

GERMANY'S METAPHYSICAL WAR. REFLECTIONS ON WAR BY TWO REPRESENTATIVES  
OF GERMAN PHILOSOPHY: MAX SCHELER AND PAUL NATORP

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INTRODUCTION. PHILOSOPHERS AND WORLD WAR I. SCHELER AND NATORP AS EXEMPLARS OF THE GERMAN "MANDARIN" CLASS. GERMAN WAR PHILOSOPHIES

The onset of the world war in 1914 produced a wide range of reactions from the intelligentsia of the countries at war. In Germany it was especially the *philosophers* who felt called upon to explain the meaning of the war in their own domain; their reaction will be the topic of this paper. There are many scholarly works that deal with the general public reaction to the outbreak of the war on the part of the intelligentsia<sup>1</sup>, but less with those thinkers who professed particular "war philosophies." Here I will concentrate particularly on the publications of two important representatives of German philosophy, Max Scheler (1874-1928) and Paul Natorp (1854-1924). As I will try to show their "war philosophies" present two distinct but paradigmatic tendencies of explaining war in German philosophy, more generally of making war a philosophical issue. It is hence justified to juxtapose both thinkers in this common attempt.<sup>2</sup> As ideological as these writings may be, I will endeavor to judge them on philosophical grounds. In the concluding section I will briefly discuss the question whether these "war philosophies" were truly *ideologies*, perhaps necessarily so.

In general, the war had been perceived, even welcomed, as an international wake-up call with respect to competing political systems. The war was also about asserting a nation's *intellectual* superiority. Not only countries and their peoples were at war; but also, the war was one of ideas and rivaling political and, *a fortiori*, philosophical systems. The war was a war of ideologies; but behind ideologies stand, to wit, ideas, i.e., philosophical concepts. It is hence not surprising that especially in a country such as Germany—a country rich with philosophical tradition around 1900—the war would become a prime topic of philosophical interest.<sup>3</sup> Hardly any professional philosopher did *not* voice a decisive opinion about the war, even those who did not publish.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, the philosophers' explanation of the war

<sup>1</sup> Especially the works by Ringer 1969, Lübke 1974 and Flasch 2000 present overall excellent studies, yet with very different emphases.

<sup>2</sup> Lembeck 1997 has also compared Scheler and Natorp in their war philosophies. My reading will, however, be quite different from Lembeck's. I will discuss Lembeck's text subsequently.

<sup>3</sup> The war was also a topic of discussion in France and England. In France, its spokespersons were no lesser philosophers than Henri Bergson and Émile Boutroux, in England J.W. Allen and G.K. Chesterton. For a summary of their ideas cf. Lübke 1974, pp. 171-176.

<sup>4</sup> This goes, e.g., for Edmund Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological movement. Interestingly, he felt more drawn to Natorp's war philosophy than to that of his colleague Scheler. Husserl writes to Natorp on June 29, 1918, upon reading Natorp's *Deutscher Weltberuf*, unequivocally endorsing Natorp's work (Husserl 1994, p. 138): "I can completely take up without any alienation what you have clarified as the meaning of the development of the world, as a true unfolding of God and world creation in subjectivity [...]." (All translations into English are the author's.) Furthermore, Flasch has collected the statements of German philosophers and even

was immediately linked to a given philosopher's standpoint. What interested many philosophers were not so much the reasons for the outbreak of the war, but rather war as a philosophical topic *per se*. Was war a special, and unwelcome, state of affairs or was it part of the "essence" of life itself? Is the war an inherently bad thing or can one make the case for a just and "good" war, and how could one justify this? Is war or strife, as already Heraclitus claimed, the "father of all things"?<sup>5</sup> Those were the kinds of questions upon which those philosophers who partook in the flurry of publications in the time of the war reflected. To be sure, the degree of "aloofness," of philosophizing in the Ivory Tower, varied. While some, like Rudolf Eucken, gave fiery speeches to mainly non-philosophical audiences, others, like Natorp, were intent on not getting their hands dirty in the daily business of warfare and politics but preferred an "unparticipating" standpoint.<sup>6</sup> In any case, it is remarkable that in Germany especially philosophers felt that they had to contribute to commenting on the war. Obviously, they were serving a demand: many of these books sold well over the course of the war and even beyond.<sup>7</sup>

There were certainly more popular figures within the philosophical scene of the time than Scheler and Natorp, fashionable figures such as Rudolf Eucken and Ernst Troeltsch, i.e., in the case of Eucken, philosophers who deliberately *left* the Ivory Tower and felt compelled to "become active." Both Eucken and Troeltsch had an active following and each gave many highly attended public lectures and turned out an impressive amount of war literature.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, there are good reasons for deciding to focus on our two philosophers who *as philosophers* are certainly not less known, quite to the contrary. One of the reasons for this focus is that, precisely as philosophers, the level of their philosophical reflection by far exceeds that of more popular figures who fed to the masses, precisely because the former did not make extreme concessions to popular appreciation. Scheler and Natorp were decidedly *not* so-called "*Popularphilosophen*" but very much maintained the formal air of their profession as university teachers. Their reflections are decidedly more "philosophical" than others. But more importantly, they represent two of the dominant philosophical schools in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Scheler was a reputed

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tried to categorize their intellectual tendencies (cf. Flasch 2000, esp. pp. 227 ff. and 259 ff.). All in all, until 2000 he has collected over 13,000 titles of publications (cf. *ibid.*, p. 11)!

<sup>5</sup> This famous fragment of Heraclitus, *pólemos patèr pantôn* (fragment 53 Diels/Kranz), was quoted oftentimes by "war philosophers," especially Scheler. We shall return to this issue in the discussion of Scheler's war philosophy below.

<sup>6</sup> It is thus highly interesting to note that *Scheler* fiercely attacks the stance of the "unparticipating observer," a stance that his phenomenological colleague Husserl declared as the only position from which to truly do philosophy after having broken with the everyday "natural attitude." Cf. *Hua*. VI, p. 242.

<sup>7</sup> Strangely enough, some of these books were read even after the second world war, perhaps to recapture the enthusiasm of Germanness in the post-war period. If this is any indication at all, the version of Natorp's *Deutscher Weltberuf*, which the author was able to retrieve in an antiquariate, was purchased by the original owners in 1957, three years after the German national soccer team won the world championship—to many this event is now seen as Germany's first new boost of self-confidence after the war.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview over these activities cf. Lübke 1974, esp. pp. 171 ff., and Flasch 2000, pp. 15 ff. It was actually also the protestant clergy that partook heavily in transmitting war philosophies and ideologies to the people. The clergy, in this sense, popularized many philosophical doctrines. This is the thesis of Luft 1966.

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member of the “Phenomenological Movement,”<sup>9</sup> a “school” that had been inaugurated by Edmund Husserl and that had, by 1914, grown to be the main challenger of the other school of “imperial stance”<sup>10</sup>; namely, Neo-Kantianism. One of the main figures in Neo-Kantianism was undoubtedly Paul Natorp, besides Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer a representative of the “Marburg School” of Neo-Kantianism.<sup>11</sup> Both Scheler and Natorp embody the two dominant philosophical tendencies in Germany around the time of the First War. Since both schools differ significantly in their philosophical character—their methods and scopes are sometimes perceived as opposites<sup>12</sup>—their strategies of explaining and dealing with the war in the framework of their philosophical “systems” will also differ significantly.

In general both Scheler and Natorp are outstanding representatives of what Fritz Ringer has famously called the “Mandarin class” of German intelligentsia,<sup>13</sup> more specifically the “German academic humanists and social scientists.”<sup>14</sup> In a larger context, the specifically philosophical contributions of Scheler and Natorp will also have to be assessed in the context of the “German Mandarins,” a group they were decidedly part of. The overall feeling of the Mandarins was “that they were living through a profound crisis, a ‘crisis of culture,’ of ‘learning,’ of ‘values,’ or of the ‘spirit.’”<sup>15</sup> As Ringer shows, this feeling began to form already in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only to become intensified in the time of war. The term “Crisis,” thus, was not only a term that was ubiquitous in the confusing interwar period and after 1933, but came to be employed heavily already in the time of the First World War. “Crisis” was an abbreviation for the situation as such. Many welcomed the war as a “cleansing” of culture and civilization that had become polluted and poisoned. The war was but the tip of the iceberg of the overall crisis in politics, science and culture at large. It was *therefore* not just the war but the cultural situation as such that required a philosophical interpretation, an assessment that would also lead the way out of the crisis of modern mankind. This is why the discussion of the war could open up the debate towards a general “renewal” of culture, and this is why philosophers were needed to tackle such grand issues. Remarkably, the trope of renewal was in all cases connected to the special fate of the German

<sup>9</sup> The main publishing organ of the Phenomenological Movement, the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, was co-edited by Husserl, Scheler and Alexander Pfänder (Munich).

<sup>10</sup> Habermas 1987, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> The other “stronghold” of Neo-Kantianism were located in Heidelberg and Freiburg—the “Southwest School,” whose most distinguished members were Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert and Emil Lask.

<sup>12</sup> It was the members of the respective schools themselves who perceived themselves to be in opposition to the other school. Especially Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, viewed his fact-oriented phenomenology in opposition to Neo-Kantian idealism. Heidegger’s scathing critiques of the Neo-Kantians in his Marburg lectures of the 1920s are well-known as well. However, Husserl later, after his turn to transcendental idealism in 1913, found the opposition to Neo-Kantianism less severe. Cf. Crowell 2001, esp. pp. 3 ff. and 23 ff., who has argued in this manner of opposition between both schools. In a recent article, Luft has tried to argue that the phenomenological and Neo-Kantian methods are not incompatible but rather reciprocal (Luft 2004). To discuss this interesting question lies beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>13</sup> Ringer 1969. Cf. the Introduction (pp. 1-13) for a characterization of the “Mandarin type.” Cf. also Habermas’ discussion of Ringer’s thesis, Habermas 1987.

<sup>14</sup> Ringer 1969, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Ringer 1969, p. 3.

people—even, as Natorp insisted, after the defeat.<sup>16</sup> This was owed, in the perception of philosophers such as Scheler and Natorp, to the great tradition of German philosophy that had peaked, and eclipsed, with the great systems of German Idealism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were, however, quite different strands of German philosophy to which both latched on in their assessment of the crisis and its overcoming.

Both tactics of explaining war identify themselves with essentially opposing philosophical tendencies that were present in the philosophical scene in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany. Part of the self-understanding of German philosophy entailed its general opposition to French and, more importantly, English philosophy. Whereas France and England<sup>17</sup> were nations of unsystematic, rhapsodic and “empiristical” philosophy, only Germany could rightfully claim to be the land of “true” philosophy, i.e., philosophy as metaphysical idealism, and only as such a true heir of philosophy since its inception in ancient Greece.<sup>18</sup> What both Scheler and Natorp have in *common*, thus, is that both perceive the war as a “metaphysical” entity. Only a treatment within a philosophy that subscribes to *metaphysics* can claim to explain the war in any satisfactory manner. The world war is not a merely contingent event in the political landscape of Europe and the world at large; and it cannot merely be explained by considering, e.g., the political, economical and military constellations in the countries at war. The war is, rather, a metaphysical event of world-historical dimension that has come about with a “metaphysical necessity.” Only a *philosophical* reflection on the war can truly comprehend this event. And, true philosophy is at home only in Germany. This was, in short, the general reasoning.

In the following I shall discuss Scheler's and Natorp's philosophical interpretations of the phenomenon of war, limiting myself to their philosophical arguments involved in assessing and comprehending this phenomenon. Both are not really interested in explaining the political origins of the war, its multifarious reasons and motives. They would both agree, presumably, that historians, political scientists and sociologists are much better suited to explain precisely *why and how this specific war* came about. As specialists for generalities, philosophers traditionally do not bother with these kinds of “mundane” things, but that is also not what war, to them, was about. They attempt to grasp the war in its “essence.” This

<sup>16</sup> Natorp 1918/II, p. 202.

<sup>17</sup> Both Scheler and Natorp mainly take issue with the “English spirit” and not so much with France. This might have been due to the factual war situation itself, in that many Germans hoped to win the French as allies. This is why, in the following discussion, French philosophy is essentially out of the picture. It also enables the reconstruction to be clearer in presenting the opposition between (British) realism/Empiricism and (German) metaphysics/idealism.

<sup>18</sup> In his interesting account of the history of how pragmatism was received on the European continent, Joas (Joas 1999, p. 124) writes: “Der Erste Weltkrieg selbst erschwerte dann jede sachliche Auseinandersetzung mit dem Denken eines Kriegsgegners noch weiter. Das nationalistische Fieber stieg in den Jahren vor dem Krieg immer mehr und ließ den freien geistigen Austausch zwischen den Nationen immer mehr als suspekt erscheinen, bis der Ausbruch des Krieges bei allen beteiligten Seiten zur Entstehung hemmungslos einseitiger Darstellungen der Geistesgeschichte der Kriegsgegner und der Herleitung des Kriegsverhaltens aus diesem ‚Geiste‘ führte.“ This is especially interesting, because he goes on to make a convincing case that there are “hidden” pragmatic elements in Scheler as well (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 125 ff.). In other words, nationalistic clichés cemented the view of fundamental philosophical “styles” as being bound to specific nations, yet, in their philosophical work, philosophers such as Scheler were closer to the enemy than they thought!

means, however, that philosophers should, according to their own “job description,” leave behind national biases and prejudices. A truly philosophical attitude is incompatible with nationalistic chauvinism. It is known that most philosophers did not adhere to this ideal and in many respects remained caught up in the muck of their nationalistic and chauvinistic biases. It will thus be an important question as to how philosophers such as Scheler and Natorp reconciled this blatant contradiction. Although they both have a very different view of “essences,” they overcome this seeming contradiction by simply declaring the ideal over the real, while claiming they can know the essence of things. This raises the interesting question as to philosophy's relation to ideology. If ideology is about justifying practices and actions based on certain putative premises that a certain group of people wants to implement, then a neo-Pragmatist reading of philosophy—one that is famously put forward in Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*—could make the case that there is nothing else but ideology, that philosophy is nothing but one discourse to justify social practices. If this were really true, these war philosophies discussed here would be the best test case for this claim and would also offer a fresh look on these authors. Lamentably, scholars of both figures usually pass over their war publications in ashamed silence.<sup>19</sup> Yet this ignoring of their war philosophies is justified neither historically nor philosophically, the most obvious reason being that both Scheler and Natorp *themselves* took these writings as direct emanations from their philosophies. The problem here is their view of philosophy as an a-temporal, ideal enterprise, with normative claims deriving from these ideals. The problem for these philosophers is precisely reality—that this wretched thing simply refuses to live up to their high ideals!

In a time such as ours, when again issues of a “just war,” preemptive strikes, the “war of cultures” and cultural superiority are discussed vigorously, one ought to perhaps pay more attention to what philosophers said about the first war of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, biased or even blinded by national enthusiasm and chauvinism as they might have been.<sup>20</sup> Clearly these writings are tedious and downright offensive to the modern reader, but this does not mean that

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<sup>19</sup> Concerning Scheler, there is hardly any discussion of his war philosophy in Scheler scholarship, and those that discuss these writings for the most part try to exculpate him (cf. Lembeck 1997 and Schneider 1995). Frings (Frings 2003, pp. 162 ff.) discusses the topic of war in the context of Scheler's analysis of drives. While he points out that these analyses are “very likely [!] motivated by feelings of a pervasive German resentment of envy of the expansion of the British Empire” (ibid., p. 162), he then goes on to discuss Scheler's views on war completely neutrally, as it were “philosophically,” without any view on his *specific* war literature. The same situation is present with respect to Natorp with the big exception of Jegelka's study (Jegelka 1992), who even makes the attempt to integrate Natorp's war writings into his overall interpretation of Natorp's political and pedagogical philosophy. I shall discuss these contributions subsequently.

<sup>20</sup> For a good overview of current discussions of war, cf. Coppieters & Fotion 2002. In the introduction (by Fotion, Coppieters and Appressyan) these authors discuss the general tendencies of thought on war and place them into the categories of realism, militarism and pacifism. They themselves profess the so-called “just war theory” with its categories of “*jus ad bellum*” (justified reasons for going to war) and “*jus in bello*” (just behavior in war). It would be an interesting task to compare the war philosophies of Scheler and Natorp in this context and assess where they would fit and whether they have other arguments to further either theory. The most interesting question here, it seems to me, would be whether or not Scheler and Natorp believe the war having anything to do with *morality*. This would be, however, the topic of another paper. (I thank Nick Fotion for pointing me to this anthology.)

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one should not try to learn lessons from this episode of our Western culture. Presenting these ideas philosophically—and judging them on this basis—rather than evaluating them from the stance of an arrogant, all-knowing moral high ground, is the purpose of this paper.

## 1. GERMAN PHILOSOPHY AGAINST THE REST OF THE WORLD: METAPHYSICS VERSUS EMPIRICISM AND SKEPTICISM. RATIONALISM AND IRRATIONALISM IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

Before discussing the tendencies within German philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> on the verge to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one has to appreciate the larger picture, as least as it was perceived by philosophers in the then-contemporary Germany. This account will have to remain sketchy and is only meant to give a general impression of the European “scene.”

Opposed to Germany's supposed inherent “metaphysical” or “idealistic” tendency there stood, as the traditional counterpart, the Empiricism ascribed mainly to the philosophers on the British Isles. This movement goes back to the British Empiricists of the early modern period, Locke, Hume, Hobbes. Already Kant viewed the philosophers on the British Isles in this manner.<sup>21</sup> The battle in Modern philosophy was that between, roughly, Empiricism and metaphysics, or realism and idealism.<sup>22</sup> German philosophy after Kant perceived itself as the heir of ancient Greek (Platonic) metaphysics, now dressed in the gown of modernity under the title of transcendental or absolute idealism.<sup>23</sup> German Idealism, especially Hegel, is the strongest representative of this tendency. Germany's world reputation in philosophy is based on the philosophical work in this time, i.e., approximately between 1780 and 1830.<sup>24</sup> In many presentations of the history of philosophy Hegel is *the* philosopher of the German “spirit,” both because he stood at end point of a philosophical development that had started with Kant and was continued by Fichte and Schelling *and* because he completed a “metaphysical” development that was perceived as inherently “German.”

Tersely put, Hegel introduces a *teleological* element into the development of the history of philosophy, which is, indeed, a history of *reason itself*. History is first and foremost a development of human spirit (*Geist*) in its dialectical development from thesis, antithesis, to a new (syn)thesis, and it is a development that has a clear direction and reaches its endpoint in nothing other than Hegel's philosophy itself. Hegel's philosophy purports to “sublate” all traditional philosophies. Western Philosophy celebrates its homecoming in Hegel's system

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Kant's *Prolegomena*, where he gives these characteristics. To be sure, one ought also to remember Kant's positive assessment especially of Hume who, in the famous phrase, awoke Kant from his “dogmatic slumber.”

<sup>22</sup> I do not use the traditional term “rationalism” here because I reserve that for the two tendencies within Germany, rationalism vs. irrationalism. Moreover, this characterization is by no means my invention but summarizes a traditional, if clichéd, reading. Cf., e.g., Husserl's reconstruction of Western philosophy in his historical lecture survey in Hua. VII, *First Philosophy, Part I, Critical History of Ideas*. Also Cassirer's reconstruction of modernity in his four-volume study on the “problem of knowledge” describes modern philosophy as a constant further refinement of idealism vis-à-vis Empiricism, realism etc.

<sup>23</sup> One would have to consult the famous histories of philosophy by W. Windelband and K. Fischer to verify this claim.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. also Pinkard's study who reconstructs German philosophy between 1760 and 1860 similarly. He also sees the main tenet of German philosophy in this period in idealism, cf. esp. the conclusion (Pinkard 2002, pp. 356-67).

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itself. Needless to say, such high-flying ambition produced a plethora of criticism. Indeed, the further development of 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, the so-called “decline” or “collapse of German Idealism,” can be seen as a critical renunciation of Hegel's system. Thus, the further development of philosophy in Germany can be seen as a critical demolition of Hegel's philosophy which, however, *remained* committed to viewing philosophy as metaphysics. Thus, although most philosophers after Hegel were mostly critical of the latter, they were *nevertheless* mostly in opposition to Empiricism. The battle *within* German “metaphysical” philosophy was, rather, a battle over rationalism and irrationalism.

The main point of contention was that Hegel's system was allegedly overly rational, i.e., that it had an overly positive view of reason in history. Hegel's teleology was a philosophical wish, nothing more. There were several suggestions or candidates for what was the “true” motor of history: blind will (Schopenhauer), human labor (Marx), pre-rational life or will to power (Kierkegaard, Nietzsche). All of these can be subsumed under the title of “irrational” forces that govern the world rather than reason. The true *movens* or *agens* of history are irrational powers incomprehensible to human reason, and if they can be, human reason certainly cannot alter the course of the world. The strongest philosophical current these tendencies flowed into is the movement of philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*) around the turn of the century. Its overall aim was to open philosophy up to these irrational forces in life that escape philosophical reflection. Philosophy can reflect upon this brute force of life and can at best *try* to make sense of it, but it would be ridiculous to believe that the world behaves according to reason—the outbreak of the war is the best proof for this assessment. One has to embrace life itself and not let it dissipate in detached, philosophical reflection.

Opposed to this there still stood those who believed in the project of idealism begun with Kant, of laying an ultimate foundation of knowledge in reason. Granted that Hegel had gone too far with his absolute idealism, but the main intentions of Kant's critique of reason were still valid. Giving up this ideal would lead to irresponsible relativisms and skepticisms. Hence, as of ca. 1880, there came the call: “back to Kant!” The Neo-Kantian movement<sup>25</sup> became the main philosophical movement in academic philosophy in Germany. One reason for its dominance in the philosophical mainstream was that it was mainly represented by philosophers who were university professors, i.e., respected members of society, as opposed to figures such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who had mocked academic philosophy. One character trait that the Neo-Kantians professed was their philosophical tendency to hold steadfast to the ideal of *reason*, to the project of *Enlightenment*. Philosophy is about rationality if it is to be called philosophy at all, whereas thinkers such as Nietzsche did not even care to call their attempts “philosophy.” Thus, in a broad sense of the term, the Neo-Kantians were *rationalists*, whereas most other influential philosophers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were “irrationalists,” i.e., they did not believe in the global, historical importance of reason. *Both* tendencies, however, still conceived of their attempts in opposition to Empiricism and the ensuing skepticism. Despite the stark oppositions within German philosophy, they still believed Empiricism to be the downfall of philosophy.

The point of this narrative was to lay out in broad strokes the intellectual matrix in German philosophy around the turn of the century. My claim is that both Scheler and Natorp can be classified into the group of irrationalists and rationalists, respectively, while

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<sup>25</sup> The development of this movement can be traced in detail in Köhnke 1986.

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concurrently viewing themselves in *opposition* to Empiricism, which was seen as an inherently *British* phenomenon. Thus, while both irrationalists and rationalists were opposed to each other, they still had a common enemy, and since this enemy came from across the Channel, it was, in the end, a battle between England and Germany over the superiority of their respective philosophical systems. Whereas Natorp, as a distinguished member of Neo-Kantianism, remained committed to rationalism and its teleological conception of reason, Scheler embraced the philosophy of life and its irrational tendencies. Both philosophical outlooks have an essential influence on how to view war. As “metaphysicians,” however, both Scheler and Natorp saw in the war a metaphysical force at work that could not be explained by politics, history, economy, or science; in short, by any form of *Empiricism*. War demanded a truly philosophical treatment.

## 2. SCHELER AND THE GENIUS OF THE GERMAN WAR (1915)

Max Scheler's *Der Genius des Krieges und der Deutsche Krieg* (*The Genius of War and the German War*), written in a frenzy of enthusiasm immediately after the outbreak of the war and dedicated to “my friends in the field”<sup>26</sup>, was published in the early days of 1915. It is a significant tome of almost 450 pages. In the “passionate activity of the heart” that enraptured him, Scheler admits, more than once did he have to set aside the pen; so much was he given over to this ecstatic mood in the early days of the war.<sup>27</sup> Although Scheler's book is composed in a passionate and high-spirited style, it is nevertheless intended as a philosophical work and heavily draws from elements of his philosophy laid out in publications prior to 1914, most importantly his efforts to establish a material value ethics. Before I go on to discuss Scheler's views on war, I will briefly summarize Scheler's philosophical standpoint.<sup>28</sup>

Scheler was a phenomenologist. As such, he utilized the defining trait of phenomenology, namely, its method. The phenomenological method as it was presented first by Husserl in his ground-breaking *Logical Investigations* (1900/01) can be characterized as a methodology of “seeing essences.” Scheler in principle took over this method but applied it to regions beyond the scope that Husserl had envisioned, most importantly moral philosophy. Husserl's basic idea was that with the method of “eidetic intuition” one could “see” the essence of a specific object, and phenomenology's task is to *describe* this essence thoroughly and in an unprejudiced way. The specific exemplar which one sees before one's (material or mental) eyes is merely an exemplar of this essence. Although Husserl denied this, his phenomenology was oftentimes identified as a modern form of Platonism.<sup>29</sup> Phenomenology is hence an eidetic science of how things appear to human beings when we experience the

<sup>26</sup> Scheler 1915, front page. It should be noted that several philosophers died in the trenches of the war, e.g., Emil Lask and Rudolf Clemens, and several others served as soldiers or worked in field hospitals.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 2 of the unpaginated “Vorrede.”

<sup>28</sup> Cf. also Flasch's account of Scheler's biography and his helpful but somewhat over-simplifying summary of his philosophy (Flasch 2000, pp. 103 ff.).

<sup>29</sup> It was no other than the Neo-Kantianism Plato expert Paul Natorp who proposed this reading of Husserl's method.

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world. It is a descriptive doctrine of essences, hence a method of description.<sup>30</sup> Scheler took this method to the realm of moral behavior and ethics, utilizing the methodological tools of phenomenology to describe the essences of morality, i.e., values. Scheler's material ethics of value strived to describe values as those essences that govern moral life. Moral actions are exemplary instantiations of values as the essences of certain acts (e.g., "goodness"). The goal of his ethics is to furnish a compendium of these values and describe their essence and their respective hierarchies.<sup>31</sup> For Scheler, opposed to Kant's ethics, only describing values in their actual validity for us can be a just rendering of how we actually make moral decisions and judge actions in our daily life. The philosopher is not himself supposed to make value judgments; rather, his stance must remain distanced and unprejudiced, thereby remaining, in a basic manner, committed to phenomenology's method of *description*.

Judging from this background, it is natural that Scheler's "obsession" with essences becomes utilized in his discussion of war as an element of life. War is not itself an issue of *moral* philosophy, yet it is "an event in the moral world,"<sup>32</sup> that is, it is an event, not of nature's brute force, but of human life. In order to arrive at the essence of things warlike, thus, one needs to apply the phenomenological method to war as well. To treat the war and the issues belonging to it philosophically, then, means describing the essence of war as well as the essence of concomitant phenomena, such as peace, honor, life, spirit, nation, death, etc.<sup>33</sup> The main target of these discussions is at all times the "British Mind" that dissolves these essences into empirical phenomena. Only a "metaphysics of war"<sup>34</sup> can grasp the war's essence. The "British Mind," by contrast, since it is entirely grounded on empirical explanations, does not see the difference between facts and essences. This is why the British can preposterously *declare* facts *for* essences. The "British Mind" is entirely given over to its "cant" to which Scheler devotes a whole concluding "appendix"<sup>35</sup> and he tops it off with a list of concepts that show how the British equivocate certain "essential" terms with its degenerate factual (British) versions thereof: When the Englishman says "culture" he means "comfort"; he confounds "truths" with "facts," "the good" with "the useful," "loyalty" with "exactitude in keeping one's contracts," "morality" with "right," "person" with "gentleman," "love" with "solidarity in interests," and, most revealingly: "human nature" with "Englishman."<sup>36</sup> Tersely put, since the Englishman cannot transcend his nationalistic boundaries he generalizes that which goes for themselves for everyone. The British commit, hence, a classical category

<sup>30</sup> I cannot discuss the consequences that phenomenologists drew from this basic idea, i.e., whether phenomenology should be committed to realism or idealism. Whereas Scheler remained an idealist in the early conception of phenomenology, Husserl later turned to idealism.

<sup>31</sup> As Lembeck (Lembeck 1997, p. 226; genius is "ein vorbildlicher Gesamtpersontyp") has pointed out, the "genius" that Scheler is evoking in his war book is actually an ideal type of person that Scheler already discerns in his *magnum opus*, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik* of 1913 (second installment 1916).

<sup>32</sup> P. 1 of the unpaginated "Vorrede."

<sup>33</sup> These are the main topics Scheler deals with in the "philosophical" passages of this work. In the last two parts of his work ("Die geistige Einheit Europas und ihre politische Forderung," pp. 251 ff., and "Los von England," pp. 335 ff.) he actually comments on the factual political situation of his time. These passages have mainly the character of scathing polemics against (mostly) the British.

<sup>34</sup> Scheler 1915, p. 117.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 383 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 442 f.

mistake. Obviously now, Scheler cannot be so foolish as to simply lapse into the same chauvinism with regard to the German mind. And yet, his discussions are drenched in nationalistic rhetoric. So how does he go about squaring the generality of war, its essence, with “the German war”?

As mentioned, Scheler is non-judgmental with regard to the goodness or badness of the war; any such value judgment would be un-phenomenological. Instead, a just description of the war reveals the fact that the war is a metaphysical event in the life of Western civilization.<sup>37</sup> Contrary to Kant's famous vision of “eternal peace” as a hopeful state of mankind's future, war is a “natural occurrence in the world [*Welteinrichtung*]”<sup>38</sup> and as such a “miracle”<sup>39</sup> in that one cannot explain it empirically. Rather, it must be embraced by those, “who experience this war, not as a bad dream or nightmare, but as an almost metaphysical awakening from the dull state of a heavy slumber.”<sup>40</sup> Scheler's alleged irrationalism comes most clearly to the fore in his celebration of the “genius of the war” and in his vigorous attacks on naïve Enlightenment thought which he sees most clearly represented in Kant.<sup>41</sup> War is an unquenchable element of life itself. Moreover, truly experiencing the presence of war calls us forth to awake and finally come into our own—as a *nation*. War first of all *molds* peoples into nations and calls on them to make a decision as to who they really are or want to be. War is a moment of *decision*. Yet, although the war is part of human life, Scheler goes through pains to emphasize that it is not part of *organic* life. Life can only truly be explained metaphysically, not physically (or positivistically, vitalistically or economically). Life is a *spiritual* category<sup>42</sup>; it can neither be good nor bad, this would be applying inadequate categories to a basic phenomenon of life. War is, *a fortiori*, part of the *essence* of life. Any explanation that applies empirical or value judgments to this phenomenon would be skewed from the very start.

As part of life itself—life in the spiritual sense—war is “the dynamic principle *kat'exochen* of history [...]. Every war is a return to the creative origin from which the state as such arose”<sup>43</sup>. Life itself has the trait of living itself out according to the law of its own inner nature, but the motor of this movement is war. Heraclitus' famous fragment and Nietzsche's “will to power” loom large, although neither is mentioned.<sup>44</sup> War as life's motor expands nations and peoples according to their inner law of development. As such, neighboring peoples, cultures, nations etc., if they have an active life with its own distinct

<sup>37</sup> Lübke points out that in this existential reading Scheler was also influenced by the war writings of Georg Simmel, cf. Lübke 1974, pp. 218 f.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 9. Indeed, Kant and others are mocked for their “pacifism.” Comparing Kant's ideas on “perpetual peace” with Scheler's assessment might reveal Kant in fact *not* to be a pacifist in the sense that Fotion et al. (Coppieters & Fotion 2002) characterize it. Reading Kant's text only superficially makes it clear that to him, “perpetual peace” is a regulative idea, and his text with this title actually formulates criteria for what one could call a “just war theory,” e.g., axiom no. 6: “No state at war with another shall permit such acts of hostility as would make mutual confidence impossible during a future time of peace.” (Kant 1970, p. 96). This would fall under the category of “*jus in bello*” within just war theory.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Scheler's attacks on Kant's vision in Scheler 1915, pp. 18 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 10 f.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 17. On p. 43, Scheler says that war is “rooted in life itself.”

<sup>44</sup> Flasch (Flasch 2000, p. 115) also points out Nietzsche's influence on Scheler as of 1913/14.

character, *by necessity* must clash, for life's essence is to assert itself, to bring *itself* to fullest fruition, not sparing the weaker. "Indeed, the state waging war is the state in the highest actuality of its existence."<sup>45</sup> War is thus the necessary result of different nations' lives. Peace is nothing but a lazy compromise, an insulting ignorance of the other's *and one's own* essence. War *is* asserting oneself and one's unique identity. That is to say, nobody can nor ought to be blamed for going to war. Waging war is merely a nation's healthy way of letting its inner truth roam free. "The true root of the war lies therein that in all life—independent of all its specific and changing surroundings and its sensations—inheres a tendency towards increase, towards growth and towards an unfolding of its manifold types."<sup>46</sup> The more a country or nation let their inner life roam freely, and not merely follow empirical (military, economical etc.) interests, the more it can be said to be acting according to its own essence. "Meaning and existence of nations and national states thus rest entirely on supra-utilitaristic concepts, it rests on the values of life and culture, power, honor, spirit."<sup>47</sup> These latter concepts adumbrate essences that do not *belong* to any specific nation; yet there are countries that instantiate these essences better than others—and there are nations that do not even care for these essences, like the British.

Concerning the victory in the war, it relies entirely upon the power of the nations at war. The stronger nation will by necessity win, and what makes it stronger than others is the power of its inner life, its adhering to the true essences of greatness, spirit, power, etc. In other words, it is not nations *per se* that win, it is their truthfulness to the spirit of life to which they owe their victory. In the end, all wars are spiritual battles, and that country wins by necessity which is the most spiritual. Although the war might bring factual and material suffering to individual peoples, it also has a spiritual side: "War always carries within itself these two opposite traits: the character of a basic, spiritual-vital event of nature [...] and a conscious purposeful activity of the statesperson with more or less clearly defined 'demands' upon an alien state."<sup>48</sup> Thus, the war is a useful thing in that it sorts out better from worse nations (worse, that is, in adhering to essences). War is the final arbiter over superior spiritual systems and a form of God's judgment day on earth: "The more valuable 'state' 'ought to' reign and war makes decisions according to the 'higher justice' of a divine council in active deeds [...]. Precisely in this way is the 'just war' the vehicle through which expand in the maximally optimal way the respective higher justice and the mediating systems of its instantiation, i.e., the higher-valued and 'more just' systems of rights and laws on earth."<sup>49</sup> By severing the just from the unjust, the war is also the "most powerful creator of unity,"<sup>50</sup> insofar as it firstly has the capacity to give unity to a people in its becoming of a nation, a culture, instead of merely a federal union or a civilization. War frees people from their unhealthy self-centeredness and egotism<sup>51</sup> and creates the new unity of a genuine "we." If

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 36. Cf. also the Nietzschean passage on p. 41, bottom.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 33. To be sure, "utilitarianism" is a pejorative term designating "British thought."

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 98. Indeed, war can function as a sort of "psychotherapy of the peoples" (p. 100). Scheler quotes Binswanger's study on "The Spiritual Effects of War" (*ibid.*, footnote 64, p. 365) where the latter asserts that many men in his mental hospital ("anxious, timid, hesitant, weak-

this unity is achieved in the waging of the war itself, then war is “just”<sup>52</sup>: “In the ‘just war’ even the bloodiest defeat will *not* lead to permanent hatred but solely to the spiritual-moral inwardness [*Einkehr*] of a given people [...]”<sup>53</sup> War is not an act of hatred but of *love*.<sup>54</sup> In war, one can risk one’s life and only in war can one truly gain it, even in death. Only in dying does one have the opportunity to become a hero in gaining the *essence* of one’s life (even in losing one’s existence!). In war, “everyone becomes a metaphysician.”<sup>55</sup> War brings us before the threshold of transcendence, the “threshold of religious immortality”<sup>56</sup> and “tears down the masks that have been furnished by peace”<sup>57</sup>. As such, war has the capacity of a metaphysical “critique” in that it reduces the existence of people to its “essential content.”<sup>58</sup> It is clear what Scheler alludes to with the term “critique”; only the war can provide, not a critique of *pure*, but of “metaphysical reason.” The war is thus beneficial for philosophy itself, it motivates philosophers to step back from “splitting hairs” in purely academic questions to again attempt to gain an “autonomous, original intuition of the world”<sup>59</sup>.

To summarize Scheler’s overall argument: War as an essential element of life ought to be embraced, not shunned. It brings out the best in any nation. Thus, one ought to seek it out, experience it to the fullest, in order to purify one’s essence and be unified into a nation that knows what it wants because it has made the effort to rise above national, individual particularities. When a nation does this, it is no longer German, French or English. What one reaches in this “metaphysical move” is the realm of “absolute realities.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, one *needs* these extreme circumstances to have the *disposition* in the first place to experience these absolute realities. Thus, Scheler asserts, whoever thinks that only an aloof, unparticipating stance will enable one to reach philosophical heights is tragically misled; he rhetorically asks: “What does reality care about the conditions of knowledge that the scholars want to impose upon reality? ... Such a meaning that enables cognition to experience absolute realities only belongs to war, only belongs to the peculiar upward soaring of the spirit that is called for by war to an extraordinary degree.”<sup>61</sup> In simpler terms: Insofar as other nations, such as the British, ignore and disregard the importance of these “absolute realities” they do not even qualify to be a “chosen nation.” The Germans, on the other hand, due to their inborn

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willed”) in one instant, at the outbreak of the war, became sane and “to this day” not have had relapses into their old, insane, state of affairs.

<sup>52</sup> As an aside, this would certainly count as one of the maxims of the modern just war theory, as there are: “just cause,” “legitimate authority,” “right intentions,” “likelihood of success,” “proportionality,” “last resort” (cf. Coppieters & Fotion 2002).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 150. To wit, victory in the war is due to God who is a “God of love” (*ibid.*). Consequently, war is an act of love as well.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 127. Compare this to Heidegger’s famous analysis of being-towards-death (*Sein zum Tode*) in *Being and Time*. Here Heidegger claims the contrary, that the anticipation of my own death precisely makes me aware of my essential *finitude*. A philosopher’s all-too-human reaction to Germany’s defeat in the Great War?

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 144. Indeed, as Scheler says here, the Persian War has helped Plato and Aristotle to become great philosophers!

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

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metaphysical propensity, embrace these absolute realities. This is why this war is decidedly a "German war," as the title of Scheler's book asserts.

Thus, Scheler's philosophical "trick" is this: It is not because they are *Germans* that they are a chosen people, but it is because they, *more than all others*, embrace the metaphysical dimension of the war. War produces special dispositions that enable a nation to become true to absolute realities. It is, hence, up to the respective nations to open themselves up to these higher spheres. The Germans, as a profoundly philosophy-friendly nation, do this quasi-automatically as they are a metaphysical nation *already*. This is why "this great mission" of establishing true greatness and "universal love" is Germany's alone.<sup>62</sup> Plainly put: Germany's war is great, not because it is Germany's but because the Germans better than any other nation have the capacity to comprehend and realize the war's essence, an essence which lies above any particular nation or culture.

It is easy to dismiss this theory altogether, to see it as a mere product of war enthusiasm.<sup>63</sup> Yet, one would thereby make things too easy on oneself. Moreover, neither does one do Scheler any good by attempting to "salvage" Scheler the philosopher by pointing out that he became a critic of the war after 1918, even a pacifist.<sup>64</sup> Nor does it help to merely dismiss these reflections as just short of utter stupidity.<sup>65</sup> Rather, these reflections are a direct result of Scheler's philosophical standpoint. Thus, what is problematic about this theory? How can one respond to his claim that the Germans realize these essences better than other nations? First off, one can respond with a counter-question: How does, how can one know this claim? How can Scheler the German be so sure that the Germans touch upon essences, other nations do not? And, furthermore, how does he know that the essences that he discerns, are really the true essences whereas the British counter-concepts are not? What makes Scheler so sure that "his" concepts are essences whereas those of others are not? Although Scheler claims that only the war creates the disposition to intuit these essences such as honor, life, etc. in their most essential way, these essences cannot be bound to the trenches in Verdun or Belgium. One still needs philosophical reflection to attain such "essences." War cannot *create* the essence of life, it can only make it manifest. Counter to Scheler's claim, his own "philosophical disposition" displays the same philosophical aloofness that he criticizes in other philosophers. Here is another philosophy that does not want to get his hands dirty in the

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 173. Flasch quotes Helmut Kuhn as calling Scheler's a "religious nationalism" (cf. Flasch 2000, p. 121).

<sup>63</sup> Lübke, e.g., judges Scheler's view of Germany to be a "synthesis of Fichte and Krupp" (Lübke 1974, p. 225; Krupp was the name of the family that owned "Krupp Stahl," a gigantic industrial consortium that supplied steel for the weapons during the war), i.e., of nationalistic philosophy and militant industrialism. While there is certainly some truth to this catchy phrase, it is still too simplistic to get a good handle on Scheler's thoughts on war.

<sup>64</sup> Lembeck 1997 and Schneider 1995 point this out. Whereas Lembeck, however, attempts to exculpate Scheler by simply pointing out *that* he turned to pacifism (cf. Lembeck 1997, p. 231, merely speaks of "corrections" in Scheler's views), I also fail to see any real philosophical reasons in Schneider's account. Flasch, however, remarks that it is less a change in Scheler from war-monger to pacifist but rather a change in his assessment of how the benign ideas and values have become *implemented* in the war (Flasch 2000, p. 122). This conforms to my reading according to which Scheler judges the reality by the idea and is, as it were, "upset" that the reality does not do what it is supposed to according to its "essence"!

<sup>65</sup> This seems to be Flasch's view. Cf. his short preface (Flasch 2000, pp. 7-11) as well as his final assessment of Scheler's war literature, *ibid.*, pp. 124-128.

daily business of bloodshed. *Nolens volens*, also in Scheler, fact follows from essence, not vice versa. Furthermore, one can question the plausibility of applying the phenomenological method to this sort of “essences” such as nation, culture, loyalty, democracy, faith, etc. There is no supra-temporal essence of culture, there are only the Western, Eastern, French, German, American cultures that have arisen out of their historical situations.

In other words, what accounts for problems in Scheler's theory is precisely his “drunkenness with metaphysics” and the concomitant, fatal separation between the “metaphysical” and the “real.” Only this strict separation makes it possible to *remain* a philosopher, i.e., someone who does not want to get involved, instead of seeing that a war is a war of ideas as well, *but not exclusively*, and that the strict separation of the real and the ideal by necessity makes the philosopher blind toward the *actual* reality of the real—as opposed to how one *wants* it to be. As Flasch says, “Scheler's theoretical concepts did not motivate him to uncover the historical-factual mistakes of this German propaganda thesis [sc., of being a “chosen” nation]. These theoretical concepts prevented him especially from grasping the inner contradiction between [these concepts and the historical-factual mistakes].”<sup>66</sup> Scheler's war philosophy amounts to a privileging of the ideal over the real, with his firm belief that he can *know* the ideal—or know it better than others. Where the ideal is more important than the despised real, atrocities in reality become possible and permissible. The philosopher who allegedly steps out of his particular standpoint to reach an “unparticipating observer” standpoint makes the mistake of extrapolating from his own, thereby *making* it universal, *thereby* justifying what one wants the real to be like—an ideal that one has created on one's own.

### 3. NATORP AND GERMANY'S WORLD VOCATION (1918)

Paul Natorp's *Deutscher Weltberuf. Geschichtsphilosophische Richtlinien* (German World Vocation. Guidelines With Respect to the History of Philosophy) consisting of two parts (I: *Die Weltalter des Geistes*, *The Spiritual Ages of the World*, and II: *Die Seele des Deutschen*, *The Soul of the German*) was published in 1918 with the imminent defeat already in view. Natorp had already earlier, as of 1914, published some “war texts,” mostly speeches, written on the spur of the moment.<sup>67</sup> Yet, his writings of 1918 present Natorp's most mature and sober treatment concerning our topic in question.<sup>68</sup> While it is clear from what was said about Scheler, i.e., that he counts as an “irrationalist,” this section is to show how Natorp can be considered a “rationalist.” Accordingly, his style is at no point as “hot-headed” as Scheler's.

<sup>66</sup> Flasch 2000, p. 125.

<sup>67</sup> A list of these publications can be found in Jegelka 1992, pp. 354 f. Most importantly, the short booklet *Der Tag des Deutschen* (*The Day of the German*) in 1915, consisting of four speeches and articles written in 1914. The title is a quotation from Schiller: “Jedes Volk hat seinen Tag in der Geschichte, doch der Tag des Deutschen ist die Ernte der ganzen Zeit.” “Each people has its day in history, but the day of the German is the harvest of all time.” Interestingly, also Scheler quotes Schiller time and again in his war literature.

<sup>68</sup> Natorp, who died in 1924, was also at this time at the summit of his philosophical development. In his latest phase everything to him seemed to fall into place. Before his death he managed to finish two last works, the *Lectures on Practical Philosophy* (that appeared in 1925) and his *Philosophical Systematics* (edited and published posthumously by his son in 1954). For an assessment of this late phase, cf. Stolzenberg 1995 and Wolzogen 1985.

Yet, the book in question presents a deliberately more popular book written for a wider audience.<sup>69</sup> Natorp takes the war and its world-historical meaning as an opportunity to illustrate the main tenets of his philosophy and the historical meaning of the world and how the Germans factor into this picture. How can one summarize Natorp's general philosophical standpoint?

Natorp is a member of the Neo-Kantian movement that had begun around 1880 with the call "back to Kant!"<sup>70</sup> Kant's philosophy was seen as the antidote to the unhealthy developments in philosophy, and culture at large, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not a naïve return to Kantian philosophy like a religious invocation turning its back on the present. Instead, the Neo-Kantians attempted to redress the main tenets of Kant's philosophy in the light of contemporary challenges. The spirit of Enlightenment that had peaked with Kant had to be recaptured, yet in a modified way. That is, the fundamental thesis of the Enlightenment is that the ultimate grounding of knowledge must lay in reason alone.<sup>71</sup> However, reason itself is not a rigid or static structure that remained unchanged (like an essence). Reason cannot be divorced from that which thinking and rationally acting subjects *do* in the course of history. The world is a world of human production over the course of history; it is culture. Indeed, reason is *itself* subject to a dynamic development. Philosophy has the task to *reconstruct* this dynamic development.<sup>72</sup> The manner of performing such a reconstruction calls for a special method, the so-called "transcendental method" developed by the Marburg School.

The Neo-Kantian transcendental method can be understood as development from and addition to Kant's philosophy. Kant's "Copernican" turn was a turn of attitude from talking about the world as it exists in itself (the "thing in itself") to talking about the world insofar as it is *experienced*. Transcendental philosophy, making recourse to the experiencing subject, thematizes the *conditions* of that which makes this experience *possible*. The transcendental question, thus, asks: "How is experience possible?" But experience essentially cognizes a world, but thereby forms and shapes it. The Neo-Kantian import into this scenario was to phrase world in terms of something created by human cognition. World is essentially *culture*. Hence Kant's critique of reason had to be expanded into a critique of culture. This experiencing of world, in shaping culture, has a dynamic character. Thematizing this experience of the world amounts to recounting a (hi)story, of how the world has become

<sup>69</sup> It is dedicated to the "young generation [*dem jungen Geschlecht*], the bearer of the future of our fatherland," Natorp 1918, p. vi. Though one cannot tell if this was Natorp's wish, the book is also typeset in the old German "Gothic" font which indicates that the book is meant to be more popular vis-à-vis the "scientific" or "academic" style of Latin typesetting.

<sup>70</sup> Famously, the "first Neo-Kantian" Otto Liebmann in his book *Kant und die Epigonen* (1865) gave a survey over several systematic fields of philosophy and ended each chapter with the sentence "*Also muß auf Kant zurückgegangen werden.*" ("Thus one needs to revert back to Kant."). Cf. Ollig 1979, pp. 10 ff.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Natorp's concise summary of the tenets of Neo-Kantian "criticism" in Natorp 1918/II, pp. 123 f.

<sup>72</sup> This method of reconstruction is first laid out in Natorp's *Einleitung in die Psychologie Nach Kritischer Methode (Introduction to Psychology According to Critical Method, 1888)* and further fleshed out in the expanded second edition of this work, the *Allgemeine Psychologie Nach Kritischer Methode (General Psychology According to Critical Method, 1912)*. Both works were highly acclaimed books of the time.

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experienced by human consciousness. The world itself, as an object of human experience, is a *construct* through this ever-expanding experience. Philosophy's task is to re-trace this experience that is always already occurring in different regions of experience (nature, morality, art, religion). Human consciousness or experience is, in its "accomplishing" nature, *teleological*. Viewing the world as a product of human formation is to view man's accomplishments equally as dynamic in nature. Hence Natorp's teleological conception of human reason in history.<sup>73</sup> Human activity constructs the world, and the philosopher's task is to reconstruct this process.

It is important to point out that Natorp was also a devout socialist. Instead, his socialist ideals flowed from this philosophical presupposition, which one might call "idealistic" in the ordinary sense of the word. Natorp's idealism was more precisely a *social idealism*. "*Social idealism*: This word is to say that the idea must again find itself in unison with society, the society with the idea, if at all both, idea and society, are further to exist in the history of mankind. A healthy idealism must not soar into the regions of 'ideas' far-removed from life. Rather, it must find its home in the midst of life, in the most arduous life of striving mankind."<sup>74</sup> Thus the high ideals of the Enlightenment must become implemented in the middle of the communal life of society itself. Natorp's philosophical zeal is driven by this enlightened impulse to free and better society and the individuals in it.<sup>75</sup> Now all of this—philosophy as expressing idealism and Enlightenment—is presented, in 1918, before the backdrop of a profound *crisis* of mankind, which had engaged in a global war. War is not itself the crisis, but its most visible *symptom*. Philosophy can help solve the crisis by giving an *anamnesis*, as it were, of the current situation by reconstructing the teleological development of human reason and the moment where it went awry.

The point of Natorp's historical account in *Deutscher Weltberuf* is thus to retrace this teleological development over the course of mankind's history. There are essentially three stages of mankind. The first phase is dominated by farming and cattle-keeping, politically by despotism. The second phase is that of the "free contract"—essentially capitalism. The third phase, inaugurated by the French Revolution, ultimately leads into socialism. The title of the book already indicates where this socialism becomes implemented *realiter*, or rather, which

<sup>73</sup> Indeed, Natorp says (Natorp 1918, p. vii), "'philosophy of history' is a pleonasm."

<sup>74</sup> Natorp 1920, p. iii.

<sup>75</sup> The goal of his philosophy is ultimately *pedagogy*, i.e., the attempt to make these ideals real through educating the youth and guiding them into the right direction from the very start. Natorp was very fond of pedagogy. Not only was pedagogy part of the description of his chair at the University of Marburg; he also published pedagogical books, e.g., on *Social Pedagogy* and on the pedagogue Pestalozzi. In this capacity, Natorp concretely was a consultant to the Prussian Ministry of Education concerning school curricula, gave talks throughout the nation and professed ideas—such as that of the *Gesamtschule*, a common school for all pupils instead of the still-existing three-tier system in Germany—ideas that were again discussed in the context of the leftist student revolts in the late 1960s. Jegelka in his study of Natorp makes the political, pedagogical Natorp the main axis of his interpretation and he even interprets his "theoretical" philosophy purely in terms of his overall "political" views; cf. Jegelka 1992, pp. 265 ff. I believe this sells Natorp's achievements in theoretical philosophy short. I agree here with Stolzenberg (Stolzenberg 1995, p. 13, note 38), who asserts that Jegelka's long awaited for ("längst fällige") rehabilitation of Natorp's philosophical work as a whole—especially in its originality vis-à-vis Cohen's oeuvre—is carried out at the price of his essential "Abblendung der Psychologie, in der Natorp seine theoretische Selbständigkeit schon früh bewiesen hat" (ibid.).

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nation, is called upon to overcome the crisis by taking on this nation's global vocation. Whereas volume I of this work traces the history of human civilization in general, volume II zeros in on the specifically *German* contribution to civilization. In the course of the retelling of this history, Natorp happens upon the meaning of war. Contrary to Scheler, the war is not something to be embraced (because it is part of life's "essence") but something inherently *evil yet inevitable* given the current circumstantial crisis. In this sense, Natorp is both more rational and realistic than Scheler.

The crisis is one of humanity as a whole, yet it is especially a vital question of the German people. While it is a crisis of the "spirit" of mankind, the crisis has descended especially upon the German "soul." Whereas philosophy is not itself an activity, she nevertheless has the task to explain the present situation, but in so doing, recapture the true spirit of mankind, its general character, and not remain bound to individual peoples' "souls." "Philosophy has at all times attempted to grasp in earnestness the 'spirit' of history in unity."<sup>76</sup> Natorp's aim is not to come to a nationalistic-chauvinistic conclusion according to which the spirit of mankind's culture reaches its highest peak in a specific nation's soul. Rather, he focuses on the German soul simply because it has been hit hardest by the current crisis. In the course of this critical process the German people have attempted to become a nation by moving from a mere world civilization to a *culture*. It is *therefore* that the Germans have become a *Weltvolk*, i.e., a nation with a special culture and special mission that is no longer bound to "Germanness." Both civilization and culture are something general, something independent of individual traditions and nations. Yet whereas the majority of nations have embraced what can be called Western civilization, the true peak of mankind is nevertheless *culture*. Whereas "civilization" denotes indifference, culture stands for the ideal, the spiritual, the metaphysical. Where "civilization" is "merely external," culture "emphasizes an upward-nurturing from the kernel upwards out of an inner, genuine sprouting." This is opposed to the alleged "general" bourgeois structure of "freedom, equality, fraternity."<sup>77</sup> Natorp is not against these ideals *per se*, but against the notion that they be static structures instead of something dynamic that has to be *actively achieved* by human agents. Ideals are never essences, as in Scheler, but constant *works in progress*.

It is this grand notion of culture that needs to become implemented in overcoming the crisis of modernity in order to further write "the book of history [which is] the revelation of world reason"<sup>78</sup>. With this teleological view is also implied the "idea of a continual ascent"<sup>79</sup> of reason. "In this elementary sense, history is a matter of 'freedom', not of 'necessity'; a matter of willing, not blind obligation; matter of fact: matter of doing, not of being done; of life, not of being lived."<sup>80</sup> In a world-historical gesture, Natorp recounts the main tenets of his method: Kant's *factum* of the world, its sheer givenness, is in fact a *fieri*, a doing, something that humans accomplish. Importantly, it is not a deed out of blind, irrational will: "[T]he spiritual that unfolds in history is irrational in the strict sense of something that rationalizes itself into eternity, thus never to be fully accomplished for finite creatures."<sup>81</sup> The spiritual

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<sup>76</sup> Natorp 1918, p. viii.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

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that unfolds over the course of history can also be called *life*, yet it is not a brute, incalculable force but a rational unfolding that has its aim in eternity. “Life in the end wants nothing but—itself: eternal striving towards immortality, not mere always unchanging, never-ending existence. This alone is eternity and immortality for mortals: eternal new creating, self-creation anew.”<sup>82</sup>

While Natorp (like Scheler) allows for an “unexplainable” moment in life, it is, to Natorp, not thereby irrational but *self-rationalizing*. Life might seem irrational over the course of history, but it strives towards the ultimately rational that we, as finite beings, are not in a position to fully comprehend. Life is ultimately good—we just cannot see this due to our limited perspective. Although we might not be able to fully grasp it, it is nevertheless philosophy's task to articulate it. This is philosophy's highest goal. “Yet this includes the entire, uncanny power of abstraction, in which consists philosophy, it includes in the idea of God the idea of humanity, in the idea of future (which does not merely denote tomorrow and the day after tomorrow) the idea of an eternal future. Yet this *is* philosophy, that is, ultimate, uninhibited striving for unity.”<sup>83</sup> In assessing Natorp's view on war and Germany, one has to acknowledge this original rather unusual view of philosophy itself. Philosophy takes on the role of prophecy.<sup>84</sup> But the philosopher is a *rational* prophet, and the concept of life that he proclaims is a *rational* concept.

In view of this ascent of reason, what is the role of war? While “eternal peace” is the ultimate goal of mankind, and be it as a regulative idea, in the current situation the war is a necessary but unavoidable evil.<sup>85</sup> War is something that to be taken into consideration as *ultima ratio* presently. It is thus not a moment of the spirit, a metaphysical entity, but an external event. Therefore, although “life wants to live, and living means fighting”<sup>86</sup>, it is an external strife that has as its *goal* “the deeper, the true ‘external’ peace. This peace does not mean, however, a dull unchanging indifference; rather it means the merely ideal, never experienced but eternally striven for inner harmony of the rhythm of this eternal symphony of mankind's development”<sup>87</sup>. While war and disharmony are elements of life's will, they are merely externalities vis-à-vis the “true” inner development towards peace. From this bird's eye view, war is merely a small disharmony in the grand “rhythm” or “symphony” of life. This is why it is just to *fight* for peace *if* one has this grand goal in view. War itself functions “with the self-assuredness of a natural law”<sup>88</sup> because it is something external; yet the harder the battle becomes, the deeper it lets one delve into the depths of one's soul where one can discover the true meaning of this war: to lead to a higher goal in eternity. But this goes not only for the individual: “At the least one can conceive that hopefully finally, finally the sublime meaning of the ascent to the eternally far heights will become clear *to everyone*.”<sup>89</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>84</sup> This is consistent with Natorp's other late writings, esp. in the *Philosophische Systematik*. Cf. Natorp 2000, part IV, pp. 383 ff., esp. the last lecture, p. 408.

<sup>85</sup> Natorp 1918/II, p. 184, the war is a “*Notkrieg*.” And in 1920, in his *Sozialidealismus*, Natorp again stresses the atrocities of war, its “cruelty, hate, deceit, overturning of all moral order, destroying of man's power and work” etc. (cf. Natorp 1920, p. 33).

<sup>86</sup> Natorp 1918/I, p. 25.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., italics added.

Ideally all peoples and nations at war should come to the realization that they are ultimately engaged in the “good battle” *if* they realize that the ultimate goal is eternal peace and that this grand goal justifies *every* means. “Then the battle will become a victory to all of them, then in the midst of strife the ever-renewing harmony will become clear to all of them and the souls of the battling parties will become unified on the deepest level. [...] The circularity [of history] becomes a spiral [...]. Nothing perishes, yet nothing remains in the same spot or returns in complete sameness [...]. Thus groweth the soul, it groweth eternally because it is eternal [...]”<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, despite these Heraclitean phrases, Natorp is at all times frank about the gruesomeness and cruelty of the war, but the war is sublimated into the grand scheme of things.

Now what about the Germans in this grand scheme? In this critical situation of world dimension, the Germans, in the eye of the defeat, welcome this “collapse”<sup>91</sup> of their state system. It “could not be avoided”<sup>92</sup>, and since this defeat came with an inner necessity, it is now (in 1918) the *Germans* who, despite suffering the most profound crisis, have the once-in-a-lifetime chance to *really* overcome the paralyzing crisis, whereas other nations that did not suffer defeat, cannot even *perceive* the profundity of the crisis. The only way to overcome “fatalism” in the current situation is a reflection upon the “*German-idealistic kernel*”<sup>93</sup> that was present in German philosophy. Only a newly constituted state—as realized solely through philosophical reflection—can overcome the crisis, and since the German state will have to be re-erected, this is the time to forge such a constitution according to idealistic ideals. The defeat in the war is the high time for the philosophers to spring into action; the collapse of the German state gives Natorp the opportunity to propose his ideals of the state, a state that could make possible “a state of human *culture*”<sup>94</sup> through a new trinity of *economy, justice and pedagogy* that constitute the true state according to the guidelines of social idealism.<sup>95</sup> The German people and the German culture have an inborn drive to socialism, and the crisis is the chance to realize this ideal, which the whole of mankind has striven towards but from which it has gone astray. The *new* German state can lead the way for the rest of mankind into this development that is “common [...] to all peoples of the earth and that will finally lead them all towards the same common goal”<sup>96</sup>. What the Germans and their inborn idealism have contributed to realizing this ideal is its genuine “method”: to build a culture; “to this end, the German may not have first found effective methods, but he has further conceived them and has further developed them in a way that only he can put them to use.”<sup>97</sup> This is “the German’s vocation.” In order to remain true to it the German people have to pick themselves up again from where they are and “continue fighting”<sup>98</sup>, not for external success or victory, but for the inner realization of mankind’s ideals, to which the German idealistic tradition has had an internal tendency. It must reawaken those “good” elements in its inner

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 25 f.

<sup>91</sup> Natorp 1918/II, p. 189.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

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nature and bring them to fruition. The German people in their "new state" can herald the way for a new "day of mankind."

To summarize Natorp's argument: It is not due to Germany's "special" nature or "essence" that it has this vocation. Rather, Germany, precisely due to it being hit hardest, must *assume* this role. *However*, it can only do this because, as its "condition of possibility," it has in the teleological growth of mankind developed in Kant's philosophy an *idealism* that, if turned into a *social* idealism, can be a model for all other nations. The war, as atrocious as it might be "externally," "internally" is a good thing as it forces the Germans into assuming their role of world importance.<sup>99</sup> War might seem like a crisis to us, but *sub specie aeterni* it is helpful as it brings humanity back on track to finally create a factually existing socialism. The Germans and "their" war are special, not because they are Germans, but because they just happen to be in this situation in the development of history and can become "model citizens" for a new world culture. The Germans did not put themselves into this position (since they were defeated), rather, the fate of the world has placed *them* into this position, where they have the choice to either go down in flames or resurrect themselves on the basis of the true ideals of idealism.

As asserted at the outset, Natorp's view is much more rational than Scheler's and as such also less chauvinistic.<sup>100</sup> Natorp's assessment is guided by the ideals of rationalism, teleology and socialism. These I do not want to criticize; perhaps the idea of Enlightenment entails clinging to these ideals, no matter how much they may have suffered criticisms from all sides. It is rather this alleged ideal of Enlightenment that Natorp professes, that one can take issue with. In spite of his Enlightenment ideal, Natorp ultimately has an uncritical view of philosophy as teleology insofar as he claims that the real goal of history lies beyond our comprehension. On the one hand, he reconstructs a teleology in history starting from antiquity to German idealism. Yet, what is problematic is his claim that the true motor of history and its ultimate meaning, where mankind is headed, lies beyond our finite grasp. On the one hand, this exculpates the atrocities of the war as necessary moments on the way to eternal bliss. This is not so far from Hegel's famous phrase of history as the "skull site of absolute spirit." On the other, it binds all of history together into a teleology, the meaning of which remains unknown. Again, one can ask critically: If man is finite, how can Natorp himself know of the meaning of history as the "eternal rationalization of the irrational"? It is, in the end, an unwarranted, and unwarrantable, claim. Worst of all, Natorp himself would admit this: In the end, the theme or vocation of philosophy is to attempt to "eff the ineffable," to point to something that philosophy, rational thought, can only vaguely anticipate but what can be articulated or grasped only by religious insight. With this move, Natorp himself gives up the ideal of Enlightenment and self-grounding rationality. As philosophically warranted

<sup>99</sup> Jegelka 1992, pp. 131 ff. (ch. 2.6) makes the case that Natorp fought for an "organic pacifism" all along and chastises the primitive idea of pacifism that many pacifists professed at the time. A true pacifism can only be based on the principles of Kant's philosophy (cf. *ibid.*, p. 137).

<sup>100</sup> Jegelka 1992, p. 126, also points out Natorp's strong public reaction against anti-Semitism already before the war. Lübke presents Natorp's war philosophy very much along the lines of Scheler (with Fichte's writings in the background), which seems a bit unfair given his overall sober view of the war. Cf. Lübke 1974, pp. 194-201. For a completely dismissive account, cf. Flasch 2000, pp. 320-328.

and original as this step may be—the true realization of reason lies in seeing its limits<sup>101</sup>—it nevertheless gives up on the ideal of self-responsible and autochthonous reason. Since nobody, as a finite being, can have the viewpoint *sub specie aeterni*, no one can claim to see its inner logic. From an imagined viewpoint, the war might be a good thing in the eternal development of reason; from the viewpoint of finite beings it is—and remains—an atrocity. In the end, though in a completely different manner and style, Natorp's amounts to the same *type* of interpretation of the war as Scheler's: an interpretation based on high-flying speculation that does not want to get its hands dirty in the daily business of warfare. Both have attempted to leave the Ivory Tower but, in fact, have been unsuccessful in doing so.

#### CONCLUSION. WAR PHILOSOPHY—PHILOSOPHY OR IDEOLOGY?<sup>102</sup>

Concerning the reception of these writings, this seems to be the general, and somewhat comforting, line of thought: these “war philosophies” are not really *philosophy*, but rather thesis-driven ideology on the part of agitated citizens who used their skill—reasoning—for justifying their political and personal views. This view is comforting, because it conveniently lets us compartmentalize what it is that we would like see as relevant in an author and what not. “We” in this case would be the community of philosophers in their *locus naturalis*, the Ivory Tower. This view is also dangerous, for it “domesticates” these radical views and enables one to thereby explain them away, while one continues to cling to the grandeur of their “real” philosophy. Their philosophies stand, while their ideologies can be excused as *simply being ideology*. The label “Ideology” seems to be the savior in reading these inflammatory texts. This raises the question as to the difference between philosophy and ideology, or where the point has come where philosophy *degenerates* into ideology. Does philosophy perhaps *have* to become ideology in order to reach the masses and thereby “prostitute” itself? This is a rather traditional view on their relation. Or could one adopt the radically opposed view, namely, of seeing philosophy as just *one form* of justificatory discourse among others, as Rorty claims in his influential *Philosophy and the Mirror of*

<sup>101</sup> In the conclusion of his last work, *Philosophische Systematik*, Natorp formulates as the ultimate goal of philosophy that of determining the *limit* between what can be known and what one cannot articulate, between entities and the ultimate (*das Letzte*), cf. Natorp 2000, p. 401.

<sup>102</sup> I am discussing here the opposition between philosophy and ideology in general, and not whether Scheler's and Natorp's ideas qualify as specific “war ideology.” This is the narrow focus of Losurdo's work (Losurdo 1995), who wants to establish a connection between the war ideologies of the First and Second World War (especially in the work of Heidegger). While there can be no doubt about the kinship of Heidegger's rhetoric of 1933 with that of (some of) the war books of 1914-1918, he seems to oversimplify issues by not even asking what ideology as such can mean vis-à-vis philosophy. By immediately qualifying the war books of the first war as “war ideologies,” he obfuscates any differences that do exist between simple “war mongers” and other, more reflective philosophers, such as Natorp. Moreover, it is simply not true to claim that “*a large part* of German philosophy” (ibid., p. 247) was in fact “war ideology.” This work as a whole—in many passages sloppily written and researched—seems entirely thesis driven in this respect, more specifically in wanting to demonstrate that Heidegger was a “war ideologue” essentially from his early writings around 1914 “till the end” (ibid., 248). This hasty conclusion can only be reached when one does not discuss the question that arises first: what exactly *is* ideology? This is the focus of this conclusion.

*Nature?*<sup>103</sup> Reading these texts with Rorty in mind is intriguing; indeed, these war writings on the part of philosophers seem to be ideal cases to test Rorty's claim. In Rorty's light, philosophy is nothing but ideology to begin with, fueled by the idea that philosophy has something special and normative and "more important" to say than other forms of discourse, say, art or furniture design. Thus, the two opposing views on the relation between philosophy and ideology would be (a) the traditional claim that philosophy is about timeless truths and the moment it speaks about concrete situations and lends itself to certain goals or interests, it has become ideology and has fallen from its *locus naturalis*, being the Ivory Tower. The opposite idea would be that (b) philosophy is nothing but a justificatory practice among others and that the distinction between philosophy and ideology would be a distinction made by philosophical "fundamentalists" who attach more importance and privilege to philosophy than other forms of discourse; Rorty has called this view "whiggish."<sup>104</sup> On the "whiggish" view, philosophy is more important and is rightfully privileged because it speaks about timeless truths.

Another reason why one cannot ignore these war writings, or simply label them as ideology, is because of their authors' intentions in writing them. In the course of my critical exposition I have emphasized that Scheler's and Natorp's war writings were at least *conceived of* by their authors as direct expressions of their philosophies. The authors' intentions cannot be overlooked, since the pressing urgency that both felt were clearly the most important driving force for writing these pamphlets in the first place. It is unreasonable to argue a priori that the author's intention would be insignificant. While it might not be the whole truth, it is part of the truth about *these* texts in any case.<sup>105</sup> Both philosophers were too sophisticated to produce merely war propaganda, and neither ate humble pie in the aftermath of Germany's defeat. Both made the attempt to give war a philosophical interpretation, even if, in the end, both are internally, *philosophically*, flawed, as well as historically incorrect. Yet, the "fundamentalist" might claim, they might be flawed because they, *in good faith*, slipped into ideologies. The fundamentalist could argue, moreover, that maybe there is a necessary tendency in philosophy to succumb to ideology once it starts to become political. Is political philosophy *eo ipso* a slippery slope into ideology? This expresses the "whiggish" view on philosophy, i.e., that philosophy is about expressing "essences" that (a) nobody else has access to; essences that (b) have something more profound to convey about "human nature" or the "meaning of the world." And these essences can have no purpose or practical "cash value"; the moment they lend themselves to these, they have become ideologies.

Hence, let us try to attempt to become clear on the difference between ideology in opposition to philosophy. Hermann Lübbe in his well-known book on "political philosophy in Germany" has reflected upon the difference between ideology and philosophy, in the midst of discussions in the aftermath of World War II. He claims, ideology comes into play when philosophy becomes decidedly *political*, i.e., when it deliberately wants to either interpret, comment on, or intervene in the political situation of its time. In this sense, the first "fall from the heavens" concerns philosophy's self-understanding as situation-bound and no longer

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Rorty 1980. I am more or less paraphrasing his views on a "mirror-less philosophy" in ch. VIII of this book.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., cf. p. 391 et passim.

<sup>105</sup> On the importance of the author's intentions in writing, cf. Vandavelde 2005, chapter 1.

a supra-temporal *philosophia perennis*.<sup>106</sup> It decidedly and willingly comes into contact with the *Zeitgeist*—critical as well as serving or commenting etc. As such, philosophy puts herself into the service of something concrete, she becomes, with a Sartrean term, *engagée*. Philosophy in its political “occupation” can, thus, no longer be about “objective truth”; rather, it is about making a case for something concrete that is believed to be the right thing. To be sure, philosophy finds *reasons* for this concrete issue—otherwise it would no longer be philosophy—but it does this out of the belief in serving the right cause. In other words, to Lübbe philosophy becomes ideology when it follows an *interest* or an *agenda*. As such, it “objectifies what is non-objective”<sup>107</sup>, as he quotes Theodor Geiger. The moment it no longer serves or strives for pure *theoría*, uninterested contemplating, it is already halfway on the way to ideology. Hence it is clear that this definition is given from the standpoint of the “whiggish” view on philosophy’s role. Let us see how Lübbe’s train of thought continues.

The crucial criterion for Lübbe is that ideology follows its cause motivated by, or for the sake of, *interests*, whereas philosophy, looking for “eternal truths,” searches for the latter through *reasons*.<sup>108</sup> The question is, whose interests is one serving? Is it alright for philosophy to serve some interests rather than others? Are there philosophically acceptable reasons? There are, of course, e.g., the furthering of freedom in society. And this is the point, where ideology “invades” philosophy. It is not the following of interests *per se*, which makes philosophy ideological. Rather, philosophy only truly *becomes* full-blown ideology if it mistakes (or supplants) interests for *rational* goals for non-rational interests *not* for the sake of deceiving others, but for deceiving *itself*. The philosopher lives in denial about the true principles and interests she is serving. The opposite is the type of the Sophist, who self-consciously deceives others (and invents devices for doing so) and does this, not for some high-flying ideal, but for the sake of what she thinks is *right*. The Sophist is not thereby an unethical person, but someone who bases her decisions for acting on the interests she wants to see realized, thereby buying into the prospect of deceiving others if need be. The *self*-deceit is the crucial step where philosophy reaches the state of a “*self-alienation*” from its own principal ideal (i.e., to contribute to the *philosophia perennis*); it becomes a “lazy reason” that takes things for granted where its business, in fact, has not yet been finished.<sup>109</sup> It declares, e.g., theses for premises, prejudices for arguments, and, thereby, puts *itself* to rest instead of inquiring further—to the limits of what can be rationally cognized (Kant’s notion of critical philosophy). Tersely put, philosophy turns into ideology where it *makes itself believe* that it is telling the truth, whereas it is, in fact, merely following particular interests. It has become complete ideology where it no longer realizes this difference. It lives in the state of complete self-deceit or “bad faith” (Sartrean *mauvais foi*). Bad faith means living in self-alienation from the ideals the “whiggish” philosophers have agreed upon: to find out “the truth” and not serve *any* interests. Serving interests is already not doing philosophy, and it is doubly guilty by serving interests it does not itself make transparent to itself.

Now, Lübbe claims, the “entire” war philosophy of World War I (in Germany) was “merely ideological”<sup>110</sup> in the sense of self-deceit. With respect to how I have discussed

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<sup>106</sup> Lübbe 1974, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

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Scheler's and Natorp's writings, is this assessment correct? The argument of "lazy reason" is, to be sure, not meant as an exculpation of philosophy, in that philosophy "could not help it" but was just, due to circumstances or whichever other motivation, "forced" to think in this way. This cannot be what Lübbe has in mind. It means, rather, that a given philosopher's reasoning puts brakes on itself too quickly, that it did not go beyond its mere interest-driven aims and laid itself to rest all-too quickly before its job was carried out. An ideology will take interests for arguments and will make false inferences based on faulty or hastily conceived premises. Now, although I never denied the nationalistic chauvinisms and stereotypes in Scheler and Natorp and their respective clear intentions to "serve their country," to say that their writings displayed a "lazy reason" surely cannot be the case. Rather, their war writings were direct products of their "systematic" philosophical standpoints. Only who does not immerse oneself into these writings themselves—as tedious as they may be—can claim that they are a product of mere "lazy reason" or even stupidity (Lübbe is not guilty of this assessment, but others are).

Where these writings *are* ideological is that they clearly serve an interest, namely to *engage* themselves in the current situation, Scheler as well as Natorp for patriotic interests. It is not so much the premises and the arguments that are at fault, as their *conclusions*. As such, they are not per se *ideologies*, but rather faulty or flawed *philosophies*. They become flawed precisely at the point where "the rubber meets the road," where the philosophical deduction reaches the factual. Whereas Scheler subsumes the factual under the ideal, Natorp places the messianic mission of the whole human race on the Germans. So Lübbe's assessment, according to which they are guilty of "lazy reason," is questionable. Instead, adopting a pragmatist view, one could make the case that the line between philosophy and ideology was blurry or artificial to begin with it. Clearly, the way of reasoning has to be construed as going the other way around: Both as citizens of their beloved nation had an agenda that was anything but hidden, and used the tools of their philosophy as a "practice of justification" in their concrete social situation. In this sense, they are guilty of seeing "social practices of justification as more than just such practices."<sup>111</sup> This is precisely what makes these writings so horrific and why we—rightfully—tend to feel greater anger against these philosophers than, say, poets and authors who might have written war poetry and war novels: They used their position of intellectual power to attempt to convince their countrymen that they were making sense of the war *philosophically*, rather than just ideologically. Ironically, this "Rortyan" way of viewing their writings actually exculpates them to a certain extent: if one does not see their writings as something "greater" but merely as serving a certain justificatory function in their social situation, they boil down to ordinary citizens who tried to make a case for what they thought was right, nothing more. They are not morally *guiltier* than anyone else, but they commit the "epistemic sin" of believing they have something (more) special to say.

Lastly, the point of a self-deceit that lies in this move towards the political life, comes down to a hermeneutical question. It is asking for an alleged discrepancy between what an author *wanted* to say and what he *did not* want to say but actually said. But how could one know this? It is impossible to leap into the mind of another human being and discriminate what she actually wanted to say and what she actually thought but did not say or did not want

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<sup>111</sup> Rorty 1980, p. 390.

to convey. Not even a psychotherapist will claim to accomplish this fully. The criterion for reason's self-alienation or self-deceit can only come from an "outside" perspective that can judge these claims based on "the truth." In other words, it can only be discriminated by contrasting situational and eternal truths, or by contrasting philosophy with ideology. Lübke thus *tacitly* takes the stance of the "whiggish" "eternal philosopher" when talking about ideology. But how is this possible if political philosophy, ideologized or not, deliberately does not want to be judged on the basis of eternal truths? Who is to judge? The philosopher, the ideologue or the citizen? Who is privileged, if anyone? Thus, regarding the question whether the war philosophies discussed are philosophy or ideology, the question asks for a wrong alternative. If it is *good philosophy*, i.e., soundly argued for, it cannot be ideology, *not* because it could not serve any particular interests, but because it does this *unreflectedly*. It *becomes* ideology in the eye of the beholder—the militaristic politician who bases her politics on this philosophy, the soldier in the field who takes these books as further motivation to go out and kill, and *even the philosopher* who takes his own ideas to further the cause of his nation.

The conclusion to this essay is not to endorse a pragmatist reading of philosophy in the style of Rorty's. Rather, it offers a different view of how one can construe the relation between philosophy and ideology. Clearly both Scheler and Natorp had a "whiggish" attitude about what they were doing, and in this sense lived in the state of self-deceit or *mauvais foi*, believing their writings were more than just that, ideology or propaganda, and thereby something to be taken more seriously than other cultural manifestations of the time.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, distinguishing philosophy and ideology the way Lübke does, does not overcome the whiggish view on philosophy. There is no reason to see philosophy in the whiggish way, but the problem is that Lübke does not seem to be aware of it. The pragmatist reading leaves the question as to philosophy's "real" purpose or task open. There is no extra-philosophical reason for arguing that philosophy's lending itself to a particular purpose would be an inherently bad thing. The only point the pragmatist would want to insist upon would be that one should be clear about what one does and the social practices and situations in which these activities take place. This is a way of rephrasing Lübke's argument of self-deceit: not because of some "whiggish" view on what philosophy *ought to be*, but for the sake of self-transparency is this self-deceit unacceptable on the part of someone who has made it a point that, to quote *the* bigwhig of Western philosophy, "the unexamined life is not worth living."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Indeed, what speaks strongest to the observer a century later is first and foremost art; i.e., depictions of atrocities.

<sup>113</sup> I would like to thank Kyle McNeel and David McPherson for their help with grammar and style, as well as Holger Afflerbach and Markus Asper for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

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