

INTENTIONALITY AND THE PERCEPTUAL WORLD

HUSSERL, SCHAPP, AND BLAUSTEIN ON THE CONTENT OF SENSATIONS

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Abstract

In the article, I investigate the role of sensation in the manifestation of the world in perceptual experience, as conceptualized through three distinct phenomenological approaches: those of Edmund Husserl, Wilhelm Schapp, and Leopold Blaustein. I begin by examining Husserl's Göttingen lectures, reconstructing his account of the intentional structuring of the perceptual world, with particular emphasis on the immanent dimension that shapes the interpretation of sensory content. I then turn to

Schapp's theory of presentation-qua-*Darstellung*, highlighting his original claim that sensations themselves directly present objects to consciousness, fusing the properties of things with their appearance without requiring the interpretative intervention of an intentional act. Finally, I consider Blaustein's position, which maintains the centrality of intentionality, but situates sensations outside of the intentional act, functioning as mediators, through which the external world is apprehended and interpreted.

Keywords: phenomenology, perceptual world, intentionality, content of sensations, manifestation.

Intencionalnost in zaznavni svet. Husserl, Schapp in Blaustein o vsebini občutkov

Povzetek

164 V članku raziščem vlogo občutka pri manifestaciji sveta znotraj zaznavnega izkustva, kakor je bila konceptualizirana znotraj treh različnih fenomenoloških pristopov, in sicer pristopov Edmunda Husserla, Wilhelma Schappa in Leopolda Blausteina. Najprej obravnavam Husserlova göttingenska predavanja in rekonstruiram njegovo dojetje intencionalnega strukturiranja zaznavnega sveta, pri čemer se posebej osredotočim na imanentno razsežnost, ki opredeljuje interpretacijo čutne vsebine. Nato se obrnem k Schappovi teoriji predstave-kot-*Darstellung* in poudarim njegovo izvirno domnevo, da občutki sami neposredno predstavljajo predmete za zavest, s tem ko lastnosti stvari spojijo z njihovim pojavljanjem, ne da bi pri tem terjali interpretativno intervencijo intencionalnega akta. Nazadnje obravnavam Blausteinovo stališče, ki zagovarja središčnost intencionalnosti, a občutke situira zunaj intencionalnega akta kot funkcionalne posrednike, s pomočjo katerih dojemamo in interpretiramo zunanji svet.

Ključne besede: fenomenologija, zaznavni svet, intencionalnost, vsebina občutkov, manifestacija.

Introduction

The article analyzes how the world manifests itself in perception. More precisely, I consider Edmund Husserl's, Wilhelm Schapp's, and Leopold Blaustein's theories of perception. The phenomenon of perception is one of the central topics in Husserl's philosophy, beginning with his earliest texts from the 1890s (Husserl 2004, 123–156). Here, I consider Husserl's theory of perception as it is developed in the Göttingen lectures between 1904 and 1907.¹ This period is the time of Husserl's intense research and teaching stemming from the *Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations)* (Spiegelberg 1994, 111), leading his students to form the so-called Göttingen and Munich circles (Schapp 2025; Conrad 2024, 111–122; Schuhmann 1977, 103). In Göttingen, Husserl works on a reformulation of his idea of phenomenology that ultimately leads toward the transcendental turn of *Ideen I (Ideas I)*.² In this reformulation, perception plays a central role.

In the present paper, I also focus on Schapp and Blaustein. Schapp was one of Husserl's first doctoral students in Göttingen. In his 1910 *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung (Contributions to the Phenomenology*

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1 It is noteworthy that this choice has more of a systematic than a historical justification. As rightly pointed out by Vongehr and Giuliani (2004, xiii), in the lectures of the 1904/05 winter semester, the theory of perception offered by Husserl is still formulated outside of the transcendental reduction; moreover, bodily kinaesthesia are omitted in the lectures. Both elements (reduction and the body) will become increasingly central to Husserl in later years, but are absent or marginal in Schapp and Blaustein. However, analyzing these lectures can help us to identify some elements that the three authors do have in common.

2 A crucial moment of this turn are the lectures *Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge* of winter semester 1906/07, in which one finds the first systematic introduction of the phenomenological reduction (Husserl 2008, 206 f.). For more on the transcendental turn, see: Cobb-Stevens 1990; Mohanty 1978; Zahavi 2017, 51–76.

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of *Perception*), he explores the question of how the world manifests itself in consciousness through sensations. In this context, he offers an original interpretation of the perceptual act, giving rise to a theory of ideas that influenced some leading figures of the phenomenological movement.³

Next, I refer to Blaustein and his account of perception. Blaustein was a member of the Lvov–Warsaw School, an analytically oriented school established due to Twardowski’s teaching activities beginning in 1895.⁴ At the time, Blaustein, a student of Twardowski, had an opportunity to attend some of Roman Ingarden’s lectures in Lvov, but he also participated in Husserl’s lectures in Freiburg for a few weeks in 1925.⁵ After his return to Poland, he worked on his doctoral dissertation, which was written under Twardowski’s supervision and published in 1928 under the title *Husserlowska nauka o akcie, treści i przedmiocie przedstawienia* (*Husserl’s Theory of Act, Content, and Object of Presentation*). The theory of the content of presentations—and more generally, the question of how external objects manifest themselves in the sensory content of presentations—is central to Blaustein’s critical reading of Husserl’s theory of intentionality.

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The aim of this article is to examine mutual relations between perception, the world, and sensory contents as discussed by Husserl, Schapp, and Blaustein. Even though their ideas offer interesting insights into the topics of perception and intentionality, there is no systematic study of the mutual relations among these authors. Of course, the differences between Schapp’s and Husserl’s theories of perception are discussed by, e.g., Laasik (2025) and Rolf (2004), but Schapp’s methodological considerations and his theory of presentation-qua-*Darstellung*⁶

3 Traces of this influence can be found in central texts of phenomenological Platonism, such as: Hering 2021; Ingarden 1925; Spiegelberg 1930.

4 For more about the Lvov–Warsaw School and its analytic approach, see: Wybraniec-Skardowska 2018; Woleński 2017. For more on Blaustein within the Lvov–Warsaw School, see Płotka 2023b; 2024.

5 See Blaustein 1928, 83.

6 The terms *presentation qua Vorstellung* and *presentation qua Darstellung* aim to resolve a translation misunderstanding that appears in secondary phenomenological literature. Typically, *Vorstellung*, a term referring to a form of an object’s presence to consciousness through a sensation or content that manifests certain aspects of it, is translated as *presentation*. On the other hand, *Darstellung*, a term referring to the way an object itself presents through perceptual, sensory, or some other intuitive content,

have never been discussed in scholarly literature. Similarly, it is true that the issue of Blaustein's interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality has recently been addressed by, e.g., Pokropski (2015) and Plotka (2020; 2023a; 2024), but the question of how Blaustein understands the perceptual world remains unexplored. The present study, therefore, offers an overview of how these three scholars understand the perceptual world in the context of the problem of intentionality. To this end, I will proceed as follows: I identify the central topics of Husserl's theory of perception in the Göttingen lectures, showing how he understands the constitution of the perceptual world in the intentional act—more precisely, in the context of the interpretation of sensory contents (section 1); I highlight the differences from Husserl's position and the critical aspects that emerge in Schapp's phenomenology of perception and in his theory of presentation-qua-*Darstellung* (section 2); next, I examine Blaustein's account of the perceptual act and his description of how the external world is manifested, especially in light of his critique of Husserl's theory of intentionality (section 3); and, in conclusion, I highlight the main differences between the three theories.

1. Husserl's theory of perception: Sensations, intentionality, and manifestation

In the Göttingen years, Husserl focuses on acts of “perception, sensation, imagery, representation, and memory” as starting points for the study of higher intellectual acts (Husserl 2004, 3). Consequently, the phenomenon of manifesting the world in the perceptual act becomes a central theme in his theory of intentionality. In what follows, I will focus on the lectures delivered in the period 1904–1907.⁷

is translated as *representation*, in order to avoid confusion. Now, without delving into complex linguistic considerations, I believe that in any case, the term *representation* is not suitable for expressing what Schapp means by *Darstellung*. However, one cannot overlook the long-standing tradition of translation, so it seems reasonable to continue translating *Vorstellung* as *presentation*. For this reason, I have decided to highlight, using the specific German terms, the instances where *presentation* refers to a *Vorstellung* and where it refers to a *Darstellung*.

⁷ For more on this, see Husserl 1997; 2004; 2008.

In his 1906/07 *Einleitung in die Logik und Erkenntnistheorie* (*Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge*), Husserl begins with two questions: “In which way are sensations conscious in perception?”, and: “What is the character of apprehending?” (Husserl 2008, 241). In order to address these questions, he provides a schematic list of three concepts of consciousness understood as (1) lived experience, (2) intentional consciousness, and (3) position-taking. These forms of consciousness correspond to three layers of the perceptual act. Let us consider the example of perceiving a tree. When we perceive a tree, we have a perceptual lived experience, in which the tree “stands before our eyes” (Husserl 2008, 243). According to Husserl, in this case sensations are not, so to speak, what is seen; rather, the tree is what is seen as it manifests itself from the perceived side. Nevertheless, sensations—for example, the color sensations arising with perceiving the tree—are experienced in some way, and even known by consciousness, but only in a form, in which they are not yet related to this very object; instead, they are given in a pre-reflective and implicit manner. Husserl describes this stage as a “pre-phenomenal lived experience” (Husserl 2008, 244), identifying it as the first type of consciousness (1). The pre-phenomenal represents a fundamental form, occurring at the sensory level, of our knowledge about the world. However, in the pre-phenomenal stage, the sensory data still do not have the quality of perceptual givenness. In order to have this kind of givenness, according to Husserl, a second form of consciousness is required: intentional consciousness (2), which is described as an act of attention directed toward the sensory data, allowing it to be apprehended as a manifestation of something. In this regard, Husserl states:

Not all experiences are intentional experiences. Color content may be a representative (*Repräsentant*) in a perception, therefore, in an intentional experience, but it is not itself any such experience. It is the bearer of a consciousness, but not itself consciousness—consciousness in the present sense. (Husserl 2008, 246.)

With such apperception, attention is directed toward what is present in the lived experience as sensations, and it animates these sensations so that they can be apprehended as the manifestation of a thing (in our case, a tree). In this way, consciousness can “refer” to a specific objectivity manifesting itself in perception.

Nonetheless, perception is not fully described, if Husserl's third concept of consciousness—position-taking (3)—is not considered. Thanks to apperception, we attentively grasp the object that manifests itself. It is in this attentive experience that we direct ourselves toward the object with an intentional act, whether of joy, belief, or judgment, thereby taking a position regarding that object. This shows that at the foundation of every position-taking, there is a presentation-qua-*Vorstellung* of the perceived object. In this regard, Husserl writes: "We can say that each act requires a 'presentation' (*Vorstellung*) as a foundation, an objectifying apperception that originally makes its objectivity 'presentational' (*Vorstellung*) to it, brings it to consciousness." (Husserl 2008, 247.) For an intentional act to be directed toward a perceived object, this very object already has to be present for consciousness as a lived experience through sensations, and, additionally, an intentional reference must have already been constituted through attention (intentional consciousness), one that apprehends those sensations as the object's presentation. This form of presentation, which makes the object present for consciousness, provides the basis for position-taking by an intentional act. In the layering within the perceptual act, sensations thus assume a representational function (*repräsentative Funktion*), that is, they present the object to consciousness. Sensations underlie any manifestation of the object. However, its manifesting as that specific object—in our example, the tree—depends on apperception and on the way, in which this apperception is intended. Finally, the quality of the act depends on the position-taking.

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Thus far, I have discussed the layered structure of the perceptual act from the perspective of intentionality. Now, I will turn to the role of sensations as the content of manifestation, a theme central to both Schapp and Blaustein. In order to address this issue, we have to refer to Husserl's lectures from 1904/05 and 1907. In the 1904/05 lectures, Husserl emphasizes the distinction between Mach's "doctrine of sensations" and his own phenomenology of perception. According to Husserl, Mach's central fallacy lies in the misidentification of the content of sensation with the perceived object. A phenomenological analysis of the perceptual act reveals, however, that sensations—or the complex of sensations present in lived experience—serve as manifestations of the object's properties. These properties are *manifested contents* (*präsenzierte Inhalte*)

apprehended through *Meinen*. *Meinen* is the act of intention that interprets sensations as the manifestation of something. In this way, sensations are transformed into sensory contents that manifest the object's properties (see Husserl 2004, 11–12). Thanks to the perceptual act, then, a perceived color or shape is apprehended as a manifestation (*Präsentant*) of the color- and shape-properties of that particular object (see *ibid.*, 24).

The modality of manifestation, therefore, depends on the interpretation of sensations by consciousness. Every perceptual presentation is characterized by the possibility that a complex of sensations may be interpreted by one or several intentional acts as the manifestation of an objective unity. This objective unity includes various determinations that are not actually present in sensations, but *co-intended* through the apprehension. The manifestation of this very object as a presentative horizon, transcending the immediately given sensory content, thereby occurs through what Husserl—drawing on a term from 19th-century associationism in psychology—calls “manifestation by contiguity.”⁸ To address the problem of the existence of merely co-intended aspects of the object, Husserl assigns a dual function to sensations: one and the same sensory content can be (1) the starting point for an immediate and direct manifestation (the perceived color through the manifesting sensation of the felt color) (*ibid.*, 34) or (2) the starting point for a mediated and indirect manifestation, such as one pre-delineating the color of the back side on the basis of the perception of the front side. The first form of manifestation is classified by Husserl as “by similarity” (*durch Ähnlichkeit*), while the second is defined as “by contiguity” (*ibid.*). The manifestation by similarity is based on the direct and intuitive correspondence between the manifesting sensation and the property of the manifested object. In contrast, the manifestation by contiguity is based on a reference to something that can only be “inauthentically” grasped and is not grounded on a sensory manifestation. In the absence of similarity between the presenting and the presented, the manifestation of non-immediately present moments of the object is only possible due to signs. In this regard, Husserl writes:

8 For a possible connection with Hume's philosophy with regard to this concept, see Melle 2002, xxiii.

A multiplicity of intentions that refer beyond, of intentions that are non-intuitive and not essentially grounded in the content offered by the presenting contents, latches on to the authentic intuitions and is fused with them in such a way that the expanded object still asserts itself as an object that is itself-present [...]. The bond here is such that the actually presented determinations appear analogous to signs [...]. (Ibid., 37.)⁹

Thus, in the perceptual act, sensations, which are interpreted by consciousness as the manifestation of a thing and its determinations, allow various unmanifested aspects of the thing to be included in this very act. A further specification of how the thing appears in perception can be found in the lectures now known as *Ding und Raum (Thing and Space)*. While considering the schematic constitution of the thing in perceptual acts of consciousness, Husserl identifies two opposing moments in the appearance of the thing: space and matter. Space is composed of the bodily form and the determinations of the thing (surfaces, angles, edges); matter is composed in turn of the qualities that fill the space—the colorations that extend over the surfaces along with the tactile determinations (smoothness, roughness, stickiness). The visual and tactile determinations that allow space to manifest itself correspond to *materia prima*. In *materia prima*, visual and tactile determinations represent different layers. If the perception is taking place through visual sensations, the visual determinations form the first layer and are given in an “authentic” manner, while the tactile determinations form the second layer and are given in an “inauthentic” manner. Conversely, if access is through tactile sensations, the tactile determinations compose the first layer and are given in an “authentic” manner, while the visual determinations compose the second layer and are given in an “inauthentic” manner (Husserl 1997, 55–56). Despite the difference in clarity, however, “the strata are not mounted on top of one another; on the contrary, they interpenetrate or intersaturate. They thoroughly coincide in virtue of the identity of the corporeal space.” (Ibid., 62.) *Materia*

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9 Precisely this definition of a sign-structure in perception shows that the dichotomy developed in the sixth of the *Logical Investigation* between “intuitive presentation” and “signitive presentation” is here rearticulated into the dichotomy between “authentically presented” and “inauthentically presented” (Vongehr and Giuliani 2004, xxvii).

prima, composed of the interpenetration of the tactile and visual layers, is a spatially filled unity providing the initial perceptual basis for the constitution of the thing. On this perceptual basis, further determinations of the thing are then set up, such as, for example, sound or noise, or even weight and other empirical properties that do not lead back to particular primitive sensory contents. For Husserl, these further determinations represent *materia secunda* (ibid., 56), whereas he defines the contents of *materia prima* as presentational contents (*darstellenden Inhalte*). He further specifies the authentic/inauthentic distinction as follows (cf. Husserl 1997, 60 f.):

Accordingly, the inauthentic appearance breaks down into two moments or parts: 1) the one includes that of the object which does not come at all to authentic appearance, and 2) the other includes that which indeed comes to authentic appearance visually but not tactually. The front side is seen; it pertains to the authentic appearance. It is not perceived tactually, and so of it only the complex of visual determinations, but not the complex of tactual ones, comes to authentic appearance. (Husserl 1997, 61; translation slightly modified.)

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Speaking of the inauthentic manifestations of *materia prima*, Husserl provides the example of a hand resting on a white sheet of paper. In this case, considering visual experience, the whiteness of the sheet is authentically perceived due to the sense of sight, while its roughness is only inauthentically perceived, that is, in a mediated way. To achieve its authentic perception, we have to shift from the look of the roughness perceived visually to the roughness actually felt with the hand, which then becomes authentically perceived content (see ibid., 62).

What has been said thus far allows us to outline, even in a condensed form, Husserl's account of the perceptual act in the Göttingen lectures.¹⁰ More importantly, however, it enables us to introduce a problem that is crucial for

¹⁰ I have left out considerations regarding kinaesthesia, which were already introduced in *Thing and Space* (see Husserl 1997, 131 ff.), because neither Schapp nor Blaustein take them into account in their investigations of intentionality. Blaustein, however, does discuss the problem of bodily movements within his aesthetics. For more on this issue, see Płotka 2024, 240–247.

both Schapp and Blaustein. Both authors—albeit in different ways—seek to clarify, through their respective theories of perception, the relationship between sensations and the stratified presentation of objects of the external world as these objects are given to consciousness either through a direct manifestation (Schapp) or an intentional apprehension (Blaustein).

2. The theory of presentation-qua-*Darstellung* in Schapp's phenomenology of perception

Schapp's *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung* is a peculiar work within early phenomenology. Despite Schapp's claims of being profoundly inspired by Husserl's lectures and by the debates within phenomenological circles (see Schapp 2013, 1–10),¹¹ his work does not discuss the structure of intentional acts in any depth, nor does he offer a theoretical delimitation of such concepts as subject, object, consciousness, lived experience, or intentional content. It has been noted in the scholarly literature that this lack stems from Schapp's greater interest in the lifeworld and his shift toward a phenomenological focus on external reality, rather than on conscious experiences or on the subjective givenness of the intentional object (see Rolf 2013, vii). It could even be said that Schapp simply takes Husserl's theory of intentionality for granted and explores the aspect of the phenomenology of perception that remains unexamined in Husserl's Göttingen lectures: the topic of the thing as *res materialis*. There are, indeed, some hints toward this topic in the first section of the lectures on *Thing and Space*. However, during the Göttingen years, this theme is not fully developed (see Claesges 1973, xix–xx) and is only unfolded in the second chapter of *Ideen II (Ideas II)* (see Husserl 1989, 31 f.).¹² This continuity is clear

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11 In the preface to the *Beiträge*, Schapp writes: “The work I present here descends from E. Husserl's circle of ideas. In it, we take into account not only logical research, but also the great impulses I received during the three years, in which I attended Husserl's courses and exercises, and in which I took part in various personal confrontations with him and the circle of his students. In the writing of this work, he was always at my side with his advice. I cannot really judge in detail how much of my arguments derive from these personal impulses. I only hope that I have not written anything that I have not seen for myself.” (Schapp 2013, page not indicated—the preface is unnumbered.)

12 For a detailed discussion of the transcendental nature of the constitution of the material thing, see Trizio 2021, 151 f.

both thematically and linguistically. Linguistically, Schapp refers to sensations as *Darstellenden* (presentative), echoing Husserl's term *darstellende Inhalte* from his analysis of *materia prima*. Thematically, in the *Beiträge* Schapp aims to show that the reality of the thing—its material structure—manifests directly through sensations. That said, Schapp considers both the status and the role of sensations in the manifestation of the thing differently from Husserl.

The differences between Husserl's Göttingen lectures and Schapp's *Beiträge* regarding the role of sensations in the manifestation of the external world can be grouped into four key points: (1) the interpretation of the internal relation between a thing's properties and the sensations, through which they appear to perception, which Husserl describes as "manifestation by similarity"; (2) the distinction between immediately sensed properties (e.g., colors, tones, tactile qualities) and those inauthentically given through them (e.g., hardness, weight), corresponding to Husserl's layers of *materia prima* and *materia secunda*; (3) the status of non-perceived aspects of the world, such as hidden sides or internal structures, which are apprehended through intentional acts—linked to Husserl's notion of "manifestation by contiguity"; and (4) the relationship between the world's manifestation and its reality, addressing the connection between consciousness, phenomena, and the world itself. In what follows, I will discuss these points.

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According to Schapp, every visual perception is characterized by the perception of colors: even when we close our eyes, in the darkness of night, or when we are blinded, we still perceive colors (see Schapp 2013, 65). He, therefore, asks why, in certain circumstances, things manifest themselves through colors, and in others we see only indistinct patches of color. In order to answer this, he distinguishes between "sensed color" (*empfundene Farbe*) and "adherent color" (*anhaftende Farbe*). Sensed color involves shifting light, shadows, and other visual phenomena that do not concern the thing itself, whereas adherent color persists in perception beyond these fluctuations and assumes a distinguishable form, thereby presenting the thing. In order for the thing to manifest itself in perception, Schapp argues, a balance must be maintained between the fluctuating phenomena of light and shadow and the phenomena belonging to the thing itself. For example, in the case of a helmet shining in the sun, in order for the grey of the helmet to be perceived, it should

not be overshadowed by the play of reflected light. Regarding this point, Schapp specifies that such reflections and other transient phenomena belong to the realm of “mere sensations” (*bloße Empfindungen*), while the stable elements, manifesting the thing, belong to the realm of perceptions (*Wahrnehmungen*). In order for the thing to manifest, the accessory phenomena must remain in the realm of sensations, while the elements belonging to the thing, and thus presenting it, must emerge from the realm of sensations and reach the realm of perceptions, where sensory elements acquire stability and structure, forming a unified experience of the thing (Schapp 2013, 76 ff.; Laasik 2025, 27). As a result, according to Schapp (and in contrast to Husserl), the sensed color is not the basis for any form of presentation; rather, it must be excluded from intentional consciousness, in order for the adherent color to present the thing. Moreover, Schapp overcomes Husserl’s notion of “manifestation by similarity”: the Husserlian distinction between a presenting sensed color (sensation) and a presented perceived color (accomplished by an intentional act of perception) is rearticulated into the distinction between a presenting perceived color (perception) and the material characteristics of the thing (reality).

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This brings us to point 2. In his account of how the world manifests through sensations, Schapp identifies a manifestative order in perception, one that has a normative character (see Summa 2025). He distinguishes two levels here—the presenting properties (*Darstellendes*), such as color, sound, and tactile sensations, form the first perceptual layer, while the presented properties (*Dargestelltes*), including spatial determinations as well as physical and material characteristics like rigidity, elasticity, or internal structure, are arranged on the second layer (cf. Laasik 2025, 30 ff.). Although there are some cases, in which second-layer characteristics may be presenting, it never happens that first-layer characteristics are presented (see Schapp 2013, 41–42). This dual structure recalls Husserl’s *materia prima*, but whereas in Husserl the second layer of *materia prima* was a fulfillment of the first layer, derived from being integrated through intentional experience or subsequent perception, for Schapp both layers are inextricably linked in the same perceptual experience and are immediately given. This is due to Schapp’s synaesthetic approach, according to which properties typically given through other senses, such as weight or hardness in touch, can manifest in a single synaesthetic experience, such as seeing or hearing (see Summa 2025, 50).

For instance, Schapp argues that even with our hands in our pockets, we can see a range of the qualities of things that present themselves to our eyes and are inherently different from color and extension. “We see if something is smooth like the brass of a lamp, if it is rough like our clothing, if it is liquid like water or coffee, if it is solid like a cup, if it is homogeneous like an apple or granular like a table, if it is sticky like honey or slightly viscous like ink.” (Schapp 2013, 19.) By citing these various examples, Schapp aims to demonstrate that “despite the fact that sight ‘authentically’ perceives only colors” (ibid., 38), color is not all that we see; even through the visual perception of a single object, “properties, such as elasticity and lucidity, become so highly presentable [*vorstellig*] that we have them before us in the flesh and blood” and so faithfully that “it makes no sense to ask whether they can be perceived in a more immediate form” (ibid., 21). Schapp also extends this analysis of perception to other senses, showing that we can grasp an object’s composition and shape through sound and touch, without relying on associative or memory-related processes (see ibid., 47).

176 Form and materiality, perceived directly, are what comprises the object’s character *a parte obiecti*. However, to organize what is presented into a unified manifestative pole, we also need an element *a parte subiecti*, which Schapp calls “observing perception” (*beobachtende Wahrnehmung*) (ibid., 65), a kind of perception that “is not satisfied with what is offered to it [*das Gebotene*], with what shows itself, but wants to know how what is observed is in truth [...]” (ibid., 66). The thing in its unity and character is given thanks to this “observing perception,” which does nothing more than immerse itself in what manifests itself, letting it unfold to its full extent (see Nuccilli 2025, 110 f.). The thing is thus a correlate of this more awakened form of perception—one that offers us knowledge of the thing in its individuality and character (see Schapp 2013, 123), thanks to the internal references between presenting and presented properties.

With respect to point 3, it can be noted that Schapp is far from Husserl’s notion of “manifestation by contiguity.” Whereas for Husserl the thing is configured as a mixture of intentional acts within the interpretative apprehension, in which some aspects are authentically given and the others are inauthentically given, for Schapp, the thing is given in its entirety and character in every perceptual manifestation of it, and for this reason is authentically given (see Nuccilli 2025,

107 ff.). This happens without the intervention of any integration by intentional consciousness (cf. *Summa* 2025, 47 f.), but only through an effort of observing perception to remove the impediments facing it.

Here, the difference in the configuration of the perceptual object is based on a divergent concept of phenomenon and of the relationship between consciousness and the external world. Thus, this line of reasoning leads to point 4. For Schapp, a phenomenon is not a reliable form of manifestation of the thing, i.e., one that allows perception to know it; instead, it is something deceptive that permits no access to the thing. He accordingly distinguishes between the mere phenomenon (*bloßen Phänomen*) and the thing: a mere phenomenon is that which concerns “the luminous formations, the glow, the reflection, the distance manifestations, the bluish streaks, the masses, that distance gives instead of things” (Schapp 2013, 92). Things, on the other hand, are the ones that clearly exhibit a form of material interaction with each other and display regularity in these interactions. Phenomena, then, do not have the status of things, in the sense that they do not bring to manifestation any aspect of the thing. This, of course, helps us to understand why Schapp makes no mention of Husserl’s theory of adumbrations. At the same time, it is a sign of a different way of conceiving the relationship between the apprehension of the thing by consciousness and its manifestation to the senses. Although in the final section of the *Contributions*, dedicated to the idea in perception, Schapp employs the concept of *Meinen* in a way similar to Husserl—explaining how the intuitive manifestation of the thing is apprehended by consciousness—, a structure that for Husserl is fundamental to perceptual experience is entirely overlooked in Schapp’s account, for the intentional act that interprets sensations given in presentations is missing altogether (Rolf 2004, 90).

What emerges here is a structural divergence in how Husserl and Schapp conceive the manifestation of the world through sensation. In Schapp’s account, the thing appears through its sensory givenness: sensuous data disclose the thing in its full concreteness, encompassing both physical features and intentional meaning. Sensations *present* (in the sense of *darstellen*) the thing directly to consciousness; intentionality plays a secondary role, primarily in clearing the perceptual field of distortions or contingent interferences. In contrast, for Husserl the sensuous content—understood as the basis of presentations

(in the sense of *Vorstellung*)—must be grasped within an intentional act for the thing to appear as such. Thus, sensations do not themselves manifest the object, but provide the material, upon which intentionality operates. The object is not simply comprised of the presenting sensations, but is *intended* as such—given in a *Vorstellung* that draws it into immanent consciousness as a unity of sense within a horizon of possible adumbrations. In Schapp, then, the sensation presents the thing in the external world; in Husserl, it presents the corresponding property of the thing to the immanent gaze of consciousness.

3. Blaustein's critique of Husserl's theory of intentionality and his account of perceptual presentations

178 Blaustein's view of the role of sensations in the manifestation of the external world can be seen as comparable or even similar to Schapp's; nevertheless, the two approach the central topic from different angles. As we have seen in section 2, while Schapp addresses the issue of perception mainly in the context of the object and its material reality, Blaustein's assessment of Husserl's theory of intentionality focuses primarily on how one should conceive the modes of apprehension and interpretation of sensations within lived experiences (see Pokropski 2015, 96).

In the writings of the first (theoretical) period of his research activity, i.e., just after his visit to Freiburg in 1925, Blaustein often deals with Husserl's phenomenology by taking a predominantly critical approach (see: Blaustein 1928; 1928/1929; 1930; cf. also: Płotka 2021 252; 2023a, 106–108; 2023b, 382–383; Pokropski 2015, 94; Nuccilli and Lewandowski 2024). Regarding the topic of the manifestation of the external world in perception and presenting content of sensations, one of the most interesting texts is his doctoral dissertation on *Husserl's Theory of Act, Content, and Object of Presentation* (*Husserłowska nauka o akcie, treści i przedmiocie przedstawienia*; 1928). The text is structured into three sections. The first section is dedicated to reconstructing the history of the problem of act, content, and object before 1900, with a focus on the positions of scholars, such as Brentano, Twardowski, Cornelius, and Meinong (see Blaustein 1928, 6–22). The second section concentrates on the analysis and elucidation of the central concepts of Husserl's theory of intentionality (see *ibid.*, 22–65). The third section presents a critical assessment of Husserl's

theory of intentionality, in which Blaustein articulates his own account of the presentation of the external world in perception, contrasting it with Husserl's theory of adumbrations (*ibid.*, 62–93).

In order to understand Blaustein's account of intentionality and the manifestation of the world in presentations through sensations, it is first necessary to examine the key aspects of his interpretation of Husserl's theory of intentionality as developed in the second section of his dissertation. There are three main concepts of Husserl's theory of intentionality that are discussed by Blaustein: (1) the concept of consciousness; (2) the concept of lived experience; and (3) the concept of intentional act. In his analyses of these concepts, Blaustein mainly addresses the following issues: (a) the differentiation between the various notions of consciousness that Husserl identifies in *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I* (see *ibid.*, 23 ff.); (b) Husserl's account of lived experience in relation to these different notions of consciousness, particularly concerning what may be included within lived experience and the types of lived experiences that can be distinguished (see *ibid.*, 24 ff.); and (c) the role of sensations within the intentional act—specifically, the relation they establish within lived experience to the properties of objects, and how the structure of the intentional act, as an apprehension and interpretation of sensations, should be understood.

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According to Blaustein, lived experiences are parts that form the stream of consciousness understood as a whole—namely, they are the events that shift from moment to moment and are interwoven in various ways to form the unity of consciousness. However, in addition to these experiences, consciousness also includes their concrete and abstract components (see *ibid.*, 26). What is decisive for Blaustein in this regard is that, according to Husserl, only the contents of consciousness can be lived through (*durchlebt*)—never external objects. Consequently, the notion of lived experience refers exclusively to events experienced in immanence. For this reason, Husserl rejects any distinction between a lived experience and the act of living through that experience. He accordingly does not differentiate between sensation or sensing as an act and sensation as content, since his aim is precisely to relocate, within the domain of immanent perception, what in Brentano's account had belonged to external experience. According to Blaustein, this implies two things: the sensation that

results from the perception of a property of an object, such as the sensation of color, must be part of the lived experience; and to be lived through is the property, not of the object, but of the sensation of color itself, since the actual component of consciousness, with which the intentional act is associated, is precisely the sensation of color, which is only a correlate of color as a property of the object.

With the ideas discussed above in mind, Blaustein develops—in the third section of his book—a critical assessment of Husserl’s theory of the act, content, and object of presentation. His analysis refers to five fundamental claims, which synthesize the presuppositions or the background that underlies Husserl’s account of intentionality: (1) consciousness is the source of psychic lived experiences as a coherent and continuous stream or flow; (2) lived experiences include both intentional acts and sensations; (3) intentional acts are apprehensions and interpretations of sensations; (4) it is not justified to differentiate between a sensation as an act and a sensation as content; (5) it is necessary to differentiate between sensations and object-properties (*ibid.*, 64–65). In addressing the fourth and fifth claims, Blaustein outlines how the presentations of the external world in perception ought to be conceived in his view. These two claims are crucial for us, but before I address them, it is useful to summarize the issues that Blaustein identifies in the first three claims.

To begin with, for Blaustein the first claim falls into a vicious circle, since lived experiences are defined as consciousness, but consciousness is defined as a set of lived experiences (see *ibid.*, 71). Next, the second claim is equally problematic, because sensations, being non-intentional and ego-alien (*ichfremd*), cannot be part of consciousness, which includes only ego-related (*ichlich*) acts (*ibid.*, 67; see Pokropski 2015, 97). Finally, the third claim, though partly valid, lacks precision: sensations can only be apprehended or additionally interpreted, depending on whether they directly present object-properties or are intended as part of a broader object that is not fully presented (Blaustein 1928, 73–74).

All of the claims that Blaustein ascribes to Husserl are connected. Blaustein’s assessment of the fourth claim follows his view of sensations as alien to the ego (*ichfremd*). The assessment of the fifth claim, in turn, follows the third claim that sensations can only be apprehended or additionally interpreted. Moving

from the fifth to the fourth claim, he explains that the distinction between different acts of perception implies a distinction within the field of sensations. Some sensations are apprehended—that is, they are intentional, although they relate to transcendent objects of absolutely adequate perception. Others are interpreted—they refer to spatial forms, appear as existing within spatial relations, and belong to the spatiotemporal world as objects of transcendent rather than immanent perception. And it is with respect to this distinction that Blaustein presents his conception of the manifestation of the external world in perception.

According to Blaustein, the world is composed of two layers: “the first layer is a set of presenting contents, is interpreted as a side (visible to us at a given moment) of the second layer, a set of material objects” (ibid., 75). He defines the former as the “phenomenal world” and the latter as the “material world.” The phenomenal world is a world of colors, sounds, smells—of sense-contents that are, however, spread over a two-dimensional space. These sense-contents have two peculiar characteristics: (a) they have a specific function in relation to the second layer of the world, and are therefore defined with respect to it as presenting contents; and (b) they have no form of mutual causal relationship. The phenomenal world is thus a changeable world made up of surfaces and colors in various forms and gradations that change size and position in the perceptual field without any kind of causality governing these changes. Moreover, the phenomenal world can never be given to us in its entirety; instead, we are faced only with fragments of it in a horizon of other fragments not yet perceived. According to Blaustein, this world is apprehended by our perceptions, and as such is the intentional object of our acts (cf. ibid.; see Pokropski 2015, 98). The phenomenal world is given to us directly and is therefore apprehended. On the other hand, the material world cannot be apprehended, since it always presents itself to us (to put this issue in a metaphorical way) through the phenomenal filter. The transition from the phenomenal to the material world takes place, when interpretation intervenes as a supplement to apprehension: two-dimensional sense-contents are interpreted as colored surfaces belonging to a totality of other surfaces that constitute a three-dimensional object, thereby disclosing the external world in a manner Blaustein defines as “relatively adequate” (ibid.). Sensory

data that previously appeared as varying without any causal connection are now grasped as concatenated in the manifestation of the object, which is also embedded in causal relations in the material world. Nonetheless, as Blaustein states: “Phenomenal objects do not exist in the material world, but in the phenomenal world that presents this material world.” (Ibid., 76.)

Blaustein’s articulation of the concept of the phenomenal world accordingly serves to challenge early Husserl’s theory that sense-contents are part of lived experience. According to Husserl, in Blaustein’s eyes, sense-contents are found in the phenomenal world, but only in the interpreted phenomenal world do they fulfill the function of presenting content, thereby allowing us to represent the properties of the real world. Blaustein thus accepts Husserl’s distinction between sensations and the properties of objects, but he develops it differently: he accounts for the realm of sensations as located in an interregnum between consciousness and the external world—in the two-dimensional sphere of the phenomenal world. In this way, Blaustein dissolves the vicious circle inherent in Husserl’s theory, in which sensations and intentional acts are both integrated into lived experience and thereby belong to consciousness. Sensations, in Blaustein’s view, are distinct from the properties of objects, not because they belong to the immanent realm of intentional consciousness, but because they occupy a different layer within the presentation of the world in perception (see *ibid.*, 78).

Having changed the status of sensations and having recognized them as transcendent objects of apprehension, Blaustein assesses the fourth claim. Husserl bases the rejection of the distinction between sensible act and perceived content on his interpretation of sensations as lived experiences. In his perspective, sensations are not presented in specific intentional acts, but rather lived through. According to Blaustein, however, the concept of sensation is ambiguous and can be understood as an act of perception, as content, or as an object of apprehension (see Pokropski 2015, 98–99). This distinction, which Husserl overlooks, raises a crucial question: how can an intentional act grasp an object as a whole, while interpreting sensations merely as manifestations of its properties? In order to address this question, Blaustein indicates two solutions. Either the intentional act immediately identifies the sensation with the object’s property or there are two distinct acts—one that apprehends and

interprets the sensation, and another that directs itself toward the object. According to Blaustein, however, whether there is only one act or two different acts, sensation must always be understood as a transcendent content that is apprehended and interpreted by an act for the purpose of bringing the objects of the external world to presentation to consciousness (cf. Blaustein 1928, 81).

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to clarify how different phenomenological perspectives conceptualize the role of sensation in the manifestation of the world within the perceptual act. I have explored how this issue is addressed by Husserl, Schapp, and Blaustein, focusing on the relationship between sensation, intentional acts of consciousness, and the external world. At the systematic level, both Schapp and Blaustein reject the emphasis on immanence in Husserl's initial conception of perception. This also affects the issue of the intentional status of sensations. For Schapp, sensations are the sole medium, through which things present themselves to consciousness, since the properties of the object and its manifestation are fused together. Where sensation fails to manifest anything, we remain in the realm of mere phenomena; where sensation manifests something, we enter the realm of perception and access to the "things themselves." Sensations play a central role in the self-manifestation of the thing to consciousness, without involving any intentional act aimed at the sensible level, in order to constitute the thing as a unity of sense. In Schapp's view, this does not exclude intentionality, but rather places its emergence at a later moment: it arises through the manifestation of the idea, which grasps the thing, once it has already been presented intuitively.¹³ The situation is quite different in the case of Blaustein. He does not deny the importance of intentionality in the manifestation of the external world through sensation. Rather, he seeks to address a problem inherent in the theory of intentionality Husserl develops in his Göttingen lectures—namely, the reduction of sensations to elements entirely absorbed within the intentional act. For Blaustein, sensations remain outside the intentional act, but can be apprehended and interpreted by it in

13 See Schapp 2013, 130ff.; Nuccilli 2020, 70 ff.

such a way as to allow the properties of external objects to be manifested to consciousness. This is made possible through the mediation of the phenomenal world, which can be understood as the mode, in which external things appear. Sensations thus function as presenters of external objects, providing the basis, upon which the intentional act can be directed toward the things themselves.

Both Schapp's and Blaustein's positions present themselves as alternatives to Husserl's transcendental turn, which takes shape especially in the Göttingen lectures, beginning with those of 1906/07. Whereas for Husserl sensations become means for manifesting only when, through the apprehension achieved by the intentional act, they are revealed as oriented toward the presentation of the external properties of things, for Schapp and Blaustein they are presenters in their own right: for the former, sensations function in a direct and complete sense, and for the latter, they function in a mediated form shaped by the interpretative function of the intentional act. In Husserl's case, the purely psychological-descriptive dimension is suspended along with the external status of sensations; in contrast, for both Schapp and Blaustein, it retains a decisive and central role. This methodological aspect, however, would require further discussion beyond the scope of the present work.

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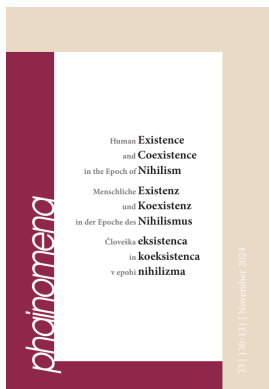
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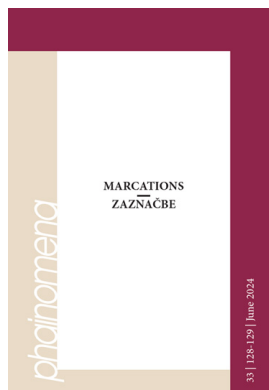
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