No. 34

<Universal ethical sense-investigation into humanity and world. World as a field of humanity’s practice and the task of the development of a universal ethical humanity>[[1]](#footnote-0)

<§ 1. The theoretical attitude and the attitude of life’s care. Universal sense investigation from theoretical and from practical reason>

Philosophy as universal sense-investigation of humanity on the possibility of shaping its existence from proper freedom in such a way that it can acknowledge it in apodictic insight as an unconditionally good one, as apodictically to be wanted. Philosophy explores the idea, problematic for it, of human existence in a life having its shape of completeness from freedom, which is wanted for this shape’s sake as one being volitionally essential from apodictic insight. Or: a philosophical life, whatever special purposes it has, is not as such like every life a life towards purposes, but a life being subject to an apodictically necessary universal law of shape, a categorical imperative, due to universal reflection, so that every will has the character of norm-justice from it, is not only an isolated will and will evaluated in an isolated way, but has its norming from a universal norming of a life’s totality as such.

You will of course object: This is the task of ethics. Ethics is only one of the philosophizing disciplines. Philosophy has theoretical and practical disciplines, doctrines of art. Ethics is the doctrine of the art of human practice. Science is a formation of purely theoretical interest; ethics as a doctrine of art is a formation of the practical interest. Let us consider. We have the possibility here to differ between two attitudes: the purely theoretical attitude and the attitude of life’s care.

[473] A universal sense-investigation of man in life’s care and <starting from> the question growing in it and increased to universality – the practical question -: How can I arrive at a satisfied existence, a life, not only temporarily but forever satisfying me, in which I am thus lastingly a satisfied man, whatever I intend, and how<ever> it is the matter with the succeeding? How can I give a shape to my whole future life, being obvious for me in its wholeness all the time, a shape and by its shape <such> a sense that I can adhere to what I <have> done, to that, which has become from me and for me, without ever being forced to discredit it, to practically delete <it> in regret, although it is already done <and> possibly has made me quite happy, etc.? – I am within life’s care here, and have a practical attitude myself. The question is practical, it only relates to all my practice as such; it criticizes my de facto practice in a practical affirmation and negation, and it designs possibilities of another practice, designs the idea of a universal form of practical life as such and as a totality of future life, which itself shall become one to be effected by me in this totality, that is, would itself be a goal of a total practice. Every practical consideration, related to a practical purpose, is itself a practical *actus*, also belongs to the modes of the volitional sphere.

But it still is sense-investigation into that, which is or is not, which is true and <which> is wrong, which is presupposed, so that a willing to act in a realizing way can become as such, <sense-investigation in that>, which is and needs to be, so that a passing satisfaction can become a lasting one; included therein, what shapes the acting may have, what is satisfaction, passing and lasting, what is evidence, apodictic evidence in the sphere of the will, etc. But all this being and non-being, being true and being wrong is thematic and is found in the attitude of life’s care and has its practical shape of sense from there. The findings of the being, the judging doing, are in the service of the will’s attitude, in which human life simply proceeds; that is, the guiding purpose is directed towards the universality of the will in the shape of a certain univocality regulating the totality of human existence as a practical one, <related> to a satisfying existence in the whole.

[474] It is clear now that every sense-investigation can also be performed in “theoretical attitude” and that universal sense-investigation of “practical reason” can any time become a universal sense-investigation of theoretical reason. Theoretical reason is itself some special practical reason and yet such a one that can overlap practical reason (also encompass itself). The theoretical interest can emerge in human existence as a special practical one among other life interests, [can] enlarge itself to [become] the scientific and universally scientific interest, detaching itself. A theoretical Ego then stands out as a member in the concrete Ego, the persisting Ego of the whole life and of all life interests remaining with it relatively or forever, a [theoretical Ego] purely interested in being and non-being, as that exclusively practicing theoretical acts in the relatively self-contained unity of the theoretical life, acts directed to the exhibition and verification of finally true being. The theoretical philosophical Ego or the concrete philosophical Ego, considered in the habituality and activity of its theoretical interest, standing out as a member, universally explores what is for it as such, is in theoretical truth, what it could ground as something being <in> truth. This thus encompasses all that belonging to the concrete practical reason according to form and content. In theoretical interest I consider man as such as a subject of his life, in his naïve world forlornness, in his satisfaction and dissatisfaction, in his happy or regretful self-judgment, in his moods of good or bad conscience, etc.[[2]](#footnote-1) All that as something being, as a genuinely being thing or a not genuinely being thing, etc.

<§ 2. My self-responsibility encompasses the responsibility for others. Individual ethics, social ethics, universal humanity ethics>

But now ethical universal sense-investigation does not only regard me. Or: I, investigating my sense in the right life, my possible life, which I could take responsibility for as the right one, cannot [475] disregard my life’s comrades. My self-responsibility encompasses responsibility for the existence of the other ones in practical reason. Their being together with me is not only some dead being together, like stones are together, as lifeless things not concerning one another. The togetherness of men is communication, a living together, creating unity of a communicating life, a community life in relations of immediateness and itself again communicative mediacy. My life’s satisfaction, the way of my genuine existence, an existence I could take the responsibility for in practical apodicticity, certainly is for me the question of life regarding my whole weal and woe. But if indeed everyone else has his own and the responsibility for his life is left to him, then it is still not left to him alone, since my self-responsibility encompasses him insofar as his existence is existence for me as well, and as this being-for-me is in communication, also in life’s community a personal unity of effecting, which, as a practical one, is to be taken responsibility for, by me as well as by him, for my part from me and for his part from him.

Closer explanation: The random personal effect can become a deliberate one. But personal effecting can take on the distinguished way of the will’s unification as a kind of the will’s penetration. It can be attempted volitionally from every side and respectively be taken on willingly from the opposite side, that is, also become a volitional communalization in this way, so that multiplicities of persons, understanding themselves merely as persons, can become personal unities of a higher order thus: passing by, as in a passing by appointment for a community personal purpose, or else persisting and volitionally related to the communalized life time, like in clubs, or without any formation through appointment, and yet currently and habitually grounded in the will <as> in generative connections of the family, the tribe, the “primarily grown” state. If such a communal personal existence, every individual personal existence is classified into as a member, as a comrade, as a citizen, etc., and at the same time as elementary carrier of the social habitual will penetration, also belongs to the essence of human existence, then the single ones’ self-responsibilities pervade each other as well [476], and they also become carriers of the higher level self-responsibility of the respective social personalities of a higher level. Insofar as these socialities themselves are subject to the volitional, purposeful creation and recreation, and possibilities as well as actualities of ongoing communalization do exist (within the general frame of the only communicating humanity as such), also communicating as non-communalized communities, then it is clear that the universal question of self-responsibility, or rather, the universal question on the genuine human existence, on a volitional life’s creation of a form one could finally (from apodictical insight) verify, encompasses the whole humanity, i.e. the universe of possible communication through immediate and mediate experience (empathy) of the co-existence. All are responsible for everything. And insofar as human life is a culpable one in a good sense and necessarily knows itself as that, we may also say: All are culpable for all. There is no mere private ethics, but individual ethics and social ethics, universal ethics of humanity, are one ethics. Only this holds true that the questions have to derive from the Ego, respectively investigating its sense in an ethical way, and that for everyone the life, also the socially functioning life he is responsible for, is his own, and for everyone the “moment”, in which he, currently living, has to decide, is his own. It is his own, and yet it encompasses – intentionally – all others. And with the help of this internality, in which all life is unitary, there is no isolation of any ethical Ego and its responsibilities.

<§ 3. The world as a field of humanity’s practice and as to be justified from practical reason. Universal ethics and the possibility of a universal teleology>

In advance thus Ethics encompasses the whole humanity in the generality of its questioning according to the essence and the possibilities of a true and right human existence, one to be wanted apodictically.

[477] But it also encompasses, if it, as a concrete one, a completely sufficient one, shall lead towards an all-sided and finally possible option of responsibility or apodicticity, the whole world, which is and is able to be a field of its practice for the whole humanity, and, as practically created by it, has to be a special theme itself of responsibilities themselves. Even that, which man does not find in the world, into which he practically lives as produced by him, by humanity as such, <not> as a practical formation, even that, which he opposes as “mere nature” to “culture” comes into question, insofar as in this, in its whole structure of being, there are conditions of the possibility of a world to be created practically as such, and perhaps also those of a nature, which shall be able to be a basis for the demanded shape of a world from practical reason, being that of a cultivated nature after all.

We need to consider here that humanity in the form of existence from practical reason[[3]](#footnote-2) correlatively, that is equivalently, has the same meaning as a world being for this humanity as to be justified from practical reason. This world, in which humanity consciously lives, being consciously <in> acceptance in it as being in certainty, into which it lives in all its life – experiencing, thinking, searching, hoping, fearing, etc., suffering, practically reacting, acting -, encompasses men themselves, the whole humanity itself. Both in one are already there and are correlative themselves: humanity, encompassing the world (and itself) intentionally, the world as already being for men as a field of life and effecting, as to be created (counted as well the self-creation and reciprocal creation of humanity). In the ideal case world is practically rational, if it implies practical rational life and existence persisting in habituality in a practically reasonable way, and according to the idea only that. This does not only imply that the men subjects are practically rational and then necessarily form a generality of practical reason, but also that <that>, which they find as such as a world beyond men, corresponds to practical reason. The question then is, whether this can be thought in the form [478] of a “complete” world at all so to say, and with “complete” men of freedom, and now even whether this, understood in an all-temporal way, can be thought, whether, if a world is pregiven for humanity as being within it at the same time, not corresponding to the idea of practical reason yet, <and> in how far a world reform then is possible through the self-reform of humanity from practical reason, in how far this is ever conceivable as a completely rational world, or else, as an endless progress of perfection, whether conditions of possibility of an “ethical freedom” as such and of such a free reform exist, whether nature already, the way it is, is according to such conditions, etc. The questions on a universal ethics, the questions on humanity or a world, created and to be created purely from practical reason, are questions on the possibility of a universal teleology, whose source of will lies within man himself.

It is man himself demanding such a teleological, a completely rational world: not from some arbitrariness, but because he asks for a life he can live, and asks <for> a world, in which he shall be able to live, or because he asks for an existence, in which he can preserve himself, he can himself finally adhere to <and> correlatively asks for a world he shall be able to verify, unconditionally verify, since it simply enables genuine life, a lastingly satisfying one. It would already be actualized, if humanity corresponded to the idea of genuineness or if this cannot be conceived of otherwise, in a universal historical progress towards genuineness in a conscious direction of the will towards it, the latter in the correlative double form of the being of genuine men <on the one hand>, living in truth as true personalities and as a true organization of personalities of a higher order, having an impact up till the personalized total humanity; on the other hand <of the being> of the humanized shape of this world, its cultural shape, in which genuine culture is, in a genuine historical progress, in one with the organization of the genuine sociality and its historicity, the universal expression, the universal objectivation of the development of genuine humanity, namely of its universal practical development of reason, through which world is transgressed in the common and de facto sense of the irrational world, transgressed through practical rationality, [479] through the new shape of a universal autonomous teleology. The process of de facto history gains the sense of the endless rise towards a universal rational humanity, under transformation of its irrational history into a rational one, for man becoming autonomous in the free universal self-sense-investigation and creating a new existence according to the apodictic insights of reason. Rationality of practical reason does not mean anything else here – as we need to derive from the whole of our consideration and [as it] needs to be paid attention to always – than the apodictic evidence essentially growing in a progressive way from self-sense-investigation in singularity and communalization (according to the attitude doxical or volitional evidence respectively) into that creation of life, or rather, that creation of a lasting Ego of lasting practical position takings as such, which can never and simply and purely never be regretted (that is, practically never be denied), which necessarily remain from responsibility and ability to be responsible implying absolute necessity.

It is the possibility of ethical existence, the possibility of this idea and the possibility of the idea escalating in necessary consequence towards the idea of an ethically being total humanity. The essential forms of human world would belong to it, the de facto world not corresponding to the idea, as it is an always accepted one by men, with men, the way they de facto are, and the ideal possibilities to recreate it from human freedom. On the lowest level the ideal framework of the world, which as natural law (natural categories and systems <of the> natural laws in the common sense, determining the identity of nature) is a world form persisting beyond all free acting, always presupposed in it.

<§ 4. The theoretical sciences in their function of a radical ethical consideration of man and world, and [function of] a rational universal practice of humanity>

It is clear that a systematic ethics performed into the direction of all ethically relevant sides, would presuppose all positive sciences: as ethics of [480] de facto men of course anthropology, or rather, psychology, sociology in the sense of socio-psychology (which certainly does not exist as little as true psychology of the human mental being), the history of man in his humanity, that is, history in the common sense in relation to the human socially historical world, but then all natural sciences as well, the inductive psychophysics included, the “rational” natural sciences like the descriptive ones. They all have much to say for the ethically teleological world consideration. The actual world, the ethically irrational one, shall be able to be reshaped into an ethically rational one, into a world, in which you do not only de facto live, but in which you can live in a satisfied way as a genuine man. You need to thus get to know it the way it is, and in how far it encompasses indeed and as such possibilities towards the ethical idea, possibilities for the free practical man.

Can a radical execution of some ethics and a seriously concretely general execution, not remaining within empty generalities, and operating with questionable presuppositions, remain a mere special science? Is the ethical question, universally taken, not an aspect, under which each and everything belonging to the world and its cognition, must come into question? And does not the other way round, if in advance cognition of the world in the shape of universal world science is in question, the ethical man need to be in question therein as well?

World science – you need to consider that world does not mean a finite manifoldness of realities you can get to know in a finite regarding, touching, that is, in an experiential way, and in a finiteness of theoretical cognition. The actuality of the world is indeed actuality in constant experience; but actuality implies an open infinity of possibilities and can only become thematic in methods, taking hold of the structure of possibilities already presupposed in the hidden, and of its whole system. Instead of moving in the infinity of possibilities being essential possibilities predelineated in advance from the proper given fact, you can – and involuntarily you do that [481] on your own accord – consider world in advance in pure possibility, and thereby already treat the de facto given as a mere example of a possible one, for which you could likewise take your free fantasy change. Thus you enter a purely rational process <related> to the all of essential possibilities belonging to the idea of a world as such. We now have an ideally possible humanity entangled with the idea of the world instead of the de facto humanity, and the ethics becomes the essential science, related to the idea of man, a man, ideally spoken, in an ideally possible world. It also belongs to the ideally possible world in this ideality itself, and closer considered as ethics – as our de facto science and our de facto possibility, to already form it -, <that is, as ethics> of the de facto humanity also to the actual <world>. The probably ideal possibilities also <belong> to the possible <world> - insofar as those corresponding to ethical reason also belong to the ideally possible worlds – to reshape this given <world> in the sense of practical reason from a given world and the free subjects belonging to it, and to form an ethics for that. But as to the actual world with us, men as actual [men], not only that appearing as a fact in the world time belongs to its reality, but also the universe of real possibilities enclosed in it. His freedom belongs to man’s being, and also the freedom of self-creation towards an ethical subject. The whole being of man and the way of being of his specifically human causality is that of the “I can”, and this potentiality to be able to is a constant real possibility of a special dignity, co-determining the world’s future; and hereto also the possibility belongs to form ethics as sense-investigation. Thus every ethically normative question is classified into the world-scientifically universal <question> on the being of the world. This being thus is taken too closely if it goes towards the mere facts having their context of order in the form of spatiotemporality, with their causal laws simply as laws of the temporal order. It is indeed also clearly testified by the factual sciences that they themselves cannot solve this task of this systematic order of the spatiotemporal [482] actualities (actualized at spatiotemporal points) at all, without mastering the infinity of possibilities, whether the passive ones, the unfree natural ones, the merely to be constructed in an inductively-hypothetical way, whether of the free possibilities implied in human existence, of the possibilities <of the> intervention, free on its own accord.[[4]](#footnote-3)

All sciences, however relating to the world, sciences of the actualities and sciences of the possibilities, get a function in a universal and radical ethical consideration of man and world.

Perhaps it is actually to be shown: Man can seriously only be man in a world, which can be teleologically created from him in insight, even if in an endless progress, but in the certainty that it is an apodictically valid practical idea. This would imply though that in advance the pregiven world <needs to > be aimed at the man and the teleology demanded by him (if he shall be able to genuinely live within it), that it needs to fulfill conditions of the possibility of true humanizability, and has its actuality therein. He can only practically verify it in advance for its sake, he can take on the struggle with its irrationalities, the irrationalities external to him, and within himself, and his like.

He can derive from his belief that this world in itself is teleologically aimed at man, e.g. in the form of the belief in a God who created the world and man in his ethical freedom, in such a way that he believes that the doing in (and the strength of) his ethical reason and in this [483] belief, verifying the world, is what is demanded by God himself as the absolutely rational creator. The ethical relation to the co-humanity then means my and above all its education towards the belief in God and towards the self-responsible ethical acting in the finite practical sphere of effecting respectively. The universal ethical humanity then is the idea of a universal humanity educated towards the religious belief, as such living in the religiously ethical striving, actualizing the ethical. A universal ethically-religious connection would then be created. As an idea it then guides every single one, and the respective humanity then develops to this idea from the voluntary activity of the believers and listeners.

This belief may have its right as having sprung from <the> life and its original possibilities; but how can the right itself be exhibited, be grounded in its genuine, pure sense, if not by autonomous reason in the shape of science? Is not, once science has been proved as an autonomous creation of knowledge of what is in truth and to be proved, has grown from apodictical evidence, the evidence of final validity, every kind of the belief in being, every kind of the conviction of being, having grown in the world life to be subjected to criticism? And does not universal science need to ask for the final sources of right of all convictions and [does not] thus a philosophy [need to] be established under the idea of universal knowledge from final justification or grounding?

Who has a belief, any kind of belief equipped with the strength of effecting from the originality of historical life, naively grounding a teleological verification of the world, can live in an ethical way, can build ethics itself on different levels of generality and with regard to the positive sciences, as a general sense-investigation on the possibilities, to not only *privatim* build up an ethical human world for himself in the world teleologically already presupposed, but as a member of a national or personal community formed already in a universally human way, <can> consider <these possibilities> and fix [them] as scientific norms. But if the ethical existence and its ideal possibilities shall be cognized down to the last detail, and if a halt <shall> be given to humanity, conscious of its autonomy, if all [484] that constant decline of genuine <autonomy> in seeming autonomy, the ethical skepticism shall radically be overcome, then a universal and radical science as such is needed. It is postulated here from the ethical question, also encompassing indeed in its practical universality the grounding of the practical right to live professionally in theoretical interest.[[5]](#footnote-4)

If on the other hand the universal world science, having become historical, is according to its ethical right there without any questions or if it subjectively has its source of right in a naïve belief in its proper value, then it also encompasses on its own accord the ethical problematic; and not only that, in its whole content it enters its service. It is a universal sense-investigation of humanity on the being according to actualities and possibilities, and it thereby gains within itself the function to ground ethics according to all not being ethics therein, and according to that, which specifically is ethics within it, the function to guide everyone’s actual life in the sense of genuineness’ norm. Science in purely theoretical interest then is a practice of theory, with the purpose to ground a rational universal practice of humanity, that of human self-creation towards genuineness.[[6]](#footnote-5)

1. 31st January 1931. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. I am an example myself, I consider myself like man as such. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Creating itself thus in practical apodicticity. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. The transcendental subjectivity can only be as one actualizing its possibilities – those possibilities, in which it actively constitutes itself to the identity, which is an idea for its part, a pole and a pole system. Correlatively the constitution of a humanized identical world as an idea in the endless progress. Man, humanity is only in the will to being, to true being as a genuine person. The phenomenology makes evident that humanity has an absolute essence it can uncover purely within itself and being for itself, and that it is only in its being itself as being in a horizonlike way, or rather, as being in its abilities. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. The ethical or practical reason in its historical relativity, that is, in a certain way the ethical truth as situational truth. In contrast to that: the pure ethical truth, apodictically valid for every conceivable humanity and world, as absolute truth. According to that humanity in the life’s form of the absolute finiteness, the absolute reason – the idea of a philosophical humanity in a philosophical life. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Therefore the ethics performed in theoretical interest in the change of attitude becomes the doctrine of art or doctrine of norms. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)