

The essences of martial arts and *corporal fighting*: A classical phenomenological analysis

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Abstract

Literature does not provide a clear conceptualisation of the fighting at the core of martial arts. In fact, there is not even a precise definition of martial arts. It is common to find descriptions of martial arts fighting as a derivation, simulacra, or metaphorical phenomenon of human conflict, i.e. a phenomenon without its proper dignity. To discover its proper dignity is the main goal of this theoretical research. Achieving this goal can be of fundamental importance to the whole of the research field and to clarify norms of practice regarding the two phenomena (fighting and martial arts).

Methodologically, classical phenomenology, or the archaeological phenomenology of culture, is applied to grasp the essence of these phenomena, in order to *return to the things themselves*. Moreover, the phenomenal distinction of *corporal fighting* leads to a correlative ethical aspect, namely, the mutual availability of the fighters involved and the motivation inherent in the challenge of physically overcoming another while avoiding being overcome. All varieties of martial arts involve a form of *corporal fight* training that unites aesthetical and ethical aspects. In the systematisation of *corporal fighting*, the aesthetical dimension defines one aspect of martial arts, including its operative nature; the other aspect is defined by an enhanced typification of the ethical dimension comprised therein. In other words, the ethical dimension is characterised by conduct that typically relates to combative attitudes. Lived experiences constituting fighting and martial arts have scientific and ethical consequences.

Keywords: archaeological phenomenology • budo • combat sports • self-defence • simulacra • sport psychology

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Agonology (science about struggle) – five detailed theories of agonology were published in 6 separate books (from 1938 to 2000, all in Polish [83-88]).

Struggle – any activity that is at least a two-subject one (premising that a team can be a subject) where at least one of subjects hinders the other [83; see also: 73, 74, 93, 94].

Fight – in the popular *Diki Dictionary*, there are 19 basic synonyms of the term (nouns); 14 verbs; 2 phrasal verbs; 2 idioms.

Budo (Budō) – originally a term denoting the "Way of the warrior", it is now used as a collective appellation for modern martial arts of *kendō*, *jūdō*, *kyūdō* and so on. The primary objective of these "martial ways" is self-perfection (*ningen-kesei*) [89].

Capoeira – a Brazilian martial art in which "fighting overcomes the fight itself, encompassing the practice of a ritualistic game since dance comes up from musicality and rhythm; attacks and defenses occur within a people wheel (*roda*), formed by the practitioner (*capoeiristas*) and the public" [36, p. 178].

Krav maga (KM) – Israeli self-defence system, developed from military experience and constantly updated by violent incidents in the military, law enforcement and civil arenas, taught to security forces and civilians worldwide.

Global science space – conventionally, the global science space is associated with the ability to provide the latest scientific knowledge through prestigious electronic scientific journals [75].

Simulacra – are copies that depict things that either had no original, to begin with or that no longer have an original [91].

SWAT – Special Weapons And Tactics.

INTRODUCTION

This philosophical and psychological theoretical investigation aims to define the essence of two phenomena: martial arts (*budo*) and what I call *corporal fighting*. The methodological perspective adopted in this study represents classical phenomenology, which attempts to grasp the essence of the objects it studies, in order to *back to the things themselves*. The primary phenomenal feature of *corporal fighting*, that is, its defining characteristic on the face of things is a physical confrontation; however, this characteristic is common to other phenomena as well. Moreover, as will be reviewed and analytically shown, the phenomenical non-distinction between *corporal fighting* and fighting in a broad sense (as does *agonology*, i.e. science about struggle, however, due to the author limitation in reading Polish, it was not possible to examine the literature on *agonology*. The Editors warn that it is a science about struggles, which allows establishing that kind of distinction. For a better comprehension, see the glossary added by the Editors, as well as the Editorial Note) leads to a serious misunderstanding about their natures, with scientific, ethical, and motivational confusion about the true and cultural meanings of martial arts.

The scientific community's burgeoning interest in issues inherent to martial arts, fighting, and combat sports, such as Japanese *karate-do*, Israeli *krav maga*, Olympic *boxing*, and *tae-kwondo*, is evidenced by the ever-growing number of publications – which will be presented below – and the growing scientific impact of *Archives of Budo* [1]. Although interest in martial arts and combat sports (MA&CS) is still dispersed among scientific publications [2] that pertain to different study areas or among national and international scientific events, it does extend beyond the fields of physical education and sports. In this sense, continuous contributions from other areas, such as psychology, sociology, and philosophy, address these issues, thereby enriching the scope of possible interpretations of martial arts and combat sports. However, this growing interest is not associated with any sort of conceptual clarity via any linking element that would provide thematic unity among these fields of study. As argued by Martinková and Parry [3], 'In both theory and practice, there is presently terminological chaos in the area of martial activities' [3, p.3]. The absence of a common thematic and terminological unit poses problems for the scientific community, in that it makes it difficult to find grounds

for comparison in the literature regarding specific practices found in the unique facets of martial arts, combat sports, and fighting. This happens even when different researchers face sharing the same theme as those aiming to analyse the socio-psychological outcomes of martial arts and combat sports involvement, specific issues such as aggression and violence [4]. Theebom [5] tried to 'help to explain why a number of studies have resulted in contrasting findings' [5, p.200], arguing that 'only through a more nuanced way of analysis might we be able to dissolve the existing paradox and can we start to detect the true effects of martial arts involvement among youth' [5, p.201]. Before detecting these effects, we argue here; it is imperative to know what these phenomena, fighting and martial arts, truly are, through an even more nuanced (though more rigorous) way of analysis.

The present research is conceptual and carries out a philosophical exploration that aims to define the essence of both fighting and martial arts. A phenomenological analysis is done, whose results provide criteria – inherent to the subject/object, a feature that phenomenology aims to make explicit – that make possible to conceptualize fighting and martial arts, defining them at the light of their various forms of empirical manifestation and distinguishing them from similar phenomena. The research aims to contribute to the whole of the research field and clarify norms of practice regarding the two phenomena. The definitions provided by the Anglo-Saxon and Latin literature regarding these cultural objects are not founded on phenomenological analysis. Moreover, the consulted bibliography in English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese do not offer a precise definition that encompasses the wide variety of practices found in these phenomena.

Even if there is no novelty in applying phenomenology to sports psychology, or still to physical education [6-16], the purpose of grasping the intentional structure of lived experiences is still incipient not only in sports psychology but also in psychology as a whole. In adherence to the Husserlian method, we took an original approach in applying classical phenomenology to the analysis of cultural phenomena [17, 18].

In phenomenology, the use of precise words is important for avoiding ambiguity; it is particularly important to describe phenomena clearly.

Words and expressions used generically are often unsuitable. As Husserl states, 'phenomenology is never content, on principle, with vague talk or obscure generalities, but systematically demands a definite clarification, analysis and description shedding light on the essential connexions and penetrating to the remotest specifications attainable: it demands thoroughgoing work' [19, p. 417]. Once a phenomenon is described, the word or term used to describe it is conceptualised; the current use of the word does not necessarily change, but its philosophical significance becomes more precise. To obtain a better understanding of the phenomena focused on in this study, it is appropriate to coin a new expression: *corporal fighting*. The term 'fighting' is generally taken to refer to various forms of 'physical combat', whereas *corporal fighting* refers only to that kind of fighting in which the body plays a central role as a tool, target, and motivator.

Physical combat includes the use of weapons in fighting but also encompasses struggles (here used as street fighting or brawls), battles, duels, self-defence, and some forms of play, all of which – as will be shown – are excluded from the scope of *corporal fighting* if the body is not the central tool, target, and motivator. Moreover, the idea of physical combat is not restricted to the notion of physical struggle (brawl), nor vice versa, if physical combat is taken to include cases of play, duelling, self-defence, or *corporal fighting*, all of which are irreducible to the idea of 'struggle'. When referencing acts of self-defence, struggling, or duelling, the word 'fighting' tends to bear meanings in addition to the typical meanings, such meanings being determined by the motivations inherent in the act of fighting. Once the expression coined in this article is clarified and disseminated, there will be a wider and more comprehensive grasp of the essence of martial arts. This need for the coining of a new concept has been brought about by the lack of conceptual accuracy in the Anglo-Saxon and Latin literature, which has led to a failure to individuate such phenomena and explain their specificities.

Achieving goal of this work can be of fundamental importance to the whole of the research field and to clarify norms of practice regarding the two phenomena (fighting and martial arts).

Literature review

A cursory literature review reveals a lack of conceptual unity among the various approaches

to the theme at hand. As already mentioned, 'describing and precisely defining the martial arts has provided an ongoing challenge for authors and theorists' [20, p. 9]. Some studies from different regions – including America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania – illustrate this fact. In their otherwise exhaustive encyclopaedia of Eastern martial arts, Habersetzer G and Habersetzer R [21] do not dedicate a single chapter to defining their subject matter. Even Keenan [22] – mirroring the approach adopted in almost every bibliography – does not offer any definition of 'martial arts'; like the authors previously mentioned, he merely speaks of 'Eastern martial arts'. Thus, these authors seem, implicitly, to share the popular approach of narrowly interpreting martial arts in terms of the word *budo*, the Japanese term for martial arts (loosely meaning 'warrior path'). The relation between the definitions of martial arts and *budo* is pointed out by Braunstein [23] and by Kalina and Barczyński [24, 2]). In a broad sense, as adopted here, *budo* is synonymous with martial arts, the usual translation of the expression. Although, it is interesting that Sasaki warns, 'Historically, the term Budo has had a very broad meaning' [25, p. 47], even in Japan, and that 'although the concept of Budo has been argued about from many points of view, it has not yet been clearly defined' [25].

A likely problem with this approach is that it may associate the concept with very specific cultural terms and with theoretical and practical references that, in the Western context, lead to an erroneous inference that the only authentic martial arts are those originating in the East. According to this interpretation, Western martial arts would amount to nothing more than copied versions of models originating in the East, which is not accurate if one takes into account the martial art forms prevalent in Europe – medieval and renaissance martial arts [26], the martial arts of Ancient Greece [27] that is, the so-called European historical martial arts [28] – or *capoeira*, a martial art form developed in Brazil [29], for instance. There is an evident paradox in the association of martial arts with the East: its etymology is entirely occidental, referring to Mars, the ancient Roman god of war. Even if we do not talk about 'areal arts', i.e. the arts of Ares, the ancient Greek god of war who was considered disruptive and impulsive, and who did not have the virtuous character of Mars, it is possible to find the employment of an alternative expression which avoids (and opposes) the suggestion of a specific

military practice in martial arts: 'civil fighting traditions' [30, p. 23].

This alternative expression, though interesting to an eventual kind of classification of combat techniques, apparently is not explicitly justified and seems to be particular to McCarthy's text. Beyond this, it can promote confusion, since civil fighting can be rigorously understood as political fighting, or fighting for civil rights, in which physical combat ideally is not expected to occur. On the other hand, Eastern versus Western styles, i.e. a classification based on cultural differences – or, more precisely, geographical differences, we should say – is arguably the most popular way to classify martial arts [31]. Theebom et al. [32] merely classify combat systems as 'indigenous fighting sports (e.g. boxing, wrestling, and fencing) that have been practiced in Europe for a long time, other systems (e.g. judo, jiu-jitsu, and karate) found their way from Far-East Asia to the West in later times', and, suggesting an Eurocentric standpoint, state that after 'the spread of Asian martial arts to the West (...) gradually, fighting systems from other parts of the world, too, found their way to the West (e.g. Brazilian Capoeira)' [32, p. 19]. The authors argue that the variety of combat systems 'over recent decades has made it less than straightforward to refer to martial arts as a unitary phenomenon' [32, p. 19]. However, they do not define martial arts; they only suggest ways to classify it. They consider a convention followed by Kavoura et al. [33] that uses 'the terms combat sports and martial arts interchangeably to refer to all combat systems' [33, p. 2].

Moreover, without intending to define 'martial arts', Looser's [34] sociological analysis and Lantz's [35] therapeutic analysis study athletes in New Zealand and the United States, respectively, practising martial arts originating in the East; these studies reinforce the message that there are cultural particularities in martial arts originating in the East. This perception is also suggested by Lu [36], who clarifies, 'Not to be confused with what in the West may be perceived as «physical» activities, Eastern martial arts are instead considered to be «philosophical» activities' [36, p.33]. Elsewhere, Monahan's [37] philosophical reading deliberately limits the definition of 'martial arts' to traditional practices in which the emphasis is less on the instrumental accuracy of combat than on artistic facets. Monahan's definition excludes instrumental combat practices, such as those performed in military and competitive contexts, and

this exclusion, in association with his arguments deployed, results in an understanding of martial arts in the context of a Western philosophical idea of self-overcoming. Monahan's definition is promising and full of well-founded moral consequences, but it clearly restricts martial arts to this philosophical idea.

Although the objective of Columbus and Rice [38] is not to define martial arts but to comprehend phenomenologically the various meanings imparted to these arts by its practitioners, the authors mention that aspects related to emancipation, religion, and military practices are part of its historical definition, while placing emphasis on psychological maturation and skills acquisition. Vey [20] refutes the dimension of meanings that martial arts could have and, regarding its definition, suggests that 'the elusiveness of this task seems to rest in the inherently dichotomous perception of the martial arts in that they are simultaneously regarded as a physical phenomenon of combat and a metaphysical set of beliefs and ideologies' [20, p. 8]. That is, in fact, the case in Cynarski's [39] definition, where martial arts are understood as 'a historical category of perfect systems of the hand-to-hand fight and wielding weapon connected with elements of metaphysics' [39, p. 20]. Therefore, adhering to dualism and a radically positivistic perspective, Vey understands that 'an operational definition of what constitutes the phenomenon is also required. In this case, combat is the physical instance of a deliberate and volitional motor series produced exclusively by humans' [20, p. 11]. The extreme weakness of his attempt to define martial arts is patent since it contains not only the combative phenomena but also any other corporal movement intentionally made by a human being.

Then, it is not possible to disagree with Correia and Franchini [40], who say that 'the disagreement demarcates and characterises the dialogue among the different actors making the historical scene that represents the field of fighting, martial arts, and combat sports' [40, p. 1]. Taking a broad approach to the notion of fighting, with emphasis on the anthropological dimension, which is excluded from the positivistic approach, the authors argue towards a polysemous view and conclude that, in '*lato sensu*, we have the situations in which that term [fighting] is circumscribed in the context of physical/bodily combat by intent of subjugations between subjects starting with interpersonal conflicts and, always, by

contradictory and ambivalent human content' [40, p. 1]. However, how do we understand this view that not all fighting happens because of an interpersonal conflict? The authors would answer that we do so by seeing it as a 'war metaphor'. This line of interpretation is indeed assumed by many other authors.

Conceptually – compared to previous research on this topic – Figueiredo [41] made landmark progress with his research. In his approach to the study of martial arts and combat sports, Figueiredo highlighted a hermeneutical approach as suitable for considering the subject, because it allows for a proper cognisance of the complexity involved. In his conceptualisation of the subject, Figueiredo [41, p. 20] distinguished between the 'fight' (in which the 'kill is real') and the 'ritualistic fight' (in which the 'kill is more symbolic'); the latter, because of its sublime aspect, allows martial arts and combat sports to be defined as disciplines, rather than as real fights. Nevertheless, the intentional specificity of these phenomena is not examined in terms of their essence, that is to say, in ontological terms, but only in terms of the hermeneutic perspective applied by Figueiredo in his important contribution. Figueiredo follows some ideas of Reid and Croucher [42]. Although they asked 'what exactly do we mean by 'martial arts' [42, p. 10], the answer is not exact, as it is limited to a significant overview of historical aspects that were determinants in its probable development: 'The fundamental division into fighting as entertainment, sport or ritual, performed within the tribe, and warfare, which is combat against other tribes, probably occurred in pre-historic times. By the time the first civilisations were well established this division had become ritualised' [42, p. 12]. In another work often referenced, Poliakov [43] took an approach that encompasses important distinctions and definitions whose contents may be understood as contractualistic: *I define Sport and athletics (...) as activity in which a person physically competes against another in a contest with established regulations and procedures, with the immediate object of succeeding in that contest under criteria for determining victory that are different from those that mark success in everyday life. (...) This definition of sport excludes a number of forms of combat, such as fencing, armed duelling, and gladiatorial events, activities that fall more properly into categories other than sport* [42, p. 7].

Therefore, Poliakov [42] escapes from the historicism of Reid and Croucher [42]¹, from the positivistic naturalism of Vey [20], and from the psychologistic fault of Correia and Franchini [40], who consider who consider fighting always as metaphorical expression of interpersonal conflicts. However, the question that remains is: how are all of those combat categories constituted?

In a version similar to the pair 'fight' and 'ritualistic fight', Sanchez García and Malcolm [44], based on Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, interpret the modern sportive phenomenon as a search for 'mimetic' excitement. Parallel to the concepts of 'real life' excitement and 'mimetic' excitement, the concepts of 'real life combat' and 'mock fights' were introduced. The former 'is reserved for unregulated combat such as street fighting' [44, p. 42]. Yet, the authors state that 'participants in combat sports explicitly recognise the differences between the "mock fights", for which they train, and "real fighting"' [44, p. 42]. Although they highlight that 'mock fights' are used 'to recognise qualitative differences, and that combat sports people identify between these activities rather than portray the fighting in combat sports as "unreal"' [44, p. 42], they do not offer a conceptual definition of fighting. Therefore, fighting and martial arts are understood as a kind of cathartic representation of real fighting, of real conflict. Although representation is important, only an accurate description can express the essence of these phenomena, not as a representation of anything else, but as phenomena having their own dignity.

Recently, Martínková and Parry [3] emphasised the prominent conceptual differences and confusion in the field, and stated, 'there is no satisfactory and well justified cross-cultural account of the classification of martial activities' [3, p. 4]. They comment that, in 'the fine collection edited by Priest and Young (2014)' [3, p. 2], among chapters of a dozen philosophers, 'their conceptions of "martial arts" vary considerably' [3, p. 2]. Echoing the editors, for whom a 'question about the martial arts is how to characterise them' [45, p. 9], they 'address this hard, non-trivial philosophical question' [3, p. 2] and 'propose a classification of martial activities based on the purpose of the activity' [3, p. 2]. The clear eidetic classification of

1. The historicist approach taken by the authors, who consider a common development from prehistoric times, suggests an evolutionistic conception. Therefore, it may be as well interpreted as naturalistic.

the purpose of what they call martial categories, and its usefulness, however, is not the same of back to physical combat and martial arts as things themselves but is centred around what is possible to do (and what is made) considering the existence of these phenomena. Once again, we can detect the dichotomous pair of 'real-life fighting with the aim of defending oneself or defeating an opponent' [3, p. 8] and 'combat in a modified form, given the lack of any real need to fight someone' [3, p. 9]. For someone, knowing fighting, the things learned by practising a martial art, provides the better condition to act in both the real combat and the supposed non-real combat (modified, metaphorical, symbolised). What exactly does the lack of any real need to fight mean, considering that when someone is practising combat in martial arts, he feels in his flesh the need to fight to defend himself and defeat his opponent? Therefore, the definition of fighting and martial arts are still unclear from a phenomenological point of view.

In the pedagogical field of physical education and sports, a very fruitful line of research has been devoted to examining the internal logic of fighting practices [41, 46-50]. Different ways to classify and characterise the phenomenon of fighting are presented in these works, most of them aiming to explain the principles that organise the functions of the combative exchange. However, what is the fighting phenomenon itself remains to be elucidated. The absence of clear answers in the literature to questions about combat categories (see Editorial Note – insertion by *Arch Budo*), i.e. of what fighting and martial arts consist, inspires the analyses done herein. The search for a definition can be undertaken with the intention of highlighting non-definitions or vague definitions of 'martial arts' in the groundwork on which these research works are based.

Methodology

Phenomenology was founded in the early twentieth century by the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938). Its major objective was to develop a gnosiology able to pinpoint the ultimate rational inherent in scientific practices. Phenomenology would thus serve as a propaedeutic for the sciences. With regard to the sciences and the human condition, phenomenological research reveals implicit elements and ideal possibilities that shape both scientific practice and the perception of existence. The task of phenomenology was to make explicit the implicit elements, that is, the elements

that were not evident but were sensed obscurely. The methodological approach adopted in this paper has been sourced from classical phenomenology, which uses eidetic and transcendental reduction as a way to isolate the essential features of a phenomenon, made by a thing consistent with its intentional comade consistently with its intentional consciousness. omenology 'proceeds with an excavation *sui generis* that moves not from the surface, but from interiority' [51, p. 5]. She goes on to say that the transcendental dimension is the dimension of the acts, the operations of which we are conscious, which we 'live' at every moment of our existence, these are the acts that are lived by us, our 'lived experience', or *Erlebnisse* (in German). The acts we live are consciously grasped by us, which means that we are aware that we are living them [51, p. 5].

Therefore, we can recognise and then analyse those specificities among the synthesis of lived experiences present in the flow of consciousness. In this operation, the object is approached with a readjusted attitude; the accepted assumptions with regard to the object are suspended in order to extract only what is manifest. This approach does not view the objects as 'beings in themselves' but as 'beings for a subject', revealing themselves as *things* to the conscious, which is always conscious of something. Here, we follow what Husserl [19] defined as 'the principle of all principles': '*Every primordial dator Intuition is a source of authority for knowledge, that whatever presents itself in intuition in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality), is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be, though only within the limits in which it presents itself.*' [19, p. 92].

The reduction is dealt with as a procedure that aims to subtract those characteristics of a phenomenon that are shown to be mere accessories, thus limiting itself to the phenomenological orientation and essence of a phenomenon. To verify the essential stability of a phenomenon (without which that phenomenon is not as it previously was), the criteria used are of the eidetic variety – or those in which different outcomes of a phenomenon are considered – so as to guarantee the persistence of its structure. This persistence corresponds to the essential stability of the phenomenon. By performing this operation, it is possible to derive an internal description of those lived experiences which characterise the phenomenon or, in this case, phenomena, namely, *corporeal fighting* and martial arts.

For a reader not familiar with phenomenology, the progress of such analyses may eventually seem to follow simple logical syllogisms and not what is called here eidetic reduction. In fact, the problems of logic, and the imperative need of logic are decisive, corresponding to a historical starting point for the phenomenology of Husserl, who was a mathematician. Without escaping logic, the fundamental distinction is that, here, logic complies with the intuition of the phenomenon, is oriented entirely by it. Therefore, it does not concern the correction between sentences, as the syllogism. Indeed, it concerns sentences that must be veridical in terms of adhering to things, i.e. expresses adequately the return to the things themselves, as Husserl stated: 'Perfectly clear apprehension has this advantage, that in virtue of its own essential nature it permits us with absolute certainty to identify and distinguish, to relate and make explicit, enable us, briefly, to carry out "with insight" and "logical" acts' [19 p. 197]. This means overcoming the uniqueness of a case, of an individual example: 'It is only the *individual* element which phenomenology ignores, whilst it raises the whole essential content in its concrete fullness into eidetic consciousness and takes it as an ideally selfsame essence, which like every essence could particularize itself not only *hic et nunc* but in numberless instances' [19 p. 209]. Phenomenology, therefore, precedes the sciences of facts that 'must find support in such acts, it makes nonetheless, as a fundamental condition of its possibility, positive affirmations concerning unreflective experiences. These it owes to reflexion, or, more accurately, to the reflective intuition of the essence' [19, p. 225]. According to the issues discussed in this paper, what we do is 'psychology in the sense of a doctrine of psychic or spiritual essences that studies the psyche empirically and a priori in its own particular essence according to its immanent set of types [Typik]' [52, p. 8].

WHAT IS CORPORAL FIGHTING?

It must be noted here that, conceptually, *corporal fighting* embodies a concept of a more general nature when compared to the concept of 'martial arts'; it loosely encapsulates the field of martial arts, while it is possible to include *corporal fighting* under the rubric of martial arts. Thus, the various martial arts embody specific ways of *corporal fighting*. The truth of this statement is evident in the fact that it is impossible to imagine

a martial art form that does *not* involve *corporal fighting*, even though it is reasonable to conceptualise the converse.

Imagining is an act of consciousness central to the procedure of eidetic variation described by Husserl [19]. The eidetic variation, or act of imagining, is accomplished by the insertion and removal of features that are potentially essential to the phenomenon being examined for arriving at a lowest common denominator, i.e. the phenomenon's essence. Thus, in considering the idea of 'martial arts', if one imagines subtracting the presence of *corporal fighting* from martial arts, an essential impossibility will be faced. There is no martial art without *corporal fighting*, whether real or imaginary. The opposite, however, is not true, i.e. if the idea of 'martial arts' – even if it is still an obscure idea – is subtracted from the idea of *corporal fighting*, the essence of the latter idea remains intact. Without the idea of 'martial arts', the essence of *corporal fighting* is retained and can have real or ideal forms independent of the notion of 'martial arts'. This is the case for some forms of combat sports, such as box and wrestling, which are not necessarily relative to cultural notions of martial arts. Further clarification of this, however, depends on a precise phenomenological analysis of martial arts phenomena. Once the more general nature of *corporal fighting* is clarified in relation to martial arts, the reason for focusing on *corporal fighting* as an object will be easier to grasp.

It is necessary to clarify here that *corporal fighting* does not refer to any form of institutionalised physical confrontation regulated by external rules that control the conduct of the participants and which involves the criteria of victory and defeat. This description is more suitable – although phenomenologically imprecise – as a definition of 'combat sport' than of *corporal fighting*. The term *corporal fighting* is a new concept that refers to a phenomenon that encompasses all combat sports types, although this premise is not entirely accurate.

This analysis has already suspended the informative institutional definition – or so-called natural definition – that seeks to identify or apprehend what is immediate in *corporal fighting*. What, then, is exhibited in *corporal fighting*? As already mentioned, the primary phenomenal feature of *corporal fighting* lies in physical confrontation; however, other phenomena – such as physical

struggles, duels, instrumental offensive combat, self-defence, and some forms of play – share the same characteristics and thus lie on the fringes of the experience of *corporal fighting*, extending the analysis even further. Mere similarities are not synonymous with being identical, and although these phenomena could be mistaken for each other, their characteristics reveal differences between them. We should caution here that the next analytical steps will make the reductions in order to get the pure manifestations of phenomena, identifying the acts of pure consciousness of which phenomena originally consisted. These phenomena can occur impurely, that is, with the right mix of acts. These occurrences are not only a fact, but also the source of imprecise concepts on the subject.

The idea of inherent motivation and ethical correlatives with regard to physical struggles in appears again Husserl's statement: 'the vast manifold of meaning-objectivities, that is to say, levels of meaning in physical things and subjectivities, are understandable [*verstehbare*] objectivities, and their scientific exploration is nothing else than just engendering understanding, clarifying motivations' [52, p. 9]. The first fundamental distinction that surfaces in *corporal fighting* is the mutual availability of the participants: both are willing to fight, and both are aware of each other's willingness to fight. This is well exemplified in the simple image of two practitioners of any kind of fighting greeting each other and engaging peacefully – even if done with much energy – in combat, with one trying to dominate the other.

The second fundamental characteristic is that *corporal fighting* finds motivation in itself – namely, in the challenge of overcoming the opponent while avoiding being overcome. The phenomenal apprehension of *corporal fighting* thus implies the possibility of recognition that both opponents participating in combat are deliberately available for the fight. For instance, a fight for survival with physical combat does not correspond precisely to the essence of *corporal fighting*, because the ultimate motivation of the fighter is to prevent someone else from killing him. The motivation of *corporal fighting* is inherent in the fight itself insofar as the key element that drives the fighters is a kind of ethical challenge embodied only by the act of *corporal fighting*. What is this ethical challenge? To repeat: it is that of overcoming the opponent while avoiding being overcome. What this overcoming involves precisely will be

developed later. From the image of the fighters greeting and combating each other, mentioned above, we pass now to the moment when one of the practitioners, finding himself dominated and even disappointed, accepts his defeat and stops the fighting.

In a physical struggle (street fighting), confrontation is invariably motivated by hostility. This motivation reifies the other entity as something disaffected. As the target of hostility, the other entity is not recognised as having positive motivations, and so the agent is closed to the other. In this closed condition, the agent always perceives the other as a negative and threatening entity. This hostility characterises the inherent unilateral nature of the physical struggle, in stark contrast to the mutuality of *corporal fighting*.

An intemperate emotional outbreak occurs only on occasion during conflict and is therefore not an essential feature of physical struggle, which is conceived as the simple possibility of somebody struggling 'coldly', without showing emotional engagement of any kind even if the struggle is accompanied by the necessary hostility, closure, and unilaterality of regarding the other as an attack target. Hence, the physical struggle does not embrace the ethical reciprocity inherent in *corporal fighting*, namely, the mutual availability and inherent motivation.

In a duel, the motivation for confrontation is the protection of one's honour. How do we know this? Again, by the imaginative variation that opens the way for the eidetic reduction in the purpose of reaching an element that is impossible to subtract from the phenomenon without disfiguring it, an element that is therefore essential to the phenomenon. If one were to set aside the honour component—that is, wounded self-respect demanding reprisal—the duel would cease to exist. However, unlike with a physical struggle, there is no element of unilaterality in a duel; on the contrary, it is characterised by a mutual agreement between the fighters, once both participants are willing to accept the other's reciprocal attempt to fight for honour.

A duel embraces only one characteristic of *corporal fighting's* ethical features. It is best to consult a dictionary to understand the essential scope and cultural relativity of the concept of honour. According to the *Brazilian Aurélio Dictionary*, honour is a 'sense of dignity that leads the individual

to seek and deserve all consideration'. A further step towards understanding honour can be taken by reading philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, for whom 'the heart of psychology of honour – the giving and receiving of respect – is already in you as it is in every normal human being, however enlightened and advanced' [53, p. xix].

Honour is thus a sense of self-esteem, a feeling of being worthy of respect. The perception of someone that is attacked on his self-esteem is deserving physical combat repair may lead to real combat. The first possibility of real combat is presented by a simple, immediate attack, which would be closer to a street fight movement (struggle). A second possibility is a challenge to engage in a physical confrontation which equates to a propositional mediation between the damage to honour and a confrontation with restorative intent. This propositional mediation appears as the structuring temporal element distinguishing a duel from a fight. Combat for the sake of honour – a more permanent manifestation of one's self-esteem – is different from circumstantial combat as it is triggered by an emotional reaction that, in another situation, depending on the mood of the offended, could be more easily mitigated. The value that fulfils a given notion of living honour varies enormously and can be even highly individualised, independent of institutionalised social codes: 'to say people have honour is to say that they are entitled to respect according to the codes of their honour worlds' [53, p. 31]. In spite of this variation, honour absolutely needs to be defended, under penalty of living in shame, since 'shame is the feeling appropriate to one's own dishonourable behaviour' [53, p. 31]. To avoid a life of shame and to make patent his purest intentions, the dishonoured samurai displays the interior of his venter. The localisation of the soul is attributed to the venter, exposed in the *seppukku*, the suicide ritual known as *hara-kiri* [21].

Since some kind of hostility is essential to 'physical struggle' and 'duels' – the demand for restitution for an affront to dignity – it can also be asked whether hostility is a necessary or possible element in *corporal fighting* and 'combat sports'. Hostility is certainly not a necessary element in these phenomena, although it should be treated as a possibility within certain limits. These limits delineate the boundaries of *corporal fighting* and combat sports as distinguishable units within consciousness flow. What, then, is the limit of the

hostile element in *corporal fighting*? Such a limit is given by the objective conversion of growing hostility in strikes that dissolve the reciprocal ethical nature of *corporal fighting*. When a hostility – which is exclusively psychic in the beginning, i.e. subjectively experienced – undergoes this objective conversion, there is a transition toward the reification of the other party into an entity as a result of disaffection with the exchanges, leading to strokes expressing hostility. Therefore, the limit lies between a possible hostility that presfrontier itself in a contained manner – composed and tolerant – and a hostility concretely expressed in combative action – unrestrained.

What about hostility in 'combat sport'? In this case, the limit is institutionally regulated with rules that are guaranteed by the referee, which control the conduct of the participants. Anyway, for combat sports, from a psychological point of view, the limits of contained hostility must be respected. The psychological dynamic inherent to combat experiences is the determinant in developing the subjectivity of a fighter and is one of the most important points in communities of different combat practitioners, whether sportive or non-sportive. Hostility should not become objective because the event would cease to be a sporting event. In sporting events, the essential condition of not being openly and objectively hostile sustains its sporting nature and maintains the practice within institutionalised rules, ideally aiming to restrict violence to within the confines of those rules. In theory fromo remain within the sporting ethos, combatants cannot express corporally or morally the outright hostility that would arise from strokes and offences devoid of the reciprocal nature of *corporal fighting*. This, however, does not mean that *corporal fighting* and combat sports do not feature aggressiveness, an energetic element crucial to those who fight but not the same as hostility.

One final distinguishing characteristic of the various forms of physical confrontation is concerned play. This is similar to *corporal fighting* in that, unlike a duel, the motivational experience focuses on playful grace rather than on the determined challenge that characterises combat. One must, therefore, recognise that physical confrontation can be marked by playfulness, as in children's fighting games, but also occasionally as in 'combat' in which the disparity between combatants is such that a real challenge for the participants does not arise. One of the characteristics

of these play-fights is that participants may deliberately swap positions, putting themselves in a situation of inferiority or superiority without this being a determinant of any dispute because in these games the purpose is not to define a winner and a loser. If the definition of victory and defeat has important consequences for the participants, the play in question gives rise to another phenomenon, namely, physical struggle of some sort. By now we have distinguished some of the phenomena that are essential to the general field of physical combat and which approach the phenomenon that this research is trying to explain, namely, *corporal fighting*. As anticipated, what constitutes the phenomenon of *corporal fighting* is the gravitational centre of martial arts, and this plays a decisive role in the analyses carried out below. In the phenomenological reduction process performed below, the various forms of physical combat have not been treated as objects and so have not been regarded from an objective perspective. Instead, the objects have given way to the phenomena, that is, they have given way to how these occurrences are revealed to consciousness. One can consider here the first-person perspective [54-56] of someone – the author or the reader – who assumes the attitude of those who witness such phenomena intuitively filling them from the descriptions in progress in this paper. Thus, with reference to situations experienced directly or indirectly, remembered or imagined, or described in literary works or presented in movies, one can assess the adequacy of the essential description and different manifestations of duels, fights, games, and struggles.

The phenomenon of duelling has always shown itself to be a matter of honour, whether through the celebrated cape-and-sword novels of Alexandre Dumas, such as *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the epic Homeric duel between Hector and Achilles, the samurai stories of Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645), or the history of duelling nobility in France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even defeat can be regarded as honourable, even if painful – think of Hector in Troy – because it remains expressive of the fight for dignity. Reflecting a value that, sociologically, is typically organised by traditional aristocracies, duellists do not act unilaterally, which would be shameful for those who live in accordance with the codes that govern this type of confrontation, but ritualise the fight as a defence of honour. This ritualisation is essentially characterised by the fact that the duel is preceded by

an agreement between the parties, made possible by a time lag between the act that insulted the honour and the fight itself.

While the duel does not have the reciprocal ethical feature of *corporal fighting*, this does not mean that it is less ethical but only that it is constituted by another ethic. Through this, the duellist's moral strength is evident because it is an ethics in which, ultimately, the duellist's honour is placed above life itself or, at least, above physical well-being. Thus, in a duel, combat is a means of achieving another goal that is not restricted to fighting itself, namely, that of defending one's honour. The eidetic analysis performed herein puts brackets around those particular situations that lead both participants to defend their honour, without dealing with the justice or injustice of any action. In short, the duel is a physical confrontation motivated by the defence of honour and whose ritualisation implies the possibility of the opponent also defending himself.

By this definition, the duel is submitted to the prevailing notion of honour, to what is felt to be an affront to dignity. Thus, the concepts of honour are so flexible from culture to culture, and eventually within the same culture so relative in reference to the meaning of its defence, that other resources, such as rationalisation, political pondering, and even self-deception, can aid in the development of a person's moral and psychological integrity. Thus, to defend one's honour can mean eventually to not make use of the radical device of a duel or even the polemic of a 'verbal duel'. Attesting the flexibility of the notion of honour is not equivalent to weakening its decisive role for mankind, nor to understanding honour as a feeling that is easily interchangeable. The duellist puts honour above his physical integrity and, ultimately, above his life – knowing very well on behalf of what he is fighting. However, referring to the historical idea of a duel to the death between gentlemen, Appiah [53] shows that the duel became considered a source of shame rather than a source of honour, a change of opinion that took centuries to occur. The process through which the duel was led to infamy and elimination took place thanks to a moral revolution – and as such, quickly – dissociating the repair of self-respect from the fight to the death [53]. However, a duel may be considered as meaning to honour one's own life. In a certain way, it gives sense to life. This can mean saving a life in a naked sense, i.e. the biological sense, but also

saving a life in a moral sense within the conception of human dignity.

The struggle, in its turn, may even include a sense of honour, as a hostile reaction is not without injury to the dignity of the subject. Its immediately reactive character, however, differentiates the experience of struggling from that of the duel. By immediately reactive character, we mean not a chronological immediateness (one can feel hostility before a struggle), but a kind of reaction that makes the hostility and the physical attack 'identical'. When a struggle occurs, any other mediation happening prior to or at that moment – a reflexive or persuasive one, for instance – falls into a separate hostility coming from the physical attack, experienced as a physical urge to act. This reactivity to the other is imbued with a hostility that suggests the loss of otherness and thus loss of the other as a subject with values and freedom. It is worthwhile to appreciate the significance of this loss of freedom: physical confrontation means the physical overcoming of an opponent, an overcoming that corresponds to cancelling his immediate freedom of action in the world. This is corporeal action and is well illustrated by struggles where the aim is to shut someone up. This lived experience of being taken by hostility puts the other into an objectified state, whose characteristic is to be reduced to a negative and threatening presence. At the moment when the subject takes the initiative in a physical struggle, even if only instantly, there is no sense of respect toward the other. The intention is to nullify otherness – the other objectified as negative and threatening – even if it happens for a very brief moment, which it does most of the time. Even if the struggle is followed by repentance or justification for the event, which would encompass a moral reflection on the experience, it does not change anything with regard to the essence of the phenomenon that occurs, unreflectively, at the time it is happening, i.e. without mediation between hostility and attack. This does not mean that the fight and all hostility correlated to it occur in a thoughtless or irrational manner since every fight has its meaning, but that the attack is primarily considered a direct expression of hostility.

Phenomenally, the struggle looks like an event lacking a degree of corporal control. It is not by chance that when a martial arts practitioner is seized by hostility so that the intensity of the blows become uncontrolled, witnesses often say that the match turned into a street fight. In such

cases, as shown by Sánchez Garcia [57] and by Melo and Barreira [58], the intensity of rampant blows, which is defined by the specificity of the interaction between practitioners, corresponds to a loss of control and the emergence of violence. Sánchez Garcia [57] points out that the criterion of loss of control is given by the notion of normal practice, institutionally defined and lived by experienced practitioners.

Therefore, the essence of *corporal fighting* lies in identifying the intentionality of a body that is also a subject. What is this intentionality and what is the relevance of situating the body of the fighter as a subject? Briefly, it has already been mentioned that *corporal fighting* requires the challenge of physically overcoming another while avoiding being overcome. The inherent challenge of *corporal fighting* reveals part of its intentionality but hides its deeper meaning, which is its essential meaning. It has been clarified that what defines a fight is the fact that, in it, 'the bodies of the fighters remain the target, as an object, and objective of the actions' [41, p. 20]. From this simple and structural insight, it is possible to penetrate into its intentional sphere, stressing some consequences for the phenomenology of combat. The first of them concerns the adversary: those who have an opponent's body as their target also have, simultaneously, their own body as the target of their adversary. We should reflect on what this means: The implication is that the purpose is not just to strike or stop the opponent's body, as the target, but also to avoid having one's own body hit or stopped as the target of one's adversary. When considering the purpose of physically overcoming the opponent, that is, having him as a target, the corollary to that must also be acknowledged, namely, the purpose of not being overcome by one's opponent. It follows that an objective reading of the fight, that is, an external reading, is inadequate; the challenge arises of understanding the fight regarding its own intentionality.

The second possible point to consider in order to comprehend Figueiredo's definition [41], at its core, is that the fight is not against a body, but against another fighter (who, of course, is not disembodied). Naturally, the fighter is a person. Nonetheless, the fight occurs against the fighter rather than against the person. If inverted, the circumstances would characterise it not as a fight, but as a conflict, which, in its turn, can be a struggle (brawl), self-defence, or an

instrumental offensive combat procedure, a duel. However, what is decisive in this particular oppositional intersubjective relationship is the range of intentional actions carried out by the participants' bodies.

In order to reach a description that adequately covers the full arc of *corporal fighting*, it is still necessary to determine the intended meaning of what is objectively referred to as physical overcoming. The intended meaning, in terms of lived experience, does not correspond to that natural attitude in which the opponent would be grasped only as a physical entity to be overcome, i.e. grasped in a strictly physical way. As indicated by earlier assertions, it does not eliminate the fact that the determination of the fight is physical, but it highlights the fact that this physicality is inherently subjective because it is the physical body of a subject. Furthermore, the idea of physical overcoming does not reveal the specificity of this overcoming, because it is not, for example, a kind of physical elimination. Once this negative reading of *corporal fighting*, that is, a reading clarified of the shortcomings of some descriptions, has been carried out, we can move on to a positive reading. So how do we describe *corporal fighting* in its full scope and specificity?

In *corporal fighting*, the goal is to restrict the operative mobility of the corporal subject, the opponent, as well as to frustrate his or her identical intentions, thus determining the phenomenal and operative dimensions of *corporal fighting*, by different kinds, uses, and styles of displacement, blocking, grappling, submission holding, kicking, and striking.

These intentional goals are ethically determined by the condition of being able, fully, to make a combatant the centre of a corporal challenge² and to know that the opponent is doing the same; these conditions lead both combatants to accept the challenge. When there is no reciprocity in terms of consciousness or willingness to restrict the operational mobility of the opponent – that is, if the intention to limit the other's freedom of movement through physical dominance is not shared by both subjects – the essential conditions of *corporal fighting* have not

been met. Thus, when there is no reciprocity in a physical confrontation, it can be considered a form of confrontation motivated by hostility or by an offensive physical attack that occurs regardless of the victim's consciousness; thus, there is no *corporal fighting*.

Phenomenological apprehension tries to approach the phenomenon exactly as it presents itself to intuition, and within limits, it presents to intuition. Figuratively, it can be argued that the phenomenon 'speaks about' itself, but only if one assumes an appropriate attitude of listening. Briefly, when the phenomenon of *corporal fighting* is allowed to 'speak' about itself, its phenomenal features are immediately apparent, although relatively enigmatic. As previously pointed out, the interaction of the combatants, characterised by displacements, defences, grappling's, submission holds, kicking, and hand strikes, develops through the mutual attempts to restrict the operative mobility of the other subject's body, and to frustrate his or her same intentions, thereby determining the phenomenal aspects of the body and the operative fighting. In such a development, it is possible to understand how the actions are ethically determined by the condition of both subjects accepting the challenge.

There is still a point to be considered: since duel is defined as fighting as a question of honour, does a *corporal fight* not involve honour? The honour of the fighter lives in his attitude, in his posture towards himself in facing the fight. His honour consists of a self-value, an effort to corresponding to his own expectation regarding the performance toward the combat. The question of honour in *corporal fighting* is motivated by the fighter himself rather than by an offender or challenger. Therefore, in spite of implicating the adversary, the challenge of *corporal fighting* is not centred on the other, as in the duel. In *corporal fighting*, the honour is centred on the fighter himself, corresponding to the combative posture emulated by the fight, expressing a self-value of the subject in action.

The qualification of the opponent fighter affects the level of the challenge directly and so interferes with the expectations of performance and attitude, i.e. the honour challenge of fighting. The challenge faced by the fighter to correspond to the self-placed expectations will be modulated and optimised by personal tendencies which come out as lived experiences. As the practice of

2 In cases where the basis of a corporal challenge is not the challenge itself but another motivation – such as hostility or honour – then the phenomena are matters of physical struggle and duel.

a martial art presumes the existence of a community, the experiences in question are intertwined with the culture of this martial art and with the fighter's peers, especially his masters, who are models for his self-placed expectations. In some circumstances, the challenge will be facing his fear. In others, the challenge becomes into self-indulgence, uncontrolled aggressiveness, negligence, the absence of tenacity, etc. The fighter's sense of honour also includes his understanding of how his behaviour can be moral in the face of defeat or victory. Therefore, the sense of honour required to fight rests on the challenges lived by each one, which will renew the motivation inherent in the fight. However, if no challenge exists in the fight, no question of honour will be evoked. Then, respecting a wide myriad of experiences and intensities, something materialises out of *corporal fighting* that necessarily constitutes a process of self-knowledge. This process has martial arts as an existential model of confrontation. It is guided by the emulation of a sense of honour, encompassing a sense of self-value, which, in its turn, is about the attitude assumed during a fight. Once fighting's essential experiences have been developed, every martial art must be grasped as an existential tradition. We are ever closer to a phenomenological understanding of what a martial art is. We will not be so, however, without prior analysis of two peculiar combative phenomena: self-defence and instrumental offensive combat. The danger of these form of combat largely distances it from play fighting. Their severity does not make self-defence and instrumental offensive combat identical to a struggle (brawl) or duel. Entering into hand-to-hand combat by necessity and against one's own will circumscribe the lived experience of self-defence.

SELF-DEFENCE: A NON-COMBATIVE INTENTION AS ETHICAL PARADIGM

As proposed by Del Vecchio [59], self-defence is significantly more than merely using combat techniques. Self-defence, firstly, allows one to anticipate and avoid situations in which there is a risk of violence or when this risk is unavoidable, to be cautious and, ultimately, defend themselves physically. Harasymowicz and Kalina [60] approach self-defence from a perspective that 'includes certain categories of preventive measures, verbal counteractions, as well as the technique of self-defence in the narrow sense' [60, p. 20]. It is, in all cases, 'defensive and

self-preservation behaviour, which may protect the person against affronts of their integrity, freedom, health and life' [59, p. 50]. Another objective definition says that 'Self-defence is the capability to counteract one attacker as well as a group of them, who do not observe any rules' [60, p. 24]. As argued previously, it is necessary to transcend external and objective definitions in order to deeply penetrate these phenomena, in their intentional consciousness. Being willing and ready (prepared) for self-defence is not the same as having the intention to enter into combat, but means knowing the manner in which to prevent, deter, and stop a physical attack. With regard to the last item, to interrupt a physical attack against oneself, against another person, or, in certain circumstances, against property, leads back to *corporal fighting* as the only appropriate condition for a person's learning and development of skills. Practising with someone by simulating attack situations is necessary for promoting possible responses with defensive intent or, to a certain degree, with a counter-attack feature, thus making the means of action readily available for the person. This will happen through the practice of 'exercises designed for composite but specific preparation for self-defence', i.e. through 'defensive training fights and control fights' [60, p.25].

Therefore, defending yourself from a physical attack is not a 'corporal fight', but it may be the use of learned resources in a corporal fight. However, combat occurring as self-defence has an essence apart from other combative forms. Its motivational act is morally loaded – it can be filled with a sense of honour – but it is essentially defensive, not combative. For comprehending its non-combative nature, it is still necessary to take into account the circumstances in which a combative (re)action consists of self-defence. The lived experience here is equivalent to a response to an attack. To be involved in an attack on oneself, or to something or someone for whom the subject feels responsible, is necessarily to be emotionally affected by an intentional operating movement of returning the attack with the aim of its discontinuation. This defensive attack does not imply equivalence, i.e. returning the attack with the same emotion and using the same corporal action, which would lead to the progression of violence; rather, emotional mobilisation is needed for the occurrence of the reaction. This is not an eminently logical intentional movement, but an affective and inter-corporal one.

The limit of the return is also crucial for defining the essence of combat in self-defence; it deals with stopping the attack as well as the danger of its continuation. Therefore, self-defence will depend on the extension of the danger and determination of the offender. Even killing can be a proportional response to an attack, constituting legitimate self-defence. However, an intentional limit that marks combat in self-defence resides in the emergency and effectiveness of intentional acts that characterise properly a brawl. In addition to a defensive return aiming to stop an attack and any danger, if the subject is assailed by a degree of hostility that blinds or impairs his conscience with regard to the offender, inducing his reification as occurring in the lived experience of a brawl, the defence becomes an attack and the combat becomes a quarrel. Therefore, the intentional return of self-defence is always risky to exceed in an offence that restricts the capacity of recognising the other, transforming into a disproportional reaction to the danger of the attack. Thus, the boundaries of an appropriate, intentional return to self-defence require a significant level of self-control. Interestingly, it has been demonstrated that decreased states of hostility and aggressiveness and increased assertiveness and confidence are associated with learning self-defence [61]. Similarly, a decrease in fear in facing hostile situations has been determined to be an effect of training in self-defence [62].

Thus, besides physical defence, self-defence embraces feelings, attitudes, and behaviours related to precautions against risk. Self-defence goes through not only objective detection of situational dangers but also a certain degree of sensitivity and social skills to discern and possibly deter others' offensive intentions. Self-defence is a question of something broad, not restricted to technical issues but that embraces humanistic education [59].

Legally, self-defence have contours and well-established conditions. Cazalbou [63] discriminates in the French jurisprudence the criteria for defining the aggression and response with which a combative action is fitted as a legitimate defence, a juridical correlation of self-defence: the attack must be real, recent, and unfair; the answer must be necessary, proportional, and voluntary. Being real means there should be a clear danger, the threat of attack or the accomplishment of an attack, not only the presentment of an attack sensed by the victim; verbal

attacks are excluded from the context of a legitimate defence. The existence of a certain temporal interval between the aggression and the attack may characterise revenge and not defence. This relates to the currentness of the aggression, which also includes the imminence of the attack as characterising the response as self-defensive. Attacks from police are supposed to be fair, and if this is the case, the response to this kind of attack does not fit the definition of self-defence. The response must be necessary, i.e. an alternative response, one other than fighting, may not legitimise the combat as self-defensive. If the answer is more aggressively intense than the attack, the inversion of roles could characterise revenge. The voluntarism of the answer concerns the control of its results, i.e. the injury caused by the defensive action. This presumes a high domain of the used techniques of the body [63].

In the ideal democratic society, it is fair to postulate that the idea of a legally delineated self-defence matches the ethical paradigm guiding the universal conduct of martial arts practitioners in a civil context. This paradigm suggests that, outside the context of combative practice, the practitioner should sustain a non-combative intent, which also involves the development of skills to prevent conflicts and risks, as well as assume a personal posture of deterring the use of violence as a mean to solve conflicts.³ There is a consistent motivational thread – not an arbitrary connection – between the *corporal fighting* experience and the psychological condition required to exercise the ethics of self-defence. The continued practice of *corporal fighting* gives the subject the ability to respond physically and emotionally, i.e. to have physical and psychological control. It is summarised as an integral self-control experience, superior to the condition that this same person would have if not practised.

In spite of peculiarities, this conduct is also the one expected from various security forces, private or public, especially the police. Unlike the military, security forces have formations and training that are not oriented to physical attack and counterattack; according to the law, they only defend citizens and property.

³ The cultural tradition of martial arts points to the existence of this gain of self-control, and this efficiency tends to justify them. Much empirical research supports this.

Instrumental offensive combat

Being neither struggle, duel, play fighting, *corporal fighting*, nor self-defence, instrumental offensive combat has the simple intention to attack someone, for any reason other than that previously considered as fight or duel. This combat aims for submission (surrender), physical paralysis (applying keys and bottlenecks, causing loss of consciousness or harm), or death of the opponent, to annul the attacked person. Instrumental offensive combat is not motivated by a question of personal honour regarding the attacked person, nor by a hostile intemperate emotional outbreak. Differently, than a duel, there is no ritualisation that would imply the possibility of the opponent defending himself. Differently, than a struggle, hostility here is not reactive (immediate), but a calculated attack approach.

For the purpose of the phenomenological analysis, the empirical motivation for instrumental offensive combat should be excluded. The analysis needs to be done regardless of how the combat is judged, i.e. whether it is correct or not, fair or unfair, valuable or worthless; what is relevant is to grasp its pure intentionality. Then, instrumental offensive combat concerns criminal or military actions, for example, actions that feature a calculated intention of attacking. Robbers, terrorists and special military forces undertake this kind of combat. Its purpose usually does not lead to a fight properly, although having as a method to show or make direct use of the force. Thus, the protagonist of offensive instrumental combat aims to neutralise the target, preferably before a fight happens. However, the fact that the attacked party can react and enter into physical combat may lead the protagonist of the attack, by using instrumental calculation, to anticipate this possibility, assuming an intentional combatative position.

In contrast to this, when a statement between the involved parties is presumed, war is equivalent to a duel on a large scale. Offensive instrumental combat is done without the knowledge of the opponent, who is actually seen and considered, perceived and thought of, as a target of the attack: 'Elite military teams, hostage rescue, SWAT and entry teams, as well as criminals, use any methods they can, including surprise, superior numbers, and superior weapons, to disable or to force compliance, preferably without the need to fight or kill' [3, p.7]. What, precisely, is the intention here? It is to attack the opponent in

order to protect themselves, to subdue, compel, or destroy the other, for an instrumental reason, i.e. to reach a calculated aim. The intention of protecting themselves, to some extent, is a condition for combat to occur. To enter into combat, even knowing that the attack will most likely result in the opponent's death, is different from a suicide attack (*kamikaze*), in which, effectively, there is no fighting but mutual destruction.

What is a martial art?

The idea of a kind of martial art that does not involve *corporal fighting* has already been rejected, because *corporal fighting* is central to martial arts. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen how this centrality, stated above but not justified, arises. That physical combat is essential to martial arts is not questioned. Why do we not just settle for this observation to define a martial art? The reason is that this would keep the phenomenon vague and indistinct, which is what we want to avoid. According to our previous analyses, physical combat can take the forms of struggle (brawl), duel, play, self-defence, instrumental offensive combat, or *corporal fighting*, each with its own intentional horizon. Are all of these implicit in the definition of martial art? The answer is no, and this is the postulation supported by the present analysis.

Indeed, the following question must be answered: is it conceivable that a form of martial art may evolve spontaneously, without implying continuous practice? The answer is surely 'no'. All martial arts necessarily imply training in *corporal fighting*. If there is no training, there is no martial art phenomenon, but, at best, a simulacrum of martial art or its idea.⁴

4 It is prudent to consider that *corporal fighting* – the essence of which has been analysed above – is not limited to actual physical confrontation but is essentially enabled by the motor-intention emergence of confrontation. It can thus occur to a subject even when the opponent is only imaginary, as is the case with corporal combat that is practiced solo. In martial arts, these solo practices involve specified forms, such as the Japanese *kata* and the Chinese *tai chi chuan*. They express motor operations comprising clearly defined defence and attack strategies directed at one or more imaginary opponents. The phenomenological difference between *corporal fighting* with a real opponent and *corporal fighting* with an imaginary opponent lies in the factual otherness, effectiveness, and consequences inherent in the former. The latter is engaged in a combat that is free of effectiveness and true consequences, both of which are inherent in a physical confrontation with a real opponent.

The training in *corporal fighting* inherent in martial arts connotes, as will be noticed, a determination of the phenomenal and ethical dimensions of *corporal fighting*. It is quite possible that such training leads the practitioner to subjective experiences that are closer to other phenomena at the periphery of *corporal fighting*, such as physical struggles (brawls), duels, acts of self-defence, and some forms of recreation activities. Very likely, over the years, trained fighters will have intersubjective experiences, which can be objectively recognised and are peculiar to some of the previously mentioned fringe phenomena.⁵ However, what happens during the lived experience of training itself is not a struggle (brawl), duel, real self-defence, or play. If martial arts are defined in terms of the training they necessarily involve, they are also committed to the aforementioned essence of *corporal fighting*, in the event that physical struggles (brawls), duels, real instrumental offensive combat, real self-defence situations, and play cannot be properly trained.⁶

What is achieved with training, namely, the acquisition and improvement of the fighter's abilities, can be applied to several physical combat situations – such as combat sports and the learning of a martial art form – as well as to situations not strictly classified as *corporal fighting per se*, but as physical struggles, duels, or forms of instrumental offensive combat, self-defence, and play. In this sense, training may even aim at the realisation of these other actions that do not correspond to actual *corporal fighting*, such as physical struggle, but the training itself does not involve a physical struggle (brawl). Such experiences are intentionally different; one can be an experience that prepares for future action, whereas the other can be a hostile or playful act.

5 Some interesting ethnographic examples are described by Sánchez Garcia [57], and some grasped by using narratives in first person by Melo and Barreira [58].

6 Representations of those forms of physical conflict that can be rehearsed or trained are excluded. This kind of training does not have any bearing on the effectiveness of the challenge among the players; rather, it deals with the challenge of representation itself and its improvement. Recreational play, even if repeated many times, as in a training program, can retain its essential recreational criteria, without which the same would be performed mechanically and be devoid of its essential grace. The training can be mechanical, although the real meaning of the above-mentioned training forms, which are exemplified by *tai chi chuan* and *kata*, are neither mere representations nor mechanically experienced training forms. Even if the opponent is imaginary, these training forms can be subjectively lived as expressions of *corporal fighting*, not in itself, but *as if* in *corporal fighting*.

Corporal fighting, according to the meaning revealed by intentional analysis, besides being required for martial arts is a central lived reference for the relationship established between fighters. In the modulation of such a relation, psychic variations in hostility can drive the fighters to the edge of a physical struggle or a duel during training, making it too dangerous and/or threatening. However, a lack of challenge or threat makes training nothing more than a playful experience or dilettante practice, or even a practice just for fitness. Thus, *corporal fighting* can be understood as existing in a state of dynamic tension along its borders. The rupture of the boundaries of these lived experiences is generated by intentional excesses, such as aggression that becomes hostility, or intentional deficiency, such as the absence of challenges. This intersubjective challenge constitutes the essence of fighting, and its absence can be motivated by fear, negligence, or whatever else. Every fight has its own dynamic tension, which is constituted by the fighters' reciprocity and, occasionally, the violent loose of reciprocity.

The psychic variations experienced by the practitioner of a martial art form while in combat takes him or her into the psychological states of a duel, physical struggle, instrumental offensive combat, self-defence, or play. Eventually, some psychological states materialise operatively in hostile attacks or recreational practices, modifying the combat-effective conditions. Indeed, an objective condition pertaining to brawls, duels, self-defence, and play is established. This description of phenomena and their boundaries does not make for definitive outlines, but rather forms the foreground of lived experiences, whose central presence and effectiveness are the determinants of the phenomena, without excluding the possibility of a simultaneous occurrence of different lived experiences. The occurrence of these phenomena is therefore dependent on the correlation between the 'subjective' (psychic lived experience) and the 'objective' (effective corporal action) facets that occur simultaneously. A fighter may feel overtaken by hostility, but fighting itself is not determined by this; indeed, fighting is designed to avoid the accomplishment of hostile action.

On the other hand, a fighter with no hostile intent may act with an intensity that is objectively understood as inappropriate for a fight, either because the fighter violates normative

standards or because the limits of combative intensity have been exceeded in the eyes of the opponent. As noted in both examples, there is no simultaneity between subjective and objective correlates that would constitute an actual struggle (brawl). Without the option provided by the eidetic reduction to identify hostility as a key factor in the struggle (brawl), it would not be possible to describe the essentiality of the different lived experiences of physical combat. It would also affect the recognition that hostility may emerge in *corporal fighting* because it is a psychological rather than an empirical condition in which one experiences the struggle (brawl). Maintaining the spirit of *corporal fighting* – the fighting spirit – as the central axis of the lifeworld is in keeping with the principles of any martial art form. This is not to say that martial arts do not have different aims to those of *corporal fighting*, however. This is down to time and place. Fights are defined according to the situation, by the intentional field of the combatants.

The purpose of practising a martial art may be for possible participation in a duel, as instrumental offensive combat or self-defence against a physical attack. According to these goals, martial arts practice, in temporal and psychological terms, is a preparation, anticipation, for likely situations. Although simulated, this corporeal fighting is a quite real combat. The mutual availability to *corporal fighting* is a requirement of fighters for simulating confrontations with other kinds of confrontation by using embodied imagination.⁷ Practising martial arts is corporeal fighting *as if* it was a duel, *as if* it was a brawl *as if* it was instrumental offensive combat *as if* it was a self-defence situation. Although it requires the use of the imagination, *corporal fighting* is not the same thing as playing in a duel, playing in a brawl, attacking, or self-defending. The anticipation and simulation, which constitute a kind of presentification posed by these goals, mean that, psychologically, different lived experiences arise simultaneously. Which ones are determinants to be included in the practice of martial arts? Even with anticipated presentification and a simulated

case of self-defence, instrumental offensive combat, struggle, or duel, the centrality of the effective presence of lived experience framing the other is the determinant (i.e. the essential constituent) of *corporal fighting*. Thus, given that training is an essential element of martial arts, its practice is an experience whose intentional horizon is delineated primarily by the layer pertaining to *corporal fighting*. Even if this horizon is aimed at and nourished by other purposes, everything on it is dispensable while the essential element of the intentional structure of the martial art, *corporal fighting*, remains.

The intentionality of *corporal fighting* previously described is, in its turn, essential to Martial Arts. As should be noted, the descriptions have made an eidetic move from an essential level to a possibly empirical level, that is, located in possible existences, a move that occurs especially when using real examples. The assertion above corresponds to the general idea of martial arts and does not exclude the possibility that certain martial arts lose their characteristics if the elements of hostility and danger are removed or if they are converted into a struggle or duel. One can suggest that narratives in which struggles and duels modulate postures and inspire virtues such as courage have historically characterised all martial arts. It is unreasonable to infer that a martial art is the same thing as a struggle or a duel. As a lived experience, the fighting spirit is the personal tension pertaining to the challenge of *corporal fighting*, which avoids being dragged down by the psychic state corresponding to the struggle and its lack of control, or by the complacency that would reduce the challenge, or by a fear so strong that it hinders the confrontation.

The attitude of the fighting spirit opens up the lifeworld to the availability of the challenge that emerges as a corporal readiness for combat. It is not an arbitrary launching into fights but a readiness to accept and respond to the mutual intention to challenge. Therefore, invoking the fighting spirit means responding to the availability of the other. In this attention to the other and modulation of one's own presence resides the ethical aspect of *corporal fighting*. It is necessary to consider also that this response is an ethical duty to one's existence – to respond to violent attacks, hostile attacks that do not comply with the assumption of intentional reciprocity, which is peculiar to *corporal fighting*. This does not mean that the ideal of the fighting

7 About the simulated combat subject, see the empirical research of Broomé [64] that makes 'a phenomenological study of a police academy cadet's lived experiences of role-play-simulated scenarios of lethal encounters and deadly force training' (p. 153). As noticed, 'When the participants had gained control over the simulated incident, they noticed that their anxiety diminished and their surreal perceptions became normal again' (p. 154).

spirit is to be disposed to fight in any situation, for instance, to accept challenges such as duels. Instead, the attack presupposes a reaction to avoid being transformed into a victim of violence. The promptness of the fighting spirit inspires attitudes and gestures that are formalised in martial arts, providing a structure endowed with persistence in their phenomenal and ethical dimensions. In turn, this formalisation favours the availability of the fighting spirit in the lifeworld. This is the sense of honour intrinsic to corporal fighting and, as mentioned before, developed in martial arts. Here, fighting for honour is not identical to the combat for the honour of a duel, where combat is a manner of solving a conflict of honour, although this must exist in order for *corporal fighting* to occur.

Nevertheless, no martial art form is solely defined by the most elementary meaning of *corporal fighting*, namely, the mutual intention between combatants to restrict the mobility of the opponent while avoiding being restricted in his/her own mobility. Each martial art form comprises a method, with attack-and-defence patterns. Such a method aims to fulfil a combative intention that corresponds to the formalisation of a corporal system. To approach this system solely on the physical plane is to lose its intrinsic sensibility and perceptive order, the latter of which is related to the apprehension and recognition of the different martial art forms and intersubjective combat dynamics and corporal positioning in the world.

These elements are dealt with adequately by a consideration of the phenomenal features of each martial art, that is, as they appear to the senses. We might talk of aesthetics of their forms, although aesthetics here does not imply the idea of beauty as a central component, even if the corporal domain of experienced practitioners can be regarded as beautiful when compared to the lack of corporal control demonstrated by beginners.⁸ The aesthetical aspect is reflected in the motor-operative capacity to restrict the mobility of others through hits, projections, strangleholds, and so on, as well as through defensive manoeuvres. The formal systematisation of the aesthetic dimension of *corporal fighting* defines one facet of martial arts; the other is defined by the enhanced

typification of the ethical dimension of *corporal fighting*, namely, through a typical cultural code of conduct that is necessarily reflected in combat attitudes.

While the idea of an ethical code is included in this typical dimension, it makes more sense to talk here of an *ethos*, which is to say a broad code of conduct, a way in which human beings relate to each other. The ethical dimension of any martial art form includes the conduct of the self to itself, the way of being a self in the world, a way of being present among other people, a way of positioning oneself in relationships, and a 'subjective process' developed through body-to-body experiences [65]. Thus, the enhanced experiential reference implies a moral dimension, culturally articulated – and commonly religiously articulated – with regard to forms of conduct that, among other things, avoid certain types of confrontation and reaffirm ways of facing them. In the absence of a commitment to the enhanced ethical dimension, there can be no martial art, only systematised *corporal fighting*. Likewise, without a commitment to the systematic combat motor-phenomenal dimension, there can be no martial art; only morality or spirituality persists. These two dimensions are constitutively and co-dependently interlaced, bodily expressing both the superficial and profound aspects of a martial art form.

DISCUSSION

The analyses were done here make it possible to define precisely *corporal fighting* and martial arts (*budo*). These definitions take into ethical consideration criteria related to the mutual disposition and motivation to fight. In addition, they clarify the nature of the objects under examination in terms of their cultural, technical, and ethical aspects. From here, it is possible to question some of the meanings and scope regarding the explanation of this phenomenon, from a philosophical, scientific, and practical point of view, by taking into account the pertinent literature.

From a philosophical point of view, it is interesting to appeal directly to Husserlian reflections, with which these investigations try to align, in a manner that can situate them within the perspective of the phenomenological school. The philosopher states: 'It can be seen quite generally that there are many kinds of objectivities which defy

8 In Japanese *budo*, argues Sasaki: 'Techniques are controlled by standards of beauty. The technical movements have to have artistic value. This is not beauty dictating function, but the function and utility of a technique installing beauty into the form' [25, p. 48].

all psychologistic and all naturalistic misinterpretations' [19, p.421]. The conceptual failure of defining fighting or martial arts accuses how exact is the Husserlian diagnosis and demonstrates how certain approaches are equivalent to naturalists or psychologising attempts, to which these phenomena do not curve. In the literature, these attempts define martial arts as Asiatic [23], historical [42, 39], or by physical particularities [20], as well as ritualistic, mimetic, metaphorical or modified expression of a supposed real conflict [41, 44, 40, 3],⁹

This happens, argues Husserl, 'with all types of objects bearing the value, all practical objects, all concrete cultural organisations which as hard realities determine our actual life, the *State*, for instance, the Church, custom, the law, and so forth' [19, p. 422] and 'all these objective entities (*Objektivitäten*; in German) must be described in a way they come to be presented according to their fundamental types and their proper order of formation' [19, p.421, 422].

Since the time of Husserl, the state was described in 1925 by Edith Stein [66], the law in 1913 by Adolf Reinach [67], and, quite recently, arriving at the lived experiences that founded the Church, the sacred was described by Angela Ales Bello [18]. Other cultural phenomena, such as the literary work of art in 1931 [68] and education [69], were analysed, seeking to explicit their fundamental types and their proper order of formation. The present analysis tries to be inserted in this phenomenological way of thinking, in its attempt to describe physical combat, and especially *corporal fighting* and martial arts as objects bearing value and practicality

The inter-subjective sphere plays a decisive role in the understanding and constitution of

these cultural phenomena. This is clear in the distinction that qualifies the different forms of combat. The ontological foundation of this possibility resides in the phenomenon of empathy. Empathy, as rigorously analysed by Husserl [70] and Edith Stein [71], is a special lived experience. Ales Bello stressed that 'by means of this we recognise the common humanity within ourselves and others' [51, p. 11]. Thus, empathy is the basis of the constitution of all possible shared objectivity, what Husserl designates the 'unity of higher order', the identical intersubjective thing: 'Its constitution is related to an indefinite plurality of subjects that stand in a relation of "mutual understanding". The intersubjective world is the correlation of the intersubjective experience, mediated, that is, through "*empathy*"' [19, p. 420].

In its turn, 'the living body is thus the instrument of the encounter between human beings, of mutual recognition and the basis for establishing an interpersonal relationship' [51, p.12]. Physical combat, an animal phenomenon with human specificities, concomitantly universal and culturally particularised, corresponds to some of the more concrete, extreme, and elementary ways through which empathy, i.e. the recognition of the other, can effectively be developed or become obscure in human relationships. The current analysis demonstrates that an exclusive glance into the physical or the psychological dimension cannot lead to the comprehension of these phenomena. It is in the intersubjective interweaving of corporal experiences that grasp combative experiences, in which the intentional relationship between two parts will determine the kind of action that is going on.

The general features of a regional ontology, the region of physical combat, make evident that *corporal fighting* al place in the study of the sport. Besides, duel, instrumental offensive combat, and self-defence are central to the military sciences are central.¹⁰ For the sake of creating a definition, *corporal fighting* is the mutual availability of challenge between combatants, in which the goal is to restrict the operative mobility of the corporal subject, the opponent, as well as to frustrate his or her identical intentions.

9 Even if is an eidetic analysis, from the point of view of classical phenomenology, the Martínková and Parry categorisation [3] fails for not operating the *Epoche*, making use of established knowledge rather than suspend them. This does not reduce the importance of the work. Besides, although militating for a phenomenological philosophy of sport, the fact that the authors did not mention phenomenology in the article shows that they are aware of the fact that their classification does not conform to its principles. As argued before, which places their interpretation as psychologist is not the general classification, which is not naturalistic or psychologist, but only the assertion that there is a real fight by necessity and other modified form of combat. Explaining the phenomenon based on a psychological cause, necessarily or not, to define their reality lies on a psychological argument.

10 Broomé's work [64] can be taken as an example.

This definition retains the ethical criteria, which is described in its essence and related to mutual availability, to the motivation for the fight itself. From this definition, it is possible to establish the general articulation and eidetic connections among the different scientific interests. This is consistent with the defence proposed by authors such as Cynarski [39], Barczyński et al. [72], Figueiredo [41], Krzemieniecki and Kalina [73], Kalina [74], Barczyński and Kalina [75], and Martinková and Parry [3]. From different methodological and theoretical perspectives, these authors are situated in epistemological positions whose dialogue with the phenomenological perspective presented here is the most fruitful.

The reductionist approach adopted by Vey [20] contrasts explicitly with the phenomenological approach, although not in its primary objective, i.e. the idea of scientifically thinking of fighting in an integral manner. It is also possible to individuate the technical field of scientific research that will address the operative dimension of *corporal fighting*, aiming to identify data and conditions for the improvement of different aspects of the fight. Some examples, such as the study of athletic training in the areas of biomechanics, physiology, nutrition, epidemiology of injuries, pedagogy, and psychology, as subjective processes that favour or disfavour the practitioner, illustrate the general goal of these technical investigations.

This definition of *corporal fighting* means that the study of its technical aspects is only possible when the discipline is understood in its entirety, i.e. including its ethical meaning. This dimension will be more openly explored in the fields of history, sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and so on. The inclusion of subject and object terms provided by phenomenology also means that the presented definition concerns not only the subjects that practice *corporal fighting*, but also the researchers who investigate *corporal fighting* objectively. Indeed, the terms subject and object 'presume' tacitly, that is to say, implicitly, that the whole phenomenon includes the concept of 'challenging' itself, whether lived in the first or third person, i.e., lived by the fighters and researchers respectively. This means that, sharing a lived experience within a community researchers have the challenging intention to improve, through scientific knowledge, the conditions that qualify fighters and their practices, of researchers self-development.

As argued by Barczyński et al. [72] in the Editorial of *Archives of Budo*, 'Any division of sciences and any classification of scientific disciplines and specialties are in some sense imperfect' [72, p.117]. So, the editorial preview of the Journal has four sections of published articles: Sciences of Martial Arts, Health Prevention, Philosophy and History, which are founded on the conviction that to restrict the Journal to one privileged part of scientific classification would be 'a contradiction of the Budo conception' [72, p. 119]. By this reason, 'Necessary is an interdisciplinary approach' [72, p. 117]. A phenomenology is a potent tool for thinking of the unity of AM&CS phenomena based on their ontology.

As mentioned, the lived experiences that are active and essentially determinants in *corporal fighting* constitute its operant motor intentionality, its apprehension of the other, and its specific motivation. The presence, absence, or even failure of the intensity will determine whether a concrete case is or is not a corporal fight. For Husserl [19], 'every description of Essential Being which relates to types of experience provides an unconditionally valid norm for the possibilities of empirical existences' [19, p. 231]. Therefore, for sports psychology (and for military psychology, in its appropriate contexts), the knowledge here exhibited signals for critical norms to their application, by which the empirical existence of combat demands a scientifically founded psychological know-how. From an interventional perspective, by means of an inter-subjectively encounter with the practitioner, it is necessary to look for his unique and proper conditions, i.e. his psychological conditions, to fight effectively without being carried away by lived experiences that are improper to *corporal fighting*. In this sense, on the trail of a 'Phenomenological Sport Psychology', the Husserl's [19] orientation is still assumed; for him, as argued in § 79 of *Ideas*, 'phenomenology is the court of appeal for the fundamental questions of psychology methodology. The general conclusions which it has reached must be recognised and, as occasion requires, adopted by the psychologists as the condition of possibility of all further developments of the method in his field' [19, p. 231].

One might expect that without an awareness of the distinction between *corporal fighting* and violence, there would be an increased risk of blurring the boundary between them. Indeed, the boundary that separates them is categorically

delineated by the phenomenological transition between the experience of living the phenomenon and the experience of being aware of the phenomenon, which raises awareness of and thematises it.¹¹ Revealing the tacit presumption makes explicit the practitioners' and researchers' ethics, the risk they face in flirting with violence, and the kinds of positions they can assume.

Thus, ethically, the technical research operatively dimensioned in *corporal fighting* assumes an agreement between the fighters for the occurrence of combat with a sense of respect for the other, which means not to turn him into a thing, nor becoming a violent action. Simultaneously, objective conditions are given for raising the technical level of the ethical challenge inherent in the fight itself, so that the production of technical knowledge can stimulate improvement of the ethical challenge of *corporal fighting*, once motor control and athletic condition lead to psychological control. In its turn, investigative comprehension of the moral processes intrinsic to the practice of *corporal fighting* – whether thematic or not – improves conditions to maintain self-control and so qualify technical performance in the motor dimensions of fighting. It favours or disfavours the fighter, thereby providing the challenge of fighting and the realisation of technical performance. In each case, the field of technical research, as well as the ethical and cultural fields, are focused on one pole of what is commonly understood as objectivity and subjectivity, with no true phenomenological separation between them. The integration of knowledge related to these poles, either on the part of the practitioner or the part of researcher provides integrity to the *corporal fighting* phenomenon. In this sense, the present postulation assumes the interpretation proposed by Figueiredo [41], except that here, beyond the hermeneutic puzzle, we indicate the connections that provide the essential integrity and continence to the phenomenon of *corporal fighting*.

Once the *corporal fighting* is defined, it is possible to move onto defining the second phenomenon to which this investigation is dedicated. The term 'martial arts' refers specifically to *corporal fighting* that is systematised in its totality, that

is, systematised in terms of its own aesthetics and ethical aspects. Aesthetics refers to the set of a participant's actions that is appropriate for combat. Ethics refers to the typical attitudes displayed in practice and in the interaction between practitioners, attitudes that tend to be fixed by habits, articulating personal interaction, contemporaneously, with the knowledge transmitted by coexistence. The incalculable variety of ways of practising *corporal fighting* corresponds to the cultural diversity of martial arts and the multiplicity of its practical and moral guidelines, all of which refer to particular times and social contexts but never validate the exclusion of the two central facets of *corporal fighting*. To make explicit the limits of *corporal fighting* is capital to understanding the lived experiences with which their boundaries are wiped out by violence.

From an empirical point of view, it will be crucial, therefore, to understand how these lived experiences are cultural and communally regulated among practitioners of different arts and in different places – as pointed out in the case of capoeira by Melo and Barreira [58]. The cultural sphere and its values, encompassing the manner by which its practitioners embody these values also deserve investigation, for instance, by the psychology and anthropology fields, in order to reach an ethical perspective that would be much more direct and objective than the one attained by technical and physical studies.

By this point, we have sufficiently stressed that the lack of an appropriate definition of what constitutes a 'martial art' can lead to the term being regarded, erroneously, as a cultural particularity that originated in the East. Perhaps one can assume intuitively that martial arts practitioners have always understood what it is. Different authors around the world who are dedicated to the study of martial arts certainly are clear about its scope. Italian historian Sergio Raimondo [76] posited that 'the so-called martial arts are disciplines, first of all, dedicated to self-education and not specialisations for the exercise of violence' [76, p. 27]. The list of authors who adopt its scope would be virtually endless, so it is easy to find examples that support the argument that there is an essential degree of equivalence between martial arts and *budo* or *wushu*. Sasaki stated that 'Ancient Japanese think of the traditional arts and Budo as methods of improving people's physical skill and personalities' [25, p. 47]. This idea is certainly correct but is not restricted to Japanese

11 This corresponds to being aware of being aware of the phenomenon. The reflexive thematisation of this awareness of the phenomenon originally experienced firsthand must, according to the goal of Husserlian phenomenology, aim at an essential description of this.

budo. Any martial art is a method that comprises these qualities. Considering 'internal' as referring to morals, mind, or spirit, and 'external' as referring to physical strength or skills, 'Wushu (also called kung fu in English) is traditional Chinese martial arts that cultivate a practitioner's internal and external qualities and abilities' [77, p. 38]. As suggested by these examples, particular cultural definitions of martial arts (beyond some of its singular qualities) usually express its general features, universal facets that are shown by the phenomenological reductions operating therein.

Moreover, while it is impossible to conceive of a combat system that does not comprise an ethical (spiritual) dimension, not all combat systems are martial arts, especially if their typological measures are too restrictive, insufficiently articulated, or only instrumental. This can be the case in some sporting versions, in which moral norms are restricted to the competitive rules or military practices through which the ethical discernment can be fulfilled one side by hierarchical obedience, and combative knowledge can be fulfilled by mere techniques on the other. When a martial art acquires a sportive version, it is possible for it to lose consistency in such a way that it loses its features, both motor (esthetical) and attitudinal (ethical). The reasons for this are suggested by Lu, who says that judo and taekwondo 'were accepted by the Olympics by changing themselves significantly, thereby losing their philosophical essences of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism' [77, p.38]. In addition to the fact that in the competitive system 'rules significantly restrain technique and fundamentally distort traditional wushu' [77, p.38], in sport, 'seeking champions and winning medals becomes the primary goal of learning/practicing in athletic wushu, pursuing Olympic ideals such as higher, faster, and stronger' [77, p. 39], which is detached from martial arts' 'traditional roots – the cultivation of fitness, self-development, and self-defence [77, p. 39]. Lu also argues that y, these athletic wushu performers nowadays would not be able to use wushu – one of the most powerful self-defence arts – to defend themselves in real fight situations as they have not learned the proper techniques' [77, p. 39].

By the same reasoning, Martinková and Parry [3, p. 13] consider that 'in present society the emphasis on victory is immense, and often dominates contemporary sport', an approach that 'affects the way of fighting – victory over an

opponent does not necessarily require reaching the perfection of the individual (...), nor absolute excellence (...), but only relative excellence (enough to win this particular contest)' (p. 13). Raimondo [76] presents a similar argument: 'the richness of the philosophy underlying their practice would suffer too much to find breathing only through sports competition and, differently, maintaining a solid value-oriented to personal self-elevation is more serenely prosecuted without competitive concerns' (p.45). We can refer to this kind of transformation and polemics, which are typical between practitioners, as existential tensions in martial arts.

Therefore, according to the perspective adopted here, the assumption of Barczyński et al. 'that each combat sport is a martial art' [72, p. 117] can be withdrawn. Every form of martial arts is a cultural product that is shared and transmissible. If a certain combat ethos is too particularised or unique to a fighter, it is doubtful that it is a martial art form at all. Many combat systems originating in warrior societies have not withstood the proverbial 'test of time', but some have retained and developed both their aesthetic and ethical dimensions by incorporating into them changes that have occurred in their respective societies. The latter case is true for the Japanese form of *karate* [78] and Brazilian *capoeira* [29], for instance.

The application of this line of phenomenological reasoning to *corporal fighting* opens up fields of technical research that deal with aspects of a martial arts system, as well as fields that deal with the historical, cultural, and philosophical aspects of martial arts, allowing us to discover how their individual ethical dimensions emerge.

From the perspective of moral praxis, the philosophical investigation has consequences with regard to fighting and martial arts instructors, referees, and sports institutions, as well as opinion makers, sports announcers, commentators, and journalists, not forgetting, of course, the fighters themselves. Such consequences are essentially related to the aforementioned proximity between physical fighting and violence. Once enlightened on the nature of *corporal fighting*, deviation from the criteria of *corporal fighting* in the behaviour and motivation of fighters can be detected. We can establish that the ethical zeal in *corporal fighting* is the zeal for the physical and moral integrity of practitioners. Thus, in a fight, when

the physical limits of one of the fighters is overstepped, that is, each time physical aggression reaches an intensity that is no longer acceptable to one partner and the fight is not interrupted, the criterion of mutual availability can be deemed to have been injured, trespassing beyond the frontier of *corporal fighting* and into the territory of violence. The fighter displaying such aggression must halt it when the limit is exceeded. In the context of teaching fighting, one of the central roles of the instructor is to ensure that this limit is not reached, while in the sporting context the central role of the referee and the regulatory institution is to maintain this limit. Crossing these boundaries, however, may mutilate the essence of the challenge of *corporal fighting*, preventing the self-development of a martial artist.

In addition, the present study is explicit regarding the inherent characteristics of martial arts that provide the conditions for an existential answer to the problems that prevail in contemporary society [34]. They provide a meaningful experience that help practitioners face life [38] and form close family bonds [35]; they also constitute a corporal practice in which states of consciousness are reached through experiences of a religious nature undergone in practice [22]. This is a subjective process that has been addressed by the field of anthropology of the body [65]. Martial arts also provides a training program, by way of decisive lived experiences, that turns a life into a work of art [37], and, as Figueiredo [41] states, potentially contribute to the determination of the objects of scientific studies.

Only the articulated values and motivations for lived experiences determining combative practices make possible to penetrate in what, effectively, pushes the so-called psycho-social outcomes of martial arts practice. It also concerns the self-regulation of the athlete in a combat sport, as the specific interests of sports psychology. Research that does not consider these interests will necessarily establish portraits of correlations that are just circumstantial; that is, 'contrasting finds' [5, p. 200] will be produced about the relationship between combative practices and anti-social behaviour, without any solid basis for obtaining results using the universal scientific scope intended by science.

None of the preceding information can be comprehended without explicitly establishing how martial arts results from the intentional structure

of *corporal fighting*. The fighting spirit contains an ethical essence that can counter violence and is ultimately opposed to its promotion. The fact that Mars is considered virtuous, as opposed to the disruptive and impulsive Ares, leads us, through this cultural expression, toward its essential manifestation. Precisely, the ethical essence expressed by Mars virtuosity allows staying in communication about identical, even if necessarily differentiating, phenomena.

This paper attempts to contribute to the issues on the intentional lived structure of these phenomena, but not without considering its limitations. The first is related to the difficulty of understanding phenomenology, a living philosophy that, since its beginning, has witnessed important philosophical disputes about its way of being applied and its pretensions. To properly use definitions that have been reached phenomenologically means to understand the need to grasp intentions, the intentionality of actions. Therefore, boxing can be grasped as a martial art, but not objectively from the natural orientation since from this pre-conceptual point of view, boxing is seen just as a sport. As we argued in the initial paragraphs of this paper, some forms of combat sports, such as boxing and wrestling, which are not necessarily related to the cultural notions of martial arts, must be shown by putting in brackets the factual, cultural, particularised, and objectified view of what martial arts is: it can be grasped as martial arts whilst lived as martial arts in a communitarian context. Even if he does not claim this classification for boxing, Wacquant [79] describes how, from the point of view of its practitioners, boxing is about teaching discipline and self-respect as well self-defence and violence. This comprehension unifies the double feature of the object (MA) and the subject (practitioner) and looks for a comparison between concept and case/situation grounded on lived experiences (intentionality). Another limitation is that analyses are always subjected to new re-descriptions, which seize other facets and specificities, deepening and making more precise the differentiation between lived experiences. This is shown by the range of analyses that for some years now [80-82] have allowed of a gradual deepening of the differences between lived experiences, which is now being presented in a manner that is believed to be global and satisfactory.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we paraphrase Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden, concerning his findings about the literary work of art, and say that the phenomenological approach of martial arts presented here, by making patent the intentional structure

of combative experiences, especially *corporal fighting*, is a banal thing: 'But, despite being banal, none of the authors I knew has clearly seen that here lie the fundamental structures that conform to the essence' [68, p. 87] of fighting and martial arts experiences.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This valuable article by Cristiano Roque Antunes Barreira is an example of intellectual and cognitive losses that arose as a result of the political division of the world after the Second World War – Cold War and Iron Curtain [92, 93]. The editors, taking advantage of the privilege to correct the text of the manuscript, removed (irrespective of the explanations in the glossary) the following fragment of the author's statement: '*None of the definitions offered in the literature for any of these cultural objects is based on phenomenological analysis; moreover, the literature offers no precise definitions that encompass the wide variety of practices found within these phenomena*'.

Especially Jarosław Rudniański (1921-2008), who after the end of the martial law in Poland published in 1989 in Polish the fundamental work of agonology: *A Compromise and a Struggle. The Efficiency and Ethics of Positive and Negative Co-operation in a Dense Social Environment* [86]; makes a broad phenomenological analysis of the concept of 'fight'. He refers to Heraclitus from Ephesus, Thomas Hobbes, Charles Robert Darwin, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Bhagavadgita*, David's fight against Goliath, but also to Karl Marx's class conflict, or to Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

The paper of Cristiano Roque Antunes Barreira, published in the *Archives of Budo*, is valuable for at least two reasons. First, it reinforces the argumentation emphasizing the cognitive (scientific) and social consequences of isolating knowledge about struggle as a result of ideological and political divisions [74, 92-94] – language barriers [83-88] are a secondary consequence. Second, it supplements the basic knowledge about fight in the context of the growing martial arts bibliotherapy in global science space [73, 95, 96].

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