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# The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy

Edited by Daniele De Santis, Burt C. Hopkins and  
Claudio Majolino

# THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

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*Edited by Daniele De Santis, Burt C. Hopkins and  
Claudio Majolino*

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# 11

## CRISIS

*Emiliano Trizio*

What is wrong with our sciences? What is wrong with our philosophy? What is wrong with our culture? These questions played a fundamental role in Husserl's thought from its earliest stage, if it is true that, since at least the 1890s, his self-conscious aim was to react to the unsatisfactory current cultural situation by renewing the classical ideal of philosophy as a systematic theoretical endeavor encompassing all special sciences, culminating in metaphysics, and providing answers to all fundamental questions concerning the world and whatever might exist beyond it (see, for instance, *Hua-Mat III*, 223–55). It would not be an exaggeration to say that Husserl's entire life-long effort could be characterized, to resort to the word figuring in the title of the famous *Kaizo* articles, as one of *renewal*: renewal of our scientific spirit and of the mission of science and philosophy as the guide and the driving force of human individual and collective existence. Ultimately, what is stake is nothing else than a refoundation of *rationalism* in an age that has seen its apparent demise, and, consequently, a widespread *weakening of our belief in the value and possibilities of reason*. If such a negative appraisal of the present cultural situation is a constant feature of Husserl's thought, it is undeniable that, through the years, it became more and more radical in content and bleaker in tone. If one excludes some exceptions, only during the last years of his life, to be precise after 1935, does Husserl make a sparse and limited use of the German terms "*Krise*" and the more formal "*Krisis*" (and, increasingly so of the latter) in relation to the current state of European (i.e., Western) culture, of philosophy, and of the positive sciences. Yet, the influence on Husserl's thought of the political situation of the 1930s and the widespread use of the term "crisis" in the German-speaking philosophical, scientific, and political literature of the time (see Graf 2010) should not be overstated. The late use of such terms (which do not belong to Husserl's technical vocabulary) does not mark any substantial philosophical novelty, precisely because, as we shall see, the concepts and ideas behind them were developed by Husserl much earlier and belong to the essential core of his entire philosophy. Indeed, precisely in order to avoid the numerous misunderstandings that have surrounded (and still surround) the very notion of crisis, it is useful to begin this analysis by showing how such conceptual framework can be discerned already in the *Kaizo* articles (written in 1922–23) and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929). In particular, in the *Kaizo* articles, we find a clear characterization of the notion of health of a cultural formation, and more specifically, of a scientific-philosophical civilization, as well as a first characterization of the reasons why our culture has fallen into a pathological state. The crucial evaluative notion that Husserl employs in those articles is that of

*Echtheit* (genuineness, or authenticity). In order to understand the role of such notion, however, it is necessary to stress that, since the entire problematic horizon of such questions is cultural (or “spiritual”) in character, a scientific, i.e., philosophically rigorous, clarification will be made possible only by an insight into the essence of culture and, correlatively, of the scientific knowledge of it. Such an insight, as is always the case for Husserl, is possible if and only if the sphere of spirit is not misunderstood on the basis of analogies derived from the sphere of nature. In very succinct terms, Husserl lists a number of essential features of spiritual reality. 1) Space and time have a peculiar non-naturalistic sense, 2) intentional life is referred to an ego and unified by a motivational nexus, 3) the different subjects connect to one another by virtue of specifically “social” intentional acts that give rise to an internal form of unification of spiritual reality, and 4) to the intentional acts pertaining to the theoretical, practical, and evaluative life there belong also *normative* and not only *descriptive* aspects (Hua XXVII, 8). Only taking these essential features as a starting point is it possible to hope to develop for the region spirit the kind of eidetic cognition necessary to any scientifically rigorous knowledge, and that, according to Husserl, the pure mathematics of spacetime has already afforded in the case of the sciences of nature. Such eidetic cognition, which is by and large still missing, will result in a science of the essence of the spiritual aspect of humankind (Hua XXVII, 10), and, thus, in a discipline fundamental to all sciences of spirit. It will allow understanding not only the essence of human personal life and all its possible forms in general, not only the essences of social formations and their infinite ramifications including cultural institutions, forms of state, religions, etc., but also the essence of a good, genuine, true, or ethical human life, and, likewise, the essence of a good, genuine, true, or ethical social and political life. The normative eidetic science of spirit details the conditions that a human society must meet in order to be *genuine* or *authentic*. This, however, does not mean that such eidetic cognition would outline a static utopian ideal that we would thereafter have to approximate. Rather, the situation is the one described in the section “*Die höhere Wertform einer humanen Menschheit*” (Hua XXVII, 54–9) of the unpublished *Kaizo* article *Erneuerung und Wissenschaft*.

Let us now consider the higher value-form of a genuinely humane humanity (*einer echt humanen Menschheit*) that lives and develops by shaping itself towards genuine humanity (*zu echter Humanität*). It is the one in which philosophy has assumed as world-wisdom the form of philosophy as rigorous and universal science, in which reason has shaped and objectified itself in the form of the “Logos.”

(Hua XXVII, 54–5)

Since philosophy itself does not consist in the static possession of a finite body of knowledge, but in the infinite exploration of a likewise infinite field of truth, subject in turn to a constant form of self-criticism, the resulting picture is that of a humanity that evolves toward an ideal that itself evolves (Hua XXVII, 55–6). In other words, humanity must fulfill the task of its endless reform under the guidance of ideals whose progressive clarification is itself an infinite task. A genuine humanity is one that lives in an effort of clarifying as well as achieving a state of humanity of higher and higher value, and, consequently, follows the commandments of an “ethical technology” that stems from the aforementioned normative eidetic insights: “the technology of the self-actualization of genuine humanity” (Hua XXVII, 56). Now, we do not have to lose sight of the fact that philosophy *qua* rigorous and universal science encompasses all special sciences, whether factual or eidetic. Since genuine humanity is guided by a community of scientific philosophers whose insights establish the norms to which any aspect of individual and collective life must conform, philosophy as rigorous science establishes the ideal norms of all scientific activities too

(including itself) and it does so as *Wissenschaftstheorie* (which ultimately requires transcendental phenomenology, and in particular, the phenomenology of reason). Thus, all sciences themselves, as branches of universal philosophy, undergo an endless process of critical development and revision and constitute so many activities endowed with a high degree of value for the life of a rational humanity. Therefore,

The development of the universal theory of science (theory of reason and logic) is an organ and at once a stage of the development of humanity towards a humanity that raises itself to a higher self-actualization.

(*Hua XXVII, 56*)

This small section contains also an indication of the significance (“*Bedeutung*”) that a genuine science has for humanity. Husserl here lists three different levels, stressing the importance of the third one. 1) The totality of theoretical cognitions, once properly elucidated within the unity of philosophy, brings with it a kingdom of values whose correlate is what Husserl calls “*Erkenntnisfreude*” (*Hua XXVII, 84*). 2) Under the guidance of both natural and social sciences, we develop techniques able to shape our environment according to our needs and goals. 3) On the basis of the clarification of the being investigated by the sciences afforded by philosophy it is possible to understand the ultimate sense of the world (*Hua XXVII, 57*). The third point, which, let us insist, is the most decisive of the three to bestow upon genuine sciences a significance for human life, is somehow cryptic, and we will have to go back to it. For the moment, however, we have acquired the needed insight into what Husserl considers the ideal “healthy” (genuine) cultural form for which we should strive.

These last considerations connect Husserl’s ethical ideal to the problematic of a phenomenological foundation of all sciences. The jargon of “*echtheit*” highlights this continuity. A genuine humanity is one that strives toward the realization of its full rational nature under the guidance of philosophy as rigorous science. Within the unity of the latter, all sciences are *genuine* in that they acquire an increasing level of rationality, i.e., of scientificity, *qua* components of such philosophy. As is well known, according to Husserl, it is the specificity of European culture to have given rise to the ideal of universal philosophy, and to have been shaped by it. European culture is defined by the very fact that it carries within itself the *telos* of a genuine humanity enlightened by the systematic unity of genuine sciences within a genuinely scientific universal philosophy (*Hua XXVII, 109*). If then we turn to the actual historical trajectory of European culture, we discover that they are governed by the vicissitudes of the *genuine scientificity* of European sciences. Although Husserl often seems to evoke a stark opposition between *echte/unechte Wissenschaft*, genuine scientificity too is a dynamic concept and admits of degrees. To be sure, a body of knowledge such as Babylonian astronomy is not a real/genuine science, since, in spite of its internal interconnectedness and its intersubjective character, it still relies on religious and mystical beliefs that belong only to a given cultural tradition (*Hua XXVII, 76*). Presocratic philosophy and science, instead, deserve to be called “genuine” at least in so far as they already presuppose the process of de-mythologization and the resulting emergence of what Husserl calls the theoretical attitude. Its results are based on evident insights and, thus, appeal to operations that are not conditioned by traditional beliefs (*Hua XXVII, 77–9*). However, a higher level of genuine scientificity is achieved only as soon as, within the unity of Plato’s philosophy, science loses the character of an investigation naïvely directed toward its objects and becomes a critical enterprise guided by logic and by the theory of science (*Hua XXVII, 81–3*). Genuine scientificity, thus, requires embeddedness in a general philosophy able to elucidate the rationality of its operations. Two points must be stressed concerning this first philosophization of the sciences. 1) It arises as

a response to the sophistic skepticism concerning the legitimacy of Presocratic cosmology. The sophists, by denying the possibility of the kind of knowledge sought for by the early physiologists, had for the first time *made scientificity itself into a problem*. In other words, the pretension of early Greek cosmology to be providing rationally compelling insights into the nature of reality was questioned, so that the philosophical grounding of science became necessary. It is noteworthy that what is, to my knowledge, the first occurrence of the word *Krise* in Husserl's corpus in which it appears with the sense that it would acquire in the last years of his life appears in a text written in 1919–20 and it refers to the situation of early Greek philosophy in the wake of the Sophists' criticism (Hua-Mat IX, 194). Early Greek philosophy is there characterized as being in crisis because its scientificity had been brought into question. This fully agrees with Husserl's later characterization of the outbreak of the crisis of philosophy with the modern skeptical empiricist denial of its scientificity. 2) No past rationalistic philosophy (neither ancient, nor modern) has found the correct way of developing philosophy as a rigorous science and to rescue the different sciences from their naïveté. To be sure, a science embedded into a philosophical system is still animated by the kind of teleological project that characterizes European culture; thus, in a way, it enjoys a certain kind of genuineness. However, already in the *Kaizo* articles, Husserl mentions the process of *technization* of the scientific method occurring after Plato as an antagonist of genuine scientificity (Hua XXVII, 83). To be more precise, *technization is the opposite of philosophization*. The more the former prevails, the less genuinely scientific science is. The failure of Europe to follow its inner teleology, the opacity of the scientificity of the positive sciences, and, finally, their failure to contribute to a meaningful human existence are all mentioned by Husserl already in these years.

In *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, especially in the introduction, we find a much sharper focus on the failure of our sciences to be genuine (“*echte*”) sciences and, thus, to occupy the place that belongs to them in the life of a “genuinely humane” humanity. In the introduction, Husserl clarifies what in the *Kaizo* lectures was only hinted at, i.e., that genuine science is a task set by Plato, rather than an achievement of his reform of philosophy. The merit of Plato is to have established, for the first time, logic as a discipline “... exploring the essential requirements of ‘genuine’ knowledge and ‘science’” (Hua XVII, 1). Plato is not the founder of genuine science; rather he has, for the first time, contrived the idea of genuine science as a task.<sup>1</sup> The idea of a genuine science is that of a science able to justify its claims in an absolute way, i.e., to a level beyond which no further doubt or investigation makes sense. Husserl calls it “radical self-responsibility.” But, of course, a science can approximate this ideal only within the unity of a rational all-encompassing science (philosophy) that is able to warrant this self-responsibility. Now, this is precisely the path that modernity has abandoned due to the fact that the different sciences have become independent (Hua XVII, 2). “Thus modern science has abandoned the ideal of genuine science that was vitally operative in the sciences from the time of Plato; and, in its practice, it has abandoned radicalness of scientific responsibility” (Hua XVII, 3–4). Such a unitary grounding of the different sciences requires, in the first place, a logic that is itself not developed in a naïve, uncritical way; that is, a science of the essence of science in general (Hua XVII, 4, 9); and, in the second place, an investigation into the essence and sense of being of their specific objective domains (Hua XVII, 6, 13, 17). These investigations would jointly provide the “absolute grounding of the sciences” that Descartes envisaged, but failed to achieve, and that only transcendental phenomenology can assure (Hua XVII, 7). Instead, due to the demise of the idea of a universal scientific philosophy, the different sciences, and logic along with them, have become “theoretical techniques” (Hua XVII, 3). Once more, we observe the antithesis between genuine science as philosophical, as rooted in a universal philosophy, and technized, independent sciences. Logic, which was meant to lead science to the path of genuine

scientificity, has itself become a positive science, unphilosophical in character. This by no means implies that logic as well as the special sciences are unable to yield evidently true or (in the case of the empirical sciences) evidently probable theories. Sciences *qua* theoretical techniques are still positive sciences that can be developed by the rigorous method of their specialists. What is missing in this positivity is, rather, their genuinely philosophical scientificity, the character of being *episteme*, sciences of being in the ultimate sense:

The *unphilosophical character of this positivity* consists precisely in this: The sciences, because they do not understand their own productions as those of a productive intentionality (this intentionality remaining unthematic for them), are unable to clarify the genuine being-sense (*Seinssinn*) of either their provinces or the concepts that comprehend their provinces; thus they are unable to say (in the true and ultimate sense) what belongs to the existent of which they speak or what sense-horizons that existent presupposes-horizons of which they do not speak, but which are nevertheless co-determinant of its sense.

(Hua XVII, 13)

This passage, as we shall see, condenses the very idea of the crisis of European sciences. Positive sciences (including logic) are unable to justify their method because they are blind to the constitutive operations of transcendental subjectivity that produce their objective domains (Hua XVII, 15). The result is, thus, that the *de facto* existing positive sciences "... are clues to guide transcendental researches, the aim of which is to create sciences for the very first time as genuine" (Hua XVII, 14). Moreover, only by virtue of the clarification offered by transcendental phenomenology, *qua* science of constituting intentionality, the positive sciences can be rescued from their unphilosophical state:

Only by virtue of such clarification, moreover, does the true sense of that being become understandable, which sciences has labored to bring out in its theories as true being, as true Nature, as the true cultural world. Therefore: *only a science clarified and justified transcendentially (in the phenomenological sense) can be an ultimate science; only a transcendentially-phenomenologically clarified world can be an ultimately understood world, only a transcendental logic can be an ultimate theory of science, an ultimate, deepest, and most universal, theory of the principles and norms of all the sciences.*

(Hua XVII, 16)

This passage, instead, contains the indication of how transcendental phenomenology is able to provide a remedy to the crisis of European sciences. Now we have gathered all the elements necessary to understand correctly Husserl's later use of the word "crisis" in relation to philosophy, to the special sciences, and to European culture as a whole.

The notion of crisis of European humanity (or culture)<sup>2</sup> is developed at length for the first time in the *Vienna Lecture* delivered in 1935. The very beginning of the lecture connects the theme of the European crisis, which, as we know, was extremely popular at the time, with the considerations Husserl had developed already in the *Kaizo* articles concerning the defining role of philosophy for Europe.<sup>3</sup> Husserl's argument is, at bottom, quite simple. There is a consensus that our culture is ill, but there does not seem to be a scientific rigorous account of the illness, of its cause, and of its remedies (which is, itself, an aspect of our very illness). What is necessary in order to clarify these issues is, first, to characterize the spiritual shape of Europe, to clarify the "phenomenon Europe" in terms of its inner teleology, i.e., of its guiding idea. The first section of the *Vienna Lecture* provides



a famous and extremely dense account of how European culture is defined by the guiding role of philosophy, which, through the praxis of the different sciences and their application, extends to all aspects of individual and collective life. The second section, instead, provides an even more succinct account of what went wrong in the development of European culture, one that will be developed at length in Part II of the *Krisis*. The account revolves around the role played by the misunderstandings concerning the being of nature and spirit. In other words, the crisis of European culture is ultimately explained in terms of the failure to develop natural and cultural sciences as genuine scientific disciplines, precisely according to the account of genuine science that we have found in the introduction to *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. In outline: the development of modern mathematical physics has produced an objectivistic interpretation of material nature, which, in turn, has produced a naturalistic interpretation of the being of spirit, whereby the latter is 1) a fragmented being dependent on the material level; 2) a being to be investigated with methods akin to that of physics. This psychophysical world-view (Hua VI, 342/294) has replaced what, instead, should have been the right way to make sense of the domains of investigation of natural and cultural sciences, i.e., by elucidating their rootedness in the “surrounding life-world” (Hua VI, 342/295). As a result, no genuine science of spirit could be developed, and in particular, not that transcendental, eidetic science of spirit that is necessary to provide the norms for any rational position-taking, any evaluation, and any practical activity. In short, consciousness could not be understood in its *constituting* function and philosophy could not establish itself as a rigorous science and become the guiding force of European humanity. Thus, once the phenomenon “Europe” is “grasped in its central, essential nucleus,” and European culture is defined in terms of “the teleology of the infinite goals of reason,” then, “... the ‘crisis’ could then become distinguishable as the apparent failure of rationalism” (Hua VI, 347/229). Husserl’s train of thought is very linear: if we want to understand what this “crisis of Europe” everyone talks about is, we need first to understand what Europe is. This can be done by recognizing that Europe is defined by the teleological idea it carries within itself. Its crisis, then, consists in the fact that it has *lost faith* in that idea. We can appreciate the continuity between the *Vienna Lecture* and Husserl’s earlier writings. In it, Husserl explicitly identifies the genuine and healthy state of European culture with the correct functioning of philosophy, and the word “crisis” appears immediately associated with the world “illness” (Hua VI, 315/270). More importantly, Husserl here clearly indicates that it is because of the objectivism derived from modern physics that the essence of subjectivity has been missed, and, thus, modern rationalism has failed its mission.<sup>4</sup> One can say that the objectivism stemming from the technized, non-genuine modern physics has played the role of the pathogen agent in the illness of European humanity.

We have now gathered the elements necessary to approach the first part of Husserl’s last work, the *Krisis*, where Husserl speaks not only about a crisis of European humanity, but also, explicitly, about a crisis of European sciences, and a crisis of philosophy. The considerations developed up to now already indicate that the latter crisis plays the pivotal role in Husserl’s entire critical enterprise, although the title of Part I of the *Krisis* does not mention it explicitly (“*The crisis of the sciences as expression of the radical life-crisis of European humanity*”). Let us briefly follow the development of §§1–5 of the *Krisis*, where these notions are introduced. In §1, Husserl acknowledges that the notion of a crisis of European sciences might seem odd.

A crisis of our sciences as such: can we seriously speak of it? Is not this talk, heard so often these days, an exaggeration? After all, the crisis of a science indicates nothing less than that its genuine scientific character (*ihre echte Wissenschaftlichkeit*), the whole manner in which it has set its task and developed a methodology for it, has become questionable (*fraglich*).

(Hua VI, 1/3)

In this short passage, Husserl provides already a definition of what the crisis of science amounts to: it is the fact that its scientificity becomes to say the least “questionable” or “doubtful.” What is, ultimately, the scientificity of a science? It is the way in which it has developed a method for its task, i.e., to determine theoretically a certain domain of objects. Obviously, the positive sciences, both natural and cultural, given their incredible theoretical and practical success, do not seem to be in a state of crisis at all. Husserl mentions that only psychology appears more problematic in this respect, but concludes that such science can be granted a certain level of scientificity too. Such positive sciences, together, must be contrasted with philosophy, Husserl adds, whose “unscientificity” is unmistakable (Hua VI, 2/4). The problem is, thus, what the crisis of the positive sciences really amounts to. On the basis of the preceding analyses, in particular of the above reading of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, we can already anticipate that the solution is based on the recognition of “the unphilosophical character of their positivity”, i.e., of the lack of clarity concerning the being of their domains of investigation. This lack of clarity is precisely due to the demise of the idea of a philosophy in the unity of which the rationality of such sciences would be completely elucidated (as to both their task and method). However, this time, Husserl follows a more complex path, whose aim is to highlight the full significance of the positive sciences’ original rootedness in a universal philosophy. To the philosopher, who is conscious of such in-principle rootedness, the inadequacy of positive scientificity is clear, but to the general public, as well as to the “scientists who are sure of their method” (Hua VI, 3/5), it is far from being so. Thus, Husserl addresses the reader by appealing to a phenomenon, that, instead, is universally acknowledged at the time he is writing, i.e., that the sciences have lost their meaning for life, as the title of §2 states.<sup>5</sup> Husserl calls this phenomenon “crisis” between quotation marks, to signal that he is referring to a use of the word that is not yet the one he is seeking, but rather a common one. This phenomenon is for Husserl undoubtedly real and derives from the “positivistic reduction of the idea of science to mere factual science” as, once more, we read in the title of §2. The idea is the following. Given that we only believe in the kind of rationality that reveals matters of fact, the insights they produce, do not mean anything for our human existence. Piling up theories about natural phenomena, or discovering countless historical and cultural facts, cannot give full meaning to our existence in the absence of a rationality that is able to *evaluate* them. As we have seen above, scientific insights cannot guide our existence and be meaningful to us unless they refer to values and norms. If scientific rationality provides only facts, then a form of nihilism is inevitable; values and norms will be considered merely as contingent facts. Ultimately, this undermines science itself. This situation, however, does not yet tell us what is lacking in the scientificity of, say, physics, or psychology. Its function here is to trigger the historical considerations that we find in §3, where Husserl briefly recalls that during the modern era, and, in particular, within the philosophy of the rationalists (such as Descartes and Spinoza), the notion of science was much broader. Even what we consider today positive sciences were still branches of philosophy conceived as the universal science of being. Such universal philosophy aimed at addressing scientifically not only questions of facts, but all problems pertaining to the sphere of *reason*. These, in turn, include the determination of the norms of theoretical, evaluative, and practical reason. They include also the so-called highest and ultimate questions that concern the sense of the world, human existence, and God; in short, the classical metaphysical questions. Within such universal philosophy, the factual sciences could also receive a significance for life. In §§4–5, Husserl outlines the “process of dissolution” of such philosophical ideal; in other words, he outlines the crisis of philosophy as the collapse of the project of a truly scientific philosophy. The decisive moment of this crisis is Hume’s skeptical onslaught against metaphysics. This characterization is fully compatible with the general definition of a crisis of science that he has provided in §1. The crisis of philosophy as universal science of being consists in the fact

that we have stopped believing in the possibility of a scientific philosophy; the scientificity of philosophy, as it was developed during modern rationalism, has become not just “*fraglich*” but totally bankrupt (as explained in §23). However, now it is also possible to provide the definition of the crisis of the sciences that we were looking for, i.e., in terms of their philosophical (and not merely positive) scientificity:

Yet the problem of a possible metaphysics also encompassed *eo ipso* that of the possibility of the factual sciences, since they had their relational meaning (*Sinn*)—that of truths merely for areas of what is—in the indivisible unity of philosophy. *Can reason and that which-is be separated, where reason, as knowing, determines what is?* (...) ultimately, all modern sciences drifted into a peculiar, increasingly puzzling crisis with regard to the meaning (*nach den Sinn*) of their original founding as branches of philosophy, a meaning (*Sinn*) which they continued to bear within themselves. This is a crisis which does not encroach upon the theoretical and practical successes of the special sciences; yet it shakes to the foundations the whole meaning of their truth (*ihre ganze Wahrheitssinn*).  
(*Hua VI, 9–10/11–12*)

This passage is in line with Husserl’s early characterization of the non-genuine character of our science. In *Krisis II*, Husserl will provide a detailed account of how the objectivism resulting from the misunderstandings surrounding modern mathematical physics has produced the psychophysical world-view that has crippled modern philosophy from the start; while in *Krisis III*, he will lay the ground for an understanding of the being of nature and spirit, based not on objectivistic, metaphysical hypotheses, but on the original intuitive experience of the life-world.

We are now able to give an answer to the questions with which this entry began. The results of this analysis suggest that the crisis of philosophy is the place to begin. *The crisis of philosophy* consists in the fact that its scientificity is bankrupt: our philosophy is not scientific, and we are *skeptical* about its possibility to ever become so. Due to the crisis of philosophy, we are unable to render our sciences genuine sciences of being: the sense of their objective domains remains obscure and the method whereby they acquire knowledge about them cannot be completely justified. This is the *crisis of European sciences*. Furthermore, the sciences, reduced to theoretical techniques have also lost the aforementioned three aspects of their meaning for life: 1) In the absence of a philosophical *Wissenschaftstheorie*, the “cognitive joy” they provide cannot be complete, due to their mutilated scientificity. 2) In the absence of a philosophical theory of values and practical norms, they cannot act as reliable means for improving our surrounding natural and cultural world. 3) In the absence of a correct account of teleology and of the “highest and ultimate” metaphysical questions, they fail to give a sense to human existence and to reveal a world that has itself an ultimate sense, a world whose teleological source is God. Finally, since Europe is defined by the teleological idea of a humanity guided by philosophy and science, the crisis of philosophy implies the loss of faith of European humanity in what defines its true being, the *crisis of European culture*.

## Notes

- 1 “Thus Plato was set on the path to the pure idea. Not gathered from the de facto sciences but formative of pure norms, his dialectic of pure ideas – as we say, his logic or his theory of science – was called on to make genuine science possible now for the first time, to guide its practice” (*Hua XVII, 2*). In this sense, his establishment of logic has on science the effect that, at a more general level, his *Republic* has on the life of humanity: to generate spiritual formations that strive for an ideal having universal validity. Plato is, more than anybody else, the father of Europe.

- 2 A letter written by Husserl to Roman Ingarden in 1935 makes clear the equivalence between “European humanity (*Menschentum*)” and “European culture (*Kultur*)” (Hua VI, XIII).
- 3 “In this lecture I shall venture the attempt to find new interest in the frequently treated theme of the European crisis by developing the philosophical–historical idea (or the teleological sense) of European humanity. As I exhibit, in the process, the essential function that philosophy and its branches, our sciences, have to exercise within that sense, the European crisis will also receive a new elucidation” (Hua VI, 314/269).
- 4 “Precisely this lack of a genuine rationality on all sides is the source of man’s now unbearable lack of clarity about his own existence and his infinite tasks” (Hua VI, 345/297).
- 5 I have already argued that the *Krisis* §2 has been often mistakenly taken to contain Husserl’s own definition of the crisis of European science as the loss of their meaning for life (Trizio 2016). This is reflected in a number of interpretations that either identify the two phenomena or do not clarify their difference and mutual relation. See Stein (1937, 327), Gurwitsch (1956, 383), Paci (1972, 3), Bohem (1979, 27), Ströker (1988, 207; 1992, 107), Carr (1974, 46; 2010, 86), Bernet, Kern, and Marbach (1993, 220–5), and Dodd (2004, 29–30). In a long and detailed response to my article, George Heffernan (Heffernan 2017) has tried to formulate an alternative reading able to salvage the essential elements of the traditional interpretation. Some of the reasons why I believe his interpretative solutions do not withstand a close scrutiny of Husserl’s texts, nor a critical examination in light of Husserl’s general view of science, can be found in this entry. The only author that, to my knowledge, avoided the “trap” of §2 was Jan Patočka, who in his 1937 review of Husserl’s *Krisis* wrote: “Husserl begins his exposition with the statement that science is at present undergoing an acute crisis of its scientificity. The crisis first *appears to the eye* as a loss of the meaning of science for life; science has nothing to say to us about the difficulties and anxieties of our existence” (Patočka 2015, 21, italics added). The remaining part of the review adds further details about the unsatisfactory scientificity of both natural and cultural sciences.

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