delivered his lectures entitled “Einleitung in die phänomenologische Psychologie” and ran the seminar “Übungen in der Analyse und Deskription rein geistiger Akte und Deskription rein geistiger Akte und Gebilde” (Schuhmann 1977, 289–290). The text of the lectures is available in Husserl (1968, 3–234; 1977a). Unfortunately, Blaustein’s name cannot be found in “Quästurakten,” which makes it impossible to verify in which lectures Blaustein participated. Given, however, that the summer semester 1925 began in May, and Husserl mentioned Blaustein as late as his letter to Ingarden from June, 27, 1925 (see Husserl 1994, 226), it is possible that Blaustein participated in the second half of Husserl’s lectures and seminars which ended on July 30. I am thankful to Thomas Vongehr for this remark. On Ingarden’s view on Blaustein, see his letters to Twardowski in Ingarden (2016).

¹⁰ Blaustein attended lectures on logic delivered by Ajdukiewicz in 1924–1925. Ajdukiewicz was a logician and a member of the Lvov–Warsaw School. After the defence of his doctoral thesis (in 1913) on space in Kant—written under the supervision of Twardowski—he pursued complementary studies in Göttingen in the academic year 1913–1914. He decided to study there because of Hilbert, rather than Husserl although he did appreciate *Logische Untersuchungen*. See Głombik (2005, 2–7).

¹¹ On the Stumpf–Husserl discussion, see Fisette (2018). Blaustein appreciated not only the way Stumpf delivered his lectures, but also his original thought, especially and importantly in the area of psychology. See Blaustein (1937/38).

¹² On Blaustein’s view of humanistic psychology, see Blaustein (1935a).

polemic against Husserl's method, as it places the polemic in a new context, one still unexplored—namely, the context of the 1925 lectures.

To do this, I will juxtapose Blaustein with Husserl, asking whether his interpretation is justified and, if not, to what extent he misreads the basics of phenomenology. To begin with, I reconstruct Blaustein's discussion about the proper understanding of the phenomenological method (Sect. 2). He believes that the method posits essences as existing, claiming that the step is unjustified for various reasons. At most, Blaustein argues, phenomenology is possible as a descriptive psychology that investigates types of psychic phenomena. In the following part of the article (Sect. 3), I will show the limitations of Blaustein's critique by referring to the theory from *Untersuchungen* and *Ideen I*. I will table the thesis that the discussion is in fact focused on Ingarden's idea of phenomenology as an analysis of the content of ideas. To buttress that interpretation, I analyze (Sect. 4) Husserl's late project of phenomenological psychology as formulated in his lectures of 1925, which Blaustein attended. In this part, I will focus on the general description of the "new psychology," as Husserl would have it, and especially on the method of seeing essences (*Wesensschau*). It is this method in particular that Blaustein challenged once back in Poland. Finally, (Sect. 5) I will point out the differences and similarities between Blaustein's and Husserl's approaches.

2 Blaustein's Critique of Selected Elements of the Phenomenological Method

Blaustein engaged in a polemic against selected elements of the phenomenological method primarily in the first, theoretical period of his research activity.¹³ The polemic was usually (e.g., Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 1930a), but not always (e.g., Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29), preceded by a reconstruction of Husserl's position, which is testament to Blaustein's good knowledge of the writings by the founder of phenomenology.¹⁴ In this part of the article, I will analyze this polemic by first outlining Blaustein's understanding of Husserl's method and then reconstructing the critique and, equally importantly, his positive proposal of how phenomenology should be understood.

At the very beginning of his doctoral thesis and in his early writings, Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 2–3, 1930a, 235–36) took note of both the continuity of Husserl's philosophical project and a major shift that occurred within it. While initially, in *Untersuchungen*, the project was basically focused on

¹³ Miskiewicz (2009, 182–83) suggests that Blaustein's work should be divided into two basic periods: (1) in the first (1923–1931) he was focused primarily on the theoretical foundations of philosophical and psychological studies; (2) later (1932–1939) he applied the developed method to specific descriptive studies.

¹⁴ Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1993, 11), who was Twardowski's student, called Blaustein "an expert in Husserl," whilst Ajdukiewicz (1925) wrote about him as follows: "He [Blaustein—W.P.] wrote a thesis about 'Act, Content and Object' in Husserl and did it very thoroughly. He read the entire pre-Husserlian and post-Husserlian literature devoted to the topic and fell in love with Husserl."

descriptive psychology, starting from *Ideen I* it clearly moved away from these early premises. However, as Blaustein observed, though Husserl retained the originally developed terminology, he changed the method. The aim of descriptive psychology from *Untersuchungen* was to describe the basic elements, i.e., inseparable parts of the act of consciousness, as well as the way this act was related to its content and object. The act of consciousness and its properties, such as intentionality, are not accounted for as an object that is separable from a lived experience, but, according to Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 28, 56), as a “purely descriptive” element, i.e., as a “quality of certain lived experiences” or, more precisely, an “essential property of psychic phenomena.” A descriptive analysis is an analysis that abstracts from genetic relations. This enabled Husserl (in Blaustein’s [1928/29, 33–34] interpretation) not only to present a classification of psychic acts based on differences in species, but also formulate specific *psychological laws*.

The project was changed considerably in *Ideen I* where Husserl developed and used the method of phenomenological reduction (*epoché*). As a result of applying this method, consciousness becomes *pure* consciousness, that is the *residuum* of reduction (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 25 fn. 2, 60 fn. 3; 1930a, 237), whilst psychological laws are understood to be a “phenomenological state of affairs” (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 32 fn. 2). This is possible by breaking the connection with empirical experience, i.e., psycho-physical individuals, and focusing on the *essence* of an act. In Blaustein’s (1928a, 1928/29, 60) interpretation, “the phenomenological method consists in changing the natural attitude,”—that is, bracketing the “general thesis” and accounting for it as a lived experience. Thus, phenomenology is a descriptive psychology that employs the method of phenomenological reduction which is equivalent to treating it as descriptive eidetics of pure experiences of consciousness based on seeing essences (*Wesensschau*) (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 60 fn. 3, 1930a, 236). As we shall see in the following section of the article, this interpretation of Husserl’s method has serious limitations.

Both in his doctoral thesis (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 60–61 fn. 3) and the later article entitled “Edmund Husserl i jego fenomenologia” [“Edmund Husserl and his Phenomenology”] (Blaustein 1930a, 238), Blaustein mentioned that he had assessed the method critically in two lectures he delivered on April 28 and May 5, 1928 during the meetings of the Polish Philosophical Society. Already in the first lecture Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 164b) repeated the definition of phenomenology he had developed in his doctoral thesis whereby it was a “descriptive discipline of ideal essences of pure consciousness’ lived experiences” and linked the method of phenomenological reduction (*epoché*) with the analysis of essences. In other words, Blaustein seemed to be focused in that lecture on the later version of phenomenology presented in *Ideen I*. Questioning the unclear understanding of essences as general objects, he formulated five different objections and doubts. (1) When it comes to *logical* doubts, Blaustein believed that to construct a real definition—that is, one that concerns the *quid rei* instead of a mere expression in a given language—one must assume the existence of a *definiendum* with specific properties; this would mean that one would have to begin with solving a problem that goes beyond logic and concerns ontology. (2) From the *epistemological* point of view, knowing essences

requires the application of a specific method of seeing essences (*Wesensschau*), but the method turns out to be, as he puts it, a schematic representation.¹⁵ This kind of representation cannot be used to prove anything because, being schematic, its presenting content cannot represent all the properties of the presented object, which means that “one can never be sure whether the choice is right, nor can one differentiate clearly between the right choices and the rest” (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 165a). (3) Blaustein also had *ontological* doubts, claiming that it is not clear how general objects “exist” given the fact that the self-givenness (*Selbstgegebenheit*) of an object can be understood intuitively only through perceptual acts, and he does not believe *Wesensschau* is an act of perception. (4) Approaching the issue of essences from the perspective of *psychology*, Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 165a) acknowledged the existence of lived experiences that are directed toward general objects and postulates that the way such objects are given should be described further; he also suggests that general objects were at best intentional objects of acts. Finally, (5) Blaustein expressed a *methodological* doubt when he argues that, although the existence of general objects is assumed at the beginning, the question of whether they really exist remains to be answered. In other words, contrary to Husserl and Ingarden (1921), he believed phenomenology is not free of the *petitio principii* fallacy.

In light of these doubts, Blaustein claimed that the sciences may address general objects only as *types*, rather than something existing as an essence. By “type” Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 165a) understood the lowest genera (individuals) abstracted from incidental properties. Types are arrived at through a series of *observations* (instead of seeing essences) by skipping certain properties. Thus understood, a type is a correlate of a specific methodological process which does not require a hypostasis in the form of an essence and does not entail the necessity to acknowledge its existence. Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 165a fn.) described the process as inductive reasoning from one case to a type (he also used the German phrase: *Schluss vom Einzelnen auf Gesetzmässigkeit in einer Menge*). Thus, in order to account for higher genera, one should apply the method of gradual generalization, i.e., the inductive method. The essences addressed by phenomenology, being higher genera, are therefore simple generalizations, *not* general objects. This is why, according to Blaustein’s conclusion, “phenomenology is possible only as an empirical, descriptive science of types (the lowest genera) of experiences in pure consciousness, not as

¹⁵ According to Blaustein’s (1930c, 57) general description, a schematic representation is a *quasi-adequate* representation, i.e., a representation in which only a few elements of the content are related to the object. A more precise definition states that “*A* *schematically* represents ... *B* for *X*, if *A* represents naturally (reconstructs in intuition) *B* for *X*, *A* is intuitively given, but *B* not, so the presenting content of *A* is not comprehended as an appearance of *B*” (Blaustein 1931a, 107). To be precise, by “schematic representations” Blaustein understood representations constituted as relatively *quasi-inadequate*, i.e., they meet the following conditions: (a) they intend their object, but (b) the object *cannot* be intuitively given; for this reason, (c) they intend an artifact which refers to the object and moreover (d) only the few properties of the artifact are correlated with relevant properties of the object. For Blaustein, a schematic representation enables one to comprehend a schema as a representation of the schematized object, whereas the schema presents *typical* features of the schematized object. By claiming that seeing essences (*Wesensschau*) is in fact a schematic representation, he undermined Husserl’s idea that this act is direct and presents its object as actually present.

an a priori, descriptive science of higher essences as ideal objects” (1928/29, 165b). Hence, in Blaustein’s opinion, phenomenology should use the method of inductive generalizations to ensure the level of certainty that is required of science.

In the lecture delivered on May 5, 1928, Blaustein considered the consequences of rejecting essences as general entities. He stressed that the step would not result in rejecting ontology itself (formal and material), but only the “categorical nature” of ontological findings which are replaced by hypotheses. Therefore, science, including phenomenology, should ultimately put forward general propositions about individual objects of certain types, instead of propositions about those very types (essences). Seeing essences may be retained to a limited extent to present states of affairs expressed by axioms, but not to obtain axioms themselves (Blaustein 1928a, 1928/29, 166a). This is because research should be focused on what is individual, i.e., experienced, rather than on what is essential, i.e., general and existing in the “world of ideas” (Blaustein’s phrase). According to Blaustein, experience is not shaped by ideas, but the other way round. He concluded that this is precisely why phenomenology cannot serve as a foundation for other material sciences, although it may provide them with some basis of formal ontology. Finally, in Blaustein’s view, the fundamental difference between Husserl’s approach from *Untersuchungen* and the one from *Ideen I* rests in applying the method of reduction which consists in accounting for what is *psychic* as *pure consciousness*.

3 Blaustein’s Critique in Light of Husserl’s and Ingarden’s Early Theory of Ideas

Blaustein’s understanding of Husserl’s method and his critique of it may be summarized as follows: (1) at first—in *Untersuchungen*—Husserl defined phenomenology as descriptive psychology whose aim was to describe essential properties, i.e., types, of psychic phenomena; (2) next—from the publication of *Ideen I* onwards—descriptions are made subject to phenomenological reduction that enables accounting for what is psychic as pure consciousness which leads to the understanding of phenomenology as descriptive eidetics using the method of seeing essences (*Wesensschau*); (3) the problem is that the method of eidetic analysis makes use of the unclear concept of *eidōs* as a general object, which is why it must be suspended or restricted to the benefit of the descriptive psychology from *Untersuchungen*. This critique, however, seems questionable. Thus, in this part of the article, I will show its limitations, drawing on the two early works by Husserl that Blaustein cited. By juxtaposing both propositions and showing the limitations of the polemic, I arrive at the hypothesis that the critique formulated by Blaustein did not so much concern Husserl as Ingarden.

In the first edition of *Untersuchungen* (Husserl 1984, 24 fn. 1; 1970a, 176–177) Husserl did indeed describe phenomenology as descriptive psychology, which he opposed to explanatory or genetic psychology. Its aim was to carry out an initial study of lived experiences by describing them within the framework of general structures in order to provide a basis for psychological or logical investigations. However, already in the second edition of the work published in 1913 (Husserl 1984, 23; 1970a, 175–176) Husserl firmly said that phenomenology is *not* descriptive psychology as it makes use of “pure” descriptions that have nothing to do with

empirical ones; thus redefined, phenomenology uses “its contemplation of pure essence on a basis of exemplary individual intuitions of experience (often freely *imagined* ones)” (Husserl 1984, 23; 1970a, 175). In fact, Husserl moved away from descriptive psychology much earlier than 1913, having stressed in 1903 that phenomenology should not make assumptions about its object (as is the case of descriptive psychology), but focus on what is given as it is given (e.g., Zahavi 2017, 42).¹⁶ Equally important, in *Untersuchungen* Husserl developed the method of eidetic analysis in discussion with the modern theory of abstraction, emphatically rejecting the practice of hypostasizing ideas as general objects (Husserl 1984, 127; 1970a, 248; see Hopkins 1997). What is captured in ideation is not so much a general object as the moment of a given lived experience. Although in the secondary literature some authors, e.g., Smith and McIntyre (1982, 112, 116–119), interpret this element as an ideal entity, namely ideal meaning, John Drummond (1990, 26) demonstrated that this interpretation is questionable as Husserl ultimately understands the ideal as *irreal*, rather than *ideal* (i.e., not as something opposed to what is real).

To avoid misunderstandings when interpreting what is ideal, in *Ideen I* Husserl introduced the procedure of reduction. The theory of reduction is complex and, historically speaking, dates back to Husserl’s research from the first years after the publication of *Untersuchungen* (see Lavigne 2005, 287–306). In the context that is of interest here, the procedure suspends all theses about existence or non-existence and thus does not solve the problem of the existence of ideas either. An essence is understood in *Ideen I* as the “what” of a given object.¹⁷ The account of essences is objective, but, following Husserl (1976, 18; 1982, 13), what is given in such an act is not accounted for as existing (*daseiend*). In any case, when investigating essences, a phenomenologist develops the ontology of a given domain, an ontology which Husserl divides into formal (dealing with the object in general) and material (investigating material essences).¹⁸ At the same time, Husserl was opposed to “Platonic

¹⁶ “Daher ist die Phänomenologie nicht ohne weiteres als ‘deskriptive Psychologie’ zu bezeichnen. Sie ist es nicht im strengen und eigentlichen Sinn. Ihre Deskriptionen betreffen nicht Erlebnisse oder Erlebnisklassen von empirischen Personen; denn von Personen, von Ich und Anderen, von meinen und anderer Erlebnisse weiß sie nichts und vermutet sie nichts; über dergleichen stellt sie keine Fragen, versucht sie keine Bestimmungen, macht sie keine Hypothesen. Die phänomenologische Deskription blickt auf das im strengsten Sinn Gegebene hin, auf das Erlebnis, so wie es in sich selbst ist” (Husserl 1979, 206–207).

¹⁷ “At first ‘essence’ designated what is to be found in the very own being of an individuum as the What of an individuum. Any such What can, however, be ‘put into an idea.’ Experiencing, or *intuition of something individual* can become transmuted into *eidetic seeing (ideation)*—a possibility which is itself to be understood not as empirical, but as eidetic. What is seen when that occurs is the corresponding *pure essence*, or Eidos, whether it be the highest category or a particularization thereof—down to full concretion” (Husserl 1976, 13; 1982, 8).

¹⁸ Already in the “Third Logical Investigation,” Husserl referred to “inexact” essences as essences founded on intuitive data which cannot be identified with “exact” essences of mathematics. He wrote: “Plainly the essential forms of all intuitive data are not in principle to be brought under ‘exact’ or ‘ideal’ notions, such as we have in mathematics. ... The essences which direct ideation elicits from intuitive data are ‘inexact essences,’ they may not be confused with the ‘exact’ essences which are Ideas in the Kantian sense, and which (like an ‘ideal point,’ an ideal surface or solid Species of color in the ideal color-pyramid) arise through a peculiar ‘idealization.’ The descriptive concepts of all pure description, i.e. of description adapted to intuition immediately and with truth and so of all phenomenological description, differ in principle from those which dominate objective science” (Husserl 1984, 249; 1970b, 15).

hypostatization,” i.e., accounting for ideas as real beings (Husserl 1976, 47; 1982, 41). For him, an essence is a correlate of corresponding acts whilst seeing essences is an originally presentive act; an essence cannot of course be reduced to these acts, being their correlate.

In light of this brief presentation, it is perhaps surprising that Blaustein was so determined to criticize Husserl. It turns out that he not only did not reflect upon but also did not accept Husserl’s arguments in favor of moving away from descriptive psychology. What is more, he consistently accused Husserl of hypostasizing ideas, which was plainly not his position. One might even say that Blaustein misinterpreted Husserl. The fundamental difference between Husserl and Blaustein was that the latter did not accept the method of reduction that neutralizes or brackets the question about the existence of ideas. With this in mind, it could be at best argued that Blaustein attacked a specific interpretation of the phenomenological method that accounts for ideas as existing general objects. But why did he write about Husserl *expressis verbis*? To answer this question, one needs to consider the broader context of both lectures. My hypothesis is that, in the lectures, Blaustein did not argue with Husserl (even though the philosopher was expressly cited) but with Ingarden or at least with his early interpretation of the problem of essence in phenomenology. Twardowski (1997b, 30) wrote in his journal that Ingarden was the only one to take the floor after Blaustein’s lectures. This should come as no surprise given the fact that already a year before, i.e., on April 30, 1927, Ingarden and Blaustein discussed the concept of consciousness on the occasion of another lecture delivered for the Polish Philosophical Society, accusing each other of the *petitio principii* fallacy (Twardowski 1997a, 305). The accusation relates directly to the epistemic value of seeing essences and the method of reduction: can seeing essences be the source of fully justified knowledge if it assumes a priori the value of a different kind of cognition—for example, scientific cognition? Kuliniak et al., (2016, 97, 114) and Kuliniak and Pandura (2019, 548–549) underlined that Blaustein’s lectures were targeted directly at Ingarden, their aim being to weaken his position after he came back to Lwów or even prevent him from holding a chair at the university. Indeed, the fact that the focus of Blaustein’s lectures was eidetic cognition and the question of essences suggests that he wanted to attack a particular understanding of phenomenology, made popular in Poland by Ingarden (e.g., 1915, 306; 1919a; 1919b; Szylewicz 1993, 4),¹⁹ whereby the discipline is the study of the content of ideas in the act of immanent seeing essences (*immanente Wesenserschauung*). Ingarden’s understanding of ideas is not fully clear, which leaves some room for interpretation (see Chrudzimski 1999, 25–29). Nonetheless, his exposition does contain a quasi-Platonic account of ideas as “ideal objects” which do not exist in time or any real space and, as such, are invariable (Ingarden 1919b, 322). Real objects are *embodiments* of ideal objects. Contrary to Husserl, in the case of Ingarden (1919b, 324) the act of direct cognition results in the *affirmation of the ideal existence* of the object. Ingarden (1919b, 338) also writes about the “world of ideal objects”—and

¹⁹ On Ingarden’s method of analyzing the content of an idea, see Chrudzimski (1999, 29–31). On Ingarden’s early reading of Husserl, see Byrne (2020, 513–531).

it is worth noting that Blaustein used a similar expression when he wrote about the “world of ideas,” even though there is no equivalent expression in Husserl’s writings. Responding to Blaustein’s criticism, Ingarden (1928/29, 167a–168a) delivered a lecture entitled “Idealizm transcendentalny E. Husserla” [“E. Husserl’s Transcendental Idealism”] at the meeting of the Polish Philosophical Society on December 6, 1928. In the lecture, Ingarden focused on the problem of reduction, trying to demonstrate that pure consciousness does not exist in the same way as the world does. This being the case, it requires a methodological approach that is different from the one applied in natural sciences, i.e., an approach different from gradual inductive generalization. We know that Blaustein did not accept this response and later spoke against Ingarden’s concept of essence on several occasions, postulating the application of Ockham’s razor to essences treated metaphysically as existing general objects (Blaustein 1930b, 454; 1935b, 101a).

Summing up these arguments and the discussion presented so far, it may be observed that, for Blaustein, the phenomenological method worked by inductive generalizations which yield, or at least are intended to yield, reliable results. This critique, which in fact misinterprets Husserl, seems to be targeted at Ingarden’s account of phenomenology. As a result of his critique, Blaustein assumes that phenomenology should be understood as a descriptive psychology that abandons the method of phenomenological reduction. The solution is undoubtedly questionable, if not simply wrong. This, however, does not end the discussion of his criticism of phenomenology. As it turns out, the proposal put forward by him shares some common elements with the project of phenomenological psychology Husserl worked on from 1925. One proof of this affinity is that, in his polemic, Blaustein uses the term “*Wesensschau*” which is absent in Husserl’s early works but does appear in his 1925 lectures.

4 Psychology and the Method of Seeing Essences in Husserl’s 1925 Lectures

Blaustein (1930a, 235), who attended Husserl’s lectures entitled *Einleitung in die phänomenologische Psychologie* in the summer term of 1925, took note of the fact that this German philosopher attached great importance to the course. The focus of the lectures was to provide a phenomenological foundation for psychology and establish its place among the humanities.²⁰ Following Dilthey,²¹ Husserl assumed that psychology had its proper method which gave access to psychic life as a unity of lived

²⁰ For an overview of Husserl’s lectures from 1925, see Mohanty (2011, 336–366).

²¹ “Psychic facts constitute their most important component, thus they cannot be understood without psychological analysis. They possess an inner connectedness [*Zusammenhang*] because psychic life is itself a nexus. The understanding of this inner nexus therefore everywhere conditions our knowledge of them. It is only because uniformity and regularity exist in mental life and permit the integration of numerous living unities in a single order that they have been able to establish powers which are superior to individuals” (Dilthey 1977, 31).

experiences.²² Dilthey termed the method as “understanding,” while Husserl, analysing Dilthey’s position and highlighting the connection between phenomenology and his project of descriptive psychology (see Husserl 1968, 34; 1977a, 24–25), believed that it was intuitive and based on seeing essences. The method was the object of Husserl’s investigations also later, be it in *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Husserl 1999, 409–443; 1977b, 339–364), published posthumously in 1939, or in a series of research manuscripts on the method of variation (Husserl 2012).²³ In this part of the article I want to reconstruct selected elements of this method—such as its general properties and the procedure of seeing essences—solely on the basis of Husserl’s 1925 lectures to then be able to decide whether Blaustein’s critique discussed above was justified.

At the very beginning of his lectures, Husserl (1968, 14; 1977a, 9) analyzed selected forms of late nineteenth-century psychology, opposing “explanatory” and “descriptive-analytic” kinds of psychology as developed by Brentano and Dilthey. The former used a hypothetical-constitutive procedure which consists in taking certain elements, such as sense data, and then combining them in causal relations; the latter worked by pure intuition. After he analyzed the two projects critically, Husserl (1968, 46–51; 1977a, 33–37) came to the conclusion that the “new psychology” is a priori, *eidōs*-oriented, intuitive or purely descriptive and interested in intentionality. Husserl expanded on this general description in the following way: (1) the a priori nature is to be understood as a striving for essentially universal and necessary elements without which psychic life cannot be comprehended. (2) The source of a priori thus understood is intuition or description, i.e., “seeing” what is essential. (3) The procedure shows intentionality because, as Husserl (1968, 47; 1977a, 34) writes, “[p]sychic life is the life of consciousness; consciousness is consciousness of something.” Importantly, (4) the procedure described by Husserl makes it possible to adopt a transcendental attitude which would provide a radical, i.e., philosophical, grounding for the knowledge of consciousness, but the attitude is not necessary for psychology as it can function on the basis of the natural attitude. Nonetheless, (5) psychology as “the pure essential theory of the mental” (Husserl 1968, 49; 1977a, 35) provides a more reliable kind of knowledge than inductive sciences because it investigates essential laws which precede what is truly accidental. (6) At the same time, psychology cannot be a deductive science such as mathematics,²⁴ as its aim is not so much to explain a finite set of axioms, but to account for an intuitive and descriptive a priori. Thus, Husserl (1968, 65; 1977a, 48) explicitly links description with intuition, claiming that the intuitive procedure consists in studying what is given in experience in “exemplary forms” and “inquiring after what is typically universal.”

²² “The great significance of Dilthey’s expositions lay above all in what he said positively about the unity of psychic life as a unity of lived experience, and in the demand derived therefrom for a descriptive psychology drawing purely upon intuition: a psychology which, in spite of being ‘mere’ description, should accomplish its own species of the highest performance of clarification, i.e., that which Dilthey expressed with the word *understanding*” (Husserl 1968, 10; 1977a, 6).

²³ On Husserl’s method of variation, see also De Santis (2020).

²⁴ See also Husserl (1984, 249; 1970b, 15).

In the “Systematic Part” of the lectures, Husserl explained the basic elements of the eidetic method. He has shown that individuals and the world itself have their proper form which can be filled with a particular content. These forms can be studied in pure fantasy where “factual experience gives me only an exemplary beginning for the style of free fantasies which I shape from it, without otherwise employing it as something to be accepted” (Husserl 1968, 71; 1977a, 53). Hence, according to Husserl, pure fantasy allows for an a priori which is understood as “the invariable” in a free variation of experience.²⁵ Notably, a priori in this context is not something general, i.e., something that can be known *regardless* of experience. Husserl often stressed that the process of variation begins with the experience of the world. Thus, a priori makes sense only when it concerns what is given in experience. Husserl describes this procedure of reaching an a priori as “the seeing of an a priori,” adding “[t]his universal essence is the *eidōs*, the ‘idea’ in the Platonic sense, but apprehended purely and free from all metaphysical interpretations, therefore, taken precisely as it becomes given to us in immediate intuitiveness in the seeing of ideas which arises in that way” (Husserl 1968, 73; 1977a, 54). In Husserl’s view, the world of essences is the world of pure fantasy, i.e., the world of pure possibilities. It must be stressed, however, that the *eidōs* is understood without “metaphysical interpretations,” thanks to which it may be accounted for as “pure kind” (*reine Art*) (Husserl 1968, 74; 1977a, 55). As Husserl wrote, “the genus can become seen as pure *eidōs* only if we do not ask about something real and thus not about actualities, but raise all actuality to pure possibility, to the realm of free optionalness” (Husserl 1968, 75–76; 1977a, 56).²⁶ It bears emphasizing that, in the passage quoted above, Husserl uses the German word “*die Gattung*” which is later adopted and translated into Polish by Blaustein as “*gatunek*.”

In any case, in Husserl’s thought, eidetic variation is given in the *modi* of “and so on optionally,” showing that the *eidōs* is *not* a fixed and invariable structure that *exists* in an abstract “world of ideas,” but is known through a complex procedure as a “*synthetic unity*,” i.e., as something that is “singularized.” This is important to the extent we bear in mind that the entirety of the procedure is accounted for metaphorically as seeing. Literally speaking, nothing is “seen” there. It is not “sensuous seeing” because variation in pure fantasy is given in the *modi* of “and so on optionally,” i.e., in the mode of consecutive changes and apprehended coincidences.

²⁵ See Kersten (1972, 56–57). Recently, Sowa (2010, 537–538) interprets Husserl’s *eidōs* or the invariant from the 1925 lectures as “what is in common,” meaning, “what is in common for the many,” and he claims that his definition comes from Aristotle. See also Hopkins 1997.

²⁶ Also in his *Ideen III*, Husserl (1971, 47; 1980, 41) connects “eidetic seeing” with “species” and “genera”: “Therefore, whenever the phenomenologist says there are lived-processes, there are psychic states such as perceptions, remembering, and the like, his ‘there are’ says exactly as much as the mathematical ‘there are’: for example, a series of numbers: there are relative prime numbers; there is no regular decahedron. This ‘there are’ is established in both cases not through experience, but through eidetic seeing. Experience is a title for acts exhibiting factual existence, acts originally grasping as perception. But what the eidetic seeing brings to originary grasping are not particulars of factual existence but rather essences of lowest universality or, as species and genera, of higher universality; there does not need to be a particular corresponding to them, and if there should be something like that, then only actually occurring experience can exhibit it.”

The “seeing” mentioned here refers to consciousness in which a new kind of object is constituted, namely the universal but given as itself. Thus, according to Husserl (1968, 83; 1977a, 62), “the idea seen is here said to be seen because it is not meant or spoken of vaguely, indirectly, by means of empty symbols or words, but is precisely grasped directly and itself.” In a nutshell, “seeing” is a mental operation that consists in forming an open multiplicity of variants which, modelled on a given experience, become independent of empirical determinations in pure fantasy. Husserl (1968, 90–91; 1977a, 68) allows for a possibility of further generalization of the achieved results through, as he writes, the method of “pure induction” (*die Methode der reinen Induktion*).²⁷ The method works by deriving a more general cognition from individual “seen” types, provided that all references to what is natural or worldly are suspended (hence *pure* induction). It is worth noting that, further on in the lecture, Husserl did not expand on the method, writing about empirical induction as a method of natural sciences (in contrast to pure sciences).

5 Blaustein and his Project of Descriptive Psychology in the Context of Husserl’s 1925 Lectures

As I have noted at the end of Sect. 3, when criticizing the method of seeing essences, Blaustein uses the term “*Wesensschau*,” which cannot be found either in *Untersuchungen* or in *Ideen I*. In each of these works, Husserl employed a different expression, namely, “*Wesensschauung*” (e.g., Husserl 1976, 6–7, 13–17, 144–145; 1984, 23). I believe that it was on purpose that Blaustein opted for a term that did not really refer to Husserl’s early work, but to his 1925 lectures in phenomenological psychology which Blaustein had attended during his stay in Germany. However, taking into account some elements of the method of the “new psychology”—presented in more detail in Sect. 4 of the article—one may identify further limitations of the critique formulated by Blaustein. In this part, I will also consider the differences and similarities between these two approaches.

I will start with the limitations. As regards the polemic presented in Sect. 2, it may be observed that (1) the most unjustified objection is that Husserl supposedly accounted for *eide* as “general objects” that *exist* in the “world of ideas.” In phenomenology, essences simply do not have a metaphysical nature.²⁸ This allows us

²⁷ John Scanlon who translated the 1925 lectures into English, notices that instead of “induction” Husserl probably meant “ideation.” See Husserl (1977a, 68, fn. 1). However, in the manuscript Husserl indeed uses the word “Induction.” I would like to thank Jagna Brudzińska for crosschecking the relevant fragment of Husserl’s research manuscripts.

²⁸ In one of his *Kaizo* articles, Husserl noticed that the thesis about a metaphysical nature of essences follows for the Platonic tradition; this legacy, however, is overcome in phenomenology which asks about “pure” essences, i.e., about reality (*Wirklichkeit*) constituted in a free variation of fantasy. See Husserl (1989, 13–14). The non-metaphysical (or pure) interpretation of essences was elaborated by Husserl in *Experience and Judgment* where he wrote: “The essence proves to be that without which an object of a particular kind cannot be thought, i.e., without which the object cannot be intuitively imagined as such.

to reject both the *ontological* and *methodological* doubts raised by Blaustein. An idea should rather be understood in a methodological, and thus technical, sense as a result of applying a certain research procedure. This is why (2) an essence is not a real object with its own real definition, but a synthesis of what is given in the act of variation. Therefore, one may also reject Blaustein's *logical* doubts. (3) This dovetails with the fact that seeing essences (*Wesensschau*) does not have to do with "seeing" in the sense of sensuous perception, even though one does notice an analogy between these two types of acts. In spite of the fact that the two acts are not equated, seeing essences is not a schematic representation (as understood by Blaustein) because it enables accounting for an a priori as "this here" (*Dies-da*).²⁹ Hence, one may also reject the *epistemological* objection formulated by Blaustein. (4) On the other hand, what seems to remain valid is Blaustein's *psychological* observation that an essence is a correlate, i.e., an intentional object, of relevant acts. However, the fact that it is a correlate does not mean that an essence is nothing more than a psychic entity. In Husserl's account, the status of an essence is unreal. Thus, in the end, Blaustein's critique is again exposed in its limited scope.

Paradoxically, however, in his critique, Blaustein borrows a lot of elements from the method described by Husserl or, to put it more mildly, the method he suggested contains a surprising number of elements of the method postulated by this German phenomenologist. And so, (1) like Husserl, Blaustein stresses a strong connection between the psychological method and the experience of what is individual. (2) Also, they both write about types and genera to explain the status of ideas (even though Blaustein eventually called for replacing the word "idea"—which he deemed to be unclear—with the more adequate "type").³⁰ (3) Both philosophers assume that seeing essences does not prove axioms but can at best account for the state of affairs expressed by an axiom. Next (4) they object to the hypothetical-constitutive procedure in psychological descriptions.³¹ (5) They both distance themselves from accepting induction at the beginning of an analysis although (6) they allow for the possibility to introduce induction (pure induction in Husserl's case), understood in

Footnote 28 (continued)

This general essence is the *eidōs*, the *idea* in the Platonic sense, but apprehended in its purity and free from all metaphysical interpretations, therefore taken exactly as it is given to us immediately and intuitively in the vision of the idea which arises in this way" (Husserl 1999, 411; 1977b, 341). For discussion of Husserl's view on essences, see Zhok (2011, 99–130).

²⁹ As Mohanty (1959, 222) explains: "terms 'perception' or 'intuition' and the correlative term 'object' are used with equal justification. In empirical perception what is revealed is the individual spatio-temporal fact; so is an essence revealed, given, 'bodily' presented in eidetic perception. Eidetic perception is also an original mode of perception in the sense that it has its own specific type of objects that are primarily given through it."

³⁰ Incidentally, it must be underlined that, later, Husserl accounted for types primarily as empirical generalisations different from essential generality. See, e.g., Husserl (1999, 381–386; 1977b, 317–322). See also Schuetz (1959, 153–154).

³¹ As a side note, it is worth pointing out that Blaustein (1930c, 8 fn. 1) allowed for hypotheses that are adopted, as he wrote, "on the basis of direct experiential data." The hypotheses are then used to describe given phenomena more fully. Thus, hypotheses are functional concepts. As examples of such concepts, Blaustein cites quality and matter of an act.

a specific way, at further stages of research.³² (7) They both account for psychic life as a unity of lived experiences. Pointing out these similarities, one should not forget that Blaustein’s descriptive psychology cannot be equated with Husserl’s phenomenology even though, due to these analogies, it has a *phenomenological* nature. The two must remain separate because Blaustein did not accept the procedures of the eidetic and transcendental reductions. If so, how can Blaustein’s descriptive psychology be understood?

Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 25) assumed that the object of analyses in descriptive psychology is psychic phenomena which Husserl presumably treated as lived experiences. Psychic phenomena, in turn, make up “psychic life” (Blaustein 1935a, 34),³³ constituting a further, more general object of psychological analyses. It is worth mentioning here that Blaustein agreed with Twardowski that the scope of analyses does not cover only lived experiences or acts of consciousness, but also objects in the sense of products of psychic actions, which corresponds partially to Husserl’s structure of noesis and noema, as well as his postulate of carrying out both noetic and noematic analyses. Nonetheless, Husserl presented a broader account of phenomenology, identifying a phenomenon as something that presents, or manifests itself. In any case, Blaustein’s suggestion was to understand psychic life and its component phenomena as wholes made up of inseparable parts. As can be seen from the discussion—published by two important academic journals in Poland, i.e., *Przegląd Filozoficzny* [*The Philosophical Review*] and *Polskie Archiwum Psychologii* [*Polish Archive of Psychology*]³⁴—between Blaustein (1931b, 1932) and Irena Filozofówna (1931a, b, 1932a, b), the aim of psychology, thus understood, is to describe what is experienced and so to *directly* account for moments of lived experiences. The description is not based on seeing essences, as is the case with Husserl, but on introspection and retrospection by taking note of what is currently and actually experienced (Blaustein 1931b, 184, 185, fn. 1). In “O zadaniach psychologii humanistycznej” [“On the Tasks of Humanist Psychology”] Blaustein wrote that the aim of psychology is to describe the “originally natural psychological whole,” i.e., a lived experience or a complex of lived experiences, which would not be singled out by any abstraction but, as it were, “originally encountered” (Blaustein 1935a, 34). To explain this “original encounter,” Blaustein referred to introspection and

³² However, one needs to bear in mind that, even though Husserl noticed the possibility of using induction within the framework of eidetics, the latter was a discipline that could provide a foundation for the generalisations of the former, but not the other way around. This is well expressed by Lohmar (2010, 213): “Bei aller richtigen und gut begründeten Abgrenzung der eidetischen Methode von der induktiven Methode ist doch mit der Bestimmung des phänomenologischen *apriori* zugleich eine Bewegung auf die empirischen Wissenschaften hin getan: Es ist der Anspruch, eine Struktur festzuhalten, die bei *allen* empirischen und *allen weiter möglichen* Fällen gleich ist. Dieser Anspruch auf die Bestimmung *aller* Fälle bildet daher eine ‘Brücke’ zwischen der empirischen Naturwissenschaft und der Phänomenologie. Das heisst: Beide Erkenntnisansprüche sind sinnverschieden, aber es gibt Abhängigkeitsbeziehungen zwischen beiden. So sollte z.B. eine eidetische Einsicht nicht der empirischen Erkenntnis widerstreiten, umgekehrt können eidetische Einsichten die empirische Forschung auf neue Wege bringen.” On the difference between induction and eidetic method in Husserl, see Smith and McIntyre (1982, 100–101) and Aldea (2014, 418).

³³ Blaustein takes the expression “psychic life” from Twardowski’s philosophy. More on this issue, see Plotka (2020a, 147).

retrospection. He understood the former as clear and explicit seeing and considers it infallible (Blaustein 1931b, 183). Retrospection also allows for capturing ongoing lived experiences. Thanks to the direct nature of both these forms of cognition, description is supposed to be free of hypotheses and focus on what is given (Blaustein 1931b, 182–183). To phrase it differently, description reveals structures of a consciousness that is not a mere psychic entity of an individual person, but also surpasses the particular life of an individual. This last point was evident in Blaustein's discussion with Filozofówna when he implicitly formulated the postulate of the universality of psychological descriptions. In light of the previous considerations, we know that universality entails (for Blaustein) an analysis of *types* of lived experiences, but not essences. So, again, what is “seen” here are *not* essences, but individual phenomena which are the basis for inductive generalizations and as such they present relevant *types*. The procedure makes it possible to reject the objection of ontological psychologism which reduces the object to mere concrete psychic experiences. It may be added that the description postulated by Blaustein is based on whether it is adequate for the investigated object and “fertile,” i.e., whether it can be applied to “numerous related problems” (Blaustein 1932, 366). By contrast, for Filozofówna (1932c, 367), the description is “direct” if it entails a hypothesis which enables one to exclude vague notions and reduce (via “Ockham's razor”) unnecessary phenomena.

To conclude this section of the article, it is worth pointing out that, according to Blaustein's understanding, a descriptive psychologist who analyses psychic phenomena and psychic life captures moments of lived experience in his or her description. The procedure enables apprehending what is experienced *as* experienced. It seems that this last step—that is accounting for the object of psychology in a specific *modus*, i.e., “*as*”—determines the phenomenological nature of Blaustein's descriptive psychology. However, in spite of this and many other similarities, there still remain two fundamental differences between the two projects. Thus, while Blaustein treats the method of psychology as auxiliary, Husserl firmly claims that phenomenology provides a foundation for other sciences. This entails a different function of experiments in psychology: whilst Husserl believes that eidetic-descriptive findings precede any empirical-explanatory ones, Blaustein allows for the possibility to correct descriptions through experiments. Indeed, when describing specific experiences, he himself uses experimental methods and psychological interviews.³⁴ These

³⁴ See, e.g., Blaustein (1938b, 26, 43. Blaustein (1930c, 5 fn. 1) wrote explicitly: “I do not oppose descriptive and experimental psychology ... Description and experiment are two methods of one and the same science. Nonetheless, among the objects of psychological research, there are areas that are available only to the descriptive method or only to the experimental one. In the great majority of cases, however, description and experiment are two phases of psychological study. Sometimes experiments verify the results of descriptive psychology, but usually the experimental method is used to investigate specific problems based on the fundamental concepts that have been identified and analysed by descriptive psychology.” In the fragment Blaustein referred to Köhler and Wertheimer, members of the Berlin School of Gestalt psychology. Against this background, it can be argued that Blaustein's criticism of phenomenology was shaped by the Gestaltist as well. After all, he held a fellowship in Berlin in 1927 and 1928.

differences mean that, regardless of the similarities mentioned above, Blaustein's project remains distinct.

6 Conclusions

The basic aim of the article was to define and explore the interpretative framework for Blaustein's philosophy and his view of Husserl. As a result of my research, I classified his philosophy as descriptive psychology of a *phenomenological* nature. Examining this term further in the present paper, I analyzed critically Blaustein's polemic against Husserl's method both in the context of the early ideas from *Untersuchungen* and *Ideen I*, as well as in relation to the later approach presented in the 1925 lectures that Blaustein attended. The analyses presented above lead to several conclusions. (1) In spite of being targeted *expressis verbis* at Husserl, Blaustein's arguments are limited and rather misinterpret that position. Considering the question of why Blaustein referred to Husserl in the first place, I explored the hypothesis that (2) Blaustein was in fact aiming at a specific interpretation of the phenomenological method made popular in Poland by Ingarden, one that acknowledges the existence of essences as general objects. Last but not least, (3) Blaustein not only did not reject the detailed procedures and descriptions developed by Husserl in his 1925 lectures in phenomenological psychology, but also used them in his own original version of the rudiments of descriptive psychology.

Finally, it is worth posing the straightforward question of whether, given the findings of this article, Blaustein was indeed a phenomenologist. Is it justified to speak of *his* phenomenology? Dąbrowski (1981, 244) underlines that “Blaustein never was a phenomenologist in the full sense of the word although the impact of phenomenology on his research results is clear.” I do not think this opinion does justice to the complexity of Blaustein's philosophy. Scholars who consider him to be a “famous phenomenologist,” such as van der Schaar (2015, 12), or those who describe his method as quasi-phenomenological, such as Pokropski (2015, 94), probably go too far. Even though Blaustein did not use the tools of *epoché*, imaginative variation (like Husserl), or the investigation of the content of ideas (like Ingarden), he followed the basic intuition that analysis should be focused on an object as it is presented or manifested in experience. This is why it may be ultimately concluded that, due to the borrowings from and references to Husserl's philosophy, Blaustein's project of descriptive psychology is *phenomenologically* oriented. It should therefore not be surprising that, at the beginning of his doctoral thesis, Blaustein (1928a, 1928/29, 3) underlined that “[a] phenomenologist ... may interpret these considerations as an application of phenomenological claims in descriptive psychology, a psychologist—as an analysis that is independent of any phenomenology.”

The interpretation discussed in the present paper is fraught with limitations, but it does open up further research perspectives. First and foremost, it must be emphasized that there are no grounds for *equating* Blaustein's project of descriptive psychology with Husserl's phenomenology. The reason is that the two philosophers had a different attitude to the procedure of phenomenological reduction which Blaustein rejected. This results in a different (from Husserl's) account of phenomenology in

the context of other sciences: phenomenology no longer provides a foundation for the considerations of other scientists and may, or even should, use experimental methods. It seems that the differences stem from the fact that Blaustein worked on his project in discussion with other philosophers too. Therefore, in order to identify Blaustein's philosophy and *his* phenomenology adequately, it is necessary to carry out further research. The following philosophical contexts would have to be analyzed: (1) Twardowski's method developed in discussion with Brentano, (2) Stumpf's method of analyzing psychic functions, (3) the Gestaltists' view on experiments and (4) Dilthey's descriptive method. In addition, a more thorough analysis would need to focus on (5) Blaustein's polemic against Ingarden's ontological phenomenology.

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