

## I. ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

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### FROM HAPPINESS TO BLESSEDNESS: HUSSERL ON *EUDAIMONIA*, VIRTUE, AND THE BEST LIFE

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This paper treats of Husserl's phenomenology of happiness or *eudaimonia* in five parts. In the first part, we argue that phenomenology of happiness is an important albeit relatively neglected area of research, and we show that Husserl engages in it. In the second part, we examine the relationship between phenomenological ethics and virtue ethics. In the third part, we identify and clarify essential aspects of Husserl's phenomenology of happiness, namely, the nature of the question concerning happiness and the possibility of a phenomenological answer, the power of the will, the role of vocation, the place of obligation, the significance of habituation, the necessity of self-reflection and self-criticism, the importance of sociability and solidarity, the impact of chance and destiny, and the specter of regret. In the fourth part, we establish the inextricable linkage between Husserl's metaethics and his metaphysics. In the fifth part, we provide a provisional exploration of his conception of the connection between happiness and blessedness. We acknowledge that there is an extensive literature on Husserl's phenomenological ethics, and our study has benefitted greatly from it, but we also suggest that our holistic approach critically clarifies his description of happiness, virtue, and blessedness by fully recognizing that his phenomenological metaethics is embedded in his phenomenological metaphysics.

*Key words:* Husserl, phenomenology, limit problems, *eudaimonia*, happiness, blessedness, virtue.

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# ОТ СЧАСТЬЯ К БЛАГОСЛОВЕННОСТИ: ГУССЕРЛЬ ОБ ЭВДЕМОНИИ, ДОБРОДЕТЕЛИ И ДОСТОЙНОЙ ЖИЗНИ

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В этой статье рассматривается гуссерлевская феноменология счастья и разрабатывается этика *эвдемонии*. Статья состоит из пяти частей. В первой части авторы утверждают, что феноменология счастья представляет собой необходимую и вместе с тем относительно игнорируемую область исследования, и демонстрируют, что, вопреки сложившимся представлениям, Гуссерль также её разрабатывал. Во второй части рассматривается взаимосвязь между феноменологической этикой и этикой добродетели, при этом особенное внимание обращено на многочисленные попытки Гуссерля сформулировать категорический императив. В третьей части определяются и проясняются некоторые существенные аспекты гуссерлевской феноменологии счастья, а именно его эвдемонизм. К этим аспектам относятся суть вопроса о счастье и возможность феноменологического ответа на него, а также такие темы как воля, предназначение, долг, привычка, необходимость рефлексии и критического отношения к себе, важность общения и солидарности, влияние удачи и судьбы, разные формы сожаления. В четвёртой части авторы устанавливают и исследуют связь между метаэтикой Гуссерля и его метафизикой. В пятой части авторы намечают возможность развития его концепции, в свете связи между счастьем и благословенной жизнью. Отмечая объем и разработанность исследовательской литературы на тему феноменологической этики Гуссерля, литературы, на которую эта статья во многом опирается, в данной статье предлагается целостный подход, который, как нам кажется, поможет критически прояснить гуссерлевское определение счастья, добродетели, благословенной жизни, и это возможно благодаря полной и окончательной демонстрации того как феноменологическая метаэтика переплетена с феноменологической метафизикой.

*Ключевые слова:* Гуссерль, феноменология, пограничные проблемы, *эвдемония*, счастье, благословенная жизнь.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PHENOMENOLOGY OF HAPPINESS

It long seemed that Husserl was preoccupied with logic, theory of knowledge, and theory of science. Yet it has become clear that he also provides a practical philosophy, a normative ethics, a metaphysical metaethics, and even a phenomenology of happiness. Given Aristotle's systematic treatment of happiness, of course, Husserl's reflections on the phenomenon seem sporadic. After all, Aristotle gives a set definition, stating that "happiness is activity of the soul in accord with virtue [...] the best and most complete virtue [...] in a complete life" (Aristotle, 1999, 9). Although he does not give formal definitions or systematic treatments of them, however, Husserl does provide phenomenological descriptions of *Glückseligkeit* and *Seligkeit*. This is evident from the recently published Husserliana XLII: *Limit Problems of Phenomenology* (2014)<sup>1</sup>. The volume contains texts from 1908 to 1937, and, their apparent disparity notwithstanding, attention to leitmotifs shows that many of them contain extensive reflections on happiness and blessedness. Hence one may indeed speak of "Husserl's eudaimonism" (XLII, 252, 382, 469, 515), although one can also ask whether *eudaimonia* is better translated as *flourishing* than as *happiness*<sup>2</sup>.

This is a timely topic, for the current field of happiness studies exhibits three major tendencies. First, research on happiness is dominated not by philosophers but by psychologists, especially by those working in "positive psychology"<sup>3</sup>. Second, many philosophers who study happiness are influenced more by "positive psychology" than by humanistic philosophy<sup>4</sup>. Third, hardly anyone is doing phenomenology of happiness. Therefore the work on happiness that a few phenomenologists are doing is especially important<sup>5</sup>. As Husserl shows, phenomenology has the potential to make original, significant, and tenable contributions to our understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> See Edmund Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie: Analysen des Unbewusstseins und der Instinkte, Metaphysik, Späte Ethik—Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908–1937)*, ed. Rochus Sowa and Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014). In the text and in the footnotes we refer to Husserl's works by volume (Roman numeral) and page (Arabic numerals) of his *Gesammelte Werke* (Husserliana). Translations are ours.

<sup>2</sup> The English expression *happiness*, with its root *hap*, meaning chance or luck or fortune, carries connotations of happen, happenstance, hapless, and so forth that the Greek *eudaimonia* does not. See (Kraut, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., (Seligman, 2002; Ben-Shahar, 2007; Lyubomirsky, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., (Vitrano, 2014; Cahn & Vitrano, 2015). The exceptions, e.g., (Haybron, 2008), prove the rule.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., (Drummond, 2010, 2013; Heffernan, 2010, 2014; Brudzińska, 2017).

human happiness. Thus it is also fitting to speak of “phenomenology of happiness” as a legitimate area of research with its own tasks, methods, and results.

The evidence for the possibility of a phenomenology of happiness emerges in those texts of *Limit Problems of Phenomenology* which contain significant contributions to the conceptual clarification of Husserl’s eudaimonism. “Grenzprobleme”—Husserl does not employ the expression, but its use is justified (XXXIX, 875–876; XLII, xix)—are those problems that overstep the bounds of ordinary phenomenological description with its usual standards of evidence (givenness) and lead into the realm of metaphysical questions, for rigorously scientific transcendental philosophy is not only open to but also ordered to “a transcendently-phenomenologically founded metaphysics” (XLII, 160)<sup>6</sup>. Husserliana XLII includes texts dealing with four groups of “limit problems”: (1) phenomenology of unconsciousness and of birth, sleep, and death (XLII, 1–81); (2) phenomenology of instincts (XLII, 83–136); (3) metaphysics, encompassing monadology, teleology, and philosophical theology (XLII, 137–263); and (4) reflections on ethics in Husserl’s Freiburg years (1916–1928 ff.) (XLII, 265–527). The organization of the volume reflects a distinction among “limit problems” (*Grenzprobleme*) between the “marginal problems” (*Randprobleme*) of the first and second groups and the “elevated problems” (*Höhenprobleme*) of the third and fourth (XLII, xix–xxx). It also shows that Husserl’s ethics, especially his metaethics, is inseparable from his metaphysics, and his concept of happiness, likewise, from his world-apprehension (*Weltauffassung*)<sup>7</sup>.

Husserl approaches “limit problems of phenomenology” via *Besinnung*, a way of “investigating the sense” of “the things themselves” that he introduces in the *Logical Investigations* (1900/1901)<sup>8</sup>, develops as a method after the First World War<sup>9</sup>, and applies, as “radical sense-investigation”, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929)<sup>10</sup> and, as “historical sense-investigation”, in *The Crisis of the European*

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. XLII, xix–xxix, lxiii–lxvi. See also Husserl to William Ernest Hocking, 7 July 1912 (Husserl, 1994, *Briefwechsel* [hereafter BW], III, 159–160); Husserl to Dietrich Mahnke, 4 September 1933 (BW III, 505–511). Cf. finally the pertinent passage from the letter of Husserl to Peter Wust (1920) that is cited in XLII, lxiv.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 204–211.

<sup>8</sup> XIX/1, 10, 24–25, 304.

<sup>9</sup> XXXV, 316–317, 327–328, 336 (*London Lectures* [1922]); XXXV, 27, 34–38, 46, 48–52, 58–64, 93–96, 241–242, 247–248, 254–256, 259, 264–266 (*Introduction to Philosophy Lectures* [1922/1923]); XXVII, 9–10, 37–38, 42–43, 46–47, 64–65, 87–88 (*Kaizo Articles* [1922–1924]).

<sup>10</sup> XVII, 9–17, 21, 34, 40, 45, 88, 124, 172–173, 218–219, 236, 243, 280–283, 285.

*Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1936)<sup>11</sup>. This is not the proper place for a lengthy excursus on *Besinnung*<sup>12</sup>, but there is substantial evidence in *Limit Problems of Phenomenology* that Husserl regards the method of *Besinnung*, as “universal sense-investigation” (which is not to be confused with simple reflection)<sup>13</sup>, as an appropriate approach to the phenomenon *happiness*<sup>14</sup>. There are c. 125 occurrences of *Besinnung* and its variants (e.g., *sich besinnen*) in 527 pages of *Husserliana* XLII (but only 3 references to the transcendental-phenomenological reduction—though *Besinnung* and *Reduktion* are not contrary but complementary), and many of these occurrences are found in the context of Husserl’s observations on happiness. Some texts of the volume even suggest that *Besinnung* or *Selbstbesinnung* on happiness is a necessary condition for a life of genuine satisfaction (*echte Befriedigung*)<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. PHENOMENOLOGY OF HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE ETHICS

Self-satisfaction (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) in Husserl’s sense of being happy with one’s life involves much more than the fulfillment of one’s needs, plans, and wants<sup>16</sup>. Associating “eudaimonism” with the indeterminacy and uncertainty of “getting what one wants,” Kant sought to discredit the role of happiness in ethics, arguing that being worthy to be happy is a higher good than being happy, and that being worthy to be happy *and* being happy are the highest good<sup>17</sup>. Husserl has a more positive view of the relationship between morality and happiness<sup>18</sup>. His emphasis on self-satisfaction is consistent with a current trend in happiness studies to define happiness as “getting the life you want”<sup>19</sup> or as “a state of satisfaction with the life that one lives”<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> VI, 4, 12, 15–16, 39, 48, 50, 54, 57–60, 68, 72–74, 100, 106, 121, 124, 135–138, 142, 156, 158–159, 169, 176, 178–179, 184–186, 190, 193–195, 200, 207, 215, 224, 250, 254–255, 262–264, 266, 272.

<sup>12</sup> An excursus that would go far beyond: VII, 7–12, 30–34, 38–39, 62–63, 66–67, 73, 141–142, 157–160, 166–168 (*First Philosophy I* [1923/1924]); VIII, 3–7, 29, 34–37, 58–59, 86–88, 120–121, 124–125, 154–155, 164–166, 203–211 (*First Philosophy II* [1923/1924]); I, 43–44, 49–50, 53, 63, 103, 116–118, 174, 179–180, 182–183 (*Cartesian Meditations* [1931]).

<sup>13</sup> See (Cairns, 1973), where *Besinnung* is translated as “sense-investigation” (20) and *Reflexion* as “reflection” (94). On Husserl’s skepticism with respect to reflection as the phenomenological method, see III/1, 162–178.

<sup>14</sup> XLII, 213, 223, 229, 255, 449, 472–474, 484, 517–518, 526–527.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 212–217, 393–399, 425–449, 451–468, 491–494, 515.

<sup>16</sup> XLII, 173 (n. 1), 309–313, 316, 322, 329, 331.

<sup>17</sup> See (Kant, 1996, 49–51, 59, 68, 70–71, 240, 593).

<sup>18</sup> See XXVIII, 402–418 (1902/1903), and XXXVII, 200–243 (1920/1924). Cf. (Peucker, 2007; Rinofner-Kreidl, 2010; Pradelle, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., (Vitrano, 2014, 1–7, 71–121, 131–135).

A decisive difference between the popular trend and Husserl's position, however, is that he insists on the inextricable linkage between satisfaction or self-satisfaction and ethics or virtue, which, he argues, only together yield genuine happiness.

A key source in this regard is Husserliana XLII, Text No. 24: "Value of Life, Value of the World, Ethics (Virtue), and Happiness"<sup>21</sup>. Here Husserl argues that there is no happiness without self-satisfaction, but no self-satisfaction without virtue, and therefore no happiness without virtue<sup>22</sup>. This text is only one of a large number of similar sources<sup>23</sup> that show that for Husserl, as for Aristotle, the practice of virtue offers moral agents the best practical chance (but no guarantee) for happiness in an unpredictable world<sup>24</sup>. Happiness is not a fleeting feeling, and certainly not the feeling of pleasure that one person gets from loving and being loved by another. Virtue plays an indispensable role in ethical deliberation, decision, and action, and happiness is understood in relation to virtue. Husserl sees *contentment* as founded on and grounded in *content*, as one of his earliest examples of the nature of a normative value shows: the case of "the brave or good warrior" in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (XVIII, 53–59). Nothing captures the concept of content in ethics better than virtue, both of character and of intellect<sup>25</sup>. To leave out morality is to leave open the door to the notion of "the happy immoralist"<sup>26</sup>.

Yet Husserl's ethics resists the usual classification of normative ethical theories into virtue ethics (Aristotle), deontological ethics (Kant), and consequentialist ethics (Mill)<sup>27</sup>. Rather, it attempts to integrate parts of all three types of theories into a whole that renders them historically fruitful and systematically useful<sup>28</sup>. Husserl's mature ethical theory also involves a novel approach based on a unique blend of three essential elements of the person, namely, a free will (Kant), an active ego (Fichte), and a virtuous character (Aristotle)<sup>29</sup>, which together enable moral agents to shape their lives so as to establish the best possible—but not perfect—conditions under which to achieve the self-satisfaction *with* virtue that is happiness or *eudaimonia*.

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<sup>21</sup> XLII, 297–333 (February 1923): „Wert des Lebens. Wert der Welt. Sittlichkeit (Tugend) und Glückseligkeit.“

<sup>22</sup> XLII, 198, 311, 316, 329–333.

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 278–288 (1920), 289–296, 379–382, 502–515, etc.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., (Annas, 1989, 1993, 2003, 2008a, 2008b; Kekes, 1982; Kraut, 1979; Arroyo, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., (MacIntyre, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Propagated by (Cahn, 2004, 2008a, 2008b; Vitrano, 2008, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> We concur with (Peucker, 2008, 307).

<sup>28</sup> See (Peucker, 2007; Heffernan, 2010; Tullius, 2017; Ubiali, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> See (Luft, 2010, 2012).

An adequate account of Husserl's approach to the relationship between happiness and virtue must clarify the evolution of his ethics<sup>30</sup>. Bracketing legitimate questions concerning formalizing periodization, one can say the following in this regard: Husserl's early ethical investigations during his time in Halle (1887–1901) are heavily influenced by Brentano's lecture courses on practical philosophy from 1876 to 1894 (published as *Grundlegung und Aufbau der Ethik / Foundation and Construction of Ethics*)<sup>31</sup> and feature a strong parallel between logic and ethics (XXVIII, 381–419)<sup>32</sup>. Husserl's idea of ethics as a rigorous science of practical reason and its formal axiology holds during his middle period in Göttingen (1901–1916)<sup>33</sup>. Yet this idea is transformed with his plea for a “renewal” (*Erneuerung*) of human values in his Kaizo Articles (1922–1924) (XXVII, 3–94)<sup>34</sup>. His mature ethics sprouts in his lectures on ethics in 1920 and 1924 (XXXVII, 3–255) and blossoms during his time in Freiburg from 1916 to 1938 (XLII, 265–527). Based on a phenomenology of the subject as a person striving for happiness (*Glückseligkeit*), it is heavily influenced by Husserl's reading of Kant and Fichte, especially of the latter's *Die Bestimmung des Menschen / The Vocation of Man* (1800) and *Die Anweisung zum seligen Leben oder auch die Religionslehre / The Way toward the Blessed Life, or also the Doctrine of Religion* (1806)<sup>35</sup>. The result is an ethics that is based on reason and love and directed toward individual and collective human blessedness (*Seligkeit*), that distinguishes between “objective values” driven by duties and “subjective values” motivated by love (though “subjective values” may involve *absolute duties*)<sup>36</sup>, and that requires not blind belief but rational faith in God as a highest, all-good being who cares for human beings autonomously responding to their freely chosen vocations<sup>37</sup>.

The evolution of Husserl's ethics is accompanied by a shift in his approach to the Categorical Imperative. In 1914 Husserl described “the problem of the *Categorical Imperative*” as “the most central problem of ethics” (XXVIII, 137), but in 1919/1920

<sup>30</sup> See (Melle, 1991, 2002; Peucker, 2008; Römer, 2011; Rinofner-Kreidl, 2017; Drummond, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> See (Brentano, 1978).

<sup>32</sup> Brentano's *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis/The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (1889) (Brentano, 1969) is not mentioned in *Husserliana* XXVIII, XXXVII, or XLII.

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., XXVIII, 3–159.

<sup>34</sup> Three (XXVII, 3–43) of five (XXVII, 3–94) articles were published (1923–1924).

<sup>35</sup> See XXV, 267–293 („Fichtes Menschheitsideal: Drei Vorlesungen“ [1917]). Cf. (Fichte, 1979, 1983). (Hart, 1995) is very good on Husserl and Fichte.

<sup>36</sup> See (Hart, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> See XLII, 265–527, esp. 297–333.

he writes that he “will probably have to give up or limit anew the entire doctrine of the categorical imperative”<sup>38</sup>, and in the early-to-mid 1920s he states that an “ethics based merely on the Categorical Imperative” is “not an ethics”<sup>39</sup>. In his early ethics, the guiding question was whether, given the Categorical Imperative in Brentano’s sense, namely, “Do the best of the good achievable within your whole particular practical sphere!” (1914)<sup>40</sup>, actions are done *in accord with duty*; in his later ethics, it is whether they are done *out of love*<sup>41</sup>. (In *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant explores a distinction between the moral value of actions done *in accord with duties* and that of actions *done out of duty*<sup>42</sup>, but Husserl does not mention this connection in any text of *Husserliana* XLII.) Husserl illustrates the difference between the two approaches with the example of a mother and her absolute understanding of her unconditional duties to her child<sup>43</sup>. He also gives the example of the mother who sacrifices her son for her country<sup>44</sup>. Husserl’s critique of his earlier approach to such a case is that the “Law of Absorption”<sup>45</sup> of a supposedly lower good into a supposedly higher good does not work because the loss or “sacrifice” is *absolute*<sup>46</sup>. There is no better illustration of the distinction between “objective values” and “subjective values” in his late ethics (XLII, 348–359).

Yet, as the most extensive set of texts in *Husserliana* XLII documents, Husserl gradually moves away from an ethics founded on a formal Categorical Imperative toward an ethics grounded in the material ideals of personhood, community, and humanity (XLII, 383–392)<sup>47</sup>. The distinctive feature of his later ethics, as compared to and contrasted with his earlier, is a less abstract and more concrete concept of

<sup>38</sup> See *Materialien* IX, 132 (n. 1): „Ich werde wohl die ganze Lehre vom kategorischen Imperativ aufgeben müssen bzw. neu begrenzen.“

<sup>39</sup> See *Materialien* IX, 146 (n. 1).

<sup>40</sup> See XXVIII, 142: „Tue das Beste unter dem erreichbaren Guten innerhalb deiner jeweiligen praktischen Gesamtsphäre!“ See also XXVIII, 153: „Tue das Beste unter dem Erreichbaren.“ Cf. XXVIII, 237–242, 348–355, 414–418.

<sup>41</sup> See XLII, 289–296. See also XLII, 87, 200–201, 265, 284, 395–396, 419–420.

<sup>42</sup> See (Kant, 1999), First Section.

<sup>43</sup> XLII, 309–310, 343–344, 348–355, 393–399, 400–408, 458–468.

<sup>44</sup> See XLII, 199, 347, 401, 458, 466. In this case Husserl always says “mother” and never “father.”

<sup>45</sup> See XXVIII, 136: „In jeder Wahl absorbiert das Bessere das Gute und das Beste alles andere an und für sich als praktisch gut Zu-Schätzende.“

<sup>46</sup> Cf. XLII, 344–347, 356–359, 383–391, 458–468, and XLII, 348–355, 410–422, 458–468. See XXVIII, 419–422, on the roles of Moritz Geiger and Fritz Kaufmann in Husserl’s shift.

<sup>47</sup> See XLII, 311, 315–316, 318–321, 324, 329, 344, 356–359, 473. Cf. Sowa, Introduction, XLII, xciv–xcv, c–cvi, cxiii.



practical reason (XLII, 265–277). In 1923, for example, Husserl introduces and develops the distinction between an “individual categorical imperative of the hour” and the “formal categorical imperative for life” (XLII, 318–321). Deviating from Brentano, and, of course, from Kant<sup>48</sup>, Husserl’s alternative Categorical Imperative, from 1924, says not *what to do* but *how to be*: “Be a true human being; lead a life that you can insightfully justify in a thorough-going way, a life of practical reason”<sup>49</sup>. What may be his most “existential” Categorical Imperative, probably from the mid-1920s, says: “*Do your best, as which the best is what you can do in the sense of the absolute best, at which your life’s meaning should aim, as [should] that of all human beings!*”<sup>50</sup> These imperatives, which do not conflict with the claims of happiness (XLII, 311), are more individual-situational and less formal-categorical (XLII, 321). Now values are defined not merely in terms of individual acts that realize the best that one can do in a given situation, but rather in terms of an absolutely justified shaping of the life that is, in each and every case, that of an individual person, as well as in terms of a rational shaping of the lives of national and trans-national societies guided by a conviction of faith, a consciousness of hope, and a community of love<sup>51</sup>. Given the human striving for happiness in the face of the irrationality (*Unvernunft*) and accidentality (*Zufall*) in the life of the individual and in the history of humanity, Husserl emphasizes the inseparability of ethical and existential concerns and poses urgent questions concerning the meaningfulness and meaninglessness of moral agency<sup>52</sup>. The phenomenon of love, as a source of binding values and as the motive of ethical action, as well as the phenomenon of the individual call to a personal task in life, move to the center of his ethics<sup>53</sup>. The result is a phenomenological ethics, in the spirit of his phenomenological philosophy, not „von oben“ but „von unten“<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Kant distinguishes several different formulations of the Categorical Imperative—“act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law”—but asserts that they all express the same thing. See (Kant, 1999), Second Section.

<sup>49</sup> See XXVII, 36: „Sei ein wahrer Mensch; führe ein Leben, das du durchgängig einsichtig rechtfertigen kannst, ein Leben aus praktischer Vernunft.“ Cf. XXXVII, 234: „Handle vernünftig!“

<sup>50</sup> See XLII, 390: „Tue dein Bestes, als welches das Beste ist, das du im Sinn des absolut Besten tun kannst, auf das dein Lebenssinn mit hinzielen soll, wie der aller Menschen!“ Cf. XXXVII, 252–253 (1920/1924). One may ask whether Husserl’s latest ethics is “existentialist.” See (Loidolt, 2011, 2018; Römer, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> XLII, 333–338, 343–344, 356–359, 400–408, 410–449, 458–484, 523–526.

<sup>52</sup> XLII, 338–340, 360–382, 408–409, 449–450, 495–523, 526–527.

<sup>53</sup> See XLII, 348–355, 393–399, 451–457, 491–494. See also (Melle, 1991, 2002, 2007; Peucker, 2008).

<sup>54</sup> BW III, 160, 213, 504; BW V, 15; BW VI, 99; BW VII, 164; BW IX, 83–84.

Husserl recognizes that, given the vagaries, vices, and vicissitudes of the world, virtue offers the best prospect of happiness (XLII, 297–333), but he, like Aristotle, also realizes that virtue does not guarantee happiness (XLII, 382). Yet he cannot without further ado be characterized as a virtue ethicist in the Classical Western tradition<sup>55</sup>. His cardinal virtues are not the Greco-Roman philosophical virtues, prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance<sup>56</sup>, which are hardly present in the texts of Husserliana XLII, but rather the Jewish-Christian theological virtues, faith, hope, and love, which are very much in evidence. This raises an obvious question. Yet, although he suggests that human beings cannot be happy without God, Husserl does not accept the medieval Christian view that “God makes human beings happy”<sup>57</sup>. He does, however, believe in a world in which divine “grace” (*Gnade*) encourages human effort<sup>58</sup>. In the end, his developed ethics, materially determinate and particularly oriented, does justice to individual hope for personal happiness, but also to collective striving for communal blessedness, in a way in which his developing ethics, formally structured and generally inclined, did not.

### 3. HUSSERL’S EUDAIMONISM THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF A HAPPY LIFE

We turn to the essential aspects of happiness according to Husserl’s phenomenological descriptions.

*The question concerning happiness.* Husserl writes: “To what end must the human being be satisfied? The human being must be able to be satisfied in order to aim at the goal not only of being good but of becoming better and better”<sup>59</sup>. According to Husserl, the “happiness question” (*die Glücksfrage*: XLII, 504–508) is a matter of how I should conduct myself ethically in order to lead a life of complete self-preservation (*Selbsterhaltung*)<sup>60</sup> and sustained satisfaction

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<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., (Drummond, 2002, 2014, 2015, 2018; Heffernan, 2010; Peucker, 2010).

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., (Plato, 2006), Book IV, and (Aristotle, 1999), Books II–VI.

<sup>57</sup> See (Augustine, 1984).

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 215, 236, 447.

<sup>59</sup> XLII, 324: „Wozu muss der Mensch zufrieden sein? Er muss zufrieden sein können, um das Ziel, nicht nur gut zu sein, sondern besser und immer besser zu werden, sich stellen zu können.“

<sup>60</sup> XLII, 503: „Wie müsste ich in der Möglichkeit, gedacht als meine wirkliche Vermöglichkeit, all mein Leben, all meine einzelnen Wollungen und Handlungen inszenieren und ordnen, damit sie zusammenstimmten zur Einheit einer sich durch das Leben hindurch erstreckenden ungestörten Harmonie der totalen Selbsterhaltung [...]?“

(*Befriedigung*)<sup>61</sup>. For Husserl, ethics is distinct from morality, but the question concerning happiness is an ethical question<sup>62</sup>.

Thus one cannot simply say that that individual is happy whose volitions (*Wollungen*) and inclinations (*Neigungen*) are constantly satisfied. Such a life would not necessarily be a good life or a happy life. Rather, an ethical life and a happy life, a life of self-satisfaction, are inseparable: “How are an ethical life and happiness (satisfaction) related? An ethical life provides self-satisfaction as a condition of the possibility of every further satisfaction”<sup>63</sup>. A life of complete satisfaction is one in which all my beliefs and position-takings (*Stellungnahmen*), as well as all my volitions and actions, produce “the harmony of a whole life” (*Zusammenstimmung zu einem Lebensganzen*)<sup>64</sup>.

Yet even the fact that my life constitutes a harmonious totality is not sufficient to permit me to characterize it as “happy.” This fact must also be known *per se*, that is, I must be aware of this harmony in order to be able to consider myself “happy.” This entails, on the one hand, that the harmony objectively subsists, and, on the other hand, that I am in a position to evaluate my entire life positively in a single act of judgment.

The necessary condition for such a general self-evaluation is the possibility of performing a complete synthesis of all my past and future beliefs, volitions, and actions. Husserl refers to this possibility as the subject’s capacity for performing acts of *Überschau* or for taking a “panoramic view” of her own life as a whole<sup>65</sup>. An *Überschau* requires the kind of act by which we experience our personal life as a whole, and, correlatively, the world as its constant horizon. As Husserl says:

The human being as a human being does not live in the moment. For the human being the whole unity of her past is a given unity and a unity capable of being

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<sup>61</sup> XLII, 504: „Wie muss ich [...] für mich mein (ganzes weiteres) Leben gestalten, um ein ständiges Leben der Befriedigung <zu> gewinnen?“

<sup>62</sup> XXVIII, 33: „Es ist offenbar eine Einschränkung, wenn wir Ethik als Moral fassen. [...] Das moralische Handeln, wie immer wir es näher bestimmen, ist eine beschränkte Sphäre des Handelns überhaupt; also die Ethik muß, wenn wir den umfassendsten Begriff gewinnen wollen, der Vernunft in der Praxis überhaupt zugeordnet werden.“ For this use of the term *ethics* see (Williams, 1985).

<sup>63</sup> XLII, 329: „Wie verhalten sich ethisches Leben und Glückseligkeit (Zufriedenheit)? Ethisches Leben gibt Selbstzufriedenheit als Bedingung der Möglichkeit jeder weiteren Zufriedenheit.“

<sup>64</sup> XLII, 507 f.: „Das konkrete Leben der menschlichen Person kann nur ‚glücklich‘ sein, wenn hinsichtlich all dieser Lebensschichten als besonderer, aber sich wechselseitig auch durchsetzender und bedingender Schichten des Willenslebens ein gewisser Stil der Zusammenstimmung zu einem Lebensganzen gewährleistet ist.“

<sup>65</sup> (Staiti, 2013) provides a detailed analysis of the experience of *Überschau*.

looked over and grasped, and accordingly so is her future and her whole flowing life<sup>66</sup>.

Any panoramic view of a whole life, of course, involves unfulfilled, obscure horizons<sup>67</sup>.

Granting that anyone is capable of grasping her own life in a single act and of thereby performing a synthesis of all her beliefs, volitions, and actions, the problem of ascertaining the criterion for determining whether life is harmonious remains. Harmony is first and foremost an aesthetic, relative category, which means that it is not an objective property of beliefs, volitions, and actions as such, but a “felt” or “sensed” property that they have in relation to a valuing subject.

A solution presupposes that the person can turn herself and her entire life into a “theme” (*Thema*), first, of valuation, and, second, of praxis<sup>68</sup>. The axiological judgment directed toward her whole life, which then becomes the “judgment matter” (*Urteilmaterie*), motivates her to act in this or that manner in order to change her life. The totality of life becomes the target of a practical undertaking.

*Will.* The most effective solution to the problem of happiness would be to reach the point at which each of my volitions were ruled by an “archontic will” (*ein archontischer Wille*: XLII 504) or a “monarchical willing” (*ein monarchisches Wollen*: XLII, 506)<sup>69</sup>, that is, a habitual tendency of the will encompassing the whole of practical life<sup>70</sup>. The result of this self-determination would be a consistent connection

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<sup>66</sup> XLII, 303 (n. 1): „Der Mensch als Mensch lebt nicht im Moment. Für ihn ist die ganze Einheit seiner Vergangenheit eine gegebene und zur Überschauung und Erfassung kommende Einheit und demgemäß auch seine Zukunft und sein ganzes fließendes Leben.“

<sup>67</sup> As Staiti indicates, “the lack of total fulfillment and the withholding of whatever kind of illustrative content [...] can be considered essential traits of *Überschau*” (Staiti, 2013, 30).

<sup>68</sup> XLII, 304: „In eins mit der Wertung des Lebens ist die *Selbstwertung des Subjekts*: Der Mensch macht sich und sein gesamtes Leben [...] zum Wertungsthema und zum praktischen Thema [...].“ XXVIII, 143: „Also wir stellen es [das handelnde Subjekt] dabei als jemanden vor, der wollend sein Willensleben regiert, dieses selbst zum Feld der Praxis, zum Willensbereich macht, und nun richtiges Wollen anstrebt.“ XXVIII, 89: „Natürlich kann das Werten sich auf die Person, auf ihre Taten, auf das, was für sie unter den für sie speziell bestehenden Voraussetzungen gut und schlecht ist, beziehen.“

<sup>69</sup> Ms. F I 28, 338: „Es ist vorauszusetzen, daß die Universalität eines ‚Ich will‘ in reiner Aktmotivation, also in reiner Freiheit leben und mir alle heteronomen Motive verbieten, die Selbstsetzung des Ich als habituellen Trägers des reinen ‚Ich will‘ in sich schließt, also in sich beschließt das ‚Ich will ein ethisch Guter sein,‘ ein solcher, aus dem nur rein gut gerichtete Akte und die beständig richtigen, die möglich sind, hervorgehen.“

<sup>70</sup> XLII, 281: „Eine habituelle Willenstendenz auf normhaftes Wollen und Handeln geht möglicherweise durch das ganze praktische Leben hindurch.“ XLII, 283: „[...] eine Universalität der Regelung des ganzen Lebens und eine Regelung des Ich selbst durch das Ich selbst [...].“

between my firm will and my fleeting volitions<sup>71</sup>. Then I could live by a supreme ideal that played the role of the highest practical demand (categorical imperative) for me in my life. Insofar as I lived according to my will, my ideal of life, I would be faithful (*treu*) to myself and to my previous decisions. The identity of the person would constitute itself as the harmonious unity of all his position-takings as driven by this regulatory will<sup>72</sup>.

The moment of self-determination of the will must be conceived as an act of “conversion” (*Umkehr*: VIII, 297) by virtue of which the totality of a person’s life gets turned upside down, as it were. This conversion implies a “renewal” (*Erneuerung*) of the human being brought about by a free act of the will—a “free spontaneity” of the I as “*causa sui*”<sup>73</sup>. In later manuscripts, Husserl characterizes this experience more precisely as a “backward renewal” (*umkehrende Erneuerung*: XLII, 497), a kind of renewal that is directed toward one’s past life and cancels one’s previous universal will and life’s ideal in order to set the stage for a new volitional form of one’s entire life.

In this manner, the subject appears to forfeit his self-preservation. A temporal split occurs in his life so that, in a sense, he is no longer what he once was. Yet it only seems so, because his goal is precisely to achieve a stable self-preservation in which conversion becomes unnecessary. The ultimate ground of all ethical renewal is the pre-ethical teleology of self-preservation. The striving for self-satisfaction accompanies the striving for self-preservation<sup>74</sup>.

The ethical conversion is made possible by what Husserl calls a “universal ethical *epoché*” (VIII, 319), a thematization of one’s entire life that makes it the subject of a universal axiological judgment. This *epoché* implies a bracketing of

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<sup>71</sup> XLII, 503 f.: „Ich in einem ins Unendliche und Ganze fortgehenden Willensleben, das in allen einzelnen Wollungen regiert wäre von einem einzigen habituellen Willen, eben dem, der als oberster Regent allen einzelnen Verhaltensweisen jene glückhafte Form verleihen müsste.“

<sup>72</sup> IV, 277: „Aber wirklich einheitliche *Person* ist das Ich in eins damit noch in einem höheren Sinn, wenn es einen gewissen durchgängigen einheitlichen Still hat in der Art, wie es sich urteilend, wollend entscheidet, in der Art, wie es ästhetisch schätzt [...]“

<sup>73</sup> XXVII, 25; XIV, 210.

<sup>74</sup> XLII, 503: „Wie müsste ich in der Möglichkeit, gedacht als meine wirkliche Vermöglichkeit, all mein Leben, all meine einzelnen Wollungen und Handlungen inszenieren und ordnen, damit sie zusammenstimmten zur Einheit einer sich durch das Leben hindurch erstreckenden ungestörten Harmonie der totalen Selbsterhaltung, sich fühlbar machend in der unthematischen Gemütsreaktion der ständig begleitenden Stimmung der Befriedigung [...]?“

one's entire previous life and a universal critique of it according to a newly imposed ethical ideal<sup>75</sup>.

Yet does not the necessity of ethical renewal contradict the necessity of self-preservation and harmony<sup>76</sup>? Husserl's elegant solution proposes two forms of self-preservation or striving for self-preservation, a generally natural one and a specifically ethical one<sup>77</sup>. Connected to this distinction is the striving for "finality" (*Endgültigkeit*)<sup>78</sup>. The subject ought to strive for a set of core convictions (*Überzeugungen*) that will, ideally, not be disappointed during a lifetime, for not only does experience not contradict them but their practical realization must also always be successful<sup>79</sup>. Only then does the life of the subject have "the character of a life directed toward constant goals, in which the I exercises self-preservation" (XLII, 368).

*Vocation.* The ethical ideal of life is a kind of universal "vocation" (*Beruf*) that assumes the role of an absolute normative "call" (*Ruf*) for the subject—"[a]n ideal that shapes the whole of life" (XLII, 493). It differs from every other specific ideal due to its universal character, and Husserl distinguishes this kind of vocation from the ideals of life that single professions (*Berufe*)<sup>80</sup> represent.

Human life presents human beings with a multi-layered manifold of "profession-unities" (*Berufseinheiten*: XLII, 507), that is, unities of obligations and volitions. To each profession pertains a specific set of obligations, values, volitions, and faculties (*Können*). Even a relative kind of happiness (or unhappiness) depends on the fulfillment (or non-fulfillment) of these obligations and volitions (XLII, 517).

This is only a part of the whole, however, because a single profession does not concern one's life as a whole, leaving some areas untouched by its regulation and

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. (Melle, 2002, 243 f.).

<sup>76</sup> We thank Dieter Lohmar for drawing our attention to this possible objection.

<sup>77</sup> XLII, 368: „Sowie das universale Denken der Vernunft erwacht [...] muss es [das Ich] auch eine neue Weise der Selbsterhaltung suchen. Die bisherige, die sozusagen passive Ausbildung von präsumtiven Endgültigkeiten genügt nicht mehr—eben weil sie immer präsumtiv sind.“

<sup>78</sup> XLII, 367: „Das Ich ist praktisches Ich, es strebt auf etwas hin, will es. Aber es steht unter dem Gesetz der Selbsterhaltung. Es kann sich als Ich nur erhalten, wenn durch seine Entscheidungen Endgültigkeit hindurchgeht. [...] [D]ann muss es nicht nur überhaupt neue Überzeugungen sich schaffen, es muss dessen sicher sein können, dass es nicht immer wieder in die Lage kommen wird und kommen könnte, seine schon gebildeten Überzeugungen wieder aufzugeben.“

<sup>79</sup> XLII, 368: „[...] es ist jede dieser Verwirklichungsarten und Herausstellungsarten [sowohl des sachlichen als auch des wertlichen Seins, Verwandlung von Möglichkeit in Wirklichkeit] immerfort in der praktischen Aktivität, wenn auch unter Korrekturen, gelungen.“

<sup>80</sup> The German *Beruf* means both *vocation* and *profession*. We use *vocation* to translate the all-encompassing *Beruf*, which Husserl sometimes also refers to as *Ruf* or *Berufung*, and *profession* to mean a vocation that does not possess this all-encompassing character.

will. A “professional-life” (*Berufsleben*) does not constitute the whole of life. Because I can simultaneously be a scientist, husband, father, and citizen, I am subject to a plurality of goals and duties that in real life may conflict with one another insofar as the actualization of one inhibits or even prohibits the realization of another (XLII, 396). Also, because a cluster of different obligations pertains to each of these “professions,” the leading of a professional life opens up the possibility of a “split” (*Spaltung*) between the part of a person’s life that is exclusively focused on the single profession, its goals, satisfactions, and dissatisfactions, on the one hand, and the part of her life that contains everything beyond and apart from that single professional life, on the other hand<sup>81</sup>.

*Obligation.* In order to live an ethical and happy life, Husserl suggests, a universal will must govern all aspects of my practical undertakings. This universal “I want” (*Ich will*) is inextricably linked to a universal “I ought” (*Ich soll*)<sup>82</sup>. In the context of “a genuine life” (*ein echtes Leben*), “a life lived in love” (*ein Leben in der Liebe*), which for Husserl is synonymous with “a life in the absolute ‘ought’” (*ein Leben in dem absoluten Sollen*), my volition grounds a universal ethical obligation (XLII, 393–399). Insofar as I will something, I experience a practical obligation to realize it.

What I want, the content of my volition, is by definition a “good,” the content of a positive axiological judgment<sup>83</sup>. According to Husserl, we can be inclined to two fundamentally different types of goods: on the one hand, universal objective goods, that is, values that are attached to the object and depend on its objective features; and, on the other hand, absolute subjective goods, that is, values that stem from a performance of the subject that attributes a subjective value to the object (XLII, 348–359)<sup>84</sup>. The latter are the results of habitualized acts of personal love (which are simultaneously “actus” and “habitus”: XLII, 354) as “the turning of the I toward that which individually allures it as this wholly particular I, and which, if achieved, would be its own completion”<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> XLII, 517: „Im Berufsleben spaltet sich sozusagen in der Person die Berufsperson ab.“

<sup>82</sup> XLII, 397: „Was ich will, bezeichne ich auch mit den Worten ‚Das soll ich‘.“

<sup>83</sup> See also (Aristotle, 1999, 1).

<sup>84</sup> Cf. (Melle, 2002, 238 f.), and see (Drummond, 1995, 2002, 2010, 2013). See also (Heffernan, 2010) on the distinction between genuine goods and (merely) apparent goods.

<sup>85</sup> XLII, 397: „Liebe ist die Hinwendung des Ich zu dem, was es als dieses Ich ganz individuell anzieht und das, wenn es das erzielt hätte, für es Vollendung wäre.“

For Husserl, an example of an act that is able to ground an absolute subjective value is the instinctual love of a mother for her child<sup>86</sup>. Yet this is a specific case that does not apply to everyone. Not all people are mothers, nor are they parents. Also, “a mother’s love” is not a universal quality of every mother; indeed, its instinctual nature is questionable<sup>87</sup>. Yet Husserl is not interested here in the specific character of parental loving, for he states that everyone, parent or not, can have his own absolute subjective value<sup>88</sup>.

At the core of the universal “I want”, then, is an act of love expressed by a preferential judgment about something, for example, an object or ideal, or about someone, for example, a family or friend. Thus the vocation expressed by the “I want” touches “the most profound inwardness, the inner center of the I” (XLII, 358)<sup>89</sup>, because it stems from an act of love and preference which only that person performs and which therefore distinguishes him from every other person.

*Habituation.* In Husserl’s sense, the universal will that should regulate an ethical life is a second-order volition. As distinguished from action-determining volitions, second-order volitions are volitions about volitions<sup>90</sup>. Yet volitions ground motives for actions. Hence this universal second-order volition is responsible not only directly for what I will accomplish in my life, for example, my concrete goals, but also indirectly for the totality of my actions<sup>91</sup>.

For a volition to function continuously throughout an entire life and thus render possible a “continuous renewal” (XXVII, 42 ff.), it needs to become “second nature” for the subject, that is, a habit. Similar to the universal volition, this “archontic” habit is a second-order habit, because it must inform the totality of her

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<sup>86</sup> XLII, 333, 351, 359, etc.

<sup>87</sup> See (Brudzińska, 2017, 297).

<sup>88</sup> A V 21 (1924), 122a: „Jeder hat sein absolutes Sollen; und seine Wahl vollzieht sich in der Frage: ‚Was soll ich?‘ und, wo ich mehreres soll, ‚Welches ist jetzt mein Notwendiges?‘ nicht einfach: ‚Welches ist das in der Gütervergleichung bessere?‘“ See also (Cobet, 2003, 40 f.).

<sup>89</sup> XLII, 358: „Ein Besonderes ist es aber, dass das Ich nicht nur polare, zentrierende Innerlichkeit ist, dabei aus sich Sinn und Wert und Tat leistende Innerlichkeit, sondern dass es auch individuelles Ich ist, das in all seinem Vorstellen, fühlend Werten, Sich-Entscheiden noch ein tiefstes Zentrum hat, das Zentrum jener Liebe im ausgezeichneten Sinn, das Ich, das in dieser Liebe einem ‚Ruf‘ einer ‚Berufung‘ folgt, einem innersten Ruf, der die tiefste Innerlichkeit, das innerste Zentrum des Ich selbst trifft und zu neuartigen Entscheidungen, zu neuartigen ‚Selbstverantwortungen‘, ‚Selbstrechtfertigungen‘ bestimmt wird.“

<sup>90</sup> (Frankfurt, 1971) reintroduces the idea of second-order volition. Like Husserl, Frankfurt considers the capacity for second-order volitions crucial for the constitution of the subject’s personal and ethical identity.

<sup>91</sup> Ms. F I 28, 327: „Sicher gehört dazu die höhere Stufe, daß gegebenenfalls so gehandelt wird auf Grund des universalen Willens und in der habituell gewordenen Willensgesinnung, überhaupt so handeln zu wollen.“



habit-formations and position-takings. Thus the essence of the ethical person lies in the habituation of a second-order volition, that is, in the habitualized form of a position-taking on position-takings (*Stellungnahme durch Stellungnahme*)<sup>92</sup>.

*Self-reflection and self-criticism.* Husserl understands, however, that ethics is not merely a matter of cultivating good habits. Self-reflection and self-criticism are also indispensable ingredients of ethical character. Yet they are not to be identified with habits in the primary or strict sense, for they do not only refer to single actions that we occasionally perform (in the present, past or future), but they also, more importantly, refer to and take a stance on our acquired habituations. The critical habit of examining every position-taking (*Setzung*), willing, or habit is a second-order habit<sup>93</sup>.

Thus it is not the actuality of having acquired morally good habits alone that makes me a good person, but the continuously open possibility of reflecting on my particular habituations, and, when appropriate, of criticizing them with respect to whether they are consistent with my absolute values. The capacity for self-critical reflection is therefore a condition of the possibility of self-appraisal and self-judgment. I cannot be a genuinely moral being without the capacity of critically reflecting upon myself as a practical subject. Referring to *Selbstwertung*, Husserl recognizes self-appraisal as a defining feature of the “*moral human being*”<sup>94</sup>. Truly “moral,” then, can only be the person who appraises himself and his life as a whole—not merely his individual actions.

Self-reflection and self-criticism, therefore, are inseparably intertwined with Husserl’s conception of happiness. As previously emphasized, ethical happiness or *eudaimonia* is different from sheer joyfulness based on the fulfillment of volitions or inclinations. Rather, Husserl describes the former as a “*reflective joyfulness*” (*reflektive Freudigkeit*: XLII, 331). It presupposes the acquisition of a critical stance toward one’s

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. (Goto, 2004, 72–75).

<sup>93</sup> The critical attitude is motivated by the experience of the inhibition of our strivings. See XXVII, 30: „Die von [den] peinlichen Entwertungen und Enttäuschungen ausgehende Motivation ist es, die [...] das Bedürfnis nach solcher Kritik und somit das spezifische Wahrheitsstreben bzw. das Streben nach Bewährung, nach ‚endgültiger‘ Rechtfertigung durch einsichtige Begründung motiviert.“

<sup>94</sup> XLII, 279 f.: „Der *moralische Mensch* urteilt über sich selbst, deutlicher gesprochen, er bewertet sich selbst als praktisches Subjekt. Wo immer er moralisch handelt, da beruht die Moralität auf aktueller oder habitueller Selbstbewertung und Selbstbeurteilung.“ XLII, 303: „Notwendig erhebt sich der Mensch zu einer Wertung des Lebens unter dem Gesichtspunkt des Besten, des am meisten zu Bevorzugenden, aber als eines solchen, das ein Gutes ist, und befriedigen kann, das Bestbefriedigende, das voll befriedigt, weil kein Besseres praktisch möglich ist.“

life-choices as well as an incessant struggle against the inclinations that distract one from one's self-determined ideal. This "*reflective joyfulness*," especially in the midst of struggles, occasional successes, and frequent failures, may be understood as a renewal of the ancient Stoic ideal of happiness<sup>95</sup>.

*Sociability and solidarity.* Each human being is, according to Husserl, a "member of society, intertwined with human kind" (XLII, 516)<sup>96</sup>. The ethical connection between the individual and the society in which she lives can be realized in two ways.

First, the principle of the social character of the ethical subject suggests that my being an ethical person is strictly related to how I behave with respect to others, my fellow human beings. As a practical subject, I have obligations toward other people. These others are not an abstract entity, a mere product of philosophical reflection, but, first and foremost, my family, friends, colleagues, and, further removed, my ancestors (*Stamm*), nation, and so forth. All these persons and personalities of higher order are bearers of ethical demands on me. These ethical demands, too, are grounded in my acts of love, which appraise a certain person or nation as absolutely valuable for me.

Second, my happiness depends on the conditions that others set in shaping the communal world (*Gemeinwelt*), which, as the field of my practical possibilities<sup>97</sup>, comprises not only physical nature but also a spiritual and historical world. "Traditionality" (*Traditionalität*: XLII, 506), for example, is an essential feature of human life. In Husserl's words, "we do not live on Robinson's island"<sup>98</sup>, because our fellow human beings co-constitute our surrounding world and thus shape it

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<sup>95</sup> See (Irvine, 2009; Heinämaa, 2017). Here we abstract from Husserl's well-documented personal struggles against depression, discrimination, and so forth. See, e.g., (Schuhmann, 1977, 428–429, 433, 472).

<sup>96</sup> XLII, 302: „Mein Leben ist aber nichts für sich; es ist einig mit dem Leben der Anderen, es ist Stück in der Einheit des Gemeinschaftslebens und reicht darüber hinaus ins Leben der Menschheit.“ XLII, 312: „Wir leben nicht nur nebeneinander, sondern ineinander. Wir bestimmen einander personal, von Person zu Person, von Ich zu Ich, und unser Wille geht nicht nur auf die Anderen als umweltliche Sachen, sondern in die Anderen, er erstreckt sich in das fremde Wollen hinein, das Wollen des Anderen und zugleich unser Wollen ist, so dass seine Tat, wenn auch in verschieden abgewandelter Weise, zu unserer Tat werden kann. Wir wirken miteinander, und darin liegt immer ein Durcheinander und Ineinander [...]“ XLII, 315: „Es ergibt sich darunter die Möglichkeit jener *ethischen Synthese*, in der jedes Ich ethisch wirkend lebt und sein bestmögliches Leben dadurch verwirklicht, dass es für die Anderen zugleich ihr bestmögliches mitverwirklicht, das aber so, dass es nicht außer, sondern in den Anderen lebt [...] und in der Willensverständigung und -verknüpfung mit den Anderen eine Wirkungsgemeinschaft schafft [...]“ Cf. (Toulemont, 1962, 251), and (Roth, 1960, 161).

<sup>97</sup> XLII, 311 (n. 2): „Die Welt ist das All [...] aller realen Voraussetzungen meines und aller Wirkens.“

<sup>98</sup> XLII, 325: „Wir leben nicht auf einer Robinsoninsel [...]“

together with us<sup>99</sup>. Insofar as the surrounding world represents a condition for the realization of my aims and volitions, other human beings indirectly affect, positively or negatively, the practical possibility of my fulfilling my ethical obligations.

Therefore we infer that, according to Husserl, I cannot be genuinely happy as an ethical subject in an unethical world. This does not mean, of course, that I can be a moral person only in relation to others, that is, by accepting the norms and obligations that they prescribe<sup>100</sup>. It does mean, however, that, if the world (the personal as well as the physical) does not fulfill certain conditions, I cannot actualize my potential and become happy. In this connection, Husserl remarks that “the individual-ethical problem, that is, the fundamental possibility of a self-responsible life, is also inseparably bound up with the social-ethical problem of a fundamental possibility of a social life, social agency, understood as the agency of the sociality itself”<sup>101</sup>. Granted, then, that the ethical character of an individual is directly connected with her personal happiness, and that it closely depends on the ethical character of the society of fellow human beings in which she lives, and, more generally, of humanity itself, Husserl argues that “*I can be wholly happy if and only if humanity as a whole can be*”<sup>102</sup>. In this sense, happiness is not local but global.

Yet Husserl also realizes that the community has no life and identity separate from the life and identity of its members<sup>103</sup>. This means that the happiness of my society as a whole depends on my happiness and that of others. According to Husserl, the society, as a personality of a higher order, is capable of happiness, as the single individual is<sup>104</sup>. Therefore, because my life is nothing other than a part in the whole of the life of society, “I cannot evaluate my life without evaluating the interdependent

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<sup>99</sup> XLII, 507: „[...] Mitmenschen [bestimmen] [...] meine Umwelt.“

<sup>100</sup> See (Mensch, 2003).

<sup>101</sup> XLII, 273 (n. 2): „Das individualethische Problem, das der prinzipiellen Möglichkeit selbstverantwortlichen Lebens, ist also untrennbar verbunden mit dem sozialetischen Problem einer prinzipiellen Möglichkeit sozialen Lebens, sozialen Handelns, verstanden als Handeln der Sozialität selbst.“

<sup>102</sup> XLII, 332: „*Ich kann nur ganz glücklich sein, wenn die Menschheit als Ganzes es sein kann* [...]“

<sup>103</sup> Ms. F I 40, 170a (as cited in Melle, 2002, 239 f.): “The social-ethical aim that a community has to pursue has its reason only by being rooted in and being demanded by the individual aims of the members of the community. The community only lives in the life of the associated individuals in such a way that the individuals know themselves through acts of consciousness of the type of the ‘social act’ as functionaries of the community, that is, that they know that they execute in such acts acts of community.”

<sup>104</sup> XLII, 313: „Als Korrelat entspringt ein ethisches Gemeinschaftsleben und in ihm ein gemeinschaftliches Güterreich als bestmögliches für diese Gemeinschaft. Als Gemeinschaft gewinnt dann diese personale synthetisch verknüpfte Vielheit Selbstzufriedenheit; und in ihr beschlossen ist dann Selbstzufriedenheit der einzelnen Personen.“

life of the others”<sup>105</sup>. Thus my happiness can be undermined by my experience of the misery of my fellow human beings. *Eudaimonia* and empathy (*Einfühlung*)<sup>106</sup> go hand in hand. If I perceive others to be miserable, my happiness cannot be absolute and “pure” (*rein*). To ignore others’ feelings and sufferings would not be a solution to this problem, Husserl argues, because it would be “ignoble and bad”<sup>107</sup> and not lead to an ethical life, the presupposition for a happy life<sup>108</sup>. As a result, the combination of empathy and misery guarantees that a life of *pure joy* will be a practical impossibility for the decent human being who participates in the lives of other human beings<sup>109</sup>.

This is one more reason why Husserl argues that happiness, that is, fulfillment, cannot be the perfect satisfaction of all the individual’s needs, plans, and wants. He posits that an uninterrupted “continuity of success [in this regard] is beyond human power” (XLII, 330). Hence it is irrational to suppose that the pleasure that comes from the complete fulfillment of all one’s aspirations is the highest goal of life<sup>110</sup>. Husserl traces the impossibility of any total satisfaction in life to the typically human striving for infinite life and thus infinite happiness<sup>111</sup>. In fact, perfect happiness and finite life are incompatible, and the pursuit of eternal happiness must not vitiate the achievement of temporal happiness. A life that lacks joy at some points is a certainty<sup>112</sup>. Yet, although perfect joy is a practical impossibility, genuine happiness is a real possibility, and one must conceive of it as such. The impossibility of an

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<sup>105</sup> XLII, 302: „Mein Leben ist aber nichts für sich; es ist einig mit dem Leben der Anderen, es ist Stück in der Einheit des Gemeinschaftslebens und reicht darüber hinaus ins Leben der Menschheit. Ich kann nicht mein Leben werten, ohne das mitverflochtene Leben der Anderen zu werten.“

<sup>106</sup> IV, 167, 169, 199, 230, etc.

<sup>107</sup> XLII, 331: „[...] [w]äre es in der Form möglich, dass ich mich taub machte für fremdes und eigenes Leid, so wäre es unwürdig und schlecht.“

<sup>108</sup> (Brudzińska, 2017, 297) remarks correctly „dass die Selbstzufriedenheit, die ein tugendhaftes Leben, ein Leben aus Verantwortung gegenüber sich selbst und den sich selbst auferlegten Pflichten, nicht das Leben der Glückseligkeit in seiner eigentlichen Bedeutung sein kann. Letzteres vollzieht sich in der Vergemeinschaftung.“

<sup>109</sup> XLII, 330: „[...] [e]ine Kontinuität der Freude kann es für niemanden geben, und gar ein Leben reiner Freude ist unmöglich für den rechten Menschen, der an anderen Menschen Anteil hat.“

<sup>110</sup> See (Hobbes, 1968), Part One, chaps. VI, VIII, X–XI, and XIII, where human insatiability is identified as the leading cause of human insecurity and thus of human misery.

<sup>111</sup> XV, 404: „Es ist *kein Zufall*, dass der Mensch, immerfort mit Einzelheiten der Erfahrung, der Bewertung, der begehrenden und handelnden Abzielung (Bezweckung) beschäftigt, *niemals zu einer Zufriedenheit kommt*, oder vielmehr, dass keine Befriedigung im einzelnen und in der Endlichkeit wirkliche und volle Befriedigung ist, und dass Befriedigung auf eine Lebenstotalität und personale Seinstotalität verweist, auf eine Einheit in der Totalität der habituellen Geltungen, die alle Endlichkeit übersteigt.“

<sup>112</sup> See F I 24, 151, which is consistent with XLII, 330.

unqualified enjoyment of a happy life does not preclude the possibility of a resolute pursuit of a blessed life<sup>113</sup>.

*Chance and destiny.* Thus far we have focused on the factors influencing happiness that are in our power. Yet what can jeopardize the pursuit of happiness is not only the empathically felt misery of others or the hostile condition of an unethical society, but also what Husserl refers to as “chance” (*Zufall*) and “destiny” (*Schicksal*).

Husserl explicitly picks up on the role of irrational chance from Kierkegaard (XLII, 285). The question is twofold. First, we must ask whether human life, and, more specifically, a happy human life, is possible in a world whose brute facticity prevents the realization of the subject’s absolute goods—thus suggesting a kind of practical nihilism. Second, we must ask the same question of a world that does not yield any sense at all—thus indicating a sort of theoretical nihilism. Bluntly put: “Can I live [ethically and thus happily] in a ‘senseless’ world?”<sup>114</sup>

Regarding the first aspect of the question, Husserl provides the example of an unsuccessful artist who cannot be satisfied because, despite his best efforts, he sees his work resulting in failure due to internal or external irrationalities<sup>115</sup>. On this description, the artist, as an ethical subject, is satisfied with his life’s ideal, but, as an aesthetic subject incapable of realizing it, unsatisfied. He affirms the ideal that governs his life, but he is miserable because he cannot attain it. What prevents him from realizing his ideal could be twofold, namely, his own limitations or the facticity of a hostile or indifferent world in which irrational chance frustrates human aspirations. The example of the unsuccessful artist involves a person who cannot achieve his personal ideal due to practical obstacles.

Regarding the second aspect of the question, other cases pose the problem of whether one’s belief in a senseless world interferes with the performance of one’s ethical duties. It might seem that if the world made no sense, every ethical obligation would also be meaningless and could not determine or direct my will. Husserl argues, however, that even “*the knowledge of the impossibility of the aim of*

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. (Hart, 1992, 286–287).

<sup>114</sup> XLII, 307: „Kann ich leben in einer ‚sinnlosen‘ Welt?“ XLII, 526: „Was können wir Menschen überhaupt tun angesichts des Schicksals und der uns alle angehenden Möglichkeit von Situationen der Verzweigung oder des totalen praktischen Zweifels, die Totalität der praktischen Möglichkeiten in Frage stellend?“ XLII, 306: „Wie aber, wenn das Leben wertlos wäre, wenn es überhaupt nicht zu einem durch mich guten werden kann, wenn, das zu erwirken, außer meiner Macht ist?“

<sup>115</sup> XLII, 322: „Der Künstler kann nicht befriedigt sein, wenn er trotz besten Willens und Strebens sein Werk misslingen sieht vermöge innerer oder äußerer Irrationalitäten.“

*my will*” would “*cripple*” my will *only* if I were a kind of “achievement machine” (*Leistungsmaschine*) designed merely to attain a particular good or realize a particular value (XLII, 309–310). He asks, for example, whether a mother who “‘knew’ that the world has ‘no meaning,’” or that “the world would end in an hour” and destroy every human value so that it would sink into a chaos without any values, would still love and care for her child for as long as possible, and answers that, for “*the right mother*,” the welfare of the child is an absolute subjective value that cannot be undermined by any external conditions (XLII, 310).

Even if the world dissolves in a heap of irrational accidents, then, the ethical subject “is justified before himself”<sup>116</sup>. He acted “to the best of his conscience and cognition” (*mit bestem Wissen und Gewissen*), he did what he had to do, and he kept the best of the attainable. Thus he is a morally good person. Therefore ethical obligations and categorical imperatives do not lose their validity for ethical subjects even if blind chance and irrational fate “govern” the world, even if the end of the world or the destruction of the earth is imminent, and even if the world becomes “a hell” (XLII, 310–311). Subjects can still fulfill their obligations by acting in accordance with them while being aware of the fact that their actions will not bring about the consequences that they expected and that motivated them to act as they did. Although their actions missed their targets, the subjects are morally “satisfied” (*befriedigt*) with themselves because they did what they were supposed to do under the circumstances.

Husserl remarks, however, that under such circumstances “I cannot count myself ‘happy’” (*glücklich*: XLII, 311). There is a tension in the notion of happiness here. One must distinguish between “self-satisfaction” (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) and “happiness” (*Glückseligkeit*). Whereas self-satisfaction is an essential element of happiness, it is not a sufficient condition for it. “Happiness is more than self-satisfaction,” Husserl argues, because, he posits, happiness entails the factual givenness of the conditions that enable the realization of my absolute personal goals, values, and ideals (XLII, 311). Consequently, in order for me to be happy, it does not suffice that I submit my whole life and its guiding ideal to a critical examination and thus make it the subject of an axiological judgment, which amounts to a premise for the conversion of my will toward a better ideal of life. In addition to this, I must also

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<sup>116</sup> XLII, 322: „In jedem Moment bleibt ihm die kategorische Forderung, und ihr tut er Genüge, wenn er das Bestmögliche erstrebt und in die Wege leitet; mag es auch misslingen, *er ist vor sich gerechtfertigt*.“

recognize an obligation in regard to the world as the field of practical possibilities in which I act.

There are two kinds of ethical obligations at stake here, the first to myself and the second to the world. The world must satisfy the basic conditions in virtue of which I can act ethically in it. Yet for Husserl this does not only mean that I must act in the world in order to render it a place in which my personal absolute values can be realized—thus overcoming practical nihilism. It also means that I must believe that such a transformation of the world is possible—thus overcoming theoretical nihilism. The conditions of the possibility for the genuine “humanization” (*Vermenschlichung*) of the world—for understanding the events of the world as a teleological progression—must be fulfilled if the human being is to live and act practically in the world<sup>117</sup>. In other words, I must “[a]ct as if I had the certainty that chance is not in principle hostile to the human being and as if I could be certain eventually to attain a good through perseverance”<sup>118</sup>.

This belief in the “positivity” of the world is not a product of philosophical reflection. Indeed, Husserl emphasizes, human beings live as if it were always possible to attain happiness although they know that the probability of attaining it is low<sup>119</sup>. He calls this presumption the “practical general thesis,” that is, the thesis that a world exists in which human life and human happiness are possible and realizable<sup>120</sup>,

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<sup>117</sup> XLII, 482: „Der Mensch kann ernstlich nur Mensch sein in einer Welt, die von ihm her sich in Einsicht teleologisch gestalten lässt, sei es auch in einem unendlichen Progressus, aber in der Gewissheit, dass es sich um eine apodiktisch gültige praktische Idee handelt. Dazu gehörte aber, dass die vorgegebene Welt von vornherein auf den Menschen hin und die von ihm geforderte Teleologie (wenn er soll in ihr echt leben können) angelegt sein <muss>, dass die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der echten Humanisierbarkeit erfüllen muss und darin ihre Wahrheit hat. Nur um dessentwillen kann er sie im Voraus praktisch bejahen, kann er den Kampf mit ihren Irrationalitäten aufnehmen, den Irrationalitäten außer ihm und in ihm selbst und seinesgleichen.“ Cf. XLII, 378 f.

<sup>118</sup> XLII, 323: „Ja, ich werde am besten tun, die Wahrscheinlichkeiten praktisch zu überwerten und so zu handeln, als ob ich die Gewissheit hätte, dass das Schicksal nicht prinzipiell menschenfeindlich ist, und als ob ich gewiss sein könnte, durch Ausharren schließlich ein so Gutes zu erreichen, dass ich hinterher mit meinem Ausharren sehr zufrieden sein könnte.“

<sup>119</sup> XLII, 382: „Die Menschen leben in einem beständigen Trug des praktischen Begehrens und Handelns. Sie leben so, als ob ein Glück (eine Befriedigung im Aufsteigen der Gütererzeugung und -erwerbung) erreichbar wäre, obschon sie doch sehen können, dass niemand dieses Glück hat und dass die Wahrscheinlichkeit eines befriedigenden Aufsteigens nicht eben groß ist.“

<sup>120</sup> XLII, 449: „[...] Voraussetzung der Positivität: Glaube, dass endgültig befriedigtes Dasein im umweltlich gerichteten Leben möglich sei. Glaube, dass in der Welt ein befriedigendes menschliches Leben durchzuführen sei, dass ‚man leben ‚könne‘, dass es sich ‚in der Welt existieren lasse‘ — man kann ‚existieren‘ (*praktische Generalthesis*). Bedingungen der Möglichkeit eines solchen Lebens.“

in analogy to the theoretical general thesis of the natural attitude that posits the existence of the world.

As the aim of Husserl's epistemology is not to negate the natural attitude (III/1, 56–99), so he also does not denounce the practical general thesis as an illusion that we need to overcome. To the contrary, the project underlying his ethical reflections is the search for the motives that underpin this ordinary belief (*Urdoxa*). These motives, however, cannot be given by experience itself, as in the case of the natural attitude. Experience does not ground my belief in the “positivity” of the world; rather, the opposite is the case. Therefore, experience notwithstanding, I must, that is, I have an ethical obligation to, believe that the world responds to basic human needs. This core belief, Husserl declares, is a rational one:

*Rational belief.* If I have the slightest real possibility that the world “complies” with human purposes, then I must take this presumption as a certainty and act accordingly. Thus I do, in any case, the best possible. Idea of God, of a world of God. *The ethical ‘as if’.* The belief that has its power from the ethical will<sup>121</sup>.

This belief is not only rational but also ethical, that is, good:

What is *theoretically reprehensible*, the overvaluation of probabilities [...], is *practically good* and therefore, but only in a practical situation, *required*. Look at what makes you strong! Believe in the world and chance! Take the world as if it were a good one [...]: Bracket the unavoidable dissatisfaction due to frequent perils and disappointments, abandon the empirical expectation that in the next categorically demanded pursuit it will happen again!<sup>122</sup>

This hypothetical imperative—note its original “if-then” structure—seems to be more than a mere piece of existential advice<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> XLII, 317 (n. 1): „*Vernunftglaube*. Habe ich die mindeste reale Möglichkeit dafür, dass die Welt menschlichen Zwecken ‚entgegenkomme,‘ so muss ich diese Vermutlichkeit wie eine Gewissheit nehmen und danach handeln. So tue ich jedenfalls das Bestmögliche. Idee Gottes, einer Gotteswelt. *Das ethische ‚als ob.‘* Der Glaube, der vom ethischen Willen her seine Kraft hat.“ We examine the role of God and “rational faith” in the next part.

<sup>122</sup> XLII, 323: „Was *theoretisch verwerflich* ist, das Überwerten der Wahrscheinlichkeiten oder gar nur leichten Vermutlichkeiten zugunsten einer empirischen Gewissheit, ist *praktisch gut* und somit aber nur in praktischer Lage *gefordert*. Blicke auf das, was dich stark macht! Glaube an die Welt und das Schicksal! Nimm es, als ob es gewiss ein gutes wäre, und lebe so, als ob du es dir schließlich zu Diensten bringen kannst, als ob du es zwingen, dir freundlich gesinnt machen kannst; lebe in dieser Gewissheit und du wirst das Beste tun! Das sagt aber: Klammere die unvermeidliche Unzufriedenheit bei Eintreten gar gehäufter Fährnisse und Enttäuschungen ein, lasse die empirische Erwartung, dass es im nächsten kategorisch geforderten Streben wieder so ergehen wird, aus!“

<sup>123</sup> In many texts of Husserliana XLII the rhetorical tone and ethical content evoke their counterparts in Marcus Aurelius' *Thoughts to Himself* (“Meditations”).



These eudaimonistic self-exhortations make clear that for Husserl the possibility of an ethical life is grounded in a practical belief that the ethical subject is obligated to accept. This approach makes ethics a matter of belief, albeit of a different kind from religious faith—even if their contents partially overlap. According to Husserl, religion and ethics are based on the belief in the teleological structure of the world as responsive to basic human needs. Religion rests on an external revelation, however, whereas ethics grounds this belief in an ethical obligation that the subject must acknowledge. Also, religion promises blessedness in a next life, whereas ethics deals with happiness in this one<sup>124</sup>. Yet, as an ethical life is a condition for happiness, so the possibility of happiness is tightly bound to the belief in a responsive world<sup>125</sup>.

All this leads to the paradoxical conclusion that at the basis of a theoretical judgment concerning the factual constitution of the world lies not empirical experience but practical volition<sup>126</sup>. As Husserl says:

I can be happy in the sense that, on the basis of a properly acquired self-trust, I can at the same time *trust the world*; I can be happy in the sense that I gain the consciousness that I belong to a world of human beings in the framework of an objective world that makes possible the infinity of ethical striving and a rational formation of the world—a formation in which humanity can come to a progressively greater possible happiness through its own work<sup>127</sup>.

*Regret.* According to Husserl, the criterion for determining whether one has achieved harmony in one's life is a particular kind of ethical emotion, namely, regret (*Reue*)<sup>128</sup>. In general, regret implies the possibility of recollecting one's past actions and of evaluating them in light of one's past or present volitions and positions. Thus I feel regret for an action that I performed in the past because I have come to regard it as not reflecting my convictions or as inconsistent with my volitions or positions, present or past.

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<sup>124</sup> We examine the role of religion in the next part.

<sup>125</sup> But, again, is the belief that the world makes sense an ethical obligation or an “existential recommendation”? In any case, such a belief is a condition of the possibility of choosing and acting morally and meaningfully in the world. If I do not believe in the meaningfulness and rationality of the world, any moral obligation loses its character as an absolute obligation and becomes a mere piece of “worldly wisdom.” Yet Husserl is talking about a belief that grounds the very possibility of ethics. As such, it should be understood as a meta-ethical belief, and the obligation involved, as a meta-ethical obligation.

<sup>126</sup> We examine the role of Husserl's “postulates of practical reason” in the next part.

<sup>127</sup> XLII, 331, translated by (Hart, 1998, 287 f.). Cf. (Roth, 1960, 162).

<sup>128</sup> XLII, 199, 240, 304–309, 454–455, 473, 492, etc.; XV, 422–424. *Remorse* can in particular instances translate *Reue*, but *regret* generally fits better. See (Wallace, 2013), for a more recent discussion of regret with respect to ethical issues.

More precisely, however, what Husserl has in mind here is a more encompassing form of regret, which does not refer merely to a single action or set of actions or beliefs. It is rather a kind of “radical and universal regret” (XLII, 492) directed toward one’s entire life and targeting one’s long-term volitions and positions<sup>129</sup>. In other words, the object of regret is the whole life of an individual, and its targets are the volitions and positions that have shaped this life thus far. Therefore I reproach myself by asking not why I did what I did, but why I wanted to do it, and I feel regret if I cannot find any rational justification for my volitions and positions. As Husserl remarks: “I have here a meaning of life [*Lebenssinn*] that I can no longer be responsible for; my previous life is radically misguided, untrue to its root” (XLII, 492). Thus a universal axiological (negative) judgment lays the foundation for a new universal will to reshape my life.

With that, the question concerning happiness assumes a radically new character. Husserl does not identify satisfaction as a positive condition such as the fulfillment of goals, wants, or irrational impulses. Rather, satisfaction in the sense of happiness indicates a harmony of the subject’s actions, volitions, and positions, and hence the negative condition of an absence of regret in the encompassing sense. Thus I am happy when I do not need to reproach myself—not with respect to singular actions that I performed in the past but with respect to the way in which I have lived my life as a whole until now: “The ‘I’ must be able to look at, survey, and appraise its entire active life in such a way that it can continually affirm in the will all the decisions that it accomplishes and has accomplished” (XLII, 487). Such affirmation requires apodictic insight of the practical kind (XLII, 487). Husserl suggests that the question concerning a happy life is a matter of whether one can live without any regret at all, and that the answer is that one cannot<sup>130</sup>.

Without claiming that our list of essential aspects of Husserl’s eudaimonism is exhaustive, we turn to the connection between his metaethics and his metaphysics.

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<sup>129</sup> This kind of regret, for Husserl, distinguishes human beings from animals. See Ms. A V 5, 14a (1927–1933): „Das Tier übt keine Kritik an seinem früheren Leben, es hat keine Reue (das Haustier ist schon ein vermenschlichtes Tier), es hat nicht hinter sich ein Leben, das der Kritik unterworfen ist und war.“

<sup>130</sup> XLII, 505: „Wie kann ein menschliches Leben so verlaufen, dass es als totales ax<iotisch>-praktisch bejahbar wäre, in dem es also keiner Reue, keiner Umkehr, keiner Preisgabe des vermeinten und erworbenen Guts bedürfte oder, wenn das <der Fall wäre>, so nur in der Weise der Korrektur, der aufsteigenden Besserung? Aber ist die Frage nicht schon beantwortet, und zwar im Sinn völliger Unmöglichkeit?“

#### 4. THE METAPHYSICS OF HAPPINESS AND BLESSEDNESS

Husserl's eudaimonism possesses existential dimensions<sup>131</sup>. Given his experiences with the *Existenzphilosophien* of Jaspers and Heidegger (V, 138–162), as well as his knowledge of the *Existenzphilosophie* of Kierkegaard (XLII, 228–235), Husserl empathizes with the struggling person who strives for self-satisfaction and happiness in a potentially meaningless world: “Can I live in a senseless world?” (XLII, 307) Positing that one cannot live, let alone happily, in a world that does not make sense (XLII, 382)<sup>132</sup>, he argues that a life lived against “*the dark horizon*” of senselessness can only be lived on the basis of a “rational faith” (*Vernunftglaube*) in a God who cares for human beings<sup>133</sup>. At one point (on 28 December 1924, to be exact), he asks how the world—with its tension between individual and collective good and evil, love and hate, success and failure—“is to be understood otherwise than under the idea of God”:

How else, than that an absolute teleology thoroughly governs all I and I-life, all consciousness, and that it expresses itself—similarly to how a personal essence does in its personal demands—in the absolute demands in the souls? *I can only be blessed, I can only be blessed in all suffering, unhappiness, in all irrationality of my surrounding world, if I believe that God exists and this world is God's world.* And if I want to hold on to the absolute ought with the whole power of my soul—and that is itself an absolute wanting—then I must absolutely believe that God exists. Faith is an absolute and highest demand<sup>134</sup>.

This is only one of a number of passages in Husserliana XLII in which Husserl recites his teleological-philosophical-theological “creed”<sup>135</sup>. Thus he poses the question: “*What must be believed, in order that the world can after all have a sense, in order that human life in it can remain rational?*” (XLII, 238) His answer, which recalls but does not reference James’s “will to believe” or Vaihinger’s “philosophy of ‘as

<sup>131</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 378–379, 393–409, 420–422, 428–432, 449–450, 495–501, 520–523, 526–527.

<sup>132</sup> For an excellent treatment of Husserl’s approach to questions of existence see (Obsieger, 2016).

<sup>133</sup> See, e.g., XLII, 169–176, 304–309.

<sup>134</sup> XLII, 203 (emphasis added): „Wie anders, als dass durch alles Ich und Ich-Leben, durch alles Bewusstsein, eine absolute Teleologie hindurchwaltet und dass sie sich — ähnlich wie ein personales Wesen in seinen personalen Forderungen — ausspricht in den absoluten Forderungen in den Seelen? *Ich kann nur selig sein, ich kann es in allem Leiden, Unglück, in aller Irrationalität meiner Umwelt nur sein, wenn ich glaube, dass Gott sei und diese Welt Gottes Welt.* Und will ich mit ganzer Kraft meiner Seele an dem absoluten Sollen festhalten — und das ist selbst ein absolutes Wollen —, dann muss ich absolut glauben, dass er sei. Der Glaube ist absolute und höchste Forderung.“

<sup>135</sup> XLII, 237–238, 254–255, 261, 407.

if”<sup>136</sup>, is an exercise in laying the transcendental conditions for a blessed life in the phenomenological sense. The fourth group of texts of Husserliana XLII contains Husserl’s ethics, the third his metaphysics. We now briefly survey his metaphysical *Weltauffassung*.

In transcendental-phenomenological metaphysics, individual human existence achieves its full genuine significance in a monadology that unfolds in a universal world teleology that finds expression in a philosophical theology<sup>137</sup>. A *monad* is the concrete unity of individual world-constituting subjectivity and its world; monads are meaning-intenders and sense-makers—they make sense of things or make things make sense (XLII, 137–159). Departing from the rationality of mental beings and the teleology of natural things, one arrives at a natural teleology with God as the entelechy of everything (XLII, 160–168). These moves require an act of “rational faith” (*Vernunftglaube*) (XLII, 169–176). Both science and philosophy are revelations of the divinity, and the revelation of the divinity is a revelation of the ideas that determine the development of humanity (XLII, 176–177). Yet there is a tension between the “natural evidence” of practical-religious consciousness and the “scientific evidence” of theoretical-technological research (XLII, 178–182). In addition, there is not only “purely scientific, purely rational theology” (via the natural light) but also “theology based on ‘irrational reasons’” (via the supernatural light or revelation); there are judgments, especially value judgments, that are based on the affects and the will; and there are cases of “collisions of values” and “conflicts of conscience” in which one must follow one’s conscience to do what one must do without conclusive evidence or absolute certainty—so that faith in God is an ethically required faith in an absolute teleology (XLII, 183–203). There is a natural development of “world-apprehensions” and of the teleological “world-apprehension” (*Weltauffassung*) (XLII, 204–211). “Genuine humanity” emerges as the absolute ideal of transcendental intersubjectivity, and approximation to this goal is desirable and possible (XLII, 212–217). The course of discovery of universal teleology is a course of total constitution from the beginnings (XLII, 218–224). The human being is not only directed toward reason but also develops in levels of rationality (XLII, 225–227). There is not only religious teleology but also rational teleology; while the rise of the modern scientific worldview has undermined the *Bodenständigkeit* that comes from religion, a new *Bodenständigkeit* comes from philosophy of existence and a new metaphysics (XLII,

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<sup>136</sup> See (James, 1896; Vaihinger, 1911).

<sup>137</sup> This is the trajectory of the Third Group of texts in Husserliana XLII (137–263).

228–235). With respect to the possibility of a personal relationship between humanity and divinity, the individual human being can live nearer to or farther away from God, and the difference between the two ways of life is partly a function of divine grace (XLII, 235–236). There is not only a scientific-teleological way of observing the world but also a non-scientific-teleological way, and one must ask what one must believe in order that the world may make sense (XLII, 236–238). Not only reason but also the affects and the will are sources of correctness and genuineness, and this distinction is relevant for the concept of world teleology (XLII, 238–242). Yet the rational human being retains ontological primacy in the constitution and understanding of the world in its historical teleology (XLII, 243–246). There is a parallel between the turning inward of prayer and that of phenomenology; both are personal but neither is private (XLII, 246–247). In terms of justification, the absolute, adequate, and apodictic apprehension of the teleology of the whole world remains an evidentiary ideal (XLII, 248–258). The solution to the problem of the relationship between philosophy and theology is philosophical theology as the culmination of philosophy; confessional theology follows and employs philosophy (XLII, 259–263).

Given Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and his strenuous efforts to make of philosophy a rigorous science seeking absolute, adequate, and apodictic evidence, this entire "cosmology" (XLII, 515–519) may seem surprising, even shocking. Some will claim that "it is not phenomenology," but others will follow Husserl's lead from transcendental phenomenology to phenomenological metaphysics<sup>138</sup>. The real question concerns the evidence for Husserl's monadological-teleological-theological world-apprehension (XLII, 447–448). He says, of course, that he is proposing a metaphysics that rests on transcendental-phenomenological *Besinnungen* and engaging not in mysticism but in metaphysics (XLII, 158). It seems to come down, however, *more* to "postulates of practical reason" in Kant's sense<sup>139</sup> than to "faith seeking understanding" in Augustine's or Anselm's<sup>140</sup>. Yet there are differences in both cases. Husserl's *metaethics* is *embedded* in a *metaphysics* that rests on the "rational faith" that the world makes sense because there is One who makes it make sense, although this *Vernunftglaube* does not relieve us of the task

<sup>138</sup> Cf. (Marion, 1989, 1997, 2001).

<sup>139</sup> XLII, 217: „[...] hat Kant nicht in seiner Postulatenlehre, obschon keineswegs in der Form, die er ihr gegeben hat, ein Tiefes und Wahres im Auge gehabt?“ Cf. (Kant, 1974, 140–153). See also (Loidolt, 2010).

<sup>140</sup> See, e.g., (Tullius, 2015). Husserl's theology is remarkably free of religious doctrine and dogma. Cf. (Held, 2010).

of trying to make sense of it on our own. If the world were meaningless, if history showed no progress, if goods and values had no chance, if striving for happiness were futile, then “*the knowledge of the impossibility of the goal* [of producing something of lasting value] *would have to cripple my will*”—*but only if I were* “a kind of performance-machine”, which, Husserl insists, I am not<sup>141</sup>. The metaethical-metaphysical connection plays a defining role in Husserl’s phenomenology of happiness. In this regard, it becomes evident that his phenomenology of happiness is not presuppositionless, and that this does not necessarily speak against it insofar as from the beginning of the phenomenological movement “the principle of presuppositionlessness” was formulated as the standard of “scientificity” for “*epistemological investigations*”<sup>142</sup>. There are limit problems of phenomenology because there are limit phenomena and human experiences of them and because phenomenology does not shy away from the investigation of such phenomena and experiences. Rigorous investigations of limit problems also respect “the *principle of all principles*”<sup>143</sup>, according to which the investigative intuitions conform to the givennesses within the limitations of their manners of givenness.

## 5. CONCLUSION FROM HAPPINESS TO BLESSEDNESS

Husserliana XLII provides primary sources for understanding Husserl’s eudaimonism. Other Husserliana volumes contain remarks on *Glück* or *Glückseligkeit*<sup>144</sup>, but few mention *eudaimonia*<sup>145</sup>. References to *eudaimonia* are also rare in Husserliana XLII. Yet they carry weight beyond their number<sup>146</sup>. This is a philological fact with a philosophical point. In every passage of Husserliana XLII in which Husserl writes of *eudaimonia*, namely, he emphasizes that it is “an infinite object” or “goal” (XLII, 252), that its attainability and sustainability are conditional and problematic (XLII, 382), that “the impossibility of Eudaimonia” is a presupposition for the liberation of the human being toward blessedness (XLII, 469), and that *eudaimonia* requires *Selbstbesinnung und Weltbesinnung* (XLII, 515).

<sup>141</sup> XLII, 309–310. See also (Römer, 2011).

<sup>142</sup> This aspect of the principle is often neglected or forgotten. See XIX/1, 24–29 (emphasis added).

<sup>143</sup> III/1, 51. There is no apriori conflict between the method applied and the matter analyzed.

<sup>144</sup> XXVII, 85; XXVIII, 411; XXXVII, 38, 207.

<sup>145</sup> XXVIII, 11; XXXVII, 77–78.

<sup>146</sup> See again XLII, 252, 382, 469, 515.

So Husserl can be diffident about human happiness: “Thus the human being lives, all in all, an unhappy life [...]”<sup>147</sup>. Yet the pursuit of happiness is, like the pursuit of wisdom, “an infinite task”<sup>148</sup>, for its potential value does not depend on its perfect achievement. And striving to be “happier” can get in the way of being happy: “The better is the enemy of the good” (XLII, 281).

Our analysis of the roles of chance and destiny in Husserl’s eudaimonism demonstrates the extent to which he views *eudaimonia* as fragile. Yet we have also emphasized how his descriptions of happiness feature virtue as a stabilizing force in its pursuit and achievement. *Tugend*, which has been the focus of much of the literature on the relation between phenomenology and ethics<sup>149</sup>, plays a prominent role in the texts of Husserliana XLII. Again, a case in point is the foundational Text No. 24 (XLII, 297–333), in which Husserl argues that happiness, self-satisfaction, and virtue are so related that there can be no happiness without self-satisfaction, but no self-satisfaction without virtue, and therefore no happiness without virtue<sup>150</sup>. This text demonstrates the basic place of virtue in Husserl’s concept of *eudaimonia* and shows that he does not underestimate the importance of morality for the phenomenology of happiness. Husserl does not have to be a virtue ethicist in the traditional Western sense for virtue to play a key role in his concept of happiness.

To understand Husserl’s eudaimonism more fully, however, one must also examine more deeply than this paper can several key ideas that are inseparable from his concept of happiness, for example, evil (*das Böse*)<sup>151</sup>, God („*unendliches Glück*“)<sup>152</sup>, and death or human finitude—for how can I be happy when I know that I am going to die or when my loved one does die<sup>153</sup>? There also remains the question concerning the connection between Husserl’s “rational faith” in human beings’ prospects for temporary happiness in this life and his reflective diffidence about, even studied indifference toward, their potential for eternal blessedness in a next—and all that the

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<sup>147</sup> XXXV, 44: „So lebt der Mensch alles in allem ein unseliges Leben [...]“

<sup>148</sup> VI, 73, 319, 323–326, 336, 338–339, 341, 345.

<sup>149</sup> See, e.g., (Drummond, 2013, 2014; Hermberg & Gyllenhammer, 2013).

<sup>150</sup> XLII, 311, 316, 329–333 (cf. 198).

<sup>151</sup> VIII, 354–355; XLII, 168, 228, 318, 374, 407.

<sup>152</sup> XLII, 166–168. Perhaps “Husserl’s God” reveals himself better not in such works as *Ideas I* (III/1, 89–90, 92, 109–110, 115, 124–125, 175, 350–351) but in Husserl’s correspondence. See Husserl to Erich Przywara, 15 July 1932 (BW VII, 237); Husserl to Daniel Feuling, 30 March 1933 (BW VII, 88); Husserl to Gustav Albrecht, 22 December 1935 (BW IX, 124). Cf. XXXIX, 167 (November 1933), and XLII, xxii, fn. 6, lxxv, fn. 3, lxxvi, fn. 1–2, lxxv, fn. 2, lxxvii–lxxviii, fn. 3.

<sup>153</sup> XLII, 393–399, 408–413, 420–422, 495–501, 508.

latter involves: religious piety, divine benevolence, and an odd kind of “impersonal immortality” that many people of traditional faith will find unsatisfying<sup>154</sup>. Husserl, like Aristotle, displays little interest in life after death. The place to be happy is here, the time is now, and the question is how.

Finally, it is a serious question whether Husserl solves the problem of what makes values valuable and goods good<sup>155</sup>. What is a value? What is a good? What makes a value valuable? What makes a good good? What makes the highest good—happiness or blessedness—the highest good? Aristotle and Kant, who also sought answers to these questions, were doing not only ethics but also metaethics. In many texts of Husserliana XLII, Husserl too is doing not only ethics but also metaethics. The key to his phenomenological clarification of the goodness of goods and the value of values appears to be *an axiological application of his concept of the constitution of meaning or sense*, a practical, ethical application which is implicit in the *Logical Investigations*<sup>156</sup> and explicit in texts of Husserliana XLII<sup>157</sup>—but which must also remain the horizon of this paper and the focus of another.

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<sup>154</sup> XV, 608–610; XXXIV, 27, 471; XLII, 154, 261, 324, 405–406, 429.

<sup>155</sup> See, e.g., (Schuhmann, 1991; Peucker, 2011).

<sup>156</sup> XIX/1, 401–410, 745–747; XX/2, 417–436.

<sup>157</sup> To restrict the search to the constitution of values: XLII, 172, 181, 197–198, 214, 224, 241–242, 249–250, 270–279, 332, 334–335, 337, 357–358, 381–382, 424–449, 460–461, 463–466.



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#### ADDENDA: UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS OF HUSSERL

- A V 5: Anthropologie, Psychologie mit Beilagen zu den Amsterdamer Vorlesungen. Menschliche Umwelt (“Lebenswelt”)—Welt der Personen. Erfahrung und Praxis. Praktische Tradition, das “Gewohnheitsmäßige”—Aufbau der Normalitäten (1927–1933).
- F I 24: Formale Ethik und Probleme der ethischen Vernunft (1909–1923).
- F I 28: Freiburger Vorlesungen zur Einleitung in die Ethik (1920–1924).
- F I 40: Wintersemester 1919/20. Vorlesungen über Einleitung in die Philosophie, systematisch [Der erste Stuck stammt aus den Vorlesungen über Einleitung 1916 u. 1918] (1916–1920).