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ON TWO THEMES IN LEOPOLD BLAUSTEIN'S AESTHETICS**

Abstract

The paper critically examines the thesis, popular in the literature, that Leopold Blaustein's aesthetics is first and foremost a phenomenological discipline. I argue that the "phenomenological" nature of Blaustein's philosophy follows from Brentano and Twardowski, rather than from Husserl. I therefore claim that Blaustein's aesthetics is determined by two equally important themes: (1) a descriptive-psychological and (2) a "phenomenological" one. The article is structured as follows. The introduction situates Blaustein's aesthetics within classical aesthetics. Section 1 reconstructs the Brentanian background of Blaustein's aesthetics. Section 2 contains a discussion of Blaustein's assessment of Twardowski's theory of presentations, which is followed, in Section 3, by an analysis of Blaustein's example descriptions of aesthetic experiences. These descriptions are discussed in Section 4, which also reconstructs the main elements of Blaustein's phenomenology of aesthetic experiences. Against this background, the question of the alleged psychologism of Blaustein's aesthetics is addressed in Conclusions.

Keywords: aesthetic experience, descriptive psychology, theory of presentations, Franz Brentano, Leopold Blaustein

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetics is commonly regarded as a philosophical theory of beauty and art. In general, aesthetics raises questions which concern, among others, our

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understanding of values and the aesthetic taste, the aesthetic object and its relation to the work of art, a specific type of experiences called aesthetic or — in the Kantian tradition — the aesthetic judgement. If one adopts this general description, while defining Leopold Blaustein's aesthetics, it is evident that his aesthetic theory cannot be comprehended as a thorough elaboration of the classical issues just listed. After all, Blaustein addresses neither the question of judgement, nor the problem of the aesthetic taste. His investigations into the nature of aesthetic values are at best of a preliminary nature. In addition, he does not construe aesthetics as a theory of beauty. But it is hard to deny that aesthetics is for Blaustein a crucial or essential part of his philosophical project. Because of this, some scholars, such as Roman Ingarden (1963: 87), Bohdan Dziemidok (1980: 5), and, more recently, Wioletta Miskiewicz (2009: 187), have claimed that Blaustein should be regarded first and foremost as an aesthetician. Indeed, methodological questions raised by Blaustein or his detailed polemics with other scholars can be regarded to some extent as points of departure for his original explorations in the field of aesthetics. This is evident from Blaustein's (1931: 14) self-commentary that his doctoral dissertation on Husserl's theory of content ought to be regarded as an attempt to formulate "a general theory of presentations" (*ogólna nauka o przedstawieniach*), which, in turn, has to be adopted in aesthetics. Following this clue, in the present study, I will attempt to show how Blaustein uses his psychology of presentations while examining aesthetic experiences. I will omit, however, his detailed descriptions of many types of aesthetic experiences. Instead, in Section 4, I will limit my exposition to Blaustein's understanding of contemplating a painting and watching a theater play. Essentially, here I offer an account of Blaustein's aesthetics as the final aim of his own philosophical explorations and as a result of a concrete use of the methodological devices.

In the literature, one finds an opinion that Blaustein's aesthetic investigations are dominated by a phenomenological point of view. This opinion is held by, among others, Stanisław Pazura (1966: 90), Zofia Rosińska (2005: xvii-xviii), or Robert T. Ptaszek (2011: 120). Pazura (1966: 90) even goes so far as to classify Blaustein as "an eminent member of Polish phenomenological school in aesthetics." The fact that Blaustein's aesthetics seems to be bound with the phenomenological traditions appears to follow from his focus on the aesthetic *experience* — i.e., on an experiential aspect of one's relation to the work of art. Moreover, one can argue that Blaustein is a phenomenologist because he studied under Husserl in Germany and, for this reason, was *influ-*

enced by him. This argument, however, is hardly convincing.[1] Contrary to these scholars and presented arguments, it seems that Blaustein's aesthetics is not a monolithic theory, as it incorporates diverse themes, which determine its concrete results. In this article, I will argue that any unequivocal classification of Blaustein's aesthetics only as a kind of phenomenology is one-sided and thus partial. It cannot address the question of the complexity of Blaustein's aesthetic theory. In the following, I will argue that Blaustein's emphasis on experience follows from the Brentanian heritage and Brentano's analysis of mental phenomena, rather than from Husserl. For sure, Blaustein's aesthetics cannot be reduced to the legacy of Husserl only. If one attempts to understand it more broadly, one has to take the tradition of descriptive psychology into account. Against this background, in the present study, I will sketch a more nuanced picture of Blaustein's aesthetics, which has a double root — i.e., descriptive psychology and phenomenology. Both themes, as it will be shown below, are equally important in defining Blaustein's thought. Moreover, as we will see, Blaustein's "phenomenological" background has to be understood broadly — i.e., not only as a Husserl-style analysis, but first and foremost as a first-person study of lived experiences; this line of thought was of course developed by Husserl, but it comes from Brentano.

To show this, in Section 1, I will inquire about Brentano's view of aesthetics and its relation to psychology. It will be argued that Blaustein follows Brentano in claiming that aesthetics shall be developed on the borderline of psychology. Next, they both seem to accept practical claims of aesthetics — i.e., they hold that aesthetics' general task is a practical implementation of its results in artistic practice. Finally, Blaustein appeals to Brentano's idea that analysis of aesthetic experiences consists in providing systematic descriptions of complexes of different presentations. Although the Brentanian themes are clear in Blaustein's aesthetics, Blaustein draws on Twardowski's account of presentations, rather than appealing to Brentano. In Section 2, I reconstruct Twardowski's theory of presentation and, against this background, attempt to define Blaustein's main objections against Twardowski's position. As we will see, Blaustein accuses Twardowski of using an unclear criterion of classification of presentations. Before addressing the question of phenomenological themes in Blaustein's aesthetics, in Section 3, I will examine a few examples of descriptions of aesthetic experiences. I will focus on two examples: his account of contemplating a painting and watching a theater play. These analyses will allow us to present, in Section 4, Blaustein's view on the structure of the

[1] On some controversies regarding the question of "influences" in the field of philosophy, see Brożek 2019: esp. 88-93. On an attempt to read Blaustein's writing in the context of Husserl, see Płotka 2020a, b, 2021a.

aesthetic experience as such. I will define different phases of this type of experience. In concluding remarks, I will consider the question of the alleged psychologism of Blaustein's aesthetics.

1. THE BRENTANIAN FRAMEWORK OF BLAUSTEIN'S AESTHETICS

It is beyond any doubt that Blaustein's aesthetic investigations are focused on specific experiences, which usually, though not entirely, occur while one contemplates a work of art. Blaustein calls these experiences aesthetic lived experiences. He states subsequently that aesthetic lived experiences are presentations or are based on presentations (Blaustein 1930: 61; 1931: 123). This description, however, is deeply rooted in the heritage of Brentano; furthermore, it has significant theoretical and methodological consequences. In this context, one can indicate at least *three* clear references in Blaustein's writings to this tradition: (1) his aesthetics is developed, as he puts it, on the "borderline" (in Polish: *pogranicze*) of psychology and aesthetic theory (Blaustein 2005: 136); (2) aesthetics has practical claims; and (3) aesthetics is developed in the form of systematic descriptions of complexes of various types of presentations. All these components can be analyzed in the context of Brentano. However, as we will see in Section 2, Blaustein developed his original account of presentations in reaction to Twardowski's theory, not to Brentano's.

In his 1874 *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt* [*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*], Brentano sketches a project of systematic investigations into mental phenomena. These explorations adopt methodological tools used by the natural sciences; this, in turn, shows scientific claims of Brentano's descriptive psychology. In the literature, one can easily find remarks that this scientific nature of psychology consists in comprehending a certain phenomenon as determined by a defined general law.[2] The aim of psychology is therefore to provide a *description* of certain mental phenomena and their *explanation* by formulating laws governing these phenomena. Since psychology is the basis of any investigation of phenomena, also other disciplines, including aesthetics, shall be developed precisely as a result of thus understood project. Indeed, this suggestion is explicitly expressed by Brentano in his *Psychologie*. In Book One of his *Psychologie*, Brentano refers to philosophy, as he puts it, "merely in passing" ("*nur ganz flüchtig*"):

[2] On Brentano's scientific procedures in descriptive psychology, see Tănăsescu 2019: 397-412.

> Let me point out merely in passing that psychology contains the roots of aesthetics, which, in a more advanced stage of development, will undoubtedly sharpen the eye of the artist and assure his progress. Likewise, suffice it to say that the important art of logic, a single improvement in which brings about a thousand advances in science, also has psychology as its source. In addition, psychology has the task of becoming the scientific basis for a theory of education, both of the individual and of society. Along with aesthetics and logic, ethics and politics also stem from the field of psychology. (Brentano 1995: 15-16)

The quoted fragment of Brentano's *Psychologie* is important for two reasons. Firstly, Brentano explicitly formulates here the thesis that aesthetics is based on psychology since only while describing given phenomena one is able to achieve clarity regarding the basics of these very phenomena. In regard to presented descriptions, one shall formulate relevant psychological laws, which could explain a given aesthetic phenomenon. By the emphasis put on mental phenomena, Brentano overcomes a classical notion of aesthetics understood as a theory of beauty.[3] Secondly, for Brentano, aesthetics has practical claims as it "will undoubtedly sharpen the eye of the artist and assure his progress." This is possible because the artist can use formulated psychological laws in order to compose relevant works of art, which, in turn, shall encourage one to live through aesthetic experiences (Huemer 2017: 203-204).

Both accounts of aesthetics formulated by Brentano — i.e., the founding of aesthetics on psychology and its practical claims — are present in Blaustein's writings. And thus, just like Brentano, Blaustein (2005: 4, 136) describes aesthetic lived experiences as complex acts, and as acts that combine different types of presentations. In turn, presentations are characterized as intentional, so as having their own in-existent object (Brentano 1995: 74-75). Aesthetic experiences as such encompass, besides presentations, sensations; sensations are apprehended by a relevant presentation and because of this apprehension the act has its object. In addition to presentations (and thus to sensations), aesthetic lived experiences can encompass volitional acts, emotions, and judgements; this claim refers directly to Brentano's (1995: 206) classification of mental phenomena as discussed in his *Psychologie*. In any case, Brentano's idea of founding aesthetics on psychology leads Blaustein to emphasize the experiential element of the aesthetic phenomenon. Here, then, lies the source of Blaustein's *phenomenological* character of his aesthetics. Therefore, Blaustein's "phenomenology" is rooted much more in Brentano, than in Husserl. Additionally, following Brentano, Blaustein sees in aesthetics a possibility of its practical implementation. A clear example of this tendency to implement aesthetics is the use of descriptive analysis of perceptual experiences of radio drama by

[3] More on this issue, see Huemer 2017: 202-209.

Blaustein: after all, he refers to concrete results of his descriptions to formulate practical suggestions for a radio author concerning how to compose the radio drama — e.g., a suggestion that the author shall hear parts of the drama after every part of recordings.[4] Importantly, the practical implementation of aesthetics goes back rather to Brentano, than to Husserl. Here, however, evident references become vaguer as Blaustein holds that the class of presentations is very complex. He states that perceptual presentations are different than imaginative, schematic, or symbolic ones. Although the purpose of psychology is, according to Brentano, a classification of mental phenomena, Blaustein seems to be closer in this regard to Twardowski, with whom he discusses the division of presentations. Let us look closer at this discussion.

2. POLEMICS WITH TWARDOWSKI

Twardowski attempted to define presentations in his early writings. And thus, in his doctoral dissertation on Descartes, Twardowski considers whether perception is a form of presentation; in this regard, he argues that perception cannot be reduced to any class of mental phenomena as defined by Brentano (Twardowski 1892: 14-15).[5] Moreover, in his later habilitation thesis, one can find a distinction between the act, content, and object of presentation (Twardowski 1977); the division was coined in reference to Bolzano and as a critical elaboration of Brentano's *Psychologie*.[6] However, only in an important essay originally published in Polish in 1898, "Wyobrażenia i pojęcia" [Imageries and Concepts], Twardowski formulates a classification of presentations which he later elaborated in the 1924 essay "O istocie pojęć" [On the Essence of Concepts]. Twardowski's classification was used by Blaustein in his own writings. In the 1898 essay and in the 1924 text, Twardowski (1924: 6-9; 1995: 79-104) divides presentations (*Vorstellungen*, *przedstawienia*) into two basic sub-groups: *imageries* (*Anschauungen*, *wyobrażenia*), which are defined as concrete and direct presentations, and *concepts* (*Begriffe*, *pojęcia*), which are understood as abstract and indirect presentations. In this context, Twardowski is focused first and foremost on an analysis of imageries

[4] For a full list of Blaustein's suggestions, see Blaustein 2005: 193-196.

[5] For a discussion of Twardowski's early account of presentations, also in the context of Brentano, see Paczkowska-Łagowska 1980: 19-39.

[6] Contrary to Twardowski, Chrudzimski argues that the triparite division of a mental phenomenon can be also found in Brentano's writings. See Chrudzimski 2001: 13-26; 2002: 186-187.

and argues that imageries are the basis of concepts, since concepts arise when imageries cannot be any more direct. While critically discussing — among others — Hume's view on imageries as a "reconstruction of sensations," Twardowski finally accepts a general definition of imageries as a synthesis of sensations. Here he adds that:

> As a synthesis of impressions, imagery still remains something distinct from impression. The difference between imagery and impression, however, is not that an impression occurs under the influence of external stimuli and without such stimuli. It consists in the fact that describes wholes which are combined from elements, and impressions are just these elements. The relation of imagery to impressions is that of a whole to its parts. (Twardowski 1995: 87)

On the basis of this passage, one might well conclude that imageries are understood by Twardowski as a synthesis of sensations; the synthesis is defined as a whole, which includes sensations as its parts. Twardowski is clear that sensations form a whole, which is unique and cannot be understood as a mere sum of its parts. These parts can be defined only in a descriptive-psychological manner. As Twardowski (1995: 87) puts it, parts are unified into one whole (*zlewają się w jedną całość*) or they fuse together (*zrastają się ze sobą*). He holds that sensations can play different roles in imageries, since they can be given in a current or actual experience, or they can be given only indirectly. With these ideas in mind, one can identify *four* types of imageries, including: (1) *perceptual* imageries (if a synthesis of impressions refers directly to what is actually experienced), (2) *reproductive* imageries (if a synthesis of impressions refers indirectly to what was actually experienced — i.e., the synthesis reproduces impressions), (3) *creative* imageries (if a synthesis of impressions refers indirectly to what was actually experienced, does not reproduce, and does combine impressions), and, finally, (4) *introspective* imageries (if a synthesis of impressions does not occur but the object is given in inner perception) (Twardowski 1995: 88; see also 1924: 6-9). Sensations, which are the basis of imageries, refer to relevant parts or traits of the presented object. The synthesis is successful, if traits that shall be combined in one whole are non-contradictory. Otherwise, imagery cannot be produced and thus presented; yet, one can refer to the object, which cannot be presented in a relevant imagery, through one's concept.

Blaustein (1928: 23-24; 1931: 90-91, fn. 1; 2005: 21, 23-24)[7] refers to Twardowski's classification of presentations — as divided into imageries and

[7] At the very beginning of Part Two of his *Husserlowska nauka o akcie, treści i przedmiocie przedstawienia* [Husserl's Theory of Act, Content and Object of Presentation], Blaustein analyzes Husserl's discussion of the term "presentation" and in this regard, Blaustein lists Husserl's attempts to avoid possible ambiguities. Against this background,

concepts — on many occasions in his writings. He also accepts the tripartite division (formulated by Twardowski in his habilitation thesis) of act, content, and object of presentation. Furthermore, Blaustein (2005: 31) agrees with his Lvov teacher that presenting content is a "view" of the object. Although these references are evident, in his *Przedstawienia imaginatywne* [Imaginative Presentations], Blaustein accuses Twardowski of using a vague and ill-defined criterion; as a result, Twardowski's taxonomy is not fully justified. Blaustein holds that the criterion is not a matter of act, because different imageries — perceptual or reproductive — can have the same matter. Quality cannot be the criterion either, because, as he writes:

> As far as quality is concerned, one can refer to introspection, which shows that the quality of, e.g., reproductive imagery, and a concept do not differ. We see no difference in the way these two types of acts relate to the object. Both make the object present. If the difference between perceptive, reproductive, and creative imageries and concepts were in their quality, the listed types of presentations would not form a uniform, idiogenic class of mental acts, while each of these types would be classified in the classification of mental acts as classes of mental acts equal to judging, experiencing feelings, presenting, etc. (Blaustein 2005: 46; 2011a: 214 [translation modified])

If neither quality nor matter is the criterion of Twardowski's classification of presentations, one should attempt to seek the criterion among other properties of presentations. In this context, Blaustein indicates that the presenting content and object are the criterion, and he argues that Twardowski in fact formulates not *one* taxonomy, but rather *three* different classifications. And thus, following Blaustein, Twardowski divides presentations into concepts and imageries. Next, he distinguishes between perceptual, or original, and secondary imageries (among the class of imageries). Finally, he divides secondary imageries into creative and reproductive ones. Each of these divisions is based on a different criterion. One has to interpret Blaustein's attempt to formulate a unitary theory of presentation precisely in this context. For Blaustein, such a theory incorporates basic intuitions expressed by Twardowski, but it seeks a clear criterion of the taxonomy of presentations. I will not elaborate on this topic in the present study (see Płotka 2020b, 2021b: 140-144); let me only remark that Blaustein's taxonomy is richer than Twardowski's and that it encompasses new types of presentations, including so-called imaginative, symbolic, and schematic presentations. Instead of analyzing Blaustein's

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he writes: "Almost none of the ambiguities discussed by Husserl is dangerous for Polish terminology, because the term is sometimes used in Poland in Twardowski's sense — that is, in the sense that covers both imageries and concepts" (Blaustein 1928: 24). It can be argued that this remark shows that Twardowski's theory of presentations was for Blaustein a framework for his account of Husserl's theory of intentionality.

theory of presentations, let me reconstruct Blaustein's paradigmatic descriptions of aesthetic experiences. This will enable us to see Blaustein's use of these three classes of presentations.

3. BLAUSTEIN'S DESCRIPTIONS OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES

As already noted in Section 2, Blaustein uses his general theory of presentations in the field of aesthetics in order to describe a variety of aesthetic phenomena. These descriptions are full of examples, which all show complex structures that constitute the object of such experiences. I will examine two examples of such an analysis: namely, Blaustein's descriptions of contemplating a painting and watching a theater play. These descriptions will allow us to thematize Blaustein's general view on the structure of aesthetic experiences.

To begin with, in his *Przedstawienia schematyczne i symboliczne* [Schematic and Symbolic Presentations], Blaustein considers the act of contemplating Hans von Marées's painting *Die Lebensalter* (*Orangenbild*). He describes it as follows:

> Against the background of a group of trees, we see a number of naked figures. To the far left there is a pond or a lake; to the right one sees a hill. A boy is sitting on the ground. Nearby, an old man sitting on a tree trunk is trying to pick up a fruit that must have fallen from the tree. Behind the child is a pensive young man in a semi-walking posture. Right next to him is a female figure following him closely. Behind the old man, a mature man is looking seriously at the fruit of the tree he is holding in his upturned hands. If we abstract from the female figure watching the young man, none of the persons acknowledges the existence of the others; each behaves as if they were alone in the grove. (Blaustein 1931: 5; 2005: 72)

The quoted fragment of Blaustein's analysis shows that, for him, the basis of the aesthetic experience (at least the experience of contemplating a painting) is perceptual presentations, which adequately present their objects — i.e., color figures, marks, and shapes painted "on" canvas; to phrase it differently, one "sees" only the material object which as such can be the basis of imaginative presentations. In the strict sense, one intuitively sees only objects that are presented in these perceptual (and not imaginative) imageries. Blaustein's idea is that the "naked figures," "the pond," "the male child," etc. are not presented adequately at all. Rather, one represents (in Polish: *reprezentuje*)[8]

[8] Blaustein is clear that whereas the relations of presentation take place between object and the presenting subject, the relations of representation take place between two objects, e.g., the object "on" canvas *represents* the object "in" painting.

these objects in an imaginative manner: they are presented as objects "in" the painting. So, on the basis of color figures, marks, and shapes, one intentionally refers to objects different from these colorful objects, yet which are "in" the painting. These "new" objects are presented imaginatively. In other words, this new reference is possible since a group of colors, figures, marks, and shapes (which is given intuitively) are *apprehended* by the viewer as intending non-intuitive objects — i.e., "naked figures," "the pond," "the male child," etc. For Blaustein, this means that besides perceptual presentations, imaginative presentations are also at play here. As a result, constellations of colors, marks, and shapes become for the viewer the appearance of the figures "in" the painting. Nonetheless, the structure of the aesthetic experience is still partial without noting that the imaginative objects refer to other objects, which are described by Blaustein as fictional characters. All these three types of objects are divided by Blaustein into (1) reproducing objects (paint on canvas), (2) imaginative objects (presented "in" the painting), and (3) reproduced objects (characters represented by the objects "in" the painting).

To contemplate the painting, one has to take into account also its *symbolic* meaning; the meaning is suggested already by the title of the painting. In order to do this, the phenomenon described by Blaustein has to include so-called symbolic representation. Only by referring to the symbolic element of the painting does one see that the child *symbolizes* childhood age, which is free of any worries, the young man *symbolizes* mature age, which is full of strength, and the old man *symbolizes* a reflective summary of one's life. Simply put, the painting contains symbols: a child, a young man, and an old man, which serve to represent, for instance, a carefree childhood, the strength of mature age, or a reflective summary of one's life. All in all, the lived experience here encompasses perceptual, imaginative, and symbolic presentations, which make up a whole lived experience as an aesthetic experience.[9]

A different example to consider by Blaustein can be found in his *Przedstawienia imaginatywne* [Imaginative Presentations], where he refers to theater. More specifically, he analyzes an experience of watching Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra* (Blaustein 1930: 15; 2011a: 216). During the play, what one directly or perceptually sees is something that is happening on stage. One sees, for instance, someone talking to another person, moving in a certain direction, etc. These objects are adequately presented in perceptual presentations. However, one does not see (in a strict sense) Caesar talking with Cleopatra. Blaustein described such objects as imaginative. In this example,

[9] Blaustein's theory of symbolic presentations resembles that of Husserl, yet it is hard to say whether he formulated his theory on the basis of Husserl's investigations. For a discussion of that tenet of Husserl's philosophy, see Byrne 2020, 2021.

the imaginative object (e.g., Caesar) is constituted in the imaginative presentation and is given at once as intuitive (the real movements and pronouncements made on stage) and as non-intuitive (Caesar meeting Cleopatra). Here the intuitive object has properties that are truly ascribed to it by the act (e.g., being a man or woman, having blond or dark hair), and the non-intuitive object has properties ascribed, as Blaustein puts it, in the *modus* "*quasi*." Yet, besides the perceptual object and the imaginary object, there is also Caesar as a historical figure. In this context, Blaustein referred to his three-part division of objects mentioned above. Thus, what is intuitively or perceptually given is only the reproducing object (events happening on stage); this is the basis of an imaginative presentation, which intends the object on its own (actor apprehended as Caesar); nonetheless, both objects refer next to the reproduced object, either the real or the fictional one (Caesar as a historical person).

With these ideas in mind, one can conclude that Blaustein indeed understands aesthetic experiences as constituted in the form of overlapping presentations and their objects. He connects relevant presentations with their objects. But, as shown, aesthetic experiences are dynamic phenomena that evolve over time. For this reason, one has to develop a detailed description of different phases of this type of experiences. I will consider this issue in the following section.

4. ELEMENTS OF BLAUSTEIN'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

As shown in Section 3, Blaustein develops his aesthetics in the form of systematic descriptions of concrete aesthetic experiences, rather than as a purely theoretical discipline. One of the purposes of thus defined aesthetics is a description of *how* one experiences the aesthetic object; against this background, one aims at describing structures and phases of this type of experiences. With this in mind, it is justified to call Blaustein's project a *phenomenology* of aesthetic experiences. Of course, one should understand this type of phenomenology in a broad way, not as a mere repetition of Husserl's train of thought. In any case, this definition of the aim of aesthetics — i.e., as describing ways of how the objects are experienced in aesthetic lived experiences — is necessary, since the aesthetic experience is a complex experience, which combines various classes of mental phenomena; as shown above, aesthetic experiences combine presentations, emotions, and volitional acts. In

addition, the aesthetic experience is not a mere sum of these elements, but rather, as Blaustein (2005: 4, 136) puts it, a "whole of a higher order" (*całość wyższego rzędu*). In short, this experience has a unique nature that is irreducible to epistemic experiences or simple perceptions. The aim of thus understood *phenomenology* of aesthetic experiences is to provide a description of this specific and unique experiential character. To phrase it differently, Blaustein's (1937: 245-249) aim here is to describe the *ways* of experiencing or the *ways of givenness* or *manifestation* (*Gegebenheitsweisen*) of the aesthetic object.

Although the aesthetic experience is complex, it is dominated by perceptual experiences. As one reads in Blaustein's *Rola percepcji w doznaniu estetycznym* [The Role of Perception in Aesthetic Experience]:

> Analysis of the aesthetic experience demonstrates that its central point is a strongly emotionally tinged perception of the object of experience. This perception and the emotions connected to it are the fundamental components of the aesthetic experience, which itself is an experiential unity of a higher order, whereas judgements and experiences involving volition — if they appear at all in the aesthetic experience — are of secondary importance. (Blaustein 2005: 136; 2011b: 235 [translation modified])

It has to be noted that, for Blaustein, perception gives direct and thus intuitive presentations. To phrase it differently, perception is for him an act which serves to apprehend sensations that, in turn, are understood as absolutely adequate presentations. Put differently, perception presents what is actually experienced and, for this reason, perception does not have a creative nature but is passive. Given that perception is passive, however, so also aesthetic experiences — which, of course, are dominated by perception — seem to be first and foremost passive. Contrary to this argument, the subject of aesthetic experiences is not receptive at all but, as Blaustein (2005: 5) puts it, "strictly active" (*wybitnie czynny*).[10] In one of his later texts on aesthetics, Blaustein writes as follows:

> Admittedly, the aesthetic experience is first and foremost a passive experience, an apprehension, and perception of aesthetic objects. In addition to the perception of an object, we can also find in it a rich source of experience in which we react to what is given to us in perception. We experience feelings in aesthetic experiences; judgments occur rarely, e.g., in the form of aesthetic assessments; acts of will appear very rarely. But the activity of the aesthetically experiencing human being is manifested not only in these reactive components of the aesthetic experience but also in perceptive components — in those in which a seemingly only passive reception to the aesthetic object is present. (Blaustein 2005: 4)

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[10] In this regard, one can argue that Blaustein is more interested in "actions," than in "products" (in Twardowski's sense). On this issue, see Miskiewicz 2009: 181-188.

Perception *seems* to be passive,[11] yet it is *essentially* active. To understand Blaustein's point, we should attend to the phasic or temporal structure of aesthetic experiences. Blaustein holds that these experiences can be momentary or can occur over a period of time. To some extent, this temporal nature is dependent on the object that is given in the relevant experiences. And so, if aesthetic experiences refer to *static* works of art, such as paintings or sculptures, then one sees "in one moment" what is given on canvas or in marble. On the other hand, if one experiences *dynamic* works of art, such as movies, these experiences unfold in time. The phenomenon that aesthetic experiences are temporal shows us that these experiences *begin* with passive perception, but later they develop depending on the attitude adopted by the subject. So, even if perception gives some direct or intuitive presentations, they are the basis on which new objects are constituted. As discussed in Section 3, these new objects are correlated with other presentations, which are founded on perceptual ones. Let us remind that, according to Blaustein, if one, for instance, sees colorful marks on canvas, one constitutes imaginative presentations on the basis of these direct presentations and later, accordingly, symbolic presentations. All these "new" objects are given in different ways of presentations, which means that the subject is active while switching the attitude toward the object and, by doing so, one constitutes new aspects of the aesthetic object.

The "strictly active" nature of the subject of aesthetic experience is therefore exemplified in different attitudes the subject adopts. This aspect of Blaustein's aesthetics is highlighted by Miskiewicz (2009: 186), who writes that "[f]or Blaustein, perceiving an object is always *observing an object with a certain attitude*." Indeed, based on Blaustein (1930: 15-16; 2011a: 216), one can claim that, according to his theory, one is justified in identifying *three* types of aesthetic attitudes: (1) natural, (2) imaginative, and (3) signitive attitudes. Every type of these attitudes allows one to comprehend a different object in the relevant aesthetic experience. In the *natural* attitude, one comprehends objects as reproducing — i.e., as objects that are proper objects of perceptual presentations; in the cases of paintings and theater plays (discussed in Section 3), one sees colorful marks or movements on the stage (one sees an actor *as* an actor), respectively. In the *imaginative* attitude, one comprehends imaginative objects; here one presents objects "in" paintings or actors *as* reproduced objects (e.g., one sees actors as, say, the fictional characters of

[11] Blaustein writes about the "passive" (in Polish: *bierny*) character of perception in the sense that perception enables one to apprehend the presenting content and not to create it. Of course, Blaustein uses this term in Husserl's sense. It is most likely that Blaustein did not know Husserl's account of passivity at the time of writing his texts on aesthetics.

Caesar and Cleopatra). Finally, in the *signitive* attitude, one comprehends reproduced objects, which are improper objects, given in relevant presentations; one sees objects to which objects "in" paintings refer or objects to which actors refer — say, the historical figures of Caesar and Cleopatra. With these ideas in mind, it can be noted that, for instance, theater-goers actively switch their attitude in order to present different objects. As Blaustein writes:

> [w]e live through imaginative presentations in the theater, but our attitude can change at any time, which can cause the focus of our attention to shift to perception of the actor (the reproducing object); this happens when an actor's bad performance offends us. (2005: 66; 2011a: 232 [translation modified])

Importantly, the change of an attitude is combined with a shift in aesthetic mood and aesthetic evaluation. The phenomenon of the aesthetic attitude is one of the most important, if not the most important, in the field of aesthetic experiences. When adopting a certain attitude, one is directed toward objects that are apprehended as "wholes of a higher order." These wholes are structures in a certain order. They build sets of ordered qualities. Blaustein (2005: 61) explicitly writes about "Gestalt qualities" in this connection. These qualities are presented in perception in a certain order and thereby give rise to a particular Gestalt or form. Thus, aesthetic experiences are directed not so much toward qualities as such, but rather toward wholes, which are already structured in a certain way, and one apprehends these wholes *as* built in this very way. To comprehend a certain aesthetic object as aesthetically valuable, as an object that gives one aesthetic pleasure, one has to adopt the relevant attitude toward that object. Blaustein holds, however, that if expectations are too high, then no relevant emotion can be presented.[12]

In sum, Blaustein describes *four* phases of aesthetic experience. At the very beginning, he writes about (1) anticipation or expectation; this phase is mainly passive. If one adopts a relevant attitude, (2) one experiences a preliminary emotion; this emotion can pass if the subject does not apprehend it actively. On the basis of passive perception combined with preliminary emotion, (3) one constitutes relevant Gestalt qualities that are ascribed (by the subject) to the aesthetic object. Aesthetic experience culminates in (4) an aesthetic pleasure or, eventually, cognitive pleasure (if one is focused on the *cognition* of the aesthetic object). The phases proceed one after the other.

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[12] "The expected aesthetic experience may or may not appear; it may be incomplete; it may — despite the proper perception and constitution of the aesthetic object — lack aesthetic emotion; it may appear at a lower intensity than expected, e.g., when we perceive the same or similar aesthetic object for the tenth time when an advertisement or an announcement is superstitious, etc. Thus, expectations that are too high determine the appearance of emotions . . ." (Blaustein 2005: 185).

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that, in his aesthetics, Blaustein describes various phenomena of aesthetic experience, including contemplating a painting or watching a theater play. In addition, he analyzes such phenomena as cinema-goer's experiences, contemplating a sculpture, or radio experiences, though I did not discuss these descriptions in the present study. In any case, one can argue that the richness of these detailed descriptions reveals the evident value of Blaustein's aesthetic theory. In this study, I argued that Blaustein's aesthetics is not a unified theory. In this context, I presented two themes of this theory: (1) the Brentanian theme and (2) the (broadly understood) phenomenological theme. The former consists in analyzing presentations while describing aesthetic experiences. The latter consists in describing the ways of givenness of aesthetic objects. I have shown how both themeses determine Blaustein's aesthetics in regard to its concrete results. Nonetheless, the theory discussed here bears the mark of an important problem: namely, the problem of reality of the object of presentation. Let us discuss it briefly.

One can argue that Blaustein was not fully consistent in following Twardowski's distinction between the content of presentations and the object of presentation. For Blaustein, as shown in the present study, the presenting content can be either adequate or inadequate in the sense that it becomes the perceived object, which in turn represents the another, say, imaginative, symbolic, or schematic object. However, if so, the presenting content claims to be the object. In Blaustein's aesthetics, if any art object, such as a canvas, a book, etc., were presented, it becomes a reproducing object (given in the natural attitude), but at the same time it loses its existential autonomy since it becomes constituted in relevant presentations. But this consequence is absurd. To avoid these problems, Blaustein held that aesthetic objects are *not* purely intentional but real. This solution is, however, only partial. For Blaustein, the aesthetic object is real, since it is presented (or represented) in a relevant act; in brief, it is real because of the act is real. The question of how one should understand "reality" of the presented object can lead to other important question — e.g., to the question of Blaustein's response to Husserl's transcendental turn (e.g., Płotka 2020a: 141-167). This, however, would take us beyond the field of aesthetics and require a thorough elaboration elsewhere.

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