

## III. ДИСКУССИИ

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### ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЯ ВОЙНЫ PHENOMENOLOGY OF WAR

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#### WAR AS A PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEME: METHODOLOGICAL AND METAPHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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The paper is guided by three goals. First, it shows that the methodological standpoint of classical Husserlian phenomenology provides us with reliable tools to resist the grand narratives that proliferate during times of war. Second, it demonstrates that phenomenology provides much-needed methodological support for hermeneutically-oriented reflections on war. Third, it shows how the gruesome reality of World War One introduced a practical turn in Husserl's phenomenology by forcing Husserl to rethink the relation between phenomenology and metaphysics. Tracing the development of phenomenological metaphysics in Husserl's Fichte lectures (1917–1918), Kaizo articles (1923–1924) and private correspondence, the paper shows that, in response to war, Husserl deliberately chose not to engage in straightforward reflections on war, but instead to write about the prospects of peace. Reflections on cultural renewal necessitated him to rethink phenomenology as practical philosophy. The entanglement of *praxis* and *theoria* in Husserlian phenomenology relies upon the establishment of a metaphysically-grounded conceptual bond that ties reason to love and faith, which in its own turn suggests that a human being is not merely *animal rationale*, but also *animal amans* and *animal religiosum*. Ultimately,

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the possibility of cultural renewal relies upon a metaphysical broadening of Husserl's conception of philosophy as rigorous sciences.

*Keywords:* war, phenomenology, hermeneutics, metaphysics, phenomenological method, cultural renewal, love, faith, reason.

## ВОЙНА КАК ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ТЕМА: МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ И МЕТАФИЗИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТЫ

САУЛИУС ГЕНИУШАС

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В нашей работе мы руководствуемся тремя целями. Во-первых, показать, что методологическая точка зрения классической гуссерлианской феноменологии предоставляет нам надежные инструменты для противодействия большим нарративам, которые распространяются во время войны. Во-вторых, мы демонстрируем, что феноменология обеспечивает необходимую методологическую поддержку для герменевтически ориентированных размышлений о войне. В-третьих, мы показываем, как ужасная реальность Первой мировой войны способствовала «практическому повороту» в феноменологии Гуссерля, заставив Гуссерля переосмыслить связь между феноменологией и метафизикой. Прослеживая развитие феноменологической метафизики в лекциях Гуссерля о Фихте (1917–1918), в статьях в *Kaizo* (1923–1924) и в частной переписке, мы показываем, что Гуссерль сознательно предпочел не заниматься прямыми размышлениями о войне, а вместо этого писать о перспективах мира. Размышления о культурном обновлении потребовали от него переосмысления феноменологии как практической философии. Переплетение практики и теории в гуссерлианской феноменологии основывается на установлении метафизически обоснованной концептуальной связи, которая связывает разум с любовью и верой, что, в свою очередь, предполагает, что человеческое существо — это не просто *animal rationale*, но также *animal amans* и *animal religiosum*. В конечном счете, мы считаем, что возможность культурного обновления зависит от метафизического расширения гуссерлевской концепции философии как строгой науки.

*Ключевые слова:* война, феноменология, герменевтика, метафизика, феноменологический метод, культурное обновление, любовь, вера, разум.

*“What the war has revealed is the unspeakable, not only moral and religious, but also philosophical misery of humanity.”<sup>1</sup>*

Irrespective of how we understand phenomenology, it seems that this tradition of thought has its own sphere of problems, which are unrelated to those set of issues that are commonly addressed either in a theory of war, or in philosophy of war. How

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<sup>1</sup> From Husserl's letter to William Hocking, July 7, 1920: „Was der Krieg enthüllt hat ist das unsäglich-e, nicht nur moralische und religiöse, sondern auch philosophische Elend der Menschheit“ (Husserl, 1994, 163).

can phenomenology tell us anything important about war? Whatever else it might be, phenomenology is first and foremost a philosophy that transforms all problems into problems of meaning. If war lies at the limit of understanding, if it transgresses all meaning and intelligibility, then shouldn't we say that phenomenology of war is in principle impossible? Is phenomenology not always and necessarily a philosophy of peace? What is "phenomenology of war" supposed to establish, how it is supposed to commence, how is it to unfold?

With these difficulties in mind, let us distinguish between three approaches to the issue at hand: *historical*, *methodological* and *metaphysical*. A historically-oriented analysis, while staying focused on specific thinkers that belong to the phenomenological tradition, elaborates upon their views either on specific wars, or on war in general. Although not many investigations have been undertaken from such a standpoint—it is common to leave the question how different wars have transformed phenomenological thinking unexamined while taking it for granted that wars have had their effects on philosophy, in general, and phenomenology, in particular—still, some fascinating studies have already been published (Sepp, 2014; Ni, 2014; Dodd, 2017; de Warren & Vongehr, 2018), while some other studies will soon appear in print<sup>2</sup>. There is a lot to be said about the uses and abuses of phenomenology within such a theoretical framework.

Besides proceeding in a historical way, one can also turn to methodological considerations. Of what significance is the general methodological orientation that lies at the heart of phenomenology for philosophically-oriented reflections on war? What kind of methodological access does phenomenology provide us to the reality of war? Moreover, does the phenomenon of war not require that phenomenologists rethink their own methodological commitments? While historically-oriented analyses are scarce, methodological investigations are nowhere to be found.

Still from within the phenomenological standpoint, one can also engage in metaphysical reflections. When one argues that there is no room for metaphysics in phenomenology, one means thereby that phenomenology is incompatible with unsubstantiated speculative considerations that lack evidential support. Yet as Edmund Husserl makes especially clear in §60 of *Cartesian Meditations*, in a significantly dif-

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<sup>2</sup> As Nicolas de Warren argues in a forthcoming study, the First World War had fundamentally transformed philosophy of the twentieth century first and foremost because "the experience of the war became 'internalized' [...] albeit in different ways, i.e., with varied philosophical consequence and significance" (de Warren, 2023, 8). The war was from the start understood as a "world historical event" that would decide the fate of the twentieth century, including the destiny of philosophy. See also (Sepp, 2014, 762).

ferent sense, phenomenology calls for metaphysical reflections, meaning thereby those reflections that are concerned with the “ultimate cognitions,” which in his post-war writings are directed at the “highest and final questions,” which concern God, freedom, immortality and the sense of this world<sup>3</sup>. Especially in the framework of phenomenologically-oriented reflections on war, metaphysical considerations prove their importance.

In what follows, I will engage in some historically-oriented methodological and metaphysical considerations, which I will pursue from the standpoint of Husserlian phenomenology. In the first two sections I will focus on the question concerning how phenomenology enables us to respond to the grand narratives that proliferate at the times of war. The first section will address this question from the standpoint of classical Husserlian phenomenology, while the second one—from the standpoint of phenomenological hermeneutics. In the third section, I will transition from methodological to metaphysical considerations. While focusing on some of Husserl’s post World War One writings, I will be especially concerned with the conceptual bond that ties reason to love and faith in phenomenological metaphysics.

### *1. PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE GRAND NARRATIVES: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS*

To start a war, one needs to spin a tale. No war can commence without rationalization: the history of war is also a history of its justification (See: Simon & Brock, 2021). So also, one needs a narrative to defend oneself against the enemy. For the most part, this kind of justification is more compelling. We cannot stop here, but must also take into account the standpoint of other parties—the outsiders who observe how the events unfold and who have to decide if, and to what degree, they should be involved. The decision they reach also calls for a justification, which concerns what is right and what is wrong, what is in the third party’s interest and what is not, what is possible and what is impossible, what should be done and what shouldn’t be done.

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<sup>3</sup> The Kantian background is unmistakable: in line with Kant’s account of the postulates of practical reason, Husserl maintains that God, immortality and freedom cannot be known, yet they must be assumed to truly exist if morality is to be possible. As Takashi Yoshikawa notes in a recent contribution, in Husserl’s post-war writings, such as the Kaizo articles, the postulate of practical reason “does not insist on the existence of transcendence in an objective dimension, but instead the significance of transcendent aims for an agent in a personal dimension. We are required to act [...] as if our actions are not hampered by disaster” (Yoshikawa, 2021, 239–240). What is at stake here is a “practical as if” that can make our goals meaningful for us.

Thus, wars are waged not only in the battlefield. Wars are waged for ideas, against ideas, with the help of yet other ideas. There are no wars either without grand narratives, or without a conflict between competing grand narratives. Wars have their own ideologies and their own propaganda machines. While actual wars in the battlefield have a spatiotemporal location, at the level of ideas they cannot be spatiotemporally individualized: they often spread into the remotest corners of the globe and reverberate in different times and places. Every single detail that comes to the fore is immediately absorbed within a totalizing narrative. Yet at the same time we are aware of other narratives and all-too-often we are perplexed how anyone could possibly absorb the very same detail within a different narrative. Indifference to the “conflict of interpretation” is not an escape, but only one specific way—and often not the best way—to get involved in the ideological warfare.

Ever since its inception, one of the central ambitions of phenomenology was to avoid unwarranted constructions and to subject the dominant theories to a critical examination. Although it aimed its attack on constructionism that dominated epistemology, ontology and ethics, nothing stands in the way of extending the phenomenological critique to other areas, including philosophical reflections on war. As Hans-Georg Gadamer remarks in his reflections on Husserl’s pedagogical practice, in his teaching, whenever he encountered the grand assertions, rash combinations and clever constructions, Husserl used to say, “Not always the big bills; small change, small change” (Gadamer, 1977, 133). As Gadamer further notes, the careful analysis characteristic of Husserlian phenomenology “produced a peculiar fascination. It had the effect of a purgation, a return to honesty, a liberation from the opaqueness of the opinions, slogans, and battle cries that circulated” (Gadamer, 1977, 133).

Some of Husserl’s private correspondence suggests that this peculiar fascination, sense of liberation and return to honesty was felt especially strongly by his students in the aftermath of World War One. In a letter to William Hocking, written on July 7, 1920, Husserl remarked that never in thirty years of teaching had he such an audience, with such a hunger for ideals, with such a striving for the philosophical, with such a thirsting for religious-ethical stimulation, with such enthusiasm for what is truthful and rigorous, and with such a distrust for empty illusory rhetoric<sup>4</sup>. As Husserl remarked a few years later in a letter to Thomas Masaryk, written on March

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<sup>4</sup> „Nie habe ich in 30 Jahren eine solche Hörschaft gehabt, von solchem Hunger nach Idealen getrieben, so ernst strebend, so sehr nach philosophischer, nach religiös-ethischer Anregung dürstend, von solcher Begeisterung für eine wahrhaftige strenge, wissenschaftlich gründliche Philosophie erfüllt und von solchem Haß gegen alle Phrase, gegen alles und jedes Scheinwesen“ (Husserl, 1994, 163).

2, 1922, never was the number of students attending his lectures as great as after the war<sup>5</sup>. Especially important in the present context is Husserl's letter to Arnold Metzger, written on September 4, 1919, where Husserl writes: "I did not write a war book, I considered that to be a pretentious fuss of philosophers."<sup>6</sup> We can understand this as Husserl's direct admission that a straightforward philosophical reflection on war can all-too-easily fall prey to dominant ideology. Still, it would be a mistake to think that, for methodological reasons, phenomenologically-oriented philosophy must stay silent about war. As we will still see, one of the central goals of Husserlian phenomenology after World War One was to provide the philosophical foundations for a cultural renewal that had become necessary with the collapse of all values during the war.

Phenomenology promises a liberation from opaque opinions, slogans and battle cries, which is especially needed at the time of war. In this regard, the phenomenological methods of the *epoche* and the reduction are especially important. While the method of the *epoche* enables us to place grand narratives in brackets and suspend our judgments about all ideological claims, the method of the phenomenological reduction leads to the further realization that we ourselves have spun these narratives, that their validity entirely depends on our own verification, that these narratives must be evaluated in light of available evidence, and that the claims that lie at the heart of these narratives can reach either fulfilment or disappointment. I would suggest that the *epoche* and the reduction belong to the group of the most powerful tools available to resist the power of grand narratives. Although classical phenomenology has often been understood as an apolitical mode of thinking, when addressed in the context of phenomenological reflections on war, the fundamental principles of classical phenomenology show themselves as the methodological cornerstone of that critique of ideology, which does not aim to replace one ideology with a different ideology, but which essentially relies on evidence that is grounded in intuition and experience (See: Husserl, 1989, 107).

The phenomenological critique of grand narratives invites us to replace all top-down theories with a bottom-up approach, which does not accept any claim for granted without first grounding it in evidence. Here we encounter an important objection: in the case of war, is it possible at all for phenomenologists to ground their critique in evidence, intuition, or experience? Obviously, it is not always the case that phenome-

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<sup>5</sup> „Nie war die Hörerzahl meiner Vorlesungen (relativ zur Gesamtbesuchsziffer der Universität) eine so große, nie habe ich eine so breite, so herzerfreuende Wirksamkeit üben dürfen als jetzt nach dem Kriege“ (Husserl, 1994, 114).

<sup>6</sup> „Ich habe daher keine Kriegsschrift geschrieben, ich hätte das als ein präntiöses Philosophengethue angesehen“ (Husserl, 1994, 409).

nologists engaged in philosophical reflections on war are themselves in the battlefield; no less obviously, even when they are, the *whole* reality of war is certainly not given in their direct experience or intuition. What, then, are the “facts” that they can rely on in their critical evaluations? How unswerving is the “evidence” that they, allegedly, can rely upon in their reflections and judgments?<sup>7</sup>

Let us not overlook that an important accomplishment of phenomenology lies in having significantly broadened the concept of evidence. Phenomenology is opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach, which evaluates the validity of all claims according to one and the same evidential standard. Not all evidence is apodictic, adequate and absolute. In different fields of analysis we have to rely on different kinds of evidence<sup>8</sup>. Thus, when it comes to philosophical reflections on war, phenomenologists often have to rely on evidence that has not been given in direct, first-hand experience. This does not mean that phenomenologists do not rely on any evidence in their judgments. The implication to be drawn here is that, when it comes to reflections on war, the evidence they rely upon cannot be either adequate, or apodictic, which further necessitates them to clarify the evidential nature of their claims and to be open to the need to revise their claims in light of further evidence<sup>9</sup>.

There is another important objection to consider. If phenomenologists are willing to suspend the validity of totalizing narratives and if they are eager to rely only on those claims that find evidential support, then are we not to conclude that phenomenology can only offer us a few unrelated semi-reliable insights, which remain insufficient to construct a more robust approach to any war, and which therefore cannot sat-

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<sup>7</sup> As Shane Brighton, following Carl von Clausewitz, remarks in a recent contribution, war presents itself “as a field of contingency in which unpredictability and the general absence of certainty dominate” (Brighton, 2011, 101). War is thus always “to some extent beyond conceptual capture, always a field of uncertainty” (Brighton, 2011, 101). In short, “war presents a surfeit of being over knowing” (Brighton, 2011, 101).

<sup>8</sup> As George Heffernan put it in a recent article on the development of the problem of evidence in Husserl’s phenomenology, “Husserl moves from an attraction to the ideal of absolute, adequate, and apodictic evidence and truth to a concentration on the reality of relative, inadequate, and dubitable evidence and truth. Husserl concentrates on epistemic justification in the theoretical realm, but phenomenology of evidence and truth recognizes that human beings are not only transcendental egos but also natural selves” (Heffernan, 2020, 420).

<sup>9</sup> What I have just said about the evidential basis of phenomenological reflections on war also applies to phenomenological reflections on ethics. See in this regard Husserl’s conclusion to the methodological considerations in the second of the Kaizo articles (See: Husserl, 1989, 20), where Husserl draws a distinction between modes of cognition that reach the highest rigor and scientificity and those modes of understanding, which cannot reach such a level because, for principle reasons, they cannot be grounded in original intuition. According to Husserl, phenomenological reflections on ethics are characterized by incomplete evidence.

isfy the need to overcome the inherent senselessness of war? This apparent limitation that affects phenomenological reflections on the mundane, or sociological level, can be further transferred to the properly philosophical domain. Are we not to say that phenomenology is at best a “poor” philosophy of war in the sense that it can only provide us with a few insights and not with a fully worked-out philosophical outlook on war? To make things worse: how can the senselessness of war leave us content with so little? Might it not be so that here the phenomenological critique of grand narratives encounters its own limit, for, quite likely, human beings will do anything to liberate themselves from the senselessness of war; and if phenomenology cannot overcome the sense of emptiness, then will we not have to conclude that, the phenomenological critique of grand narratives notwithstanding, one has to rely on some kind of grand narrative when confronted with the gruesome reality of war? For all we know, this might have been the reason why Husserl never wanted to (or rather, never could) write a “war book.”

I consider this to be a powerful objection, and in the present context, I would like to work out a twofold response. The first response is hermeneutical and I will present it in the second section. The second one is metaphysical and I will turn to it in the third section.

## 2. PHENOMENOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS: A POSSIBILITY OF MUTUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

In hermeneutically-oriented frameworks it is common to characterize the general structure of understanding as a fusion of the horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*). As Hans-Georg Gadamer famously contends in *Truth and Method*, “understanding is the fusion of the horizons supposedly existing by themselves” (Gadamer, 2004, 317). This suggests that to understand anything whatsoever is to project certain prejudices upon the phenomenon. Presumably, while in some cases, such a projection will miscarry, in other cases it will generate insight. This alleged inseparability of understanding and prejudices makes it comprehensible why Gadamer would famously maintain that “the fundamental prejudice of the Enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself” (Gadamer, 2004, 283). We would crudely misunderstand Gadamer’s position if we did not take into account that, according to him, prejudices are fundamentally of two different kind: legitimate and illegitimate, or enabling and disabling (See, for instance, Gadamer, 2004, 289, 306). While it is our obligation to suspend the disabling prejudices, we need to capitalize on the enabling ones. We need to do this because, according to Gadamer, without prejudices, nothing can be understood at all. But how are we

to draw a distinction between enabling and disabling, or legitimate and illegitimate, prejudices? According to Gadamer, no methodologically-based answers can be offered. Presumably, only history will be able to judge whether the prejudices we have projected upon the phenomenon have been legitimate or not. With the passing of time, we come to recognize blinding prejudices as blinding and we learn to separate them from legitimate prejudices. According to Gadamer, temporal distance (*zeitliche Abstand*) is a positive condition of understanding, for it allows for the illegitimate prejudices to die out and for the legitimate prejudices to flourish.

Especially when confronted with the reality of war, one finds good reasons to consider such an optimistic view too indeterminate. Sometimes it is not enough to wait and see what the future has in store for us. Especially when confronted with the senseless and destructive reality of war, the stakes are just too high. As we reflect on the totalizing narratives that proliferate during the times of war, we cannot help but must search for way to justify those positions, which we choose to hold. It is just not enough to claim that those prejudices we take to be reliable make up our own views. Rather, we face the need to justify our own views, to ground them and clarify their presumed legitimacy, and this requires that we rely on some kind of a method of reflection. Faced with this realization, we can ask: can the hermeneutical account of the general structure of understanding not be bolstered with the fundamental principles of phenomenological methodology?<sup>10</sup> Would this not be required especially when it comes to such destructive events as war?

Despite Husserl's resistance to the hermeneutical turn in phenomenology undertaken by some of his students, and despite Gadamer's suspicion about Husserl's unrelenting reliance on method, one can nonetheless claim that, conceptually, phenomenological and hermeneutical standpoints can in important ways complement each other. Phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches need to join hands if they are to demonstrate their mutual significance. This is especially true when it comes to phenomenologically-oriented reflections on war. As mentioned above, due to its unrelenting critique of all grand narratives, the phenomenological method leaves us with too little in the face of the destructive reality of war. The hermeneutical approach faces a different limitation: it allows us to say much more, but what one says remains

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<sup>10</sup> The approach I here briefly wish to present comes close to the one that James R. Mensch had defended in a recent contribution, where he argued that "the evidence that phenomenology provides for the teleological structure of interpretation is prior to all the claims that hermeneutics makes about the historical determination of our interpretations. It is not, *per se*, historical. Because it is not, it cannot be relativized. Given this, hermeneutics must presuppose phenomenology..." (Mensch, 2016, 177).

unreliable and the suspicion cannot be easily erased that what one says echoes one of the dominant ideologies. The possibility that I here wish to consider comes close to Paul Ricoeur's program of grafting phenomenology onto hermeneutics: might one not overcome both limitations by joining together hermeneutical reflections with phenomenological methodology?<sup>11</sup>

If we follow the account of the *epoche* and the reduction as they are presented in such works as Husserl's *Ideas I*, then we might be led to think of Husserlian phenomenology and phenomenological hermeneutics as philosophical alternatives. However, if we focus on Husserl's writings after World War One, which fall under the heading of genetic phenomenology, then Husserl's phenomenology will no longer appear philosophically distant from philosophical hermeneutics. Husserl's emphasis on the patient return inquiry that leads us from a higher stratum of experience to a lower stratum, his contention that the *epoche* and the reduction are to be understood not as single-step operations, but as methodological steps that need to be repeated over and over again as one struggles to overcome different levels of *naivete* in one's analysis, his emphasis on the historicity of subjectivity and the sedimentations of consciousness—all of this brings phenomenology into proximity with hermeneutics, so much so that, as Husserl himself remarks, “an authentic analysis of consciousness is, so to speak, a hermeneutics of the life of consciousness” (Husserl, 1989, 177).

Phenomenology can offer hermeneutics what it lacks: a method that enables it to distinguish legitimate and illegitimate prejudices. Phenomenology provides hermeneutics with a possibility to rethink the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate prejudices while relying on the above-mentioned methods of the *epoche* and the reduction. According to such an approach, legitimate prejudices are those prejudices, which, to the best of one's understanding, are grounded in evidence. Otherwise put, they are these kind of prejudices, which, to the best of one's understanding, have withstood the test of the *epoche* and the reduction. Yet precisely because we cannot face here either apodictic or adequate evidence, the possibility remains open that one will need to either reject the prejudices in question, or place them in brackets. Otherwise put, the possibility is open that there are other levels of *naivete* that one still needs to overcome. As Husserl remarks in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, quoting (or rather misquoting) Heraclitus, “you will never find the boundaries of the soul, even if you follow every road; so deep is its ground.” As Hus-

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<sup>11</sup> To characterize the view I am here putting forth more precisely, instead of grafting phenomenology onto hermeneutics, which was Paul Ricoeur's classical project that he undertook in a number of his works, one should consider the possibility of grafting hermeneutics onto phenomenology.

serl further notes: “Indeed, every ‘ground’ that is reached points to further grounds, every horizon opened up awakens new horizons...” (Husserl, 1970, 170).

Here we face a modest, step-by-step, critique of grand narratives. It is a critique that unfolds on the level of mundane experience and that does not require that one suspend the narrative one subscribes to “in one go.” It is rather a critique that demands one to continuously reflect on the legitimacy of the narrative in question and that demands one to continuously modify and revise one’s position in light of available evidence. We face here a patient return inquiry that does not all at once bring about the destruction of all narratives. To return to the second objection formulated at the end of the last section, the approach here presented leaves one with something more than just a few claims that are grounded in evidence. One is not left with a few scattered insights, but with a comprehensive point of view, although admittedly, the validity of this view remains questionable. With reference to Paul Ricoeur’s analysis of the *wounded cogito*<sup>12</sup>, one could speak here of a *wounded narrative* that does not abandon its grand ambitions, yet which at the same time remains open to its own inadequacies.

### 3. PHENOMENOLOGICAL METAPHYSICS: LOVE, FAITH AND REASON IN A SENSELESS WORLD

Having taken a detour to phenomenological hermeneutics and having seen how it enables us, while still relying on the phenomenological method, to retain, revise and rebuild a position with regard to war, in general, or any war, in particular, let us turn back to Husserl’s phenomenology, for here we will encounter another way, and more precisely, a metaphysical way, to confront the second problem presented at the end of the first section. In the framework of Husserl’s writings, we can distinguish between two positions towards war. Husserl had presented the first position during his lectures on Fichte’s ideal of humanity (*Menschheitsideal*) that he had first delivered to wounded soldiers between the 8th to the 17th of November 1917 (See: Husserl, 1987, 267–292) — at the time when almost a total mobilization in Germany had taken place and when the Western front had become, in Ernst Jünger’s terms, a “storm of steel.”<sup>13</sup> In these

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<sup>12</sup> As Jean Greisch insightfully remarks, “But this wounded cogito is not a cogito *crushed* by the weight of a relentless suspicion. For the credence which characterizes attestation is also the ‘trust’ which copes with suspicion, thus making an ‘attestation of the self’ out of attestation” (Greisch, 1996, 86).

<sup>13</sup> Husserl had repeatedly delivered the Fichte lectures on two other occasions: on January 14–16, 1918, and on November 6–9, 1918. As the editors of *Hua XXV* have noted in their introductory remarks, Husserl here was speaking *pro domo sua* (See: Husserl, 1987, xxvii–xxxiii). So also, as

*Kriegsnotvorlesungen*, for which he was awarded the Prussian Service Cross, Husserl argued that war experience enables the soldiers to establish and preserve ethical values. By contrast, in various texts he had written after the war, Husserl no longer saw anything positive in war experience *per se*. War now represented to him both physical and spiritual agony and marked the collapse of meaning of European culture in general. In his post-war writings, Husserl focused on issues concerning cultural renewal (*Erneuerung*) as a task that the destructive nature of war had left him with.<sup>14</sup> Whether we focus on Husserl's reflections on the war in the Fichte Lectures or in later writings, we come across the same tendency to interpret the war not merely as a political phenomenon, but, in the words of James Dodd, as a "spiritual 'total war' in which nothing less than the meaning of human existence was itself at stake—the future of all culture, all philosophy, all the spiritual ideals of human existence were to be decided on the battlefields of the war that began in August 1914" (Dodd, 2017, 149). Indeed, this is the perplexing characteristic of Husserlian reflections on war: he invites us to interpret war not as a political and not even as a social phenomenon, but as a philosophical, and more precisely, as a metaphysical event, which calls for a distinctly philosophical response<sup>15</sup>.

Due to its destructive nature, war lies at the limits of understanding. Building on the basis of Husserl's phenomenology, we can risk a claim that Husserl had not made himself, although his writings lend support for it: we can try to understand war as a limit problem. Husserl had conceptualized limit problems (*Grenzprobleme*) in two complementary ways: as the highest problems (*Höhenprobleme*) and as marginal

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Federico Ferraguto has recently remarked in his analysis of these lectures, it is easy to give into the "temptation to understand Husserl's Fichte as a sort of avatar for political and ideological needs extraneous to the specific point of view of the *Wissenschaftslehre*" (Ferraguto, 2021, 80). Nonetheless, as Ferraguto argues throughout his analysis, it is also possible to configure in Husserl's lectures a "remarkable interpretative perspectives for research on Fichte's philosophy" (Ferraguto, 2021, 64). Moreover, these lectures make also clear that reflections on Fichte at the time of the war led Husserl to the development of genetic phenomenology, which focuses not only on the activity of consciousness, but also on its passivity, starting with habits and unconscious tendencies.

<sup>14</sup> While relying on Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*, Shane Brighton has suggested "that as a field of contingency, war forces the unmaking and remaking of social and political meaning in ways which defy prediction" (Brighton, 2011, 103). Moreover, with an eye on Hannah Arendt, Brighton further argued that "war is a generative force, not least because it confronts those who experience it with the need to create—and contest—its meaning in ways that do not terminate with cessation of physical violence" (Brighton, 2011, 104). As this section will make clear, these insights are by no means specific to Levinas or Arendt, but that they also characterize the very goal of Husserl's phenomenological reflections on war.

<sup>15</sup> What attracts Husserl to Fichte is the practical-theoretical unity of Fichte's philosophical vision—the unity of theoretical considerations and practical realization, where philosophy shows the way to liberation by enabling one to rise to the ideal of humanity as it is represented by true morality.

problems (*Randprobleme*). Marginal problem should not be misunderstood as problems of marginal importance, but as problems that lie at the margins of what can be analyzed relying on static and genetic methods. They are those problems that lie at the margins of phenomenological description and that emerge at the limits of phenomenological accessibility. By contrast, highest problems are those that Husserl identifies as metaphysical and ethical. Although we do not encounter Husserl's explicit reflections on war in this framework, I would nonetheless suggest that Husserl's account of limit problems provide us with a highly promising framework for phenomenologically-oriented reflections on war. Within such a framework, war should be understood as a limit problem in both senses of the term here distinguished. It is given as escaping all givenness, it is understood as defying all understanding and comprehensibility. Yet its sheer senselessness and incomprehensibility cannot satisfy our understanding, and therefore, we find ourselves compelled to address it alongside the highest problems, i.e., in the framework of ethical and metaphysical considerations.

Recall Husserl's observation, quoted above, that he did not write a war book and considered such an endeavor to be a pretentious fuss of philosophers. If, as I have suggested above, war lies at the limits of understanding, then it is hard to understand what value a philosophical war book could possess. At the same time, the risks are obvious, as the other war books written by other phenomenologists at the time make clear. Instead of justifying the war, describing its values, clarifying its genius or explaining its inevitability, Husserl preoccupied himself with questions concerning how one is supposed to rebuild one's life after the war. Husserl responds to the challenge of war by writing about peace—by engaging in ethical reflections on the possibility of cultural and personal renewal (*Erneuerung*), which in its own turn transforms Husserl's theoretical project into a practical philosophy, or as Takashi Yoshikawa insightfully remarks, it transforms Husserl's transcendental idealism from a purely theoretical enterprise into a way of life (See: Yoshikawa, 2021, 249).

In the §49 of *Ideas I*, Husserl famously entertains the possibility of the hypothetical annihilation of the world (*Weltvernichtung*). He argues that even if the world were no longer to exist (that is, even if those patterns of experience that assure us of the existence of the world were no longer to obtain), this would not affect the being of pure consciousness; as the subject that thinks the nihilation of the world, consciousness would still be there. On this basis Husserl maintains that pure consciousness has absolute being, while the being of the transcendent world is only relative. Consciousness is absolute in the sense that *nulla "re" indiget ad existendum*. By contrast, all transcendent things, including the transcendent world, are necessarily related to consciousness, and therefore, their being is relative (See: Husserl, 2012, 93–96).

On December 23, 1931, Husserl had reportedly told Dorion Cairns that before World War One he was “set in a theoretical attitude,” while after the war “existential problems have been of primary interest to him” (Cairns, 1976, 60). This appears to be especially true when it comes to Husserl’s post-war reflections on this notorious hypothesis concerning the annihilation of the world. In a manuscript composed ten years after the publication of *Ideas I*, (See: Husserl, 2014, Text Nr. 24), we come across a thought-provoking adaptation of this notorious thought experiment. In this manuscript, written in 1923, Husserl asks: But what if life were senseless and if none of my actions could make it any better? What if my free will were either impotent or an illusion, if I were just a plaything of blind forces that rule my life and the whole world, while giving the illusion of free action and thinking? Moreover, what if there are no reasons to hope that things will ever be different? What if I have to judge the world as unreasonable? Husserl further adds: what if my respect for humanity is lost, as happens in the case of war? Can I live in such a meaningless world? (See: Husserl, 2014, 306)

These questions gain their importance in the context of philosophical reflections on war especially if we think of war as the prime embodiment of destructiveness, hopelessness and senselessness. Husserl articulates two philosophical responses to the hypothesis of radical senselessness, one of which relies on *love*, while the other one on *faith*. It is love and faith, when thought through in a radical fashion, that save human beings from wide-ranging senselessness, or at least provide human beings with the most reliable assurance they can possibly hope to attain. Let us take a closer look at Husserl’s reflections.

When faced with such manifestations of senselessness as the reality of war, what sense can it possibly make to follow the categorical imperative, which Husserl understands as the task of doing the best under possible circumstances?<sup>16</sup> It is important not to overlook that, for Husserl, it is not only persons, but also personalities of a higher order, that is, communities of persons, that face the task of following the categorical imperative (See: Husserl, 1989, 73). Yet as Husserl also observes, all our actions, without any exception, are surrounded by a dark horizon of unintelligibility (See: Husserl, 2014, 304 ff.). What does this unintelligibility mask? If it masks radical senselessness, what could possibly motivate ethical action?

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<sup>16</sup> As Michael Gubser observes in his commentary on Husserl’s phenomenology of ethical renewal, as it was articulated in the Kaizo articles, “the Kantian vocabulary should not mislead us into seeing a similar project. Husserl’s imperative did not lead to a formal concept of universal duty, but to rational responsibility bound by individual circumstances and experiences” (Gubser, 2014, 52).

Suppose I believe, rightly or wrongly, that the world is meaningless, that human history is not to be explained in terms of any kind of progressive development, that all human action and creation do not constitute anything reasonable either for me, or for other human beings. What, then, should I do? (See: Husserl, 2014, 309) If the person's actions and decisions gain sense only insofar as they realize values, then such a scenario would paralyze all activities. It is in light of such a hypothetical scenario, which reminds us of the nihilation of the world as described in §49 in *Ideas I*, that Husserl turns his attention toward the phenomenon of *love*, which, as Ullrich Melle suggests, constitutes the very foundation of Husserl's late ethics (See: Melle, 2002). Consider the mother's love for her child (See: Husserl, 2014, 310). This changes the situation entirely. In one of his manuscripts, Husserl remarks that Moritz Geiger had correctly pointed out to him that it would make little sense to expect that a mother would first deliberate if the fulfillment of the fundamental need of her child is the best in light of all the alternatives. Even if the mother is assured of the senselessness of the world, and that if not tomorrow, then the day after would bring about the ultimate destruction of all that is, still, she would not abandon her child, she would continue to love the child and care for the child. The child's well-being is an *absolute* value for the mother: it is the mother's personal love that grounds an absolute ought. Against such a background, Husserl draws an important ethical distinction between objective values and the subjective value of love in which they are all rooted<sup>17</sup>.

We have moved from the mother's love for her child to ethical implications in too fast a way. The mother's love for the child is instinctual, and therefore, it is not ethical *per se*. There is no ethical command to love one's child, just as there is no ethical command to love oneself or to satisfy one's hunger or thirst. Whether the world turns out to have always been hell, or whether it turns into hell, nothing can possibly change the mother's love for her child. Moreover, as Husserl claims in one of the unpublished manuscripts that he was preparing for the Kaizo journal, "the life of an animal is guided by instincts, while a human life is also guided by norms" (Husserl, 1989, 59). While acknowledging the difference between what is instinctual and what is ethical, Husserl nonetheless asks: "Is it not similar with everything that is ethical?" (Husserl, 2014, 310) For Husserl, there is something proto-rational and proto-ethical about the mother's love for the child. As Ullrich Melle puts it in his analysis of Husserl's ethics, "a pure instinctual love can, however, be refined into a pure love" (Melle, 2002, 244). If the mother's love for her child is to be understood as a model of a person's com-

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<sup>17</sup> For Husserl, ethical life is always already historical and it is characterized by a striving to realize an ideal. In such a framework, love is characterized by the striving for union with the desired ideal and this union gives life an ethical form.

mitment to absolute values, then we can say: no matter what, nothing can change my actions insofar as I subscribe to absolute values. According to Husserl, love is the ground of absolute values, which we are to understand in a twofold sense: they are neither merely hypothetical, nor are they relative to the subject, the way all “spiritual works” are (See: Husserl, 1989, 119). Drawing ethical implications, we can say that the altruistic love of one’s neighbor is the specifically moral value (See: Melle, 2002, 237). To be ethical and to act ethically is to resist all hell and to perform one’s duty, yet the performance of one’s duty is ultimately rooted in love.<sup>18</sup> By doing what is good, I fulfill my duty and cannot reproach myself. This brings its own satisfaction, even though it need not bring happiness (See: Husserl, 2014, 311).

In his further reflections, Husserl considers the possibility of establishing such an ethics of absolute values not only at the individual, but also at the social level. In the first of the Kaizo articles, he speaks of “the inseparable pair of ideas: the individual and the community” (Husserl, 1989, 6). Husserl maintains that ethics is not reducible to individual ethics, but that it also embraces social ethics, which splits into an ethics of communities and an ethics of universal community, that is, of humanity (See: Husserl, 1989, 21, 59). He emphasizes the entanglement of my own life with that of others (“we don’t live next to each other, but in each other” (Husserl, 2014, 312)), which he takes to mean that the conditions are there to establish an ethical community of love (*Liebesgemeinschaft*). Husserl further conceptualizes an ethical community as a personality of a higher order: we can live a common ethical life. He maintains that such a community would be characterized by common goals, common strivings, common will, common joy and common suffering. The relation between parents and children (and especially the mother and the child) is a model in accordance with which his conception of an ethical community is built.

It is crucial not to overlook that, for Husserl, such an ethical community of love is a fundamentally rational idea that is set against all forms of irrationalism. In Appendix X that follows the Kaizo articles (See: Husserl, 1989, 113–122), Husserl draws an explicit distinction between the Enlightenment idea of reason and egoistic nationalism. The idea of aggressive nationalism, which is destructive of neighboring nations, is for Husserl fundamentally irrational and unethical. In this manuscript, which was written in 1922/23, Husserl conceptualizes the history of modernity as a struggle between the idea of reason and diverse forms of irrationalism, which manifest themselves in the form of culturalism and nationalism and which are concerned with the

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<sup>18</sup> To avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, let me note in passing that this rooting of the sense of duty in love is a characteristic feature of Husserl’s *late* ethics, and not of his ethics in general.

egoistic upsurge of national power. “This idea is contagious,” Husserl contends, “without being an absolute idea of value” (Husserl, 1989, 121). Husserl further alludes to a distinction between different forms of nationalism (See: Husserl, 1989, 121), one of which could be characterized as egoistic and expansionist, while the other one as ethical. Ethical nationalism is in fact modeled in accordance with the mother’s love for her children and the child’s love for her parents, to which Husserl also alludes in this manuscript. In Husserl’s reflections, the mother’s love for the child, just as the child’s love for the mother, stand opposed to this idea of aggressive nationalism, which is destructive of neighboring nations. The mother’s love for her child doesn’t demand the blood of other children, just as the child’s love of her parents doesn’t demand the blood of other parents. Husserl continues:

To make a claim to one’s own absolute value while also making it impossible for anyone else to even strive for them, in the manner of bondage, is a crime and not an absolute value that relies on the categorical imperative. (Husserl, 1989, 121)

Husserl’s reflections on love gain even greater significance when we interpret them within the context of his phenomenology of personhood. What does it mean to be a person? To a large degree a person is constituted through four fundamental relations: relation to oneself, to one’s body, to others and to the world at large (See: Geniusas, 2020, 148–150). We can further draw a distinction between three essential characteristics of a person (See: Melle, 2002, 243). First, persons make themselves into what they are. Through spontaneous acts of thinking, valuing, and willing, they shape their character, habits and dispositions. Second, personal life is historical, which means that the acts of thinking, valuing and willing are largely shaped by the person’s history. Third, a person is who she is most inwardly by her love and calling. As Melle has it, “every person receives from the depths of her personality her own absolute values, her values of love” (Melle, 2002, 243).

By way of analogy, one can transcribe what has just been said about persons to communities of persons, which Husserl conceptualizes as personalities of a higher order. They are also constituted through fundamental relations: relations to themselves (self-understanding), relation to their land, or territory, relation to other communities, as well as relation to the sociohistorical world at large. Moreover, we can also draw a distinction between three essential characteristics of communities. Just like persons, so communities also, make themselves into what they are through various spontaneous acts of thinking, valuing, and willing. Second, communities are also historical, and therefore, their dominant modes of thinking, valuing and willing can be explicated through communal history. Last but not least, much like persons, so

communities also are what they are depending on their dominant modes of love and calling. The absolute values of each community are grounded in love: tell me what you love and I will tell you who you are.

At this point one can say that no matter how meaningless the world might be, an ethical subject still retains the motivation needed to live an ethical life. Yet here we run into a difficulty. It seems that the performance of ethical actions can be explained either as an instinctual, or as a quasi-instinctual behavior, which is fundamentally irrational. Such an apprehension goes against the fundamental principle of Husserlian ethics, which is grounded in the idea that a human being is a rational being (*Vernunftswesen*)<sup>19</sup>. Husserl's ethics of love only partly answers the challenge posed by the possibility of a meaningless world. However, Husserl's metaphysical reflections pave the way for another path: according to Husserl, rational ethics of absolute value can be preserved if it is grounded not only in love, but also in *faith*. So as to bolster the reasonableness of ethical action under all imaginable circumstances, Husserl introduces further reflections on phenomenological theodicy (See: Husserl, 2014, 318). In Husserl's reflections, the principle that sooner or later, light will prevail over darkness, serves as a regulative idea that makes ethical action meaningful under all possible circumstances. It is, he suggests, philosophical faith in the divine nature of this world, that renders ethical action rational<sup>20</sup>. This divine nature of the world is in truth our own divine nature, which manifests itself when we embrace the highest in ourselves: "In us God chooses himself, a ray of the divine in us reaches into the highest light" (Husserl, 1987, 284–285). God is the entelechy, Husserl claims in another manuscript, and besides him there is "nothing" (Husserl, 2014, 336)<sup>21</sup>. The philosophical, rather than religious, belief in God, understood as a regulative idea, is the belief in reason, and it is this faith that sustains the view that everything that is irrational is just a step

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<sup>19</sup> Human beings are rational beings and ethical beings when they act in such a way that through their actions they strive to become better persons. They become better persons by following the categorical imperative, which Husserl understands as the demand to do what is best under the given circumstances. Such ethical actions result in the constitution of values. I belong to the world in which I can set, together with others, rational goals and we can act together toward their actualization.

<sup>20</sup> As Ullrich Melle remarks, "Husserl acknowledged the irrationality of the absolute ought if it is looked at in isolation. The absolute ought of the individual person has its rational meaning only in a theological context. The absolute ought has 'its highest, rational and therefore intelligible sense in a divine world'" (Melle, 2002, 245).

<sup>21</sup> In different writings, Husserl offers us significantly different conceptions of God. While in the manuscripts that have been recently published in Hua XLII God is understood as a teleological principle, in the Kaizo articles, God is understood as an ethical ideal, that is, as an ideal rational being that a human being should strive to become. See in this regard (Husserl, 1989, 33–34).

in the history of the world's development. "The world has its being from God and besides that it is 'nothing'" (Husserl, 2014, 337). Or as Husserl puts it in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, "the problem of God clearly contains the problem of 'absolute' reason as the teleological source of all reason in the world—of the 'meaning' of the world" (Husserl, 1973, 9).

Thus, Husserl—one of the greatest rationalists of all times—suggests that rational ethics cannot be sustained without philosophical faith in God. Such a philosophical faith clarifies the teleological framework of Husserl's late ethics: in everyday life, human beings are faced with an endless task of transforming themselves into rational beings. They face the task of determining their actions and decisions through rational motives and of employing their reason in ever more meaningful ways, which in its own way makes possible an ethically-grounded intersubjective constitution of the world through ethical socialization<sup>22</sup>.

It might very well be so that the general experience speaks for a hostile fate that repeatedly destroys human happiness. Moreover, I know empirically that I will die, that all my personal efforts will come to an end and that my personal happiness is a temporary fact. But I can take comfort in the hope and faith that all my efforts belong to the historical chain that continues through generations: and if my actions will benefit others, then these actions are for the best. With this in mind, Husserl maintains that if a human being fights heroically for the good, this is for the best (See: Husserl, 2014, 328).

"Is there, in this existential 'if,' a way out? If not, what should we, who believe, do in order to be able to believe?" (Husserl, 1970, 17) The rationalism that Husserl offers us is a rationalism that rests on the shoulders of a philosophical faith in reason, which in its own turn is grounded in love for philosophy itself.

#### 4. CLOSING WORDS

All the essential elements that comprise Husserl's fundamentally rationalistic ethico-metaphysical outlook can be found in the lectures to wounded German soldiers that Husserl had delivered during World War One.<sup>23</sup> In the three lectures that

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<sup>22</sup> Ethical life consists of different kind of ethical types. Husserl distinguishes between the common ethical type that human beings share with each other and an individual ethical type that is specific to each person. Every human being has her own ethical duty in a concrete situation, her own concrete individual categorical imperative.

<sup>23</sup> As James Dodd remarks, the second and third of the Fichte lectures "can accordingly be read as an earlier version of those unpublished Kaizo articles from the early 1920s, which develop further

he had delivered in 1917, already after his son, Wolfgang, had died in the battlefield in 1916 (at the age of twenty), and after his other son, Gerhardt, had been gravely wounded (by a bullet in the head), Husserl focused on Fichte's idea of humanity and on their practical significance at the time of war (See: Husserl, 1987, 267–292)<sup>24</sup>. It is not possible in the present context to delve into a detailed analysis of these lectures. I wish to note, however, that Fichte's ethico-religious idealism had influenced Husserl greatly and that these lectures provided the first occasion in Husserlian phenomenology for reason, love and faith to join hands with each other. Not only in these lectures, but also in his later manuscripts on ethics, we come across a conception of a human being that is not merely an *animal rationale*, but also *animal amans* and *animal religiosum* (we need understand these terms in the sense described above). As Hans-Rainer Sepp has remarked, in these lecture we come across the entanglement of *praxis* and *theoria*, which sketches all of Husserl's later phenomenology (See: Sepp, 2014, 767). Admittedly, we cannot ignore the important difference between Husserl's standpoint in the Fichte lectures and the position he held after the war (See: Ni, 2014). In the Fichte lectures, Husserl spoke of war experience as a battle for the establishment and preservation of ethical values and of the "revelation of divine ideas in our glorious German folk so that it grows to its true glory" (Husserl, 1987, 293). By contrast, soon after the war, he spoke of the war as expressive of the culmination of the fragility and dishonesty of the European culture of his day.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in the first lecture on renewal (*Erneuerung*), published in the Japanese magazine *Kaizo* in 1923, Husserl maintained that the war, which since 1914 had devastated Europe and which since 1918 had taken the "finer shape" of spiritual torture and economic degradation revealed the inner truth of the senselessness of European culture (See: Husserl, 1989, 3). The war had deprived European culture of its faith in itself. Nonetheless, Husserl returned to the conceptual bond that ties reason, love and faith in his post-war manuscripts, which means that we cannot discard these reflections as ideologically-driven "propaganda" that clouded Husserl's mind during the years of the war. The unity that binds love, faith and reason to each other retains its philosophical importance in light of all the

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these themes of moral existence and divinity that are here being presented through a reflection on Fichte" (Dodd, 2017, 174–175).

<sup>24</sup> Adolf Reinach, Husserl's beloved student and first real co-worked in the development of the phenomenological movement, who would have quite likely become Husserl's heir, died in the battlefield in Flanders during the first week when these lectures were delivered.

<sup>25</sup> In a letter to Winthrop Bell, written on August 11, 1920, Husserl wrote: "Dieser Krieg, der universalste und tiefste Sündenfall der Menschheit in der ganzen übersehbaren Geschichte, hat ja alle geltenden Ideen in ihrer Machtlosigkeit und Unechtheit erwiesen" (Husserl, 1994, 12).

unpredictability characteristic of our times and, for better or worse, nothing suggests that it will lose its significance in the future. Against such a background, one could say that Husserl interpreted the war as a distinctly philosophical challenge to which he responded by articulating a form of an ethical life that is characterized by faith in reason and love of reason. For Husserl, the solution to the problem of war (or of any other crisis worthy of its name) had to be sought in philosophy.

At the end, one might wonder: how are we to understand the relation between the methodological and metaphysical considerations that were presented in different sections of this essay? One has good reasons to suggest that they stand in tension with each other. One could put it as follows: while the methodological considerations suspend not only ideological, but also metaphysical claims, metaphysical considerations take us far beyond what can be justified while relying on the fundamental principles of classical phenomenological methodology. With this concern in mind, let me conclude by noting five relevant points. First, historically, the reality of war is what has forced Husserl to rethink the fundamental methodological principles of his phenomenology. Thus, it was in 1917 that Husserl introduced a conceptual distinction between static and genetic methods in phenomenology, which we are to understand as the most important phenomenological methods. Second, as Husserl's further reflections make clear, not only the static method but also the genetic method is insufficient when it comes to understanding the senseless reality of war. In the framework of Husserlian phenomenology, war belongs to the group of those phenomena that are to be treated under the heading of limit problems. Third, even though Husserl never clearly spelled out the fundamental methodological principles that underlie his analysis of limit problems, understood as metaphysical and ethical problems<sup>26</sup>, nonetheless, his ethico-metaphysical reflections are not arbitrary. Fourth, war is a limit problem not only in the sense that it is an ethico-metaphysical problem, but also in the other sense that Husserl had singled out: it is a problem that arises at the margins of phenomenological accessibility. This insight, I would suggest, provides us with important clues that enable us to reflect on the methodological principles that guide over Husserl's reflections on war. After all, even though Husserl did not engage in methodological reflections on limit problems, understood as ultimate and highest, he did provide us with some methodological considerations that concern limit problems, understood

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<sup>26</sup> As Rochus Sowa and Thomas Vongehr, the editors of XLII, point out, Husserl did not preoccupy himself with questions concerning the method appropriate to deal with the highest problems. In this regard, there is an important difference between limit problems, understood as ethical and metaphysical problems, and limit problems, understood as marginal problems (Husserl, 2014, xxix).

as marginal problems. A further investigation into Husserl's "phenomenology of war," understood as an ethico-metaphysical response to war, would require that one clarify those methodological principles that underlie his analysis.<sup>27</sup> Fifth, we can say that the reality of war provides one of the harshest tests for the fruitfulness of the phenomenological methodology, and *vice versa*, phenomenological methodology provides us with the means to test the grounds of potential rationality concealed in the senseless reality of war.

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<sup>27</sup> Although I could not address these methodological principles in detail in the present essay, I have addressed them elsewhere (See: Geniasas, 2022, 13–17).

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