A. TREATISES

THE IDEA OF A PHILOSOPHICAL CULTURE

Its first emergence in Greek philosophy[[1]](#footnote-1)

The basic character of the Greek science that emanated from Thales is “philosophy”, is the systematic effectuation of a theoretical interest, freed from all other purposes, the interest in the truth, purely for the sake of truth. But pure science in this sense does not merely designate a new kind of cultural formation, merely getting in line with the other cultural formations. It prepares for the development of the whole culture a turn that leads it as a whole towards some higher determination. Philosophy could not remain with the first, well-comprehensible preference for cosmological problems due to the tendency to systematic universality that is inborn so to say to the purely theoretical interest. How much ever the world presents itself as the totality of all realities in the natural external point of view, encompassing humanity as a group of subordinated singularities, it is still given in current life for the acting one and especially also for the researching man in the necessary form of orientation “I and my surrounding world”, “We and our (common) surrounding world”. This “principal coordination” was supposed to become effective for the theoretically researching interest as well. Subjectivity as the cognizing one, and on top, as the theoretically cognizing one; furthermore subjectivity as affected by the surrounding world in weal and woe; And finally subjectivity freely acting from inside [204] into the surrounding world and reshaping it by purposeful action – all that had to come into the focus of theoretical research to an ever higher degree, and the world research, naively turned outside, and the research of the mind, reflectively turned inside, had to mutually intertwine and depend on each other. As soon now as research took its direction towards the thinking and otherwise acting subjectivity, it had to meet questions of a final satisfaction and in connection with that those of genuineness and legitimacy of the goals and ways to be chosen. It had to meet this already in the domain of science itself, since the drafted theories, as soon as they were drawn into the dispute of the systems, were supposed to advocate its right. The beginning science therefore had to overcome the original form of development of naïve theoretical research in order to become truly rational science, justifying itself with insight and ultimately; it had to research the norms of a science, ultimately justifying itself, in the self-investigation of scientific theory, and to afterwards strive for an essentially reformed shape, that is, in conscious goal-setting, namely that of a science from guidance and justification by scientific theory.

Similar norm problems related to the acting man as such though, apart from the theoretician who acted in a cognitive way. Thus the whole complex of the highest and ultimate questions had to enter the field of the theoretical work, aiming at the totality of the absolute normative ideas, which shall fundamentally determine human acting in every sphere in their irrefutable and unconditional acceptance. Even if these ideas, quasi as hidden entelechies, functioned as forces determining the development already prior to their pure seeing and theoretical shaping: they were and are only able to effect “genuine humanity” as consciously worked out and apodictically appreciated forms of possible legitimacy; Because what else does this say but a truly mature humanity, striving as such to live in all time awake self-responsibility; willing all time to follow “reason”, to govern itself, and only according to self-thought and self-discerned norms; and willing all time to be able to and ready to [205] represent the absolute normality of its doing from the ultimate sources of finality. In this way thus the task to help provide humanity, striving along blindly, with the deepest self-consciousness, that of its true and genuine sense of life, had to accrue to philosophy – the universal science. It had to become its greatest obligation to give to especially this sense the final rational shape, that of a theory clarified and understood on all sides, finally justified in every regard. This, developed systematically in sciences of principals, had to bring out the whole system of norms in a grounding way that humanity has to satisfy in order to become a true and genuine humanity, a humanity from pure practical reason. As a philosophy, in the more pregnant sense of a universal science of principals, it had to show together with its final rational sense-investigations that a truly human development of humanity was never possible in the way of a merely organic, blindly-passive growth; that it was rather only possible from autonomous freedom, and from a truly autonomous science in the first place; on top though from a universal philosophy that has given itself its absolute system of laws, the universal law for all possible genuine laws in its fundamental disciplines. Philosophy itself has to show in finally overmastering rationality that the naturally grown historical culture may have the developmental shape of a genuinely human culture only in the form of a scientifically founded and methodized culture, and – ideally spoken – in the form of a philosophical culture finally understanding itself, justifying and practically shaping itself from final rationality, that is, according to evident absolute principles.

We can exhibit the first percolating and complete shaping of this conviction that is important for the history of humanity in the course of Greek philosophy’s development. We can universally consider the history of phiosophy (that, the way it has originally grown as a universal science, has to remain a universal science according to its essential sense) the light of its necessary determination to create a universal and ultimately rational self-consciousness [206] of humanity, by which it shall be brought to the course of a genuine humanity. A piece of such a way of consideration shall be roughly outlined in the following, rather as an invitation to actually thorough exertion than as a claim f an executed performance.

……[[2]](#footnote-2)

Let us summarize. Socrates, the ethical practician, first of all put the basic contrast of all awake personal life, that between unclear opinion and evidence, into the focus of the – ethical-practical interest. He was the first to cognize the necessity of a universal method of reason and he cognized the basic sense of this method as an intuitive and apriori critique of reason; or, spoken more precisely, as a method of clarifying self-investigations, completing themselves in the apodictic evidence, as the original source of all finality. He was the first to view the existing-in-itself of pure and general essences as absolute self-givennesses of a general and pure intuition. With relation to this discovery the radical giving-a-justification, demanded by Socrates for the ethical life in general, *eo ipso* gains the meaningful shape of a fundamental normation, or rather, justification of the active life according to the general ideas of reason to be expressed by pure intuition of the essence.

May all this be lacking a properly scientific version and systematic execution with the lack of theoretical purposes in Socrates: it may still be assumed as certain that indeed the embryo forms for the reasonable-critical basic thoughts are indeed implied in Socrates, the theoretical and technological formation and most fruitful progressive formation of which is Plato’s everlasting glory.

The Socratic principle of radically giving a justification was transferred by Plato to science. …[[3]](#footnote-3)

[207] The basic character of the European culture can therefore be called rationalism indeed in this sense, and its history [can] be considered under the aspect of the struggle for the enforcement and shaping of the sense peculiar to it, the struggle for its rationality. Because all struggles for some autonomy of reason, for the freeing of man from the shackles of tradition, for “natural” religion, “natural” right, etc., are eventually struggles or lead back to struggles for the universal normative function of the sciences that are ever to be grounded anew and eventually encompassing the theoretical universe. All practical questions imply cognitive questions, which, for their part, may be generally grasped and be transferred into scientific ones. Even the question for the autonomy of reason as the uppermost principle of culture has to be asked as a scientific one and be decided in scientific finality.

1. The article was published by Husserl in the *Japanese-German journal for Science and Technique*, vol. 1, no.2, (Lübeck) 1923. It was written in 1922 or 1923. – Editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The text of the article following here, from “The first philosophy, naively directed to the outside world...“ until “... of such essences as such“ is to be found in the 1st lecture of the *First Philosophy*, page 8.23 to page 10.31. – Editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The text of the article following here, from “Theoretical cognizing...“ until “...finally normalizing authority“ is to be found in the 2nd lecture of the *First Philosophy*, page 11.31 to page 17.7. – Editor’s note. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)