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Phenomenology and Language:
The Last Frontier

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In one sense, language is an old pre-occupation of phenomenological concern, for even in the *Logical Investigations*[1] the fourth study was concerned precisely with language in the form of a construction of Pure Grammar. But what is new and unprecedented is the approach to language and consequent upon it the investing of an unprecedented importance upon language. The formula of Pos provides a convenient schema for appreciating the change in perspective regarding language. Pos describes this difference in terms of two different perspectives on language. According to the first, language is held up as an object before consciousness, which seeks to discern its form and essence, as it does with regard to any other object; here consciousness or subjectivity is essentially free or independent of language which is to be understood only as a means or medium of thought. It is intentional consciousness which is prior and explanatory and language is vivified and made intelligible by intentional consciousness, which, however, is independent of it. Intentional subjectivity constitutes language, as it does any other order of objectivity, but like any other object, again, the being of constitutive subjectivity or consciousness is independent of it; indeed, a true grasp of intentive consciousness is possible only when the external medium, the linguistic exteriority, is neutralized in the epoche.

From this objective approach or perspective, the last works of Husserl, particularly the *Origin of Geometry* and some of the sections dealing with language in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*,[2] according to Pos,[3] initiate a turn or transformation, for now language is no longer attempted to be understood from the outside; it is no longer thought of as an object to be held up before consciousness, which, by means of its free variation, looks beyond the historical and contingent features of particular language with their contingent and factical grammars to grasp the essence or eidos of language as such in terms of its Pure Grammar.

In the *Logical Investigations,* Husserl sees the relation between thought and language in terms of the model of relation between thought and any other object. The model which seems to be guiding Husserl's search of a pure grammar, or an eidetics of language, is a perceptual model; just as in the case of perception, we start in our search for the essence of the object, from a certain contingent and specific instance given in our experience, so also here, in our search for the essence of language, we start from what is closest

to us, what we are initially familiar with—namely our own language, in all the specific and historically contingent ways in which it has come down to us. We start from a certain empirical manifestation of language, with its own features of form and meaning which are peculiar to it. We, then, vary its composition and in this free play of variation, we run through all possible forms of composition, all possible ways of conveying a sense; we vary its syntactical features and semantic peculiarities and in this imaginatively proliferating different forms of linguistic representation, we are enabled to discriminate between what is essential and what is accidental, what must remain if there is to be a language, a possibility of communicating meanings, from what may be variable from one instance to another. The constant, the invariable features and the relationships they define give us the essence of language, which Husserl calls pure grammar. This *a priori* study of language is the eidetic foundation of empirical linguistics; as in the case of other disciplines, so also here, in the case of linguistics, we must distinguish between a pure eidetic part and an empirical part of the discipline; the empirical study of specific languages, like German, French, etc., is possible and conceivable only on the basis of a pure eidetic comprehension of the essence of language; like every empirical theory, linguistics also presupposes certain fundamental notions, both syntactic and semantic, and these constitutive categories of the discipline need to be clarified as to their fundamental sense. But this clarification of the basic notions cannot proceed by way of an inductive classification of contingent features of particular languages. Before these historically given forms can be understood as linguistic representations, we must first understand the pure form of an indicative or exclamatory or an interrogative sentence before we can understand the variable forms in which these functions are performed in specific grammars. Furthermore, in the empirical case the form is very often overlaid and complicated by contingent features; there are regional, local and individual variations; there are permitted alternative forms, and personal and group peculiarities which are tolerated. In this maze of the variable and the adventitious, it is impossible to discern the pure forms of meaning; on the contrary, it is the constant and unchanging essence that illumines and clarifies the variable; it is in the light of eidetic principles that we are even able to identify a feature as linguistic. While the empirical depends upon and presupposes the eidetic, the eidetic laws and truths are independent of the empirical; it is because of this self-sufficiency of the essence that we are able to generate all possible forms and systems of representation by a free monological act of imaginative variation. We do not have to wait for an empirical encounter with actual linguistic forms to generate variable linguistic forms. These systems and forms which the eidetic method generates are the achievements of a monological imagination in the sense that the phenomenologist, in search of the essence of language, constitutes these forms within the space of his own consciousness; we do not, Husserl apparently believed, have to participate in them as native speakers; our consciousness is outside every one of these systems and

that is precisely why it could constitute every one of them. From the vantage point of this constitutive consciousness, the difference between native and foreign vanishes, for the alien is formed precisely by varying the features of the native form. By placing them both on the same plane, so to say, the enigmas and paradoxes of relativism are avoided at one stroke, for meaning is primarily pre-linguistic and the linguistic form is only an exterior layer. As an external clothing or covering, all forms become commensurable for they all cover or express the same meaning. By grasping this meaning, it is possible therefore to relate all the forms to each other and to the stratum of meaning they all seek to express. In the universality of this meaning, the differences between the forms become inconsequential. This fundamentally was Husserl's response to the threat of relativism; by separating the eidetic as supra-temporal from the temporal flux of actualities, Husserl was enabled to exempt the sciences of the eidetic from the contingencies of relativism, and since every discipline has an eidetic core, in every science there is a core of essential and non-relative truth. But this way with relativism had one basic presupposition, namely that consciousness itself is capable of grasping timeless truths and validities. The subjectivity that is capable of eidetic intuition must be a subjectivity which is itself non-temporal, as it were.

The eidetic analysis at the level of linguistics also carries with itself a particularly problematic anthropological implication and, in fact, the recoil from the programme of a Pure Grammar begins with a certain uneasiness felt about this implication. The anthropological correlate to the idea of a free imaginative variation which leads to the emergence of different systems and forms of linguistic representation is the idea of production of different cultural configurations on the basis of a free variation of our own cultural code. This was the response of eidetic phenomenology to the challenge of cultural relativism and of world-view philosophies; the fact of diversity, of the existence of different perspectives and systems of meaning, is not denied but phenomenology would claim that it is possible to go beyond these configurations and seek to understand them as different exemplifications of a common structure; insofar as we can grasp the eidos or the essence, these varying exemplifications fall into an order and consciousness can run through them for now it has a compass and guideline. Husserl is claiming two things here: (1) consciousness which constitutes these different configurations is itself independent of these, and (2) because of (1) above, it is capable of entering into each one of these forms and reconstruct their specificity and individuality from within. By grasping these as variations of the common essence, their unity and diversity are simultaneously comprehended and thus they are made intelligible inwardly and no longer acknowledged merely in their facticity. What holds good for the intelligibility of other linguistic systems holds good for other life forms, for other belief systems, other schemes of good, other styles of art and images of individual and social good. With the epoche, consciousness is freed of the fetters of ontic compulsion and is capable of realising its inexhaustible productivity

such that we fulfil in a depth sense the maxim, 'I am human and nothing human is alien to me.' Precisely what appeared to be a burden and a limitation, the existence of alternative systems of meaning and value, is now seen to be a sign of freedom of consciousness.

Given the implicit universalism of eidetic phenomenology one can understand why the encounter with Levy Bruhl should have been momentous for Husserl.

Merleau Ponty reports on the extraordinary interest and excitement which the encounter with Levy Bruhl's *Primitive Mythology* aroused in Husserl.[4] To us today, after the very complex and many-dimensional debate over relativism and rationality, the excitement caused by Levy Bruhl might appear somewhat exaggerated and overly dramatic, for the ideas of pre-logical mentality and participation mystique appear to us to be impressionistic, and naively ethnocentric. But I shall try to suggest that Husserl sensed something far deeper and challenging in the work of Levy Bruhl, an aspect of the matter which cannot so easily be disposed of. As a sort of sign-posting of the kind of issues involved, we can remind ourselves that what seems to have challenged Husserl are not the theories or philosophical explanations offered by Levy Bruhl regarding the differences between the thinking of the so-called primitive people and modern logical and scientific thought. At a more sophisticated level, as we shall see, it is also not the problem of alternative rationalities that seems to emerge out of Levy Bruhl's somewhat naive philosophizing. But what impressed Husserl was the actual achievement of Levy Bruhl, his ability to enter into the interior recesses of vastly different peoples and make contact with a very different order of experience. Merleau Ponty alerts us to this aspect of the relationship between Husserl the transcendental phenomenologist and Levy Bruhl the anthropologist and student of primitive myths. Merleau Ponty writes: 'What interested him here (i.e., in Levy Bruhl's *Primitive Mythology*) was the context with an alien culture. . . ' In a letter to Levy Bruhl, Husserl himself writes, 'it is a task of the highest importance *which may actually be achieved* to feel our way into a humanity whose life is enclosed in a vital social tradition and to understand them in this unified social life.'[5]

In passing, we may note how Husserl actually and in so many words does say that we can achieve an interior and depth understanding of a fundamentally different form of life. He does not, as it were, celebrate the impenetrability of alien modes of thought; he does not, like some of the extreme historicist and cultural-relativist versions of the argument, proclaim the limitedness and boundedness of our modes of thought. Nor does he seem to be suggesting that what we have to achieve here is to think ourselves into a categorically different conception of rationality, that we must think in terms of a new logic with its different notions of truth and consistency. Hence the explanation of Husserl's excitement over Levy Bruhl would require a deeper and more patient and discriminating analysis. To begin such an analysis, we may briefly reconstruct for ourselves why Levy Bruhl

should have come as a challenge in the first place; we cannot be sure of any such reconstruction, for there is no concrete indication that it is precisely in this way that Husserl himself conceptualized the situation, but the reading which Merleau Ponty hints at is extremely plausible. The reason, we may say, why the discoveries of Levy Bruhl appeared so challenging to Husserl was that following the narrative of Levy Bruhl the anthropologist, the empirical scientist, he could understand inwardly the sense and significance of an alien mode of thought and its productions which he, as an eidetic phenomenologist, could not, by his own efforts, have understood. The empirical account seems to highlight the limits of the eidetic method. As we say, the eidetic method is monological for it claims the capacity to constitute all possible orders of meaning. It is this presumed sovereignty of the eidetic method that is called into question by the discoveries of Levy Bruhl. The sense of limits to the method is not due merely to the exotic nature of the material assembled by Levy Bruhl, for such variations of content would not challenge the form of the essence. It must be because the data collected by Levy Bruhl seem to belong to a categorically different order, because they cannot be fitted within the structural form of the essence, and yet at the same time the anthropologists' account makes sense and following it, we are enabled to comprehend it as a system of meanings—it is this experience of a form of understanding, transgressing the *a priori* framework of eidetic analysis, that must have been the shock and challenge felt by Husserl. But there is a deeper significance implicit in the encounter with Levy Bruhl. For it is not merely a crisis in method but along with the difficulty of the problem, there is also the feeling that momentous issues are at stake. Husserl describes Levy Bruhl's achievement as profoundly important. If it had been a matter of making sense of certain bizarre myths and belief systems of certain obscure tribal communities, if it had been only a matter of explaining the meaning of exotic symbols and the coherence of strange narratives, at the most it would have been a theoretical and methodological challenge but it would not have amounted to something profoundly important. Husserl must have felt that in the guise of a problem about myth and magic of so-called primitive people, what is really involved in the resolution of the enigma is a deeper understanding of ourselves—an awareness of the nature and limits of our own rationality. It is this possibility that must have so strangely disturbed and excited Husserl for here was a strange reversal of roles between philosophy and empirical sciences. In its classical form, it was philosophy in the form of transcendental phenomenology which had claimed the privilege of self-consciousness, and the empirical sciences, working within the natural standpoint, were said to be characterized by a naivete about themselves. Now, it is in the medium of an empirical science, working according to a factual method, that we come to a deeper understanding of ourselves and our reason.

In order to understand this turnabout in the relation of philosophy to empirical history, we must first understand exactly the nature of the

challenge which faces the eidetic method of phenomenology at this point. But the fact that a certain method of phenomenology is limited by the discoveries of Levy Bruhl does not however mean that the authority and function of philosophy itself have to be withdrawn; it is not the end of phenomenology that we are facing here; on the contrary, the solution of a genuine problem only releases a new phase of phenomenology; so also here, once we have learnt to respond to the problem at a deep level, then we would be equipped to carry on the investigations of phenomenology on a new terrain—history. But we must see the issue in its proper proportions and dimensions and that means that we must first see why the material presented by Levy Bruhl proposes a challenge to our assumptions and presuppositions regarding rationality and intelligibility. Here, Husserl seems to have a profound intimation that it is not the exotic and strange content of Levy Bruhl's narrative that is of such imposing challenge but the kind of world which it implies. All objects and facts are intelligible in the final sense only in terms of the world horizon in which they are experienced as objects and facts. This much is phenomenology in the classical sense but what is now up before us is a certain implication of this principle, namely, that if the background world context is unintelligible, if the horizon is alien and non-representable, then, to that extent, everything in that world, every fact and every little detail in that horizon would be strange and alien to us. We must first achieve a clarity and intelligibility about the background world-representation for the account of what is in the world to make sense. We do not build up to an understanding of the world, brick by brick, as it were, by way of facts and details; on the contrary, the converse is truer. We are able to make sense of the details, we are able to understand their nature and implications only insofar as we have a prior understanding of the type of world in which they are implicated. Hence the real problem, the deep challenge is the radical contrast of the world behind the myths and tales of Levy Bruhl. Perhaps we may have a clue to the sort of world presupposed by the anthropological narrative if we identify the type of world to which it belongs. Of course any such description would be general, for it would be in terms of types and kinds, the sort of world which we describe as primitive or pre-literate. Taking a clue from the work of anthropologists like Horton[6] who have focused on the differences between traditional and modern forms of thought and life, we may briefly set down the broad features of the pre-modern type. But it must also be kept in mind that the characterization that we are about to consider of an alien pre-literate or mythopoetic social formation is however within the discourse of a modern society; in particular, the characterization belongs to the anthropological discourse of modern society; the very categories in terms of which the description is elaborated would not figure within the modes of awareness of the social type concerned. This fact of the disparity between the object of description and the language of description has the effect of creating the impression that the social formation we are concerned with does not have a self-awareness. It is true

that the so-called primitive society would not see itself or understand itself in terms of the categories with which we describe it. But this does not preclude the possibility that it may have its own mode of self-description, its own form of self-consciousness. Furthermore, the terms in which we, men of modern societies, describe our own social forms may not be the terms in which succeeding societies will look upon us. Their discourse is likely to be as significantly different from our discourse as ours is from that of earlier times. But this plurality of discourses and modes of self-understanding once again raise the problem of relativism and alternative standards of rationality. We have to work through the problem with care and circumspection for it is fairly clear even before any detailed consideration that the relativistic position does express an important aspect of the matter. But the core of truth in the relativistic position need not be blown up into the dead end of the thesis of incommensurability, for, although the descriptions of primitive social formations available within the discourses of modern anthropology are, in one sense, external to the societies themselves, yet they do allow us to have a sense of the quality of life, thought and action available within these social types; they give us some inner understanding of the subjectivities of the members of these kinds of social formations. In the hands of a sensitive anthropologist like Levy Bruhl, these theoretical categories sensitize our perceptions so that we are able to have a comprehension of not merely the external features of their milieu but of their life world also. And it is this grasping of an alien and strange life world not by means of a monological reflection but by way of a disciplinary discourse, this discursive access to an alien subjectivity, that caused all the excitement for Husserl.

We shall, by stages, seek to understand how discourse can provide in its own way an entry into the phenomenology of a foreign life world. We shall begin with the broad structural form of a primitive mythic social form. Consider, for example, the characterization which Habermas[7] gives of a pre-literate mythic world on the basis of anthropological representations of such a mythic world-view and mythic consciousness: 'What we find most astonishing is the peculiar levelling of the different domains of reality: nature and culture are projected onto the same plane. From this reciprocal assimilation of nature to culture and conversely of culture to nature, there results, on the one hand, a nature that is out-fitted with anthropocentric features and in this sense humanized, and on the other hand, a culture that is to a certain extent naturalized.' This formula of naturalizing of culture and a culturalizing of nature is precisely what at once irritates and fascinates a modern sensibility. Habermas expresses the irritation unequivocally: 'What irritates us members of a modern life world is that in a mythically interpreted world we cannot make certain differentiations that are fundamental to our understanding of the world. From Durkheim to Levi Strauss, anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out the peculiar confusion between nature and culture. . . . Myths do not permit a clear, basic conceptual differentiation between things and persons. . . . Moral failure is conceptually interwoven

with physical failure . . . the confusion of nature and culture by no means signifies only a conceptual blending of the objective and social worlds but also a deficient differentiation between language and world.'[8]

But precisely this transgression of the categories of nature and culture also seem to have a strange nostalgic effect upon the modern sensibility. Thus Horton writes: 'As a scientist it is perhaps inevitable that I should at certain points give the impression that traditional African thought is a poor shackled thing when compared with the thought of the sciences. Yet as a man, here I am living by choice in a still heavily traditional rather than in the scientifically oriented sub-culture I was brought up in. Why? . . . one certain reason is the discovery of things lost at home. An intensely poetic quality in every day life and thought and a vivid enjoyment of the passing moment.'[9] (One here begins to have a glimpse as to why the discovery of Levy Bruhl should have struck Husserl as 'fundamentally important.')

If one is to understand the problem posed by an alien life world to a modern style of thought in its depth and complexity, one must develop both the irritation and the nostalgia.

Horton[10] gives us a schematic description of the kind of attitude and motivation typical of a form of life within the world as represented in Habermas' account. Horton's account of the attitudes of traditional culture (again it must be noted that this description is as seen from a modern point of view) is under five inter-linked categories:

1. *Unreflective:* Traditional thought is said to be not concerned self-consciously about its own conceptual and epistemological premises and pre-suppositions. 'There is a sense in which it includes among its accomplishments neither logic nor philosophy.'

2. *Unsystematic:* Here what is meant is not that traditional thought and belief cannot be ordered and systematized but, as in the above characterization, the traditional thinker does not feel the systematizing motives as an imperious demand as does the modern intellectual. Traditional knowledge does not typically seek a conceptual and logical order and stratification but is expressed in an ad hoc and free style manner.

3. *Mixed Motives:* Horton believes that there is an over-determination of the motivation of traditional thought in the sense that it is shaped by extra-cognitive interests as much as by the strictly theoretical demands of explanation and prediction. Horton attributes this play of emotional and aesthetic motives to the personalized character of traditional thought. 'There is little doubt that because the theoretical entities of traditional thought happen to be people, they give particular scope for the working of emotional and aesthetic motives.'

4. *Low Cognitive Division of Labour:* It is claimed that traditional thought is not the product of a specialized group of professionals or experts charged with producing theories.

5. *Protective Attitude to Beliefs and Concepts:* Horton, like Gellner and others, gives a special emphasis to this feature. He writes: 'Much has been made of

the scientist's scepticism towards established beliefs; and one must, I think, agree that this above all is what distinguishes him from the traditional thinkers.'

Summarizing and generalizing from a consideration of these five features of traditional thought, Horton[11] formulates two key factors which explain the cognitive style of such forms of belief: (i) 'In traditional cultures, there is no developed awareness of alternatives to the established body of principles', and (ii) 'any challenge to established principles is felt as a threat of the cosmic abyss and therefore evokes intense anxiety.'

On the basis of the general description of the features of the world-view and world-attitude of a mythic social formation we may now return to Levy Bruhl's presentation of the cognitive paradoxes of such a form of thought. These anomalies of thought, which Levy Bruhl held to be characteristic of primitive thought, are summed up in what he called 'mystical participation' which, he further believed, serves to distinguish the primitive mind and its processes from the rule-governed thought forms of the modern scientific mind as 'pre-logical.' It is indeed over this thesis of the pre-logical mentality of the people of pre-literate societies and the alleged cognitive incommensurability between the primitive and the modern that the controversy over Levy Bruhl has essentially revolved. After the brief period of an initial excitement over the idea of mystical participation which seemed to fit very neatly into the emerging currents of celebration of the exotic, the non-rational and the irrational, the thesis of a pre-logical mentality was held to be itself a sign of logical failure, not so much on the part of the subjects Levy Bruhl was describing, but on the part of Levy Bruhl himself. It was held that the theory of mystical participation is a very good example of an over-interpretation of phenomena and facts which Levy Bruhl no doubt correctly observed. But once the excess theoretical load of interpretation is discarded and the phenomena are properly identified, then we can see, it was said, that the so-called 'mystical participation' is not the strange and exotic thing it threatened (or promised?) to be but something which is found in so-called 'logical' or modern ways of thought as well. Indeed, in a highly effective counter move Horton attempted to show that far from being the exclusive animalist of primitive thinking, these Levy Bruhlian paradoxes occur inevitably in the process of 'transcendental' explanation, i.e., whenever we seek to explain a range of phenomena at the observational, empirical level by postulating unobservable entities and processes of a theoretical kind, the kind of cognitive animalist which Levy Bruhl noticed of mythical thinking inevitably emerges. And Horton pointed out that such transcendent hypotheses are characteristic features of modern scientific thought. The pendulum seems to have swung to the opposite extreme, for now it appears that the underlying thought processes of both mythical and scientific thinking are the same. To a thinker committed to the ideals of reason as passionately as Husserl was, such an 'intellectualism' would have had a great deal of appeal but at the same time, by assimilating the alien to our own

modes of thought, such a programme may minimize precisely the challenge posed by a different mode of thinking and thereby miss an opportunity of deepening our own ideas of rationality; it is this that seems to have impressed so much upon Husserl—namely, the possibility that encounter with the utterly strange, the alien and the far-removed may yet paradoxically lead to a widening of our own horizons; the other may be a way of access to a deeper level of our own self-awareness. It is this possibility that makes anthropology so significant for transcendental philosophy.

Hence we must follow a dialectical pattern here; we must first develop the sense of the challenge that traditional thought poses for us; at this stage, we shall explicate the paradoxical nature of mythical thought which Levy Bruhl describes under the description of mystical participation. Once the sense of the otherness has been brought out, then we can follow the response of Horton in the form of assimilating such modes of thought into our own frames; but we shall see how this attempt to negate the difference between the alien and our own cognitive systems does not wholly succeed; the sense of the contrast and difference persists. At this point, we shall, as it were, attempt to take the debate onto a higher level of presuppositions and perspectives and make an attempt to make sense of the radical asymmetry between the two types of thought in terms of the difference between Naturalistic and Personalistic perspectives on the world.

Using the contrast between the two points of view as global perspectives on the world, as two ways of making sense of the totality of experience, we shall see how the personalistic perspective has its own sense of the order of the world, how within this scheme there is a presentation of nature which is very different from that of the idea of nature as given within the frames of the objectifying sciences. A recognition of this dimension of the world and an appreciation of what it adds to our conception of the natural world would lead to a deeper understanding of our reason; we would be, perhaps, in a position to think of the possibility of new types of sciences, which are implicit in the altered conception of reason and the world.

Levy Bruhl claimed that primitive mentality is pre-logical in two senses: (i) in believing in propositions from which contradictory consequences could be drawn, though the thinker fails to draw them, and (ii) in the much stronger sense of believing in propositions which are inherently and of themselves radically incoherent. It is the latter that he called 'mystical participation', for the examples that he gave of this latter type of pre-logical thinking were identifications of one thing with several others which are radically different from each other; thus one and the same thing can be a stone, a tree and a spirit; or rain and wind and lightening are different from each other and yet they are spirit. It is this type of pre-logical thinking that drew the greatest amount of criticism from his opponents and it is easy to see why. The first type of pre-logical mentality, namely believing in propositions which could have contradictory implications, is only potentially illogical since such a thing could also be said of modern forms of thinking. Since contradictory

implications of which we presently have no inkling whatever may remain hidden in any one of the propositions which we currently accept, we are precisely in the situation in which the pre-logical primitive thinker is said to be placed. But the second feature of mystical participation is a more puzzling cognitive phenomenon. The primitive thinker, we are told, identifies one thing with others, although (i) he also recognises that it is different from them and (ii) the things with which it is identified are themselves different from each other. Thus X is identified with Y, Z, etc., although (i) X is different from Y and Z and (ii) Y and Z themselves are different from each other. One obvious way of disarming the Levy Bruhlian paradox would be to say that the so-called mystical participation is only symbolic identification. But this only serves to postpone the issue for now, the contrast precisely takes the form of the radical difference between such symbolic cognitive styles and the cognitive forms of modern thought. Hence, Horton's attempt to show that precisely such 'a paradox' is inherent in the very form of a *scientific explanation* is a truly radical turning of the tables. The characterization of primitive mentality as pre-logical was made possible by the contrast between traditional and modern forms of thinking; if this contrast is 'deconstructed' then the characterization of pre-logical mentality loses all its force and evaluation. Thus, he writes: 'The sciences are full of Levy Bruhlian associations of unity in duality and identity of discernibles. These associations occur whenever observable entities are identified with theoretical entities. . . . I shall argue, not only that they are irreducibly paradoxical but also that their paradoxicality is integral to their role in explanation.'[13]

The argument opened up by Horton, if successful would be truly 'deconstructive' for it would have simultaneously shown that (i) precisely the sort of anomaly said to be characteristic of pre-logical mentality is found in the structures of scientific explanation, and (ii) these anomalies, however, are functional for such explanations. Far from being excrescences upon scientific rationality, such cognitive paradoxes characterize precisely the rationality of science.

Horton's comparative analysis of traditional and modern thought as represented by science is designed to make two points: first, he argues that some of the features of traditional belief systems which are said to be anomalous and were said to mark off such systems as 'pre-logical' from modern ways of thinking are only apparently paradoxical or anomalous, if we first appreciate the theoretical functions of such statements. Secondly, and more importantly, such features are not peculiar to only so-called traditional forms of thought but are also found in theoretical sciences of the modern type. As Skorupski points out, this is the decisively important contribution which Horton makes to the debate over the traditional—modern ways of thought—an idea which takes the debate onto a new level altogether.

Horton claims that something like Levy Bruhl's paradox is inherent in the ideal of theoretical explanation of observable phenomena. Insofar as the project of a deeper level theoretical explanation of observational

phenomena is taken to be the distinctive thrust of the modern scientific conception of rationality, Horton's argument gives the debate a new turn altogether. He bases his argument on a principle formulated by Heisenberg: 'It is impossible to explain rationally the perceptible qualities of matter except by tracing these back to the behaviour of entities which themselves no longer have these qualities. If atoms are really to explain the origins of colour and smell of visible material bodies, then they cannot possess properties like colour and smell.'[14] We require bridge laws which connect the properties and relations of observable things to the properties and structures of hidden theoretical entities, which themselves cannot possess the properties sought to be explained by them. The point seems to be nothing more than the simple logical truism that the explanans cannot have the features of the explananda if they are truly to explain the latter. But the problem arises only when we consider the *form* of these bridge laws. Consider an example of such a hidden level explanation: the solidity, temperature and other properties of a macro-object like a table are explained as due to the motion of molecules composing the table. Here the bridge laws do not take the form of *relational statements* connecting theoretical entities and properties with observational things and their properties, but they function as *identity statements*—the table is a system of molecules in rapid motion, lightning is electro-magnetic discharge. In terms of Heisenberg's principle, the molecules themselves cannot be solid or warm, if they are to explain solidity and warmth of material bodies. On the other hand, if the bridge law is an identity statement, if the table is an organized system of molecules, then, the theoretical entities must have the properties of the observational entities for they are the same. In other words, we seem to have a full blown contradiction on our hands—the molecules cannot have the properties of the table since they are said to explain them and they must have the properties since the table *is* a system of molecules.

At this point the symbolist theory may offer a way out, for it could be maintained that the theoretical entities are not genuine ontological posits but only an explanatory device, a theoretical instrument for classifying, explaining and predicting observable phenomena; in other words, one may adopt an anti-realist instrumentalist view of theoretical entities like molecules. Horton rejects an instrumentalist view of theories, but if one were to accept such a view, then it would be very close to a symbolist interpretation of the paradoxes of mystical interpretation, thus defeating the idea of a radical difference between 'primitive' and modern thought. In fact, it is precisely this commensurability between the two on the basis of an instrumentalist philosophy of science which is proclaimed by Quine: 'As an empiricist, I continue to think of the conceptual scheme of science as a tool, ultimately for predicting future experience in the light of past experience. Physical objects are imported into the situation as convenient intermediaries, . . . comparable epistemologically to the gods of Homer . . . in point of epistemological footing, the physical objects and the gods differ only in

degree, not in kind. Both sorts of entities enter our conceptual scheme only as cultural posits. . . . Positing does not stop with physical objects. Objects at the atomic level are posited to make the laws of macrospic objects and ultimately the laws of experience, simpler and more manageable. . . . Epistemologically, these are myths on the same footing with physical objects and gods, neither better nor worse.'[15]

There is a third way also by which one may seek to respond to the thesis of Levy Bruhl regarding the presumed pre-logical mentality of the mythical consciousness; one may say that this is a bad interpretation which misunderstands the nature of the identity claimed between spirits on the one hand and earthly phenomena such as rain, trees, etc., on the other. One may think of these types of identity statements as the sort of identity involved in the brain-mind identity theory;[16] as per this theory, mental states are said to be referentially identical with brain states although they differ in senses. The identity is not logical identity or synonymy, but referential or contingent identity. Using this model, one may say that rain, trees, etc., are identical with spirit referentially but not in sense. But again, while this would save the phenomena from the charge of illogicality or pre-logicality, yet precisely by saving the phenomena by way of an advanced principle of modern logical thought, it closes the gap between the traditional and the modern. We have considered three strategies by which one may avoid the imputation of illogicality or inferior rationality contained in the theory of the pre-logical mind of the primitives. Insofar as they do, these three ways fulfil an important role, but at the same time in every one of these strategies, the traditional is so closely assimilated to the modern that one loses the opportunity of enrichment and widening of our horizons which the proper understanding of an alien mode of consciousness may have for us; it was this possibility of a deepened awareness of ourselves, a possibility of a more comprehensive and larger understanding of the world and our place in it that Husserl sensed in the discoveries of Levy Bruhl. Horton himself testifies to this possibility when he explains to us his commitment to stay back in Africa; he speaks of the discovery of things lost at home, of an intensely poetic quality in every day life and thought and a vivid enjoyment of the passing moment.

I believe that this dimension should not be lost; what the debate over the pre-logicality of the primitives has taught us is that these aspects of experience and thought cannot be simply classified as only of emotive significance and appeal, that the poetic quality Horton is talking of is not only a matter of a certain pathos or mood. On the contrary, these aspects are indications of a form of understanding the world and the place and significance of human consciousness and thought. It is because in such a way of thinking the world is seen and experienced in a new light that they are so precious, for they promise a deeper understanding of reason. The phenomena described by Levy Bruhl might have been interpreted by himself very poorly or inadequately, but the phenomena themselves are of great

importance to us; as phenomenologists, our fundamental commitment is, after all, to the things themselves. But wherein does their significance for us lie? Why do the discoveries of Levy Bruhl matter to us so much? Why do these stories of spirits and powers and of an enchanted world strike us, as they did Husserl, as fundamentally important? Behind the stories of gods and goddesses, of participations and presences, what is the tale that we are being told in these accounts? To what possibility are we being invited?

In order to move into the kind of considerations raised by these issues, we might, at this point, remind ourselves of a remark Horton makes when he was characterizing the traditional cognitive attitude contrastively from the attitude of the modern sciences.

According to Horton, one of the important differences between traditional and modern forms of thought is that the former is a personalized form of thinking while the latter is abstract and objective, but Horton is quick to point out that this does not make the former inferior or inadequate in terms of rationality.[17] Now, this 'personal' character of thought could be trivialized into the charge of anthropomorphism which is taken to be the tendency to think of the operation of natural objects in terms of motives, intentions and such other human states; but anthropomorphism is a type of explanatory thinking within the naturalistic frame of thinking; it is a rival mode of explanation to the causal explanations of science, and since it is a competitor to scientific explanations, it falls within the overall naturalistic perspective. But the contrast which Horton is concerned with is not a contrast between a rational and pseudo-rational mode of thinking within a single or same frame of reference but a contrast between two different perspectives, two different ways of making sense of the whole of our experience. Anthropomorphism is what personalized discourse appears to be from within the naturalistic point of view; it is a caricatural image of the other point of view.

In order to explicate the two forms of thought intrinsically and without the projective distortions of one perspective on the other, we may follow Husserl in his delineation of the naturalistic and personalist perspectives in *Ideas II*.[18] Indeed, as De Boer observes, almost the whole of *Ideas II* is concerned with the delineation and demarcation of the naturalistic and personalistic attitudes and the relations between them.

A precise demarcation between the naturalistic and personalistic points of view, without prejudging the coherence or otherwise of either perspective, would be possible only if the differentiation between the two is made from outside these two positions, for otherwise the very adoption of one of the points of view as the vantage point would tend to impose a certain description upon the other. But as Husserl's analysis shows further, this does not mean that we simply have to acknowledge both points of view as equal. On the contrary, Husserl argues that in a sense we can see that the personalistic point of view is more basic or primordial: not in the genetic sense that the non-scientific or pre-scientific perspective precedes the scientific point of view but in the logical and epistemological sense that the

objective perspective of the scientific description of the world depends upon or presupposes an earlier availability of the world in the medium of a personalized discourse. But to revert to the earlier point about the need for a different level at which the two perspectives could be conceptualized; in order to bring out the contrasted articulations of the two points of view, we must have access to a different level of conceptuality, which means that the proper differentiation between the two perspectives is possible only after the reduction. Ricoeur writes concerning this step on Husserl's analysis: 'The possibility of contrasting one attitude with another rests on the more radical possibility of detaching oneself from every attitude, that is to say, of performing the phenomenological reduction. The first act shatters the spell of the natural attitude and thus makes another attitude possible.'[19]

Before proceeding further with this analysis, we can make two points for future guidance: (i) The impact or effect of the reduction on the two points of view is not the same in all respects. Although it relativizes each in the sense that it shows how each point of view is the articulation of a certain interest of 'motivation' in Husserl's sense, yet the personalist point of view is, in a sense, closer to the phenomenological standpoint itself, for the personal perspective is the standpoint of the subject or the person and, as Husserl points out in *The Crisis*, there is a sense in which the transcendent subject or self and the human subject are identical; this peculiar alliance of identity and difference between the human subject and the transcendental subject has no analogue in the case of the naturalistic point of view. This means that in a sense yet to be clarified, the humanistic sciences have, as it were, an affinity with the ultimate or the transcendental phenomenological point of view. That is why Husserl often says that only a nuance separates them; this means that for every truth about consciousness or the subject at the transcendental level, there is a corresponding truth at the level of the personalist perspective; this in turn means that the personalist point of view is a mirror of the transcendental phenomenological understanding. (ii) The second implication follows from the 'global' character of each point of view. It is not as if the naturalistic perspective is a perspective on nature and the personalist perspective is a point of view on spirit or the subject. Each perspective is a point of view on the totality of experience; the two are two representations of the world. Thus within the naturalistic point of view there is a representation of nature as well as representations of the other, and of the human being. Similarly, within the personalist view point also there is an understanding of nature. Now, in Ricoeur's presentation of the presuppositions of Husserl's analysis, we are told that the two points of view, as determined by specific interests, could be made visible only from the more primordial point of view opened up by the transcendental reduction. Since the phenomenological perspective is also a total perspective, within that also there is an understanding of nature. If so, we must identify three levels at which we can understand nature: (1) the ultimate transcendental point of view of the phenomenology of the life world; (2) nature as understood within the

personalist point of view; and (3) nature as conceptualized within the discourse of the objectifying sciences.

Each perspective or point of view may be characterized by a certain fundamental Idea which acts as the regulative principle of that scheme and a certain fundamental principle of connection which orders the phenomena within that perspective so that the point of view presents a systematic understanding of the world. The basic regulative Idea of the naturalistic point of view is the thing, conceived of a material or physical reality. For this point of view, nature is the totality of realities that are either themselves material nature or are founded on material nature. Nature, in the fundamental sense, is physical nature and the other orders, such as the animate and the psychic, are also nature in the derived sense. This style of thinking according to which the mental or psychic is located in naturalistically conceived body and hence causally correlated with it, Husserl calls the naturalization of consciousness. Such a perspective is in its own way total, for it can include every characteristic and trait of human behaviour, individual and social. All such inter- and intra-human phenomena would, however, enter into the naturalistic representation after they have been given a correlation to material nature in the primary sense in terms of causal connections which is the fundamental ordering principle of the naturalistic perspective. Thus, man is seen in terms of the model of psycho-physical system of interactions and every process of consciousness is interpreted in terms of the stimulus response model. All intentional phenomena, from perception upwards to imagination and fantasy, are seen in terms of causal connections and association bonds of varying orders of complexity. Similarly, inter-human or social relations also are interpreted in terms of the causal schema—the idea of a social behaviourism would be the form in which the naturalistic perspective would seek to include social phenomena. Since individual and social actions are subjectively meaningful, the prospects of carrying through an objectivistic or 'externalist' explanation of language arises at this point. If meanings also could be accounted for in terms of S-R connections, it would appear that the last divide between human and natural phenomena could be overcome. The naturalistic perspective therefore is, in its own way, a total or global one; it has its own conceptual or categorial resources to take account of psychic and social phenomena. Also the very possibility of carrying through a total naturalistic interpretation suggests that there is an aspect of validity in the naturalistic interpretation. According to the naturalistic world-representation, all phenomena are either natural phenomena in the primary sense or are founded on such natural phenomena. Hence all phenomena fall within one world understood as 'bodily' nature in the objectivistic-naturalistic manner. All facts and relations between facts are intelligible and are also recognisable as facts and relations only within the horizon of the one world. Hence the other perspective, the personalist world-view, is neither a part included within the naturalistic view point, nor a larger totality which includes it—it lies on a different plane of conceptuality such that the entry

into it requires a change in attitude, a qualitative shift of motivation. But how is such a shift possible considering that the naturalistic point of view is global, covering every aspect including psychological phenomena such as attention, motivation and attitude? As we saw, insofar as there is a representation of human behaviour within the naturalistic frame of reference, there would be an understanding of attitude and motivation within this scheme of interpretation; this is what is meant by saying that there could be a psychology congruent with the naturalistic point of view. How then do we explain the shift from the naturalistic point of view to something outside of it? This is perhaps one of the most puzzling enigmas which Husserl faces along with Dilthey, Rickert and others. Although both the points of view are described as total or global perspectives, yet, unlike Dilthey, Husserl does not want to leave the matter with a final and unbridgeable relativism; the two, although total, are not symmetrical. It is not merely possible to shift from the one to the other but in a sense such a change of focus is necessary; it is demanded at the reflective level. Although the naturalistic point of view can find a place for every phenomenon, yet if we ask as to how it itself is possible, if we ask a question about its own presence as a point of view, then, as it were, a fissure is opened up, for the naturalistic point of view, precisely because it is a form of consciousness, a form of understanding, is not itself a natural fact. If we therefore ask a question, not about the content falling within the framework but about the framework itself, about the form of understanding and not about what is understood within that form, then the possibility of another level of understanding, another form of thinking becomes visible. We, who hold the naturalistic point of view, exist and have our being in the life world; we do not live and think at all times as objectivating scientists; even scientists outside their vocation exist as members of the pre-scientific life world and it is precisely this extra scientific mode of being of the scientists as forming a community of investigators who recognize each other as persons, who share certain common interests and who can communicate with each other as subjects about what appears to all of them as objects—it is this which makes the scientific attitude and activity itself possible. In other words, the limits of the naturalistic point of view are comprehended not by going out of it, but comprehending it itself as a form of understanding, a certain style of intentional consciousness. Reflection destroys the 'absoluteness' of the naturalistic understanding of the world by relativizing it to a certain interest or attitude, and in that very act of exhibiting the constitution of the point of view, it also opens up the space for other interests and other points of view.

Like the naturalistic point of view, the personalist point of view also is a global perspective on the whole of experience considered from the point of view of a specific motivating interest. In the case of both the perspectives, the interests which lie behind the two points of view must be understood as constitutive interests; they prescribe the basic categories of the two points of view, prescribe the criteria of what world be regarded as real within each frame of reference and also lay down the lines of inquiry within each system.

Hence these constitutive interests are not to be taken merely in the empirical sense as events and episodes within particular biographies; rather they are to be taken as 'transcendental interests' in the sense of accounting for the possibility of such things as events, episodes and biographies.

Just as the naturalistic point of view presented the world under the regulative idea of a thing or object of nature, so also the personalist point of view presents the world as the *surrounding world* (umwelt) or the '*significant world*.' The concept of the surrounding world is oriented towards a centre, a nucleus or originating term, around which the world is formed as the significant environment.

The surrounding world is the world seen and experienced in terms of its qualitative significance and appeal; within this scheme, nature and natural objects are experienced as invested with meanings and as carriers of value and worth; nature is perceived in terms of attraction and repulsion, terror and fascination, tenderness and ruthlessness; it is also experienced in terms of certain collective and traditionally sanctioned interpretations, as something the public recognized and identified. This historical image of nature, this 'traditionality' of understanding which provides the sense of the world as something common and shared, makes the world appear as 'our' world, as the milieu of a certain form of life. But the sense or meaning of the surrounding world reaches into the interior recesses of individual experience also.

In the personalist perspective, I experience nature and natural objects as having a personal or individual resonance for me; while recognising it as 'our' world, I also find it peculiarly and intimately 'my' world; I move about it and find myself in it in the manner of personal familiarity and intimacy—I read into it meanings and values which have a personal appeal and reference to me. Without in any way diminishing or reducing the sense of a common world, I also experience the world in a unique way, in the mode of an individual life experience; public objects present themselves to me in unique profiles—they show aspects to me which are unique to my point of view; I participate in a common world but the specific mode of my participation, the qualitative style of experience is uniquely mine.

Like the language that I speak, the world also is personalized in my very experience of its common reality. Each individual has her own inner illumination in which the one world appears to her; each person invests the world with a uniquely personal touch and feel. As such, the world's meaning and significance is irreducibly plural and polycentric. The surrounding world is nature personalized and made meaningful to the subjects in innumerable styles and modes of appeal. But in and through all this personal modulation, yet there is also the over-arching feeling of experiencing one world. A landscape or a mountain or a lake may be seen in a multiplicity of ways by different subjects; to each one of them the object is presented through a profile with its characteristic lights and shades. Yet all these profiles are referred to the same object which serves as 'the pole of unity' round which the profiles are layered; in the light of this unity pole, the different

experiences feel themselves as subjects for a common world—the experience of the world is a bond of unity, for shared experiences serve to integrate separate subjectivities into 'we subject' as Husserl sometimes puts it.

The personalist perspective is ordered by the principle of motivation which serves the same unifying and connective function as the principle of causality does for the naturalist perspective. Husserl gives a wide range of meaning to the concept of motivation; to say that the personal world is a motivational world means that in this perspective the objects in the world are seen as attractive or repulsive; they are experienced as charged with valence —as lovable or hateful, welcoming or inhospitable, soothing or annoying. Our moods present the world in these attractive and aversive modalities; in living through these moods, we do not experience ourselves as imposing or projecting such meanings and values upon the world: that is a later interpretation in terms of another discourse. On the contrary, in the experience of joy the light and the laughter are in the things themselves— the fields are smiling and the brooks sparkle. A mood is a way of reading the world and in that reading, the world is understood in affective terms. This presentation of the world as suffused with motivational powers, as propulsive or repulsive, charges our experience of our own embodiment with a sense of dramatic energy; we feel the surge of passion, the glow of joy, the shiver of apprehension and the numbness of terror course through our body. In the personal world, there is of course an experience of the lived body, but it is not experienced as a thing, as a biological and physiological entity, but as my way of being open to the world, as my presence before things. In them and through them, the meanings of things flow and I feel lit up with the light that burns in the things. The body is not experienced as a separate thing or entity weighing down on my subjectivity but neither is it experienced as the docile instrument of consciousness. In a sense, there is in the vital and dynamic contact with things, in the density and charge of the experience of things, a transcendence of my ego sense, of my subjectivity. The body in its raptures, in its celebration of the world, takes me out of myself; in that sense, there is a moment of anonymization but this loss of the ego sense is balanced by the heightened sense of the presence of things. The world draws near to me and draws me into the midst of things.

In the natural world-picture, social action and interaction are represented in terms of a field of forces, in terms of stimulus and response connections and action and reaction schemata; speaking and understanding too are seen in terms of conditioning and reinforcement, substitutions and displacements. But within the world-representation of the personalist perspective, the other is experienced as a dialogue partner and the limits of my recognition of others are seen in terms of the limits of communicative relations. It is in the light of a common language that fellowship and sociality are understood. I experience my fellow beings primarily as beings with whom I can talk or who have something to say to me. It is in the flow of conversation that we define ourselves for each other and it is in these communicative networks

that the self is presented and judged.

In fact, it would even be said that it is in language and through language that the personalist view point as a whole is mobilized and enacted. The world is perceived in terms of the models and metaphors, the predications and attributions of discourse; the world of the personal view point is shaped and articulated through the proverbs and maxims, through poetic and dramatic forms and through other kinds of narratives which invest things with human worth and value. It is in language that the world is experienced as our home, as our shelter and also as our custody. It is also in language that we articulate for ourselves the meaning of community and association; it is in our communicative interactions in the bonds of our speech that we bind ourselves to the other, that we identify our obligations and rights and responsibility. What is valid in the sense of truth, rightness in the sense of normative acceptability, and sincerity in the sense of authentic expression—all these meanings are constituted in communication and discourse. And lastly, the sense of the self, of our identity as not merely things or even as mere animate organisms but as meaningful subjects is the work of language; it is in the inter-locking network of self appraisals and appraisals by others, in the play of reflection by self and judgement by others that the identity and the shape of a person are born; truly it could even be said that we talk ourselves into being.

And now we could identify the basic contrast between the two points of view, for if the one looks at the world in language, the other seeks to place language in the world. And also the instability, the inner vulnerability of the naturalistic point of view can be seen, for it itself is possible only as the prior work of language, for after all it is in language that the naturalization of language is described; it is in discourse that we talk of a transcendence of discourse towards the world. It is in speech that we tell ourselves stories about the coming of speech. And this single fact that it is in language that science itself is made possible does not, of course, falsify science or demean it but it makes science a cultural accomplishment; it brings science back into the life world and gives it a place as one of the potentialities hidden in the life world. The remedy for the reifications brought about by a science misunderstood lies in a science properly understood. And a proper understanding of science is possible only if we see science as one of the 'symbolic forms' in Cassirer's sense. If to understand a form of language is to understand a form of life, then to understand the form of the language of science is to understand the life of science itself.

But to come back to the point with which the present discussion started. Today under the sedimentation of the world-representation of the modern sciences, this constructive and constitutive activity of the sciences has been concealed from us; we tend to take the world to be precisely what the sciences present it to be and hence we take the discourse of the sciences to be a simple description, a straight-forward presentation rather than a construction or formation. In this situation of blindness, which was what

Husserl described as the naivete of the natural standpoint, we take a possible perspective on the world to be the only possible perspective; indeed since it is felt to be the only possible one, it is considered not even as a perspective or point of view. On the contrary, it is taken to be the world itself, the representation is taken to be a presentation. Under the spell of this sedimentation, a monological reflection is not capable of giving us access to the originary life world. It is necessary to dwell upon the generality and endemic nature of the crisis Husserl is talking about. As the argument of the text progresses, it becomes very clear that it is not merely a setback or an internal breakdown within the sciences that Husserl is talking about; from the sciences of nature, the critical failure, the loss of the sense of the life world, the blindness to the authentic life of subjectivity spreads to the other sciences and to philosophy. Although he does not specifically mention them, it is legitimate to think of the crisis spreading beyond the sciences and the philosophical systems, to touch and transform the arts and religion, our morals and aesthetics. All our beliefs about the world and ourselves have been moulded by this basic narrowing down of our horizons, by this loss of a sense of another dimension. Our thought is enframed by the naturalistic point of view within which our sense of beauty or sense of good and even our sense of the holy have been shaped by the objectifying mode of thinking. In this order of thought, not only our sciences and our philosophies but our morality and art are also a reified ethics and a reified aesthetics. Our moral judgements harden into inflexible rules and codes, our sense of beauty can only recognise the palpable, thing-like aesthetics. A feeling for the horizon for an enveloping and diffuse sense of life which includes in itself a place for ambiguity and ambivalence, for not only the clear and the explicit but also the implicit and the latent in both the good and the beautiful, above all, a sense for other possibilities and other styles of life and thought—it is this sense of the fecundity of human consciousness that has been eclipsed. In this condition of a narrowed vision, it appears that something totally different and unimaginable in our terms, the intrusion of a wholly different way of thinking is needed to provide a stimulus, a reviving and re-vivifying touch to our sense of the inexhaustible content of the life world. But at the same time, this intrusion of the alien must be made intelligible to us; it must speak to us and we must be led, gradually step by step, into a vastly different system of meanings. We require bridges thrown across to us, we need to be conducted into a different way of thinking. And, in Husserl's appreciation, this is what the discoveries of anthropologists and historians of other times and places can do to us, for in their hands, in their careful and meticulous way of presenting the phenomena, they are able to shift us from the perspective in which we stand immobilized.

A gifted anthropologist, one who has not only a method but also a vision, relates the myth or the ritual to the perceived environment of the people, to their 'umwelt', to their patterns of communication and interaction and to the systems of classification and categorisation as reflected in their language

and all these phenomena are placed within an indigenous vision of the good life—by making these connections and affinities come out of little bits of behaviour and custom, by evoking a world-view from out of the ordinary conduct of life, he gives us a sense of another form of experience, another possibility of life. The achievement of the anthropologist is two-sided: on the one hand, he grasps the inwardness, the sense and quality of life of people far removed from the conventional images of human possibilities and perfections; but at the same time, he makes us understand this alien subjectivity. His discourse connects us to them and in this one act of connection, he vindicates reason by enriching it. Precisely because we understand, we are able to see the continuity, the bonds between us and the people he is describing. In this sense, paradoxically, it is the anthropological performance itself which belies certain dogmatic forms of cultural relativism. Because we understand under the guidance of the anthropologist, we also recover a sense of oneness with the alien form of life. But a sensitive anthropologist with a vision would not let us drown the feeling for difference in the excitement of understanding; he would not let us assimilate the other too closely into our own frames of reference and orders of meaning. By making us sensitive to the fact that those meanings come from a different horizon, he preserves a sense for the difference, for the contrast, for the other. This perhaps is the ultimate gift of language that it could relate us to the other without the pathologies of either aggrandizement or abasement. Language is the exemplar of the paradoxical alliance of unity and difference that Husserl was looking for.

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