This is the **original version (preprint)** of the following study:

"On Charles's "Quasi-Fear": A Perceptual–Phenomenological Defence of Thought Theory" by Hicham Jakha

Forthcoming in *The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2025.2479442

Please cite the **version of record** which incorporates changes and improvements following the peer-review process.

On Charles's "Quasi-Fear":
A Perceptual–Phenomenological Defence of Thought Theory

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Abstract

This article puts forth a perceptual–phenomenological defence of "thought theory" as a solid solution to the paradox of fiction. Arguing against Kendall Walton's pretence solution to Charles's fear and going along the lines of Peter Lamarque's and Noël Carroll's thought theory, my proposed defence makes use of the philosophy of a figure who is rarely discussed in the context of phenomenology and never discussed in the context of the paradox of fiction: Leopold Blaustein. To bring forth my proposed perceptual–phenomenological defence, I devise Blaustein's descriptive account of "perception" and its role in shaping aesthetic experience. Within this line of thought, I further develop a *perceptualist* reading of Blaustein, paralleling Christine Tappolet's version, that may be of service to proponents of the "perceptual theory of emotions."

Keywords: paradox of fiction; perceptual theory; emotions; Leopold Blaustein

Introduction

This article discusses the paradox of fiction by exploring its phenomenological background. In the context of Kendall Walton's explanation of Charles's fear of the slime along make-believe lines and analytic thought theory's criticism of Walton's pretence theory of emotions, I attempt to formulate an alternative version of the thought theory. This variant is established on the basis of a

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perceptual–phenomenological reading of Charles's experience. Charles's phenomenology is described in terms of Leopold Blaustein's phenomenology. Since the paradox of fiction can have different formulations, the following is my point of reference[1]:

(A) To be moved by something, it is *necessary* that we *believe* in the existence of said "something" (i.e., said "something" must exist);

(B) We ordinarily do not believe that fictional entities exist;

(C) Fictional entities genuinely move us at times.

Some philosophers attempt to overcome this paradox by appealing to "pretence." Most notably, Walton argues that Charles does not actually fear the slime on the theatre screen. Charles is merely *pretending* to fear the slime. His "quasi-fear" state plays a part in a wider game of make-believe in which Charles is engaged.[2] Thus, Walton's solution to the paradox of fiction is to eliminate (C). It is not true that fictions move us, for all works of fiction are essentially games of make believe, and any resultant emotions therein are to be processed as part of these games.[3] Other

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[1] Cf. Colin Radford, 'How Can We Be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?,' *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supplemental Vol. 49 (1975): 67–80.

[2] Cf. Kendall L. Walton, 'Fearing Fictions', *The Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 1 (1978): 14.

[3] Throughout my analysis, I adopt a general usage of "fiction" and "fictional entities." Works of fiction are inclusive of all fictional representations, regardless of the material means through which they are represented. Fictional entities, likewise, are the objects unveiled *via* these representations, broadly understood.

philosophers challenge instead premise (A). These philosophers reject Walton's cognitivism and argue in its stead that having an emotional response does not require any beliefs about the entity to which it is directed.[4] Among the philosophers who take this route, we can name Lamarque and Carroll.[5] These philosophers advocate for the so-called "thought theory," which states that our imaginative faculties *represent* to us (mental) entities which then become the target objects of our emotional responses.[6] This proves that cognitivists' fixation on the role existence beliefs and judgments play in relation to emotions is not as firmly grounded as it was previously thought to be.

To consolidate the value of thought theory, I will attempt to introduce Blaustein, treating him as a figure who is not discussed in the context of the paradox of fiction. In the 1920s and 1930s, Blaustein explored various issues in the field of aesthetics. These issues were investigated in the context of his original theory of so-called "imaginative presentations." Blaustein enjoyed a

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[4] Thinkers from various fields of study reject the thesis that beliefs are key in the formulation of emotions. Among these, we can mention proponents of "appraisal theories" (e.g., Nico Frijda, *The Emotions* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986]), "perceptual theories" (e.g., Christine Tappolet, *Emotions, Values and Agency* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2016]), etc.

[5] Peter Lamarque, 'How Can We Fear and Pity Fictions?,' *British Journal of Aesthetics* 21, no. 4 (1981): 291–304; Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror; or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[6] A similar approach can be found in Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 188, where he emphasizes the "intentional objects" of one's emotions as being sufficient to explain their states.

solid background in phenomenology, for he studied under Husserl in Freiburg im Breisgau.[7] In this

article, I am not interested in a historical-philosophical study of Blaustein's thought. Rather, I wish

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[7] For a biography of Blaustein, see Jacek J. Jadacki, 'Życiorysy niedokończone', in ......*A mądrości zło nie przemoże*, eds. Jacek J. Jadacki and Barbara Markiewicz (Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Filozoficzne, 1993), 159–80. To fully understand Blaustein's writings, it is helpful to situate him in the contexts of early phenomenology (cf. Witold Płotka, 'Early Phenomenology in Poland [1895–1945]: Origins, Development, and Breakdown', *Studies in East European Thought* 69, no. 1 [2017]: 79–91) and the Lvov-Warsaw School (cf. Witold Płotka, 'From Psychology to Phenomenology [and Back Again]: A Controversy over the Method in the School of Twardowski', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19 [2020]: 141–67; 'The Origins and Development of Leopold Blaustein's Descriptive Psychology: An Essay in the Heritage of the Lvov-Warsaw School', *History of Psychology* 26, no. 4 [2023]: 372–90). For more on the School itself, see Jan Woleński, *Logic and Philosophy in the Lvov–Warsaw School* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989); Anna Brożek, Friedrich Stadler, and Jan Woleński, eds., *The Significance of the Lvov-Warsaw School in the European Culture* (Cham: Springer, 2017). For more on the classification of Blaustein's philosophy with regards to specific historical schools of thought, see Marek Pokropski, 'Leopold Blaustein's Critique of Husserl's Early Theory of Intentional Act, Object and Content', *Studia Phaenomenologica* 15 (2015): 93–103; Wioletta Miskiewicz, 'Leopold Blaustein's Analytical Phenomenology', in *The Golden Age of Polish Philosophy*, eds. Sandra Lapointe *et al*. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 181–88; Zofia Rosińska, 'Leopold Blaustein — Styk Psychologii i Estetyki', in *Wybór pism estetycznych*, by Leopold Blaustein, ed. Zofia Rosińska (Kraków: Universitas, 2005), vii–lii.

to approach his ideas analytically by juxtaposing them with analytic thought theory and analytic *perceptualism*.[8] Therefore, I will argue that Blaustein can reinforce the strongholds of thought theory as a solution to the paradox of fiction. In particular, I shall argue against Walton's pretence solution to Charles's fear of the slime on the ground of *phenomenology*. To put forth the phenomenological ground, I shall make use of Blaustein's descriptive account of "perception" and its role in shaping our aesthetic experience. Within this line of thought, I will further develop a *perceptualist* reading of Blaustein that may be of service to proponents of the "perceptual theory of emotions." With these objectives in mind, this article is structured as follows. First, I start with an exploration of emotions in analytic philosophy, focusing primarily on Walton's pretence and analytic phenomenological criticism of Walton's account (Sect. I). In Sect. II, I proceed to outlining the phenomenology of Blaustein within the context of the perceptual theory of emotions. To read Blaustein along perceptualist lines, I refer to three main "analogy arguments" found in Tappolet: the intentionality argument (Sect. III), the (re)presentationality argument (Sect. IV), and the correctness argument (Sect. V). After establishing my perceptualist reading of Blaustein, I proceed to its applicability to the paradox of fiction (Sect. VI).

I. Emotions: Mere Pretend?

It is safe to say that the paradox of fiction, as conceptualized in today's analytic philosophy, essentially revolves around our "experience" of fictional works and their objects. It is *my* experience of the slime that evokes in *me* the emotion of fear. Thus, to understand the nature of

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[8] To be specific, I will focus chiefly on Tappolet's version of perceptualism.

"fictional emotions,"[9] we need to undertake the experiences, i.e., broadly understood phenomenology, that underlie those emotions. Walton disregards the phenomenology of fiction experience. This seems to undermine Walton's take on the issue. Many philosophers have already pointed out this concern. For instance, against Walton's games of make-believe analogy, Carroll writes:

> If it [my fear of horror films] were a pretend emotion, one would think that it could be engaged at will. I could elect to remain unmoved by *The Exorcist*; I could refuse to make believe I was horrified. But I don't think that that was really an option for those, like myself, who were overwhelmedly struck by it.[10]

Carroll rightly stresses the complex phenomenological dimension of fictional emotions. A pragmatic allusion to games of make-believe does not adequately account for the emotions *our* experiences of works of fiction evoke in *us*. It is not up to me when/if I am going to partake in a certain game, where I choose to feel (or pretend to feel) that I am frightened of the slime. This emotion is, in a way, forced upon me through my experience of the fictional work. Just as we cannot help but feel frightened by the slime, there are fictional works that are characterized by what can be called "aesthetic failure." That is to say, there are fictional works, such as *The Brain from Planet Arous* and *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*—both mentioned by Carroll—that fail to evoke in the experiencer the emotional response that they were initially produced to elicit. There are other works which can be said to exemplify "opposite effect." In other words, there are works

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[9] By "fictional emotions," I do not mean to dismiss these emotions as mere *façon de parler*. I use this terminology to denote the emotions that arise following one's experience of fictional works.

[10] Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, 74.

that are supposed to make us feel sad, which turn out to make us laugh or cringe.[11] Games of make-believe do not seem to fit such works.

To further support the phenomenological validity of fictional emotions, Novitz argues that "many theatre-goers and readers believe that they are actually upset, excited, amused, afraid, and even sexually aroused by the exploits of fictional characters. It seems altogether inappropriate in such cases to maintain that our theatre-goers merely make-believe that they are in these emotional states."[12] What fiction readers/viewers experience is qualitatively no different from what they might experience in similar non-fictional situations. On the phenomenological level, I argue, there are no pretend emotions. If indeed someone was consciously pretending to feel, say, sad when Victor Hugo's (*Les Misérables*) Cosette did not get to see her mother before the latter died, we would be prompted to treat them as dishonest tricksters, or even worse, as soulless psychos. How dare they? Some readers might retort. To these readers, the tragedy of Cosette is a phenomenologically real one, and any suggestions that their feelings be reduced to mere pretend would be met with a resounding rejection. Let us go along with pretend theorists and let there be pretend emotions, would that refute the phenomenology of fictional emotions? Usually, when someone is merely pretending to feel sad or scared about a fictional state of affairs, there is an

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[11] Cf. Noël Carroll, 'On Kendall Walton's Mimesis as Make-Believe', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 51, no. 2 (1991): 383–87.

[12] David Novitz, *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 241. See also Glenn Hartz ('How We Can Be Moved by Anna Karenina, Green Slime, and a Red Pony', *Philosophy* 74, no. 4 [1999]: 572) for a similar defence of phenomenology against pretence.

underlying emotional state that accompanies their pretend state. To be more explicit, when a reader pretends to feel sad about Cosette or fear of the slime, they usually are thrilled about the book as a whole, provided they like it. In the event that they do not, their underlying state might be that of discontent. Now, which emotional states are real, and which are merely pretend? All these emotional states are still triggered by the experience of the fictional work and its objects. What makes the first-degree emotions pretend emotions and the second-degree emotions real? Or are all emotions related to fiction pretend? In which case, even the feelings of pleasure or discontent that follow a reader's reading experience would be classed as pretend as well. All these difficulties arise following the suspension of phenomenology.

In defence of Walton, one might argue that he is not dismissive of experiencers' phenomenology. Thus, Carroll's criticism (or mine) is not appropriate. In this regard, Neill argues that what such criticisms seem to overlook "is that the fact that Charles *is* genuinely moved by the horror movie is precisely what motivates Walton's account." Therefore, Walton's primary focus is the *target* of Charles's emotions, not the emotions themselves. Walton does not have a problem with Charles's emotions, for we can indeed be moved by works of fiction. His problem is rather with what Charles's state is *of*. Whether Charles's emotional state is of actual fear or merely quasi-fear, that is the question. Walton's approach is that Charles's emotional response (fear) is merely pretend, and for that it is quasi.[13] Even if we assume that Neill's defence is valid, is it a defence of Charles's phenomenology? To Charles, his emotional state directed towards the slime is one of actual fear. Saying that Charles's state is one of quasi-fear eliminates his phenomenology in favour

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[13] Alex Neill, 'Fear, Fiction and Make-Believe', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49, no. 1 (1991): 49-50.

of a cognitivist approach. This circles us back to the irreducibility of emotions, phenomenologically speaking, to pretence. Therefore, it is safe to say that attempting to separate fictional emotions and the experiencer's subjective experience is futile. If these two are two faces of the same coin, how can we account for their conjoining within the paradox of fiction? I will attempt to answer this question with the help of Blaustein's phenomenological perceptualism.

II. Blaustein: A Perceptualist?

For those who do not see any value in discussing the paradox of fiction anymore, it is helpful to point out the paradox's epistemic fruits. As Stecker argues, although the paradox of fiction seizes to be a "paradox" if one abandons the belief premise or the existence premise (as most philosophers and psychologists do nowadays), there is still a lot to be gained from engaging with the paradox.[14] A major area that benefits from interactions with the paradox is "cognition." "Emotional experiences are able to mould the way in which we engage with the world cognitively. They influence our perceptions, imaginings, beliefs, and suppositions."[15] Blaustein's philosophy resonates with these lines of thought. To set the record straight, Blaustein did not give much space to "emotions," as they figure in fiction, in his account. My attempt to incorporate Blaustein into the paradox of fictional emotions, therefore, gains further pertinence as it fills a lacuna in his

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[14] Robert Stecker, 'Should We Still Care about the Paradox of Fiction?,' *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 51, no. 3 (2011): 295.

[15] Íngrid Vendrell Ferran, 'Emotion in the Appreciation of Fiction', *Journal of Literary Theory* 12, no. 2 (2018): 212.

thought, namely the underrepresentation of emotions. He wrote primarily on the description of various experiences, and how they interact with "perception."[16] To be succinct, my aim is to comprehend Blaustein's phenomenology of perception as a model of emotional intentionality paralleling analytic perceptual theories of emotions.

Blaustein's emphasis on "perception" as the bedrock of aesthetic experience mirrors analytic "perceptual theories of emotions." These theories argue that having a certain emotion is correlated with perceiving some object or state of affairs as being a certain way (e.g., as being scary, sad, revolting, etc.).[17] Tappolet's account in particular is regarded highly in contemporary discussions revolving around emotions. According to Tappolet, "emotions consist in perceptual experiences of values."[18] Tappolet's account differs from cognitive theories of emotions when it comes to the "representational content" of emotions. Tappolet advocates a view in which emotions arise following a "non-conceptual," "simple," and "non-epistemic" perception. For instance, to fear something, it is not necessary at all that one possess the concept of "fearsome."[19] To defend her perceptual theory, Tappolet cites the "analogies" between perception and emotions. Amongst the most important analogies stressed by her we can mention the following. Both perceptions and emotions are "phenomenal." Both perceptions and emotions are "passive," in the sense that they

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[16] For more on Blaustein's account of perception, see Witold Płotka, *The Philosophy of Leopold Blaustein: Descriptive Psychology, Phenomenology, and Aesthetics* (Cham: Springer, 2024), 235-240.

[17] Cf. Tappolet, *Emotions*.

[18] Tappolet, *Emotions*, xi-xii.

[19] Ibid., 16-18.

arise somehow automatically. Both perceptions and emotions are "world-guided" (directed towards something in the world). Both perceptions and emotions are endowed with "correctness" criteria. Notwithstanding the disanalogies between perceptions and emotions (which she also considers), Tappolet argues that "emotions involve a genuine kind of perception."[20]

Blaustein's phenomenology of perception fits perfectly the perceptual theory put forth by Tappolet. A strong argument in favour of incorporating Blaustein into Tappolet's perceptual theory of emotions can be made in reference to Brentano. Tappolet's evaluative account of emotions is essentially Brentanian.[21] Blaustein's phenomenology of perception, likewise, is strongly influenced by Brentano's philosophy.[22] This shared Brentanian link brings Blaustein and Tappolet even closer. However, Blaustein's phenomenology, I argue, provides a more promising formulation of "perception" and its varying objects than Tappolet's. Instead of assuming an account of perception without motivating it,[23] Blaustein provides a solid paradigm of perception and various

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[20] Ibid., 29-30.

[21] For more on Brentano's account of evaluative emotions, see Uriah Kriegel, *Brentano's Philosophical System: Mind, Being, Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 187-217.

[22] For an analysis of the Brentanian influence on Blaustein's account, see Płotka, 'Origins and Development'.

[23] Cf. Benjamin De Mesel, 'Review of Emotions, Values, and Agency', *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2017, https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/emotions-values-and-agency/.

perceptual objects. In the following, I will explore three main analogy arguments discussed by Tappolet and establish on their basis my perceptualist reading of Blaustein.[24]

III. The Intentionality Argument

Perceptions and emotions are said to involve *reference* to certain objects. For example, Edmund's perception of the Grand Canyon is directed towards the Canyon, and Mark's amazement with the *Mona Lisa* painting is directed towards the painting. Therefore, the Canyon and the painting are the *intentional* objects of Edmund's perception and Mark's emotion. But these intentional objects are not of the same type. If we follow Tappolet's reduction of emotions to perceptions, some issues start to emerge. Perceiving a (real) natural scenery and perceiving a painting are qualitatively distinct. We have, so to speak, two different kinds of perceptions; one that takes a real entity as the intentional object of perception, and the other that takes a work of art as the intentional object of perception.

Blaustein was aware of the nuanced structure of perception, which led him to distinguish amongst "observative," "imaginative," and "signitive" perception. In observative perception, we are mostly perceiving everyday phenomena, architectural works, and so on. Imaginative perception gives rise to two objects, the perceived object and the imaginative object. The former takes on the role of the "presenting" object, whereas the latter functions as the "represented" object.

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[24] I will mainly explore three of the main analogy arguments laid out in Christine Tappolet, 'The Receptive Theory: A New Theory of Emotions', *Philosophies* 8, no. 6 (2023): 117. For a detailed discussion of these arguments, see her *Emotions*.

For instance, when perceiving a painting, we directly perceive the presenting object (the canvas, the shapes, the colours, etc.). We also perceive indirectly the represented object, i.e., the object "within" the painting.[25] Signitive perception is reserved to, *inter alia*, literary works and radio drama.[26] Here, too, a distinction is made between the presenting object (written/heard words) and the represented objects.[27] Edmund's perception of the Canyon fits the observative perception. His perception is directed towards the Canyon. Mark's perception, by contrast, is imaginative. While his direct perception is drawn towards its presenting content (colours, shapes, etc.), his indirect perception is drawn to the imaginative object within the painting: the beautiful woman posing for a portrait. Edmund's perception can only be direct, despite his perception of the Canyon being intentional in relation to the Canyon.

By and large, the intentionality argument takes both emotions and perceptions to be directed towards certain intentional objects. Nonetheless, it is vitally important that one take into

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[25] Blaustein further distinguishes within imaginative perception (a) the presenting object (the material substrate of an artwork), (b) the imaginative object (e.g., Caesar interacting with Cleopatra), and (c) the "reproduced" object (e.g., the Caesar and Cleopatra who lived in the past) (Leopold Blaustein, 'The Role of Perception in Aesthetic Experience', trans. Monika Bokiniec, *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics* 48, no. 2 [2011b]: 236). The reproduced object is only relevant in cases where a non-fictional object is imported into the fictional world, as in the case of Caesar and Cleopatra.

[26] Cf. Leopold Blaustein, *O percepcji słuchowiska radiowego* (Warszawa: Polskie Radio Biuro Studiów, 1938).

[27] Blaustein, 'Role of Perception', 237.

account the characteristics of the objects perceived and subsequently filter their intentional objects via different lenses. Blaustein's intentionality provides us with an adequate apparatus through which we can distinguish intentional objects on the basis of the nature of their perceptions.

IV. The Presentationality Argument[28]

Apart from sharing intentionality, perceptions and emotions are said to "present" their intentional objects in a specific manner. Perceptions present their intentional objects as being a certain shape, colour, etc., and emotions present their objects as being scary, gloomy, etc. For example, Edmund's perception presents the Canyon as being huge, rocky, etc. Mark's amazement with the *Mona Lisa* presents the intentional object as being beautiful, amazing, etc. As with the intentionality argument, the distinctness of the intentional objects involved requires that we approach their presentationality differently.

Blaustein analyses the phenomenology of presentation, *vis-à-vis* perception, in a psychological–descriptive manner. Presentation is an "intentional mental act" endowed with a "matter" and a "quality."[29] "The quality of the act is the interdependent part of the act that makes

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[28] Note that Tappolet uses "*re*presentation," not "presentation." I made the decision to exchange the former for the latter to conform to Blaustein's account, in which a distinction is drawn between the two terms. To further motivate this decision, it can be stated that, since she follows Brentano's evaluative theory, Tappolet uses a mistranslation of Brentano's "*Vorstellung*" (see fn. 30 below).

[29] This is Edmund Husserl's terminology (see his *Logical Investigations*, trans. John N. Findlay, vol. II [London: Routledge, 2001], 77-176). A similar distinction can be found in Kazimierz

the act turn towards an object and do so in a specific way. […] The matter of the act, on the other hand, gives direction to the intention, directing it towards this particular object and making it apprehend this object and not another."[30] Blaustein explores three divisions pertinent to the act of presentation, matter, quality, the presenting content, and the intentional object. Analysing the Twardowskian division of presentations ("[…] into *images* and *concepts*, images into *perceptual* and *secondary*, and secondary images into *reproductive* and *creative*"[31]), Blaustein notes that the division's principle lies beyond the act's quality and matter, leaving either the act's presenting content or its intentional object (or their interrelation) as the possible principle of division. Instead, he provides a three-fold division: (a) the division of presentations into images and concepts, (b)

Twardowski, *On the Content and Object of Presentations*, trans. Reinhardt Grossmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977) and Alexius Meinong, 'On Objects of Higher Order and Their Relationship to Internal Perception', in *Alexius Meinong on Objects of Higher Order and Husserl's Phenomenology*, by Marie-Louise Schubert Kalsi, trans. Marie-Louise Schubert Kalsi (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1978), 137–208.

[30] Leopold Blaustein, 'Imaginary Representations: A Study on the Border of Psychology and Aesthetics', trans. Monika Bokiniec, *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics* 48, no. 2 (2011a): 210-211. Note that I have changed Bokiniec's terminology, for it is misleading. In particular, I have changed "representation" to "presentation" as the former term does not capture correctly Blaustein's Polish term "*przedstawienie.*" "Presentation" is usually taken to denote the German term "*Vorstellung*" (as used by, e.g., Brentano). Blaustein, similarly, uses *przedstawienie* as the equivalent of Brentano's *Vorstellung*. I adopt this terminology throughout my article.

[31] Emphasis mine.

the division of images into perceptual and secondary, and (c) the division of secondary images into reproductive and creative. The division principle in (a) is motivated by the distinct relation obtaining between the presenting content and the intentional object in images and concepts (in the latter, the presenting content is "inadequate"; in the former, "adequate"). The division principle in (b) is based on the varied nature of the presenting content ("sensory content").[32] (c) operates on the basis of the varied nature of intentional objects in reproductive and creative images.[33]

With these deliberations in mind, it is important to distinguish presentations on the basis of their presenting content and intentional objects. Considering the example discussed above, Mark's presentation of the painting and Edmund's presentation of the Canyon differ accordingly. One thing that they have in common is the presentation of "space" and the "I" embodiment within the worlds of the Canyon and the painting. That is to say, Edmund's perception of the Canyon situates him within a spatial relation with the Canyon and its surroundings. He sees the Canyon as being closer to him than other objects in the vicinity. Certain rocks are bigger than others, redder than others, and so on. Edmund the perceiver is bodily immersed in the perception of the Canyon. He is aware of his body's relation to the perceived object within space. The relation obtaining between Edmund's body and the Canyon is a phenomenologically real one, hence his presentation of the Canyon within real space. Mark's perception, on the other hand, is phenomenologically different, and it is so with regards to the painting's presenting content and intentional object. The

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[32] In the case of perceptual images, the sensory content (shape, size, colour, etc.) is there to behold at will, i.e., it is independent of the viewer. The sensory content of secondary images is subjective, i.e., its perception is dependent on the viewer (Blaustein, 'Imaginary Representations,' 228).

[33] Ibid., 215.

painting's intentionality lies in its presentationality as an imaginary object. In comparison to Edmund's, Mark's perception of the painting presents not only its intentional object, but also Mark's relation to the imaginary object. Mark sees directly the presenting content of the painting. Beyond the sensory content, he can see indirectly the imaginary object within the painting, i.e., the beautiful woman. The imaginary presentationality of the *Mona Lisa* has an effect on Mark's bodily relation to the intentional object analogous to Edmund's with regards to the perceptual presentationality of the Canyon. While looking at the *Mona Lisa*, Mark situates himself within the painting's world and deduces from the latter relations that connect his body to the painting's spatiality. The pathway between the two mountains behind the woman is in a spatial relation to Mark's body and its surroundings. The posing woman is spatially closer to Mark and his cup than the pathway is. But these spatial relations are not identical to the ones obtaining in the case of Edmund's perception. While Edmund's body is *actually* in a spatial relation to the Canyon, Mark's body is merely imaginatively spatially related to the painting. Blaustein terms this relation "quasi-spatiality."[34] Another difference between Edmund's and Mark's perceptions has to do with the temporal dimension of their presentations. Mark's temporal relation to the *Mona Lisa* is, besides being merely quasi, limited by the "static" appearance of the painting. There is no movement in the pathway. The river surrounded by the mountains is everlastingly calm. Thus, Mark's imported "I" does not stand in a temporal relation to the painting's world. Edmund's presentation of the

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[34] Mark's temporal relation to the painting is, accordingly, "quasi-temporal." It is worth mentioning that Blaustein distinguishes within temporal relations between "static" and "dynamic" appearances, as they figure in, *inter alia*, paintings and sculptures, and the theatre and the cinema, respectively (Ibid., 219-220).

Canyon, by contrast, is governed by the principle of temporality, and his temporal relation to the Canyon is actually temporal. This is dictated by the nature of the Canyon's intentional object and the perceptuality of its presentation.[35]

In short, the presentationality argument has it that perceptions and emotions *present* their intentional objects as being so-and-so. However, as with the intentionality argument, it is important to specify the *kind* of presentation at play as perceptual presentations differ from imaginative presentations. Blaustein's intricate analysis of presentations and how they relate especially to their presented objects and intentional objects adds an in-depth understanding of perception–presentationality that improves Tappolet's perceptualism.

V. The Correctness Argument

To further motivate her reductionism, Tappolet argues that perceptions and emotions share criteria of correctness. In other words, one can assess the correctness or incorrectness of perceptions' and emotions' presentations of their intentional objects. For instance, Edmund's perception of the Canyon is correct if it adequately presents the Canyon as the perception's intentional object. Likewise, Mark's emotion towards the painting is correct if it adequately presents its intentional object. As with the previous two arguments, the correctness argument can benefit from Blaustein's meticulous account of perception and presentation. Edmund's perception of the Canyon is easier to evaluate than Mark's perception of the painting. We can say that Edmund's perception is correct if it presents the Canyon as such. But how can we apply the same correctness criteria to Mark's

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[35] Cf. Ibid., 215-221.

perception? This is a thorny issue that is rooted for the most part in the subjectivity of emotions. It is made even more challenging by the nature of Mark's intentional object.

As has been formulated above, the *Mona Lisa* and the Canyon are distinct objects with two distinct intentional objects and two distinct modes of presentation. The painting is an imaginary object, and as such it is perceived through an imaginary presentation. Imaginary objects, as Blaustein conceives of them, occupy a space between the imaginary world and the real world.[36] Their presenting content is hosted by the real world, and their presented objects live within the relevant imaginary works. As we tend to the presenting content of the painting, our perception is directed towards something that occupies a place within real space–time. Shifting our attention to the presented object within the painting, our perception singles out an imaginary object that lives within the painting's quasi-space–time. If emotions are indeed perceptions, which object is singled out by Mark's perception, the presenting objects or the presented objects? It seems that since perceptions and emotions are world-guided, it is more appropriate to treat them as being directed towards the presenting objects of the painting. Then, both perception and the presenting content would share real world-guided-ness. Accordingly, Mark's amazement (perception) is really directed towards the painting's colours, shapes, canvas, etc. This explanation would pair nicely with the correctness argument. It is definitely easier to assess the accuracy of Mark's perception of the painting's presenting objects. If, for example, he claims that the painting's dominant colour is pink or that it makes use of bold triangles and rectangles, we would be well within our right to call him out on his incorrect perception. Therefore, the painting's presenting objects provide us

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[36] Cf. Leopold Blaustein, 'O imaginatywnym świecie sztuk', *Miesięcznik Literatury i Sztuki* 2, no. 8–9 (1935/36): 243–49.

with a principle of objective intersubjectivity; a principle that can help regulate perception's correctness criteria. However, Mark's emotions towards the painting are more likely to be directed towards the represented object within the painting.[37] The painting's presenting objects are but means to "put together" the object presented imaginatively: the smiling woman. It is more accurate to say that Mark's perception is directed towards this object. His amazement is more likely to be with the presented object and its beauty, not with the isolated colours and shapes putting it together. If we accept this explanation, the correctness argument comes up against a brick wall. How can one decide if Mark's perception of the painting's presented object is correct? Unlike its presenting objects, perceiving the painting's presented object is a subjective endeavour. With the absence of an objective intersubjectivity principle, it is difficult to assess the correctness of Mark's perception of the painting's presented object. Consequently, since Mark's emotion is more likely to be towards the presented object, it would likewise be difficult to assess its correctness.

Blaustein would approach the correctness argument in a combinatorial way. To be more explicit, Blaustein draws a distinction amongst three "attitudes" that accompany our presentations: "natural," "imaginative," and "signitive."[38] While observing the painting's presenting objects, Mark's attitude is a natural one. This attitude allows him to attend to the painting's presenting content in an objective way. But Mark's perception is also directed at the painting's presented objects: the posing woman, the pathway between the mountains, the river encircled by the pointy mountains, etc. His higher-order perception of these objects is founded on his lower-order

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[37] What Leopold Blaustein also calls "distant" objects (cf. *Przedstawienia schematyczne i symboliczne* [Lvov: Nakładem Przeglądu Humanistycznego, 1931], 26-28).

[38] Blaustein, 'Imaginary Representations,' 216.

perception of the painting's presenting content. Mark's higher-order perception can be identified with the imaginative attitude. Going beyond the physical foundation of the painting, he is able to imaginatively construct what the painting really wants to capture, i.e., the fictional objects da Vinci intended to bring to life. Mark can also attend to signitive components of the *Mona Lisa* that transcend both its material substrate and imaginative presentations. While in the signitive attitude, he can search for significations that may permeate the painting. By devising Blaustein's theory of attitudes, we can conceptualize Mark's perception and its correctness in a way that combines all the aforementioned attitudes. His perception of the *Mona Lisa* is correct if his attitudes complement each other. To put it another way, Mark's perception is correct if the painting's presenting content provides an adequate ontic foundation for the presented objects. The painting's significations are correct if they derive their adequacy from its presenting content and presented objects.

To recap, Tappolet's third argument in favour of reducing emotions to perceptions invokes the fact that they both can be evaluated, *vis-à-vis* the correctness of their intentional objects' presentations. Devising Blaustein's theory of attitudes, it becomes clear that the correctness of perceptual and imaginative presentations invokes different attitudes, for the intentional objects involved in each presentation are distinct. Accordingly, since imaginative presentations include both a real presenting content and an imaginatively presented content, I proposed combining all three attitudes to account for the subtleties of imaginative presentations and their correctness.

Now replace Mark with Charles, and substitute Mark's amazement towards the *Mona Lisa* for Charles's fear of the slime. Can the Blaustenian perceptualist account established above offer a better explanation of Charles's fear than Walton's games of make-believe analogy? The following section will attempt to answer this question.

VI. Reintroducing Phenomenology into the Paradox of Fiction

As has been argued previously, the phenomenology of experience is crucial in understanding the nature of fictional emotions. Merely reducing fictional emotions to pretend does not do justice to the experiencer's phenomenology nor to the cognitive benefits of fiction. Blaustein's phenomenology can provide us with insight into the experience of fiction, which takes into account both the phenomenological experience of fiction and fiction's cognitive value.

In reference to Walton's account, as has been argued in Sect. I, he oversimplified Charles's experience. Children's games of make-believe, on the basis of which Walton built his theory of pretence, differ drastically from aesthetic subjects' complex experience. Charles's emotional response to the slime has to be explained in terms of its underlying phenomenology. First, Charles "sees" the slime on the screen, hence Blaustein's emphasis on perception is *à propos*. The slime is a moving image, to borrow Carroll's term.[39] The image is composed of colours and shapes. This moving image is projected onto a theatre screen. These are the material substrates of the slime that reproduce it, and which Charles can genuinely see.[40] The slime is the imaginative object. It is the object "within" the screen. This presented object, in turn, represents the scary fictional slime that Charles fears. Charles is not a passive viewer. He adopts different "attitudes" while aesthetically

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[39] See Noël Carroll, *Theorizing the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The term is originally Bergson's.

[40] Cf. Leopold Blaustein, *Przyczynki do psychologii widza kinowego* (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne, 1933).

experiencing the slime movie.[41] For example, while attending to the reproducing aspects of the slime, he adopts a natural attitude. He may raise questions about the movie's director or the cinematography behind the slime's creation. While in this attitude, Charles's experience is that of the actual. The attitude that immerses Charles in the aesthetic experience of the slime is the imaginative one. His fear of the slime can be accounted for in terms of his attitude to the object as a fictum. Charles can also adopt a signitive attitude to the slime, searching for any significations that might underlie its depiction. Now, we can devise this Blaustenian account to establish a theory of fictional emotions, in which Charles's fear of the slime is genuine within his imaginative attitude. After the movie, he might assert that he was really terrified of the slime, the imaginative object, as he was immersed in the imaginative attitude throughout the movie. Had the slime's depiction been unconvincingly dull, Charles's attitude would have been different. He would have been focused mostly on how bad the depiction of the slime was.

The Blaustein–Tappolet account, therefore, strengthens the thought theory by providing it with a perceptually-motivated component. Furthermore, Blaustein's phenomenology better demonstrates how imaginative presentations function psychologically. Carroll, for example, would have it that Charles is scared of the "content" of his slime thought.[42] Blaustein would agree with

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[41] The non-passivity of Charles's perception raises an objection to the perceptual theory and its passivity analogy. Perception in itself is passive, but to change perceptual attitudes, *vis-à-vis* their intended objects, is an intentional operation; hence it cannot be passive (cf. Leopold Blaustein, *O ujmowaniu przedmiotów estetycznych* [Lvov: Lwowska Biblioteka Pedagogiczna, 1938/2005a], 4).

[42] Cf. Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror*, 88.

Carroll in this respect, for it is indeed the content of one's thoughts that moves them. Imaginative representations are found within the various thought contents with which we are presented following our perceptual interaction with works of fiction. Following Twardowski, the content (*Inhalt*) of imaginative acts is to be distinguished from both the imagining act and the object (*Gegenstand*) towards which it is directed. There is, however, a major difference between Carroll and Blaustein. Carroll does not restrict genuine fear to what we referred to as the imaginative attitude. This leads us to raise the following questions: What exactly is the relation between imaginative objects and our attitudes? Charles can be terrified for weeks. Can we say that his imaginative attitude spanned out? At what point should we break with the imaginative attitude? Will Charles's attitudes overlap at some point? Is it even up to Charles to pick which attitude to adopt? These are all valid questions that challenge Blaustein's account. It can be argued that the slime is so realistic that Charles's attitude changes from the imaginative to the natural, resulting in a case of genuine fear outside of the imaginative. It seems that we have reached the limit of phenomenology. It is time to address the elephant in the room, the slime *qua* object.

Although Blaustein purports to be merely concerned with a description of experiences, he repeatedly finds himself grappling with ontological issues. Blaustein's ontology of imaginative objects, if I am permitted to talk of one, takes these objects to be "quasi-real."[43] If these objects are merely quasi-real, how can Charles fear the slime? Isn't this another way of putting Walton's account? I do not condone reducing Blaustein's account to Walton's. For one thing, Walton is an eliminativist about fictional entities. By saying that our emotions to fiction are quasi, he intends to

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[43] By "quasi," Blaustein means "as-if." Imaginary objects are quasi-real, in the sense that they are as-if real.

eliminate the objects of fiction from our ontology.[44] Blaustein admits fictional entities into our ontology. He is, therefore, a non-eliminativist about ficta, albeit his non-eliminativism is weak. By quasi-real, Blaustein simply means that these entities operate outside spatio-temporality.[45] Ficta are, nonetheless, objects of our imaginative acts. Thus, he can be described as a proponent of the intentional (thought) theory of ficta. But Blaustein did not develop a full-blown ontology. He was convinced that his descriptive approach would provide him with the right account of imaginative objects. Blaustein's scepticism over ontology should be taken with a grain of salt. This is not to dismiss his entire account, for it is phenomenologically solid and shows promising results for the paradox of fiction.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to put forth an alternative defence of analytic "thought theory." This defence makes use of the phenomenology of Blaustein. I have demonstrated that Blaustein's phenomenology takes "perception" as the starting point of aesthetic experience, paralleling the analytic "perceptual theory of emotions," which considers "perceptions" and "emotions" to be on a par; thus, reducing the latter to the former. To read Blaustein along the lines of the perceptual theory, I have appealed to Tappolet's version of the theory. In particular, I have formulated my Blaustenian perceptualism with reference to three analogy arguments on which she bases her

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[44] As Kendall L. Walton explicitly does in his *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[45] Cf. Blaustein, 'Imaginary Representations,' 221-222.

theory: (a) *intentionality* (both emotions and perceptions have intentional objects towards which they are directed), (b) *presentationality* (both perceptions and emotions present their intentional objects as being a certain way), and (c) *correctness* (both perceptions and emotions can be judged regarding the correctness of their intentional objects' presentations). I have shown that a reformulation of the perceptualist theory along Blaustenian lines considerably improves the theory, for Blaustein meticulously analyses "perception" and its relation to the three aforementioned elements. Blaustein can also be regarded as a proponent of the "thought theory," albeit a weak one. (I consider Blaustein to be a weak proponent of the thought theory, for –although he admits fictional objects– his reluctance to delve into their ontology leaves his overall position ontologically weak, in comparison to full-blown ontological theories of ficta).

Therefore, the objective of my article was two-fold. First, it put forth a phenomenological defence of analytic thought theory, strengthening the version of the theory found mainly in Lamarque and Carroll. Second, my article attempted to develop a phenomenological perceptualist theory of emotions, relying on the accounts of Blaustein and Tappolet. My perceptualist reading of Blaustein has shown that there are many commonalities between him and Tappolet. However, beyond these commonalities, Blaustein's perceptualism proved to be more adequate. For instance, a major argument that has been raised against Tappolet's perceptualism is pertinent to her analysis of "perception" and its rudimentariness.[46] Blaustein's perceptualism has improved Tappolet's by making use of meticulous analyses of perception, presentations, and attitudes within a philosophical–psychological framework. This perceptualism is more equipped to tackle the
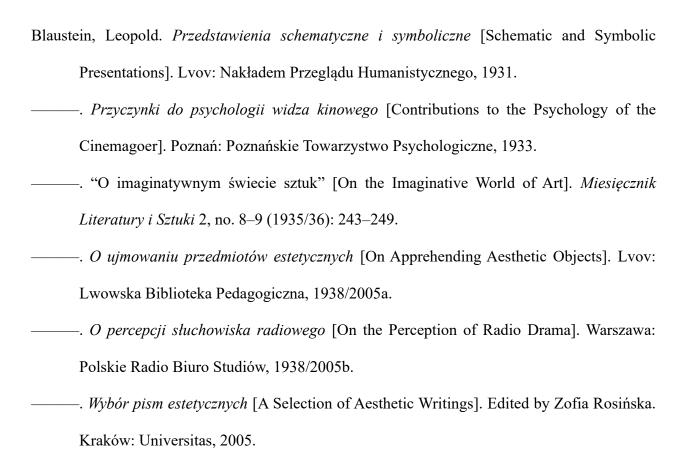
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[46] Cf. De Mesel, "Review of 'Emotions'."

paradox of fictional emotions, considered as a special kind of emotions that can be phenomenologically identical with genuine emotions.

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