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LA VITA FELICE

Arguments for and against phenomenological objectivity and objectivation in the reflections of Giovanni Piana and Enzo Paci

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Abstract

This work focuses on significant reflections by Enzo Paci and Giovanni Piana regarding objectivity and objectification, based on their commentary on selected passages from Edmund Husserl's phenomenological proposal. In The Crisis, particularly, Husserl underscores the controversy associated with the potential mathematization of essences, which he perceives as influencing modern philosophy and gradually leading to a state of crisis. In this text, Husserl therefore criticises the application of a method deemed illicit according to his proposal for rectifying phenomenology, which could undermine the value of intuition and the historical, progressive acquisition of knowledge. This study highlights the key points of this theoretical review and follows the commentary subsequently provided by Paci and Piana, which uniquely centres on a potential political reading and interpretation of these positions, to which this contribution gives particular attention.

Keywords: Objectivity, Objectivism, Process, Teleology, Intersubjectivity.

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La vita felice
Argomenti a favore e contro l'oggettività fenomenologica e l'oggettivazione nelle riflessioni di Giovanni Piana ed Enzo Paci

Questo lavoro si concentra su alcune delle riflessioni più pregnanti di Enzo Paci e Giovanni Piana a proposito dei temi dell'oggettività e dell'oggettivazione a partire dal commento di alcuni passaggi della proposta fenomenologica di Edmund Husserl. Ne *La crisi*, soprattutto, Husserl si concentra sulla polemica inerente alla possibile matematizzazione delle essenze, che egli ravvisa all'opera nella filosofia moderna e che lentamente conduce a uno stato di crisi, appunto. In questo testo, Husserl denuncia pertanto l'ap-

plicazione di un metodo ritenuto illecito secondo la sua proposta di rettifica fenomenologia, che discrediterebbe il valore dell'intuizione e dell'acquisizione storica e progressiva del sapere. Questo studio riprende i punti salienti di questa revisione teorica seguendone il commento poi offerto da Paci e Piana che si concentra, in modo del tutto originale, su una potenziale lettura e interpretazione politica di queste posizioni, e sulle quali questo contributo pone particolare attenzione.

Parole chiave: Oggettività, Oggettivismo, Processo, Teleologia, Intersoggettività.

Introduction: The School of Milan Steps Forward

In 1978, Giovanni Piana undertook a course primarily centred on Husserl's *Crisis,* analysing its conceptual intersections and the enduring theoretical implications that have remained in a latent state[1]. This lecture series is engaging for various reasons. This series has a historical significance as it is one of the most complex documents created by exponents of the "Scuola di Milano". Chronologically, it is likely the latest, making it one of the final works tied to the movement. Theoretically, it encompasses various interpretations linked to the School, reflecting both existentialist and materialistic perspectives on Husserlian phenomenology[2]. This evolution begins with the early insights of Antonio Banfi and culminates in the well-known and developed results of Enzo Paci, who also taught Giovanni Piana himself. Indeed, the Scuola di Milano was an intellectual movement that thrived at the University of Milan during the 1930s and 1960s[3].

The movement is notable for its integration of various philosophical traditions. It was profoundly influenced by the existential thought that was prominent in Italy during that era, especially that of Paci and his discussion on Sartre. Additionally, the School of Milan critically examined how a distinctive form of Marxist form of phenomenology could enhance the lived experiences of historical subjects through their genuine and defining actions. In this context, Piana's work aims to reinterpret Husserl's theories from an ethical, practical, and potentially

[1] This course was subsequently included in the twenty-third volume of Giovanni Piana's Complete Works, specifically titled *Conversazioni sulla "Crisi delle scienze europee di Husserl"* ("Conversations on Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences*, Lulu 2013).

[2] See E. Paci, *Pensiero, esistenza e valore. Studi sul pensiero contemporaneo.* Principato, Milano-Messina 1940, p. 46; E. Paci, *L'esistenzialismo,* Cedam, Padova 1943, p. 1.

[3] See F. Papi, *Vita e filosofia. La scuola di Milano: Banfi, Cantoni, Paci, Preti.* Guerini e associati, Milano 1990; E. Renzi, *Breve e facile storia della Scuola di Milano*. «Materiali di Estetica. InCircolo», 2023, pp. 157-160.

revolutionary standpoint[4]. This approach fosters an understanding and interpretation of the world that promotes actions respecting others and the environment while steering clear of self-serving exploitation or «barbarism»[5]. Moreover, these arguments emerge from a thorough analysis of the *Crisis* and the prevalent focus on *mathematization* and *objectification*, which is essential to revisit.

1. Mathematization, Objectivity and Objectifications. Key Claims and Objectives

Husserl critiques the mathematical treatment of essences in the early sections of *The Crisis*. This process of mathematical or arithmetical modelling represents for him an overextension of the intuitive and legitimate method, which in phenomenology aims to reveal the essence of things as they inherently and actively disclose themselves. Indeed, mathematisation posits an infinite recurrence in the formation and nature of essences, surpassing both the physical and, arguably, the *physiological* limits of the perceiving subject. Here, mathematics appears to be an endless and formal repetition of a specific transcendental model, seemingly detached from both direct observation and, consequently, from the objects and content itself it engages. Furthermore, the role of the observer is here notably restricted, a point similarly emphasised by Merleau-Ponty in his discussion of the *Kosmotheoros* and formerly by Bergson in relation to Aristotelian *pensée de la pensée,* in *Creative Evolution*. Conversely, Husserl's genetic investigations clarify that things are intuitively presented to our progressive and teleologically-oriented understanding, which nonetheless possesses fundamental limits that are challenging to exceed. Indeed, the entire exploration of retention and protention articulates how the subject can perceive and hold onto certain characteristics or *typicality* (as the notes of *On The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* argue for).

Husserl contends that this application is unsuitable and historically tied to Modernity, particularly the period of Descartes and Galileo. The excessive reliance on mathematics and its methods, combined with an emphasis on calculation, has gradually separated humanity from the fundamental aspects of its understanding. As will be elaborated below, this transition has *weakened* both their practices and the roles of scientists responsible for implementing them[6].

[4] See G. Piana, *Esistenza e storia negli inediti di Husserl,* Lampugnani Nigri Editore, Milano 1965, pp. viii-xvi.

[5] E. Paci, *Esistenzialismo e storicismo.* Mondadori, Milano 1950, p. 174.

[6] For Paci, understanding this responsibility hinges on the irreversibility of time that influences all our actions and our role in advancing the progressive teleology of reason (see E. Paci, *Esisten-*

Consequently, mathematics and mathematicians have become disconnected from reality, meaning that which is truly significant for human beings: exploration, historical context, and the ongoing transmission of knowledge that is continually discussed and revised. As Husserl rather states, effective science involves doubt and *epochal* questioning, progressing through direct experimentation and observations while occasionally summarising or *reconsidering* its established but always verifiable assumptions. Piana and others from the Milan School also associates this critique with a humanistic viewpoint, ultimately linking it to economic and social ramifications through a Marxist framework. Indeed, a dogmatic, dominant and *insular* science demeans its findings and those who helped shape it, discounting their time and efforts. Such a science not only fails to meet expectations but also betrays its fundamental purpose, ultimately leading to human dissatisfaction for discrediting their *labour*.

With this in mind, this paper seeks to outline the development of this analysis as illustrated in the works of the leading exponents of this School. Unlike the mathematization of essences and their undue *objectification* and aiming to re-explore the actual *origins* of Husserl's *geometry*, the authors of the Milan School propose appropriate methods for carrying out scientific practice that honour all parties involved. This belief is reflected in these authors' proposals, both in their criticism of an epistemologically flawed method that *reifies* essences by detaching them from their ongoing processes and intersubjective refinement, and in their condemnation of a detrimental practice that denies scientists the means to assert themselves and ultimately achieve *happiness* and human fulfilment. This aspect, rooted in Marxist thought, is among the most distinctive features of these interpretations, which this study intends to emphasise. In the following, I explain how the question unfolds in the text of *The Crisis*.

2. Husserl and the Social Commitments of His Late Phenomenology

Key interpreters of this School argue that the late culmination of Husserl's phenomenology – especially his emphasis on lifeworld, historical intersubjectivity, and the teleology of reason – gained a valuable counterpart within the Marxist framework and its *materialistic* outlook. Although Husserl sought a return to the *things themselves* and never indicated any engagement with Marx, including sporadic references to "communism", this approach would find significant theoretical depth within the genetic and generative analyses that Marx suggests

zialismo e storicismo, cit., pp. 194-195).

through the examination of labour, capital, and surplus value theory. From this perspective, Husserl would specifically emphasise the theoretical implications concerning the creation of ideal constructs, which involves examining their practical conditions for formation, consolidation, and transmission, as well as the eventual return to their *intuitive origin,* which is essential for their never-ending and encompassing validation.

Husserl emphasises this final aspect significantly. In *The Crisis*, he contends that modern science has increasingly become devoid of meaning for humanity. This has particularly resulted in what he terms a forgetfulness of its origins – those concrete and intuitive practices that interact directly with things themselves, ensuring proper alignment for every subsequent act of constitution and reasoning. Consequently, and by adhering to the materialist view of this unfortunate development, this approach not only strips away every sensitive connotation and verification from the inductive procedures of rigorous science but, more critically, it also robs *interpreters* of their importance and role in the evolving history of the theory itself, which *teleologically* progresses and *intersubjectively* finds corroboration[7]. This represents the concretised *arithmetization* or *mathematization* of scientific practice, initially involving Galileo and extending to all of modernity. A prime example is mathematics and its *serial* repetition that mechanically reproduces itself with a reassuring uniformity that stifles re-

[7] In *The Crisis,* Husserl continually cautions that scientists must avoid falling into *objectivism* and its method of voiding, which strips the foundational and active constitution or *reactivation* of meaning and disregards the temporal and processual dynamics that shape it progressively and collectively. To exemplify the perpetually improvable nature of sense constitution and our dedication to it, Husserl also refers to the concept of *teleology* related to knowledge and the reason that Kantian philosophy supports and directs. In paragraph §15 of *The Crisis*, Husserl presents *teleology* as an ongoing process that hones and enriches the core of the «becoming of philosophy» (E. Husserl, *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology.* Tr. D. Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1970, p. 70; see also E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie,* ed. Walter Biemel, Martinus Nihoff, The Hague 1954, p. 71). He suggests that as a rational endeavor we continually cultivate and convey, we philosophers act as «bearers of this teleology», grounded in «our personal intentions in the unity of our historical task», ivi, cit., p. 70 (see ivi, cit., p. 71, for German references only onwards). Therefore, we draw from history – or ideally should – and acknowledge a «spiritual heritage» along with the responsibilities it entails, nurturing connections «in the thinking of those who philosophize», curiously enough, and once again, «*for one another and with one another» to develop a more profound understanding of teleology itself and what it entails (*ivi, cit., p. 70, emphasis mine; see ivi, cit., p. 71). In this exchange, various generations of philosophers pursue a shared «will» or «surviving goal» and ultimately rediscover the same teleological origin or restart, ivi, cit., p. 71 (see ivi, cit., p. 72). This «will», while manifesting diachronically in each individual that eventually claims it, lacks a personal or exclusive foundation; instead, as an intimately derivative, genetic and generative concept, it originates from «the will» of ideal and putative «spiritual forefathers» who came before us (ivi, cit., p. 71; see ivi, cit., p. 72). In paragraph §28, this will is also said to be aiming at elevating what is considered «scientific thinking» from that which is «pregiven» and primordially experienced by monads collectively. The transition of «prescientific life» content from an «imperfect» state, in terms of scope and constancy, to perfection occurs through objective science as *praxis* (ivi, cit., p. 110; see ivi, cit., pp. 112-113).

search progress. The book of nature, described in mathematical terms, as Galileo mentions in *Il Saggiatore*, indeed seems to be a text that doesn't genuinely need a *reader* to make sense of it; instead, it merely recites itself. Modern science, which depends on abstract models and their independent sophistication, seems to employ a nearly algorithmic approach, thereby forgoing a material analysis of its constructions. Consequently, it repeatedly removes its accomplishments from their historical context, specifically, the former conditioning of their proper *sedimentations*. However, the effects on science also impact scientists. Deprived of any role or responsibility, scientists would passively accept the meanings they inherit and become ordinary executors of their historical duty.

Husserl and Fink firmly critique this view of a teleological *decline* of meaning, highlighting the essential role of human *Bildung*[8]. It is no coincidence that Husserl contrasts the mathematical and homologous framework of a so-called algorithmic science with the detailed examination of *The Origin of Geometry*, which serves as the third appendix to §9a of *The Crisis*[9].

3. How Should We Relate to Our Sedimented and Objectified Past? Outlining the Problem of Evil, Distance and Separation

In this text, Husserl highlights the historical and intersubjective *a priori* that underlies every ideal institution as the inauguration of an "open infinitude" regarding the endless becoming of meaning. Indeed, the geometrical figure that emerges

[8] In §40, Husserl appears to advance his argument further. He claims that the process of transforming prescientific life into a scientific one occurs iteratively over time, incorporating various *objectifying* activities that extend beyond the immediate present. These activities imply «an infinite horizon of inactive validities which function with them in *flowing mobility*» (ivi, cit., p. 149, emphasis mine; see ivi, cit., p., 152), or «*Bildung*» (as «movement of education»; see ivi, cit., p. 331; Husserl also speaks in this sense of «vocation as a sort of cultural configuration» that is realised and maintained by communalization and «cooperative work, mutual help through mutual critique» indicating that past creations and accumulated meanings are not static; rather, they actively engage in the continuous development of new and deeper meanings. The new findings resulting from this interaction help form a «vital horizon» of knowledge that reaches back, reclaiming and enriching past validities to illuminate «a single indivisible, interrelated complex of life» (ivi, cit., p. 149; see ivi, cit., p. 152). In §49, Husserl observes that this contribution is made possible through intentional «overlapping», which involves all the monads engaged in the gradual development of both the objective world and authentic way of doing science. This also highlights the critical role of an «intentional language as a continuum of retentions and protentions» (ivi, cit., p. 168; see ivi, cit., p. 171), echoing the terminology found in *On the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness.*

[9] Authored in 1936 and published by Fink, *The Origin of Geometry* investigates the intricate subject of the historicity of the transcendental, the concept of ideality formation, and the potential *revitalization* of meaning through generations of interpreters. Additionally, it examines the craft of writing, which is vital for effectively creating, preserving, and conveying specific content through faithful *sedimentation over time,* as Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, and other important philosophers would also later acknowledge.

is shaped over time[10]. Through the contributions of various *geometricians* who successively and creatively succeed one another throughout history, its new properties are gradually uncovered and subsequently made available to the entire scientific community. However, these properties, established as previous traditions or sedimentations of meaning, are not fixed or unchangeable. The assumptions of the past are perpetually scrutinised by *revisiting* their *origins*, which is the primary question that has led to a coherent array of responses. This ongoing process is what distinguishes science as a discipline and defines the role of a scientist, or in this instance, a geometrician. Both science and its practitioner must consistently *reassume* the foundations of their practices, which must always remain, at least de jure, intuitively *traceable*. This, for Husserl, is made possible by the use of a technical tool, namely *writing*, although in sometimes ambiguous terms[11].

[10] See also M. Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the limits of phenomenology. Including texts by Edmund Husserl.* Tr. L. Lawlor and B. Bergo, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2001, pp. 19, 30 on this.

[11] In *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl emphasises the pivotal role of language and writing in the formation and preservation of knowledge. He contends that language gains enduring validity when captured in written form. This aspect is particularly significant in geometry, where evidence must be documented in writing for proper understanding. It should be conveyed through a *living tradition* or technical medium, as noted in his correspondence with Fink (E. Fink, *Sixth Cartesian Meditation. The Idea of Transcendental Phenomenology,* tr. R. Bruzina, Indiana University Press, Indiana 1995, pp. 174-178; see E. Fink, *VI. Cartesianische Meditation. Teil 1. Die Idee einer Transzendentalen Methodenlhere. Texte aus dem Nachlass Eugen Fink (1932) mit Anmerkungen und Beilagen aus dem Nachlass Edmund Husserls (1933/1934).* Herausgegeben von Hans Ebeling, Jahn Holl and Guy Van Kerchoven. *Husserliana: Dokumente, Band II/1* (Hua D II/1), Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1988, pp. 199-203). The idealisation process in geometry aligns with the temporal aspect of the «continuous synthesis» between past and present «acquisitions», which remains elusive without an understanding of its distinct «persisting manner of being» (E. Husserl, *The crisis of European sciences,* cit., p. 355; see E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften,* cit., p. 367). According to Husserl, a «linguistic embodiment» such as writing renders the ideality of geometry «valid» and comprehensible to all (ivi, cit., 358; see ivi, cit., 370, for German references only onwards). This validation process results in an «ideal construction» that can «be understood for all future time and by all coming generations of men, thus capable of being handed down and reproduced with the identical meaning», ultimately establishing an ideal construction that is «valid with unconditioned generality for all men, all times, all peoples» (ivi, cit., p. 377; see ivi, cit., p. 385). Indeed, writing is something capable of involving «communication» with a related «communicator», surviving for an open-ended timelapse, and providing the «persisting existence of the ideal objects even during periods in which the inventor and his fellows are no longer wakefully so related or even are no longer alive» (ivi, cit., p. 360; ivi, cit., p. 373). Writing fosters the process of «communalization», bringing together geometricians in their collaborative efforts (ivi, cit., p. 364; as « *Vergemeinschaftung* » see ivi, cit., p. 374; see also E. Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge.* Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von S. Strasser. 2 Auflage. Martinus Nihjhoff: Haag 1963, p. 156 and E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. 2, 1921-1928.* Herausgegeben von Iso Kern. Martinus Nihjhoff, Haag 1973, pp. 523-530). It represents the «infinitization» of our abilities and transcends the «finitude of the individual and even the social capacity» for data retention (ivi, cit., p. 365, as « *Verunendlichung* » see ivi, cit., p. 375). This idealisation process involves multiple generations of researchers, with its evolution potentially endless. Geometricians engaged in this collaboration form a cultural supplier group, enabling communal sedimentation and reactivation of writing. This involves technically capturing content that future geometrician-writers will inherit from those in the past. Geometricians do not solely engage synchronically in building their knowledge. Synchrony fails to convey the temporal scope of geometrical transformations enabled by writing, passive sedimentation of content, and active ideal reassumption. This comprehension

Indeed, what significance does writing hold for Husserl, and why is it so important? Writing functions as a crucial instrument for fostering collaboration across generations, facilitating a dynamic evolution of meaning. However, writing also represents the nascent stage in a perilous process of *objectification* and entrapment of meaning itself – a process that, by its very nature, cannot endure indefinitely. This phenomenon gives rise to *fragmentation*, which contributes to productive interruptions and renewals, ensuring that the progression of thought remains discontinuous and adaptable. Intriguingly, the very medium that aids us in preserving reliable memories paradoxically instigates a gradual *oblivion* regarding our origins, ultimately creating a disjunction from the foundational truths that shape and sometimes distort sociocultural structures[12]. This separation raises pertinent questions: Why does this phenomenon take place? Is it possible to halt this

also unfolds diachronically. As Husserl remarks using a familiar formula, «science is related to an open chain of generations to those who work for and with one another», referring to a chain made up of «researchers […] who are accomplishing subjectivity of the whole living science» (ivi, cit., pp. 355-356; « *daß jede bezogen ist auf eine offene Generationskette miteinander und füreinander Arbeitender, ob bekannter oder unbekannter Forscher, als der für die gesamte lebendige Wissenschaft leistenden Subjektivität* , ivi, cit., p. 367). In this context, «scientific thinking attains new results based on those already attained» because «the new ones serve as the foundation for still others, […] in the unity of a propagative process of transferred meaning» (ivi, cit., p. 363; « *in der Einheit einer sinntradierenden Fortpflanzung* », ivi, cit., p. 373). Indeed, each «stage» of this construction and transferal of meaning functions as a fundamental service to the general economy of the teleological project of geometry (ivi, cit., p. 363; ivi, cit., p. 373; see E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität: Texte aus dem Nachlass. 3, 1929-1935.* Herausgegeben von Iso Kern. Martinus Nihjhoff: Haag, 1973, pp. 593-596; E. Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der Vorgegeben Welt und Ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916-1937).* Herausgegeben von Rochus Sowa, Springer, Dordrecht 2008, pp. 319-320). However, although geometry claims to be a collective enterprise, it does not neglect the autonomy of «every researcher», the latter operating «on his part of building» knowledge (ivi, cit. 362; ivi, cit., 372). Here, superior «meaning is grounded upon meaning», and, in this process, «the earlier meaning gives something to its validity to the later one» and «becomes part of it» (ivi, cit., 362; ivi, cit., 372). The «coconciousness» (« *mitbewußt* » ivi, cit., p. 379) of what is «constructed through human activity» and sedimentation, which guarantees its validity in time, «implies a continuity of pasts which imply one another», i.e., permanency which appears to be a form of cultural endurance that corresponds the very sense of sedimentation he suggests (ivi, cit., p. 370).

[12] From this perspective, Remo Cantoni's comments seem quite accurate. In his book *Umano e disumano,* Cantoni argues that «to objectify also means to express, to bring to life, to realise, to project into a universally valid form, that is, to objectify» what we risk losing from our institutions and layers of meaning. He refers to these layers as genuine «documents of civilisation» that encapsulate established cultural truths and ethical frameworks developed over time. Conversely, Cantoni presents «the concept of reification», which represents a «fall», a deviation from the true essence of meaning resulting in an «involution» and a consequent «loss of values». This shift leads to «hysterilization» where what «was once a meaningful form, a justified objectification, can become historically closed and dogmatic». For Cantoni, this represents a persistent fight against what he defines as *inhumane*, which distances itself from the responsibility emphasised in both scientific and civilizing practices as per Husserl's vision of Greek Europe. Here, reification is viewed as the perilous extreme of objectification, which he considers a positive, foundational aspect, in contrast to constructivist efforts and *autothelial* attitudes that resist decay, mortification, and *heterodirection* (R. Cantoni, *Umano e disumano,* Istituto Editoriale Italiano 1958, pp. 177-181). In *Il problema antropologico nella filosofia contemporanea*, Cantoni further elucidates that the human facet and our shared humanity are fragile and occasionally ephemeral elements that must be «tenaciously defended» against negligence and barbarism, as Husserl articulated in his renowned Prague conference (R. Cantoni, *Il problema antropologico nella filosofia contemporanea*, La Goliardica, Milano 1963, p. 4).

drift away from authentic understanding? How can we appreciate the process of *objectification,* which is in itself good and necessary, without wielding it as a weapon against one another?

Husserlian phenomenology, with its nuanced exploration of consciousness and experience, seems here to poignantly illuminate the dilemma of *evil* and offers insights into the means of defence against its manifestations. The degree to which one is distanced from the origins and the *living work* that facilitates the establishment and recovery of idealities highlights a critical aspect of Husserlian thought[13]. This perspective is notably discussed by various interpreters from the Milan School, particularly Remo Cantoni. While objectification and the formal establishment of enduring essences are valuable, Paci will conversely clarify, using a well-known Husserlian phrase, that the past sedimentation must continuously *be made present* and interpreted by each new contributor of meaning. Consequently, every reader has the epistemological duty and moral obligation to acknowledge the contributions of those who came before them and to engage with them in the ongoing collective endeavour. Indeed, the complex interplay between writing, memory, and meaning is further examined by several authors associated with the Milan School, who delve into these critical issues in greater depth.

4. Exploring Piana's Conversations. The Happier Life that Phenomenological Reconsiderations Provide (or Should)

In Piana's transcripts, the concept of a dichotomy between constructive and detrimental forms of *objectification* – specifically, the processes of feedback, validation, and the communication of ideality throughout human history and *technology* – receives thorough scrutiny. While a focus on concepts, phrases, and varying degrees of refinement in *sedimentation* is essential for advancing scientific practice, as articulated in *The Crisis* and, more specifically, in *The Origin of Geometry* through the rigorous analysis of writing, it nevertheless risks succumbing to *objectivism*; that is, it may become hypostatized and could forfeit its connection to its *intuitive* origins and the *redemptive* promises that authentic knowledge ought to foster. Such intentional spillover and sinking of the teleological mission can precipitate a state of crisis or impasse within science,

[13] This also relates to what Paci describes as the theme of habit, which can lead to *laziness* or «tiredness» in questioning the assumptions and pondering the «wonder» of philosophy, thus losing connection with the origins (see E. Paci, *Il nulla e il problema dell'uomo,* Bompiani, Milano 1950, 96; and E. Paci, *Tempo e verità nella fenomenologia di Husserl (con uno scritto husserliano inedito),* Laterza, Bari, p. 68).

which can subsequently be instrumentalized to the detriment of the scientists themselves. The latter may also find themselves fetishized and deprived of their work's validated and verifiable outcomes.

In his first lesson, Piana asserts that Husserl's genuine pursuit of objectivity calls for a distinction from what Husserl refers to as «objectivism»[14]. This involves an understanding that goes beyond mere passive feedback and transcends the confines of an internal debate within science, while also investing in the relationship between science and its philosophy. To carefully differentiate objectivity from objectivism means, as Piana suggests, removing «any moment of subjective overpowering of the given» along with its algorithmic and illegitimate aspirations. Here again we encounter ambiguity: if, indeed, «the intent oriented toward the establishment of justified and intersubjectively verifiable knowledge», even utilising the tools at our disposal, «is in itself fully legitimate and indeed obligatory in concrete cognitive doing, it can become a *tendency*, by no means obvious, to prospect as the task of science that of ascertaining factual data, prescinding from any consideration that would in this way question purposes and directions of meaning». When we succumb to this tendency or *temptation*, we often overlook that «life must be projected» to fit with «the desires and hopes which make it rich in meaning and perhaps, we could say, *happier*»[15].

This passage is intriguing because it connects the aim of explicit epistemological correction with the *eudaimonistic* inquiry that drives Husserl and the interpretations of the Milan School authors: a more precise and respectful understanding of its developments leads to a more fulfilling and enriching life, aligned with *telos*[16]. However, these tendencies can be quite skilful. Objectivism can actually initiate a counter-movement – the trigger for a «movement of deprivation

[14] Indeed, «if actual knowledge and truth are sought, it cannot be assumed that they apply», or can apply, «only to the individual or to bounded human groups». Rather, one seeks knowledge «that can be intersubjectively recognized and grasped» (G. Piana, *Conversazioni sulla "Crisi delle scienze europee di Husserl",* cit., p. 19).

[15] G. Piana, *Conversazioni sulla "Crisi delle scienze europee di Husserl",* cit., pp. 19, 79, emphasis mine; see also E. Paci, *Esistenzialismo e storicismo,* cit., p. 170, on this very idea of *temptation*.

[16] From this perspective, it is vital to briefly underscore the contributions of Antonio Banfi, who recognised the importance of *koinonia* and shared purpose. As an early proponent of the School of Milan, Banfi emphasised the essential connection between attaining scientific objectivity and the collective human effort required for its ongoing and intricate achievement, as referenced in *L'uomo copernicano* (Il Saggiatore, Milano 1950, pp. 183, 201, 243, 259). Additionally, Banfi was the first to point out, although in a broader analytical context that was less specifically phenomenological and not strictly Husserlian, the ambiguity involved in any form of objectification. He described this as an «arrest in the process of thought», a necessary yet contentious interruption followed by eventual progression (ivi, cit., p. 345). Nonetheless, as Banfi elaborates, there is no structure of knowledge that does not seek to assert itself as an «objective formal structure», which serves as a principle or fixed point that allows one to transcend temporary and manageable crises (ivi, cit., p. 352).

of sense of reality itself»[17]. This occurs when the abstraction of *mathematization* is enforced upon the geometrical process of consistent and unwavering verification of essences. More ominously, Piana notes, this eventually signifies the dissolution of all life connections and the diminishment of the unique contours of every historical event. To prevent this issue and help individual interpreters recognise their connection with others and the historical context that surrounds them, Piana emphasises the Husserlian relationship between philosophy and *Bildung*[18]. This also recalls the *civilising* purpose that motivated Husserl when pronouncing his conference in Prague in May 1935. By engaging in the *Rückfrage*, which involves a renewed awareness of its undefined premises, geometric science can effectively resist the trend toward objectification and the mathematization of its findings, while remaining firmly grounded in evidence and building its ideal constructions from a foundational perspective[19]. From the typical and consistent traits of bodies gradually evolve, distinguishing themselves from their primitive, sensitive tissues, which still avoid dogmatism and the extremes of total and abstract objectification. Through a "historiographic" approach, science can always reconstruct its foundational phases, often marked by anticipations and assumptions, allowing room for intuitive understanding or potential disillusionment, as Husserl would claim in his *Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis*[20]. In geometric refinement, however, as Piana himself argues, there is a close connection between the legitimate perfection of his practices and their objective determination, similar to the case of writing.

What is important to point out, in any case, is the procedural dimension that distinguishes scientific progress, including its fallibility and the value of its protection and safeguard we should always keep in mind[21]. This fallibility, which we must view positively in this context, is inseparable from the *content* its methodology addresses. Here, we attain the core of Husserl's argument against Galileo, regarding the inappropriate application of mathematization to the physical world, which, while not infinite, is indefinitely extendable – and deals with «objectification procedures which have produced such fruitful results in the narrower field of spatial forms and relationships»[22]. The improper extension of the «mathematical index» and the immediate «substantialization» of the infinite verification link that it adduces eventually ends by sanctioning the di-

17 Ivi, cit., p. 21.
18 Ivi, cit., pp., 40, 185, 197.
19 Ivi, cit., pp. 47-49.
20 Ivi, cit., pp. 57-58.
21 See ivi, cit., p. 60.
22 Ivi, cit., p. 65.

chotomy with the *lifeworld*, from which, rather, «every instance originates and to which every cognitive instance must eventually return»[23]. Piana acknowledges that re-establishing this connection requires regaining a desire for «legitimacy» and related epistemological «concern», also from ethical and moral perspectives. This is essential to «avoid dangerous shifts of meaning» and prevent illegitimate substantiations or hypostases. Moreover, from a phenomenological standpoint, Piana underscores the significance of an endeuavor he values, especially the *presentification* of scientific practice as a countermeasure against its possible instrumentalisation, something also Paci supports[24].

5. Towards Presentification and Civilisation: Paci's Phenomenology as Generative Maieutics

Similarly, Paci, prior to Piana, expressed concerns and a sense of responsibility regarding the sedimentation in Husserl's work. While sedimentation can signify the «preservation of meaning in the object», as he expresses in *Diario fenomenologico,* it also serves as the initial step towards the inappropriate «objectification» of our findings, which should instead be perpetually re-examined and revived from their historical stagnation[25]. Paci asserts that truth exists in time and its ongoing inquiry, drawing on Husserl's notion of «living present» (*lebendige Gegenwart*)[26]. This concept highlights a gradual evolution and consistent preservation of meaning while progressively transcending past instrumentalisations. In this context, the intuitive evidence of data is not solely tied to the abstract and *solitary* concept of the immediate moment, nor is it separate from its development and transformation over time[27]. Instead, it exists in the «presence in time», linking the past and future that the unending life of the present enables through the continuous renewal of its practices, stemming from an intersubjective contribution that is always in a state of formation and reformation[28].

23 Ivi, cit., p. 78; see E. Paci, *Il nulla e il problema dell'uomo,* cit., pp. 33-34.

24 Ivi, cit., p. 83.

25 E. Paci, *Diario fenomenologico*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 1961, p. 37.

26 Ivi, cit., p. 55. See E. Husserl, Husserliana VI. *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie,* ed. Walter Biemel. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954, p. 489.

27 See E. Paci, *La filosofia contemporanea*, Garzanti, Milano 1974, p. 285.

28 E. Paci, *Diario fenomenologico,* cit., pp. 92, 110. Indeed, Giulio Preti, a key figure of the Milan School, offered insights that were quite similar. In *Praxis e empirismo,* Preti argues that «definitions, rules, principles of verification are all things which have a history» – concepts that have been rigorously proposed, formulated, and debated while preserving their significance and social implications. Moreover, their validity is both «objective» and, therefore, «intersubjective» and diachronic: proposals that gradually gain acceptance, as Preti notes, «come to be part of the traditional heritage» because they align with the structures from which they arise. Consequently,

In *Tempo e verità nella fenomenologia di Husserl,* Paci reiterates the concept of an expanded temporal presence, aimed at revitalising the past through ongoing transformative rehearsals. These practices help us continually grasp the significance and value of intuition. Additionally, this approach directs the teleological journey of reason, which is understood by Husserl and Paci as both an ethical endeavour and a historical obligation[29]. Here, particularly with reference to *The Crisis*, phenomenology represents a continuous rectification of reason over historical time, striving to prevent the alienation and fetishisation of science. As Paci notes, this serves as the foundation for the «continuous redemption» of humanity[30]. This redemption is carried out as a pedagogical exercise and liberation conducted alongside several subjects who are recognised as equals, as Husserl himself clarifies in paragraph § 42 of the *Cartesian Meditations* and continues in the following[31]. Such «continuing education» awakens other minds from the possible torpor of reason and unites women and men of science in sharing the means necessary for rediscovering what lies buried, as happened, for Husserl, in the case of writing[32]. This is how the gigantic undertaking of «human presentification of cosmic time» is continuously carried out, according to which nothing or almost nothing can escape us if we remain faithful to our original ideals[33].This commitment enables us, as interpreters, to stay within this group and fully embrace our role as *functionaries* of humanity, as Husserl would programmatically say. As Paci notes, moreover, humanity as «entelechy» not only realises science but also realises «herself in time, always presentifying the past and looking to the future as telos»[34]. If we deny this telos, we will observe the gradual divergence

they are regarded as «accepted» or at least «acceptable» by individuals within a civilisation that shares a common culture and established communal living. Concerning the «social idealism» that Preti advocates, he asserts that social factors form «the fundamental fact of knowledge», serving as both the initial and ultimate elements, conveyed through language that is «transmitted from generation to generation», alongside customs and habituality practices. Thus, Preti concludes, «the intersubjectivity that is required for the objective validity of knowing concerns not only the linguistic verifiability and its modes, but also the logical verifiability, that is the same syntactic-semantic construction of discourse» (*Praxis e empirismo*, Einaudi, Milano 1957, pp. 133-134, 139, 148).

29 E. Paci, *Tempo e verità nella fenomenologia di Husserl,* cit., pp. 40, 59.

30 Ivi, cit., p. 92.

31 Paci elaborates, extending his remarks to Husserl, that recognising the pairing with another marks the initial step towards establishing the objective world. This recognition first occurs in the present and gradually extends to future interpreters, broadening its reach. It is this initial encounter that paves the way for further objectivations, which we recognise as part of a growing human community that exists «in the presence of the original» (ivi, cit., pp. 149-151).

32 Ivi, cit., p. 136.

33 Ivi, cit., p. 138.

34 Ivi, cit., p. 159. As Paci comments in *Idee per un'enciclopedia fenomenologica*, «objectivity» thus achieved would be resolved precisely in «humanity as an intersubjective universe» (Bompiani, Milano 1973, p. 189).

that results in the emptiness of *objectivism*, or knowledge that halts at the superficial, settling for simple heuristic shortcuts.

This is precisely what the established *maieutic* phenomenological approach aims to challenge, as Paci argues in *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo*. The crisis in which science can find itself is not primarily caused by the stagnation of its results, but by the abstraction of processes and the verifications that have historically led to them[35]. It is essential to consider or recall the horizon of life that surrounds everything that is «objectively verifiable». Rather, truth is the idea of «rationality that lives in every science and gives meaning to life». The truth, therefore, lies «beyond objectification» and is found in the «rational movement that transcends every partial expression, just as it elevates to an infinite rational moment», the *value* of a meaning[36]. This *rational movement* represents an ongoing quest for meaning, its attainment, and its never-completely secured preservation, which governs the distancing from any potential crisis situations in science as it undergoes continuous transformation[37]. Transformations resemble tasks continuously delegated to various monads in our environment, utilising terminology from the *Cartesian Meditations*. Each monad is finite yet possesses the essence of infinity, reflecting the limitless potential of science. By embracing a «fungent life» of reason, it absorbs the lessons of history, but not in a dull or passive manner[38]. By receiving meaning – always incomplete and uncertain – it becomes a catalyst for new and ever-evolving interpretations[39].

35 E. Paci, *Idee per una enciclopedia fenomenologica*, cit., p. 12.

36 E. Paci, *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 1963, pp. 19-22. The index of this movement, however, must not lead one to underestimate the constitutive importance of all its stages, as Paci clarifies in his commentary on *The Origin of Geometry*. As noted by other authors of the School, Paci also acknowledges the foundational value of the «document» as an objectification and «consolidation in us of the past» that similarly allows us to have a present and a relative future. Geometry itself, in fact, is nothing more than the set of human operations and their transmission from the sense of a primitive presence or visibility of the figures themselves. In a certain sense, it is the progressive sedimentation of the results of these operations that makes geometry «geometry», as an indefinite possibility of reactivation and progressive enrichment of meaning. Thanks to the technique of language and writing, from which we cannot here do without, we are able to reimmerse ourselves in this historical depth and uncover the inventiveness and creation that lie beneath the «automatism» in which objectivism tends to hide (ivi, cit., pp., 219-227; see also E. Paci, *Relazioni e significati. III. Critica e dialettica,* Lampugnani Nigri Editore, Milano 1966, pp. 272, 288). For these reasons, as Paci states programmatically in *Idee per una enciclopedia fenomenologica*, it is necessary to «found and refound geometry» to eliminate the opposition of potentially mystifying ideologies, as he subsequently notes from a more overtly Marxist perspective in his critiques (ivi, cit., p. 41). Objectivation requires ongoing investigation, serving as a search index. It marks the initial step in the journey toward liberation from anything that might obscure or conceal it, including the «claim to present itself as an obvious and effective factual reality» (ivi, cit. pp. 193, 205).

37 See also E. Paci, *Idee per una enciclopedia fenomenologica,* cit. p., 299.

38 E. Paci, *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo,* cit., p. 44.

39 Guido Davide Neri emphasised the concept of recovery and the essential reinstitution of intersubjective and intermunadic recall in his work, Praxis e conoscenza. To recover and encapsulate what has been established, one must implement the reverse pathway of the meaning that facili-

Thus, the «thematization» of the all-encompassing intermonadic totality that underpins the entire scientific apparatus occurs both synchronously and diachronically. According to Paci in this text, the aim of thematisation and its process is to shift objects and ideals from passive to active, and to establish the «civilization» we aim to inhabit «against the threat of death» posed by abstract objectification, viewing it as a «struggle against darkness»[40], and Paci describes this by metaphorically recalling the episode of the Tower of Babel and the endless translations that rendered the original and *unique* message incomprehensible.

Conclusion. Strategies for achieving happiness and its safeguarding

A significant insight drawn from the preceding sections is the powerful social message conveyed through sound scientific practices. By emphasizing the practical and intersubjective value of validating scientific discoveries, this perspective not only addresses their epistemological and heuristic significance but also underscores the intrinsic human values that this recognition must encapsulate. Consequently, individuals who cultivate an understanding of their scientific tools, alongside an awareness of the risks involved in either objectifying or mystifying scientific findings will experience a reduction in ignorance. They will also become more phenomenologically informed, thereby acquiring greater autonomy, empowerment, and resilience against potential manipulation. Paci further posits that the crisis facing European sciences originates primarily from a detachment from their foundational liberating purpose. In essence, when scientific inquiry strays from its role as a means of enlightenment and social betterment, it risks becoming a tool of oppression rather than a catalyst for progress. This suggests that the restoration of trust in scientific practices requires a recommitment to their historically rooted ideals of freedom and empowerment[41].

For example, geometry began as a sophisticated measuring technique that might have become excessively abstract due to the *arithmetisation* of its methods and the tools employed. Indeed, geometry's refinement process must always be retraceable and easily reviewable to prevent detachment from the data, where the issue of *evil*, as mentioned earlier, may emerge[42]. Therefore, the objective

tated the emergence of ideality throughout history (*Prassi e conoscenza. Con una sezione sui critici marxisti della fenomenologia. Lukács, Adorno, Marcuse, Tran-Duc-Thao, Naville, Schaff,* Feltrinelli, Milano 1966, pp. 152, 158). This approach is indicated by Husserl's notion of *Rückfrage* itself.

40 E. Paci, *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo,* cit., pp., 60, 235.

41 See E. Paci, *Fenomenologia e dialettica,* Feltrinelli, Milano 1974, p. 26.

42 See on this E. Paci, *Il filosofo e la città. Platone, Whitehead, Husserl, Marx,* Il Saggiatore, Milano 1989, p. 105.

sedimentation that occurs during the investigation should remain connected to the journey that leads to its formation. Paci reiterates that sedimentation should not lead to «estrangement»[43], which refers to a disconnection between the subject creating it and the ensuing work. This disconnection can become a harmful cycle, leading to the exploitation of both the individual and their contributions. In this sense, the «value»[44] here at stake should not be detached from its creation and the ongoing validation process. By doing so, we can ensure the accuracy of our practices and protect against potential manipulations and misunderstandings, ultimately leading to a fulfilling and *joyful life*.

[43] E. Paci, *Relazioni e significati. III,* cit., p. 323.
[44] Ivi, cit., p. 343.