

WANDERING ACROSS THE FACE OF EUROPE

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Abstract

«Wandering Across the Face of Europe» is a reconsideration of the Husserl's the Vienna Lecture in light of both its condemnation and in light of recent European and global history. The paper hinges on a reconsideration of the distinction between scientific medicine and the nature cure that opens Husserl's essay. The paper argues that it is only through relinquishing the objectivist desire for a natural science of human societies that the problems of the world can be solved. This relinquishing, it is argued, demands not a search for a better system, but the necessary condition of accepting responsibility for the effects of existing systems and the overcoming of the desire for a world wide system. Only through rejecting the objectivist desire for system can there be a true taking up of and a taking responsibility for the European tradition. The paper then involves a re-commitment to Husserl's notion of the essence of the European tradition.

Keywords: eurocentrism, tradition, human society, naturalism, objectivism.

Husserl's sole attempt to deal explicitly with what could loosely be called social or political problems, *The Vienna Lecture*¹, has generally been looked upon as something of an embarrassment. The lecture, while dealing with the much discussed European crisis, is said not to live up to the rigour and insight of the *The Crisis of European Sciences*. In the following, I will explore the possibility that part of the reason behind responses to the Vienna Lecture has to do with the way it is written. *The Vienna Lecture* has been attacked in one way or another since its publication. *The Lecture* has been called anachronistic, Eurocentric, and naive, it has been condemned both for its particularism and for its universalism. These negative and contradictory readings indicate the possibility that there is far more going on in the lecture than is generally assumed.

Husserl is not often considered a subtle writer: difficult, even obscure at times, but rarely subtle. This has led to some rather hasty interpretations. The most obvious misinterpretation emerges out of the assumption that his work develops in a simply linear fashion. Husserl himself spoke of the zigzag method, in

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and out of the natural attitude; more significantly, the work often backtracks, generating layers of analysis rather than cumulative developments. It is often necessary to reread earlier descriptions in order to get a full sense of what is being described. This is particularly true of the introduction to the work. The introduction, necessarily, occurs in the natural attitude prior to the phenomenology proper; as a consequence its meaning is transformed by the movement into the phenomenological attitude. These general remarks are emphatically true of *the Vienna Lecture*; the structure of the essay, rather than being naive or simplistic, is extraordinarily complex and as such offers itself to a number of possible interpretations.

A couple of common misinterpretations illustrate the point I am making and help us clear a way into the lecture proper. The first one concerns the charge of Eurocentrism. *The Lecture* is Eurocentric. But this Eurocentrism plays a role in the text that cannot be reduced simply to Husserl's prejudicial attitude towards non-Europeans. As it will become clear as we proceed the references to non-Europeans do not indicate the superiority of the Europeans. What at first appear to be Eurocentric pronouncements are on closer analysis condemnations of Europe. There is a polemical aspect to Husserl's essay that is thinly veiled behind an apparent Eurocentrism.

The decisive point here is that Husserl privileges the essence of Europe, not Europe. The essence of Europe is not manifest in Europe at the time Husserl is writing – this is the crisis. This point should be self-evident. Nonetheless, in order to see this, the lecture needs to be appreciated in two registers simultaneously. On the one hand, there is the naturalistic register. Here Husserl appears to be repeating the general views of the Europe of which he is a part. He appears to be repeating the general Eurocentrism of the Europeans, most notoriously the Germans, in the 1930s. On the other hand, there is the phenomenological register. This is much more difficult to appreciate. What tends to be read is the naturalistic account which constitutes the surface of the lecture, what is missed is the subtle, but no less apparent phenomenological level. Two points here as initial guides to our reading: first the essence of European culture has nothing to do with the geographical location known as Europe. Husserl makes this explicit in two ways, with each way manifesting at least two modalities. First, and this is the polemical aspect of his writing, the geographical location known as Europe need not manifest the essence of Europe. This non-manifestation of the essence is present both in the example of the Gypsies, one of the most notorious examples in Husserl's essay² and the naturalistic example, and in the effects of the crisis, this is the phenomenological example. The misinterpretation here has to do with understanding of the Europeans as somehow distinct from the Gypsies. The Gypsies are the example that Husserl uses in order to elicit the sense of the crisis. The second point to be made with respect to geography is that the European essence exists outside the geographic locale known as Europe. This again is manifest in two ways, in the naturalistic sense that the Americas belong to Eu-

European culture, and in the phenomenological sense that the essence of Europe concerns the universal and thus need not have anything to do with Europe whatsoever, this latter sense is also manifest in the fact that the universal is inherently and by definition exportable. The essence of Europe concerns the discovery and pursuit of the universal – not merely in terms of universal truths, but in terms of the discovery of the attitude appropriate to the pursuit of the universal. As we shall see, the essence of Europe is not the discovery of truths, but the discovery of infinite tasks within the theoretical attitude.

The second guide to our reading is the fact that the essence and the crisis are historically coterminous, or rather the crisis is historical and the essence is ahistorical and universal, albeit having a discernable origin – the ancient Greece of the philosophers.³ This origin may well be disputed, but the dispute misses the point. The dispute over origins returns the question of the essence to the naturalistic register. The example of Greece, in Husserl's text, reveals the tension between essence and crisis. In the naturalistic register Greece is the origin of the European tradition, in the phenomenological register this origin is purely contingent and nothing essential. As in the *Crisis* itself, it is the relation between these two registers, the phenomenological and the naturalistic that constitutes the way into phenomenology and reveals the nature of the crisis. Phenomenology emerges out of and is always already threatened by the natural attitude.

In turning to the Lecture itself we get a clearer picture of how the zigzag method works. The Vienna Lecture begins, after indicating that it will be concerned to elucidate the theme of the European crisis, with a distinction between scientific medicine and the lore of the nature cure. Science, Husserl indicates, has been able to take great leaps in the prevention and cure of bodily ailments, going beyond the traditional cures that arise out of the common life of the people. The sciences of the body are themselves based on the fundamental sciences of nature – physics and chemistry. After indicating this distinction, Husserl asks why there has been so little success in the so-called humanistic sciences: why has there not developed a scientific theory of human societies to parallel the scientific theory of human bodies? He proceeds to present an explanation from the perspective of the natural sciences. The basic explanation is that since societies are made up of individuals and since individuals are such complex organisms, science has not yet acquired the degree of theoretical insight to be able to generate a theory of the enormous community of individuals that make up human societies. The absence of a natural theory of human society is a result of the fact that scientific theories of human being are still in their infancy. There is no end of nature cures, but a truly scientific theory of human society has yet to emerge.

There is a tendency to read this argument in Husserl's voice, as if Husserl were endorsing the claims that he is presenting. Husserl, however, begins the discussion of the distinction between nature cures and medicine by speaking of what is familiar to all; at the moment he mentions the crisis he writes: «The European nations are sick; Europe itself

it is said is in crisis»⁴; when he turns to the scientific explanation for the absence of a medicine of human societies he refers to «those familiar with the spirit of the modern sciences». At each point he speaks in the voice of everyone, and not in his own voice. The usual reading seems to be determined by two points. It is assumed that in generating the distinction between nature cure and scientific medicine, Husserl is clearly on the side of scientific medicine. Moreover, since, after making the distinction and applying it to the context of European societies, Husserl never again brings up the issue of the nature cure, he has been read as presenting a scientific theory of society that rights the wrongs of previous attempts to generate such a theory.

It seems to me, by contrast, that the introduction to Husserl's Vienna Lecture should be read, not as a presentation in Husserl's phenomenological voice, but as a presentation of the natural attitude towards society and social problems. The distinction between nature cure and scientific medicine, familiar to all, should be understood as the beginning of a classic example of deconstruction. In the context of the parallel between medicine and society, Husserl adopts neither the position of the nature cure nor the position of scientific medicine. But he explicitly argues against the relevance of the scientific position, leaving out of the discussion altogether the relevance of the nature cure. But the distinction hangs over the entire lecture. To see this we need to hear what Husserl says about the nature cure: the nature cure, Husserl informs us, «arises in the common life of the people out of native experience and tradition», he even puts quotation marks around the expression nature cure, speaking of it as the «lore of the *so-called* nature cure»⁵. The familiar and natural distinction, that what we need is a scientific theory of society and not more nature doctors, is the source of the crisis. But in the process of deconstructing this distinction the terms themselves go through rather a profound transformation.

Nonetheless, this is not how the lecture tends to be read. The references at the beginning of the lecture to the «common life of the people», «native experience» and «tradition» tend to be ignored, despite the fact that they but not the scientific theories of the body are the key to the entire essay. The key to the solution of the European crisis is not the development of more scientific theories of society, but a greater attention to the European tradition. Thus when Husserl writes that «the whole way of thinking that manifests itself in the foregoing presentation [rests] on portentous prejudices and, in its effects, itself [shares] in the responsibility for the European sickness»⁶, we should take him at his word and assume that he is not merely referring to the scientific argument, but also to the distinction between nature cure and medicine in its relevance for theories of society. The key to society and its health is tradition.

Husserl, of course, does not mean that we should return to the age of the nature cure. The turning point in the essay occurs when Husserl, like so many relativists, points out that natural science and its off-shoots themselves belong to the European tradition, that the natural sciences have to be understood as accomplishments of European culture and that

it is «absurd and circular to want to explain the historical event ‘natural science’ in a natural scientific way»⁷. In speaking of the natural sciences we are speaking of something that emerges in the common life of the people, out of native experience and tradition, but this does not mean for Husserl that the natural sciences are simply reducible to any other cultural product. Husserl does not share with the relativist the belief that because all products of human thought are cultural they are all merely cultural and thus there is no means of discriminating between them. The mode of proceeding that equates natural science with all other cultural products, the route taken by the so-called relativist eliminates distinctions by presupposing the universality of cultural products. The relativist does not indicate that cultures have different modes of being in the world, but rather reduces all differences to manifestation of the same. The relativist position is a paradoxical naturalist position that leaps to the universal in a profoundly non-reflexive manner, granting all cultural products the same value.

To reveal the duplicity of the relativist’s position, Husserl brings up the example of those who claim that philosophy itself is universal. All cultures, it is said, have a philosophy (here we could extend this argument to politics, economics, religion, etc) and there is no means to judge between these philosophies, each is a manifestation of a universal characteristic of human being or of human communality. To speak in this way, Husserl insists, is to interpret the non-European in a European manner⁸, it is to project explicitly European categories of thought and social life onto the non-European. For Husserl, the distinction between cultures is presented as indicative of the superiority of the essence of Europe. There is little indication in the lecture as to how this evaluation is possible from within the phenomenological epoch, but then perhaps this is not the point. The evaluation, today, is clearly inappropriate. Again, however, we need to understand Husserl’s argument in two registers. In the first, Husserl is making the essential point that different cultures are not reducible to the same, that we should not project our European categories onto the other, an action that both distorts the other and conceals the essence of our own cultural products. This projection is a consequence of what Husserl in the lecture refers to as objectivism. In the second register, he is making the far more important claim, given the context in which he is writing that the European tradition should not be taken for granted. Traditions are neither universal nor natural. A tradition demands responsibility and vigilance. What is essential in the cultural context is not necessary. A misunderstanding of the tradition can have devastating consequences for the society in which the tradition is manifest and to others who are subject to these misunderstandings. The polemical aspect of Husserl’s argument motivates the references to other cultures. The references reveal European culture at the same time as they reveal the sense of the crisis. The reference to other cultures is not meant as a denigration of the other, but as a judgment about Europe. The reference to Gypsies in fact takes on a twofold significance within this polemic. On the one hand, they are an example of the non-European

within the geographic borders of Europe as already mentioned; on the other hand, they are an indication of the Europeans themselves under the conditions of crisis. What differentiates the two, the Europeans and the Gypsies, is not that the Europeans are superior to the Gypsies, but that the Gypsies retain their traditions despite their wandering across the face of Europe, while the Europeans have lost their tradition. The nature cures of the various fascist and communist parties are indicative of the lost wandering of the Europeans. The reference to the Gypsies, in other words, evokes the Europeans; the polemic counters the natural attitude, the presuppositions and the prejudices of European thought.

The Europeans are becoming non-Europeans. This, it seems to me, is the polemical backbone of Husserl's argument. The non-Europeans, Husserl suggests, when they have appreciated what is essential in European culture desire to Europeanize themselves, but no European would desire to turn him or herself into a non-European, and yet this is precisely what the scientists of culture are demanding. The charge of Eurocentrism against Husserl is correct, but one needs to understand this Eurocentrism in a phenomenological register. So when Husserl is speaking about Indians who desire to Europeanize themselves, he also makes explicit that these Indians also want to preserve their cultural specificity.⁹ European, in the context of Husserl's lecture, does not refer us to some specific manifestation of European culture. The Indian, when he or she has understood Europe essentially, does not desire to adopt English or German culture. The German or English when they have understood Europe essentially cannot confuse this essence with Germanness or Englishness. The German and the English are the superstructure with respect to the essential base. The threat is not the Europeanization of the globe, but the misidentification of the superstructure with what is essential. It is precisely this misinterpretation that we have seen manifest over and over again during the last few hundred years precisely in Europe, and increasingly throughout the world as a consequence of a misappropriated Europeanization and a misrepresented European culture (brought about, of course, by conquest, colonization and «economic rationalization»). And it is against this that Husserl is writing.

But what then is the essence of Europe and what are its social and political implications? For Husserl, the essence of Europe lies in the discovery of the theoretical attitude, the attitude that manifests itself in the scientific medicine that opens the lecture. But the theoretical attitude is not sufficient for understanding the essence of Europe. Understanding the theoretical attitude as what constitutes the essence of Europe is the error made by Marx and his followers. The theoretical attitude is far too easily naturalized. The result of this naturalization, objectivism and positivism, mistake the results for the attitude. What is not appreciated is that the theoretical attitude insofar as it is an attitude opens itself onto the infinite. Within the theoretical attitude there can be no such thing as an absolute truth. Moreover, the theoretical attitude is not a method but rather the condition of possibility for all consideration of method. More specifically, the phenomenological reduction is not a method: to

claim this is to relativize the reduction, as if it were merely one approach to the question of essence. The reduction is a transformation of attitude that makes access to the world as the thematic horizon of all cognition possible. The essence of Europe is the discovery of infinite tasks, which means the discovery of the reduction whether explicitly thematized or not.

For Husserl, it is the discovery of infinite tasks that constitutes the fundamental argument against naturalism and objectivism. The scientists of culture and society have fundamentally misunderstood this aspect of the European tradition. Moreover, they, like those who adopt specific European cultural forms, have misunderstood the transformation of attitude that lies concealed in the European tradition. The culture of Europe is not European at all, precisely because what is essentially European puts into question and refuses to commit to absolute judgments everything that manifests itself as European culture, this refusal to commit to the particularities of the tradition in any absolute sense is the essence of Europe. Husserl writes:

«If inadequacy announces itself through obscurities and contradictions, this motivates the beginning of a universal reflection. Thus the philosopher must always devote himself to mastering the true and full sense of philosophy, the totality of its horizons of infinity. No line of knowledge, no single truth may be absolutized and isolated. Only through this highest form of self-consciousness, which itself becomes one of the branches of the infinite task, can philosophy fulfill its function of putting itself, and thereby genuine humanity, on the road [to realization]. [The awareness] that this is the case itself belongs to the domain of philosophical knowledge at the level of highest self-reflection. Only through this constant reflexivity is philosophy universal knowledge».¹⁰

These words can be read in two ways. On the one hand, they can be read as if the truth were to be achieved only as the result of infinite striving. This is the understanding that lies at the heart of Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's phenomenology. The key to Derrida's reading is that the claim cannot be subject to the phenomenological principle of principles.¹¹ On the other hand, the claim concerning infinite tasks could refer to the necessarily interminable reactivation of established truths. In the *Origins of Geometry* it becomes clear that Husserl is not only referring to an infinite striving, but also to the necessity of perpetual reactivation, a perpetual vigilance and responsibility with respect to what has been established.¹² Both ways of understanding infinite tasks can be understood with reference to anti-naturalism, but it is only the latter that has a clear reference to the potential slip into the naturalism of established facts. Even an absolute truth can become naturalized, the essential anti-naturalism of phenomenology demands the reactivation of even established truths, and this reactivation necessarily has the capacity to reveal the evidential lack of even that which has been most emphatically established. Nonetheless, reactivation brings about the necessity of a constant reactivation of the tradition of theoretical insight.

The necessary reactivation of even established truths constitutes the core of Husserl's phenomenology from the perspective of social theory. But this reactivation must itself be prevented from becoming merely mechanical; the reactivation must arise out of a suspension of the very beliefs that are to be reactivated. It is this suspension that constitutes the essence of the European tradition. Any belief that begins to be absolutized, even the belief in rationality or in phenomenology itself, must be reactivated. Indeed, this reactivation has to penetrate even into the most basic assumptions about human communality and tradition. Within the natural attitude, communality and tradition invariably refer to a certain repetition and persistence. But for Husserl, the condition of social life no longer lies in the past, in the perpetual repetition of ideal conditions, but in a striving towards a future ideal which is, at any given time, the infinite horizon of our striving. This striving, coupled with the notion of reactivation, renders every achieved truth merely relative with respect to the universal. It is as such that phenomenology constitutes an attitude, rather than a method, an attitude that has the power, as the *Crisis* makes more emphatic, to transform the very nature of the life world.

In presenting Husserl's argument in this fashion we are already within the domain of a particular political tradition. Husserl's argument implies certain liberalism. Nonetheless, this is not a liberalism predicated on inherent virtues or self-evident truths. Rather this is a liberalism predicated not on a theory of the individual, but on a distinct theory of human community and tradition. The deconstruction of the distinction between scientific medicine and the nature cure generates a new understanding of the expressions «common life of the people» and «tradition». In part this idea of common life of the people must be understood through a consideration of the crisis. According to the *Vienna Lecture* the crisis in its most general terms is objectivism, an extension of the persistent critique of naturalism that begins with the critique of psychologism in the *Logical Investigations*. In the context of the Vienna Lecture the critique of objectivism refers implicitly to totalitarianism in both its Marxist and Fascist forms and to the previously dominant liberalism. The critique of natural science implicitly refers us to the naturalism and objectivism of the dominant social and political forces of the day.

The basic concept of objectivism assumes that humanity is subject to objective rather than subjective, or what Husserl calls spiritual forces. Objectivism turns its face away from the subjective conditions of possibility for natural science, for knowledge of history or society, and takes the objective as the condition of existence for human sociality. Husserl's anti-objectivism refers, in other words, to any and all materialism in social theory and as such it refers to any social theory predicated on the privileging of the objective, whether it be the body, the nation, history or wealth, and as such it relativizes any and all social institutions. No social formation, no social institution can be considered anything but relative with respect to the absolute, the infinite task of human communalization. The opening onto infinite tasks that characterizes philosophy, ren-

dering all truths merely relative with respect to the universal, is reflected in the domain of politics and society. Moreover, any and all social theories predicated on natural or objective assumptions, which concern race, nation, biology, history, material wealth, rights, intrinsic goods, etc. are necessarily to be viewed with suspicion, if not with outright hostility. There is a clear tendency towards pragmatism here, but Husserl's pragmatism is the pragmatism of the spirit and not of the body. Indeed, the fact that Husserl's social theory can only ever have tentative recourse to the facts, to the objective conditions of existence, reveals not a simple pragmatism, but an infinite responsibility. The recognition, indeed, the necessity, of the relativity of all truths demands not the relinquishing of the truth, but a perpetual and interminable commitment to the truth. Husserl's relativism is not an objectivist relativism that declares all truths of equal value, but the relativism that judges all truths in relation to an infinite ideal from the perspective of the infinite responsibility.

It is in turning to the spiritual as opposed to the objective that Husserl's argument opens itself up again to the charge of naivety. All human societies are predicated on the satisfaction of basic needs. This is a truism known to both capitalism and communism. How these needs are to be satisfied and the correct or best institutional framework for the satisfaction of needs is what is in debate. The difficulty here however is that both capitalism and communism (and indeed fascism) understands the framework as itself belonging to the logic of needs and not to the knowledge and attitudes of the community itself. The fact that needs are to be satisfied is not what is significant for social well-being, what is significant is the accumulated knowledge of how those needs are best to be satisfied. To put it in another way, the possibility of well-being is not contained in the necessity of the object, and the naturalized belief that this is the case leads to the mistaken belief in a mechanized social system which functions merely according to the administration of a rule. In both liberal and communist societies there is an assumption that the intentions of the individual undermine the well-being of the system. The individual, in order to be free, must submit him or herself to the system. The system itself, it is assumed, emerges out of the nature of things and not out of past or present processes of conceptualization and traditionalization, and will run on its own unhindered if only individuals properly submit. In this we can appreciate the necessary condemnation of the natural sciences as a model for the science of human community. By contrast within a phenomenological social theory the object rather than being the source of the process is the resistance to the process that constitutes the infinite task. The moment the theory itself comes to take on the force of the object to be accommodated we have entered the world of the natural attitude and diminished responsibility.

A phenomenological social theory, in other words, must persevere in its perpetual responsibility to the community, to the tradition and to the object. The object here needs to be thought not merely as that which is given, but more importantly as that towards which the tradition and the community is directed. The object as that which is given is

the perpetual threat to the object as that towards which we perpetually strive; the object as it is given, especially when that object comes to be theory itself, has the potential to close the community off to the recalcitrance of the object of its striving. An infinite responsibility demands an infinitely open horizon of striving and this means an infinitely open attitude towards the surrounding world which includes the world as it is described by the natural sciences. A phenomenological social theory, in other words, insofar as it accepts the task of the universal, the infinite striving of the theoretical attitude, must avoid at all costs the sedimentation of social theory, and this means the perverse assumption of a universal theory applicable to all and every surrounding world. The sedimentation of social theory into laws corresponding to natural laws and the assumption of such a possibility is the relinquishing of the European tradition and not its fulfillment.

Social and political theory take on responsibility at the moment it takes responsibility for the European tradition, the tradition out of which the possibility of social and political theory emerges, and subjects that tradition to a sustained and interminable critique.¹³ In taking this responsibility however one cannot simply assume that one is therefore challenging, «resisting», that which at present brings about the horrendous conditions of suffering we are witnessing as a consequence of the globalization of the European tradition, rather in taking this responsibility one is taking up the responsibility of the tradition in its essence. The critique of the handed down and sedimented presuppositions of the tradition is not a stepping out of the tradition, but a taking up of the tradition in its essence. In this sense there is a radical conservatism inherent in Husserl's thought. To do otherwise than to accept this task of taking up the tradition in its essence is to again submit to forces of mechanization, of naturalism and objectivism. But it must also be understood that it is only in taking responsibility for the self and the tradition that one can respond to the other. I am not responsible for the other; I am responsible for my actions and the actions of my tradition and their effects on the other. In our feigning responsibility for the other, we risk doing no more than relinquish our own responsibility in the suffering of the other. That the western world is today not in a state of profound upheaval is indicative of the power of the forces of naturalism and objectivism. A crisis perhaps, but not yet a shouldering of the burden of responsibility for our actions.¹⁴ It is clear, however, that Husserl did not take into account, for understandable reasons, the possibility of the naturalization of infinite tasks without ideal. The naturalization of capitalist economics and liberal democratic politics has resulted in an infinite task which has shunned the idea of the horizon of communal striving. This infinite task without ideal is the negative side of the essence of the European tradition or rather it is the naturalization of the theoretical attitude and the infinite task. As such it is also the naturalization of responsibility. No longer is responsibility the responsibility for the essence of tradition or for the claims to truth one makes or the knowledge one forces on others, today responsibility has become responsibility for the other within the

confines of an infinite task without ideal, something that verges on cynicism.

Husserl's anti-objectivism, as the basis for his critique of the social and political conditions of the 1930s, is clearly in opposition to any form of materialism, be it of the communist variety or the capitalist: any materialism, insofar as it is predicated on the finitude of nature, necessarily degenerates into a system and as such necessarily becomes totalitarian and can only result in intolerable suffering, if not for all then for the majority. Only a social or political theory that opens itself through infinite responsibility onto the infinite task of anti-naturalism and anti-objectivism can manifest the common life of the people, and this means the people of the world, in a philosophical communality (not it should be stressed «community»), and can thus fulfill the essence of European humanity. Nonetheless, it is clear that such an understanding of communality, of common life of the people, cannot be reduced to naturalistic or objectivist notions of humanity or community. A community is not the sum of people, nor is it the sharing of beliefs or expectations. Community in the objectivist sense is merely a process of exclusion, a being together in opposition. The opposition of the community is predicated on objectivist presuppositions, it cannot be based on the recognition of either responsibility or infinite tasks. The naturalist concept of the community is predicated on the experience of the other from within the natural attitude, the other is experienced as another body, as strange or as familiar. Familiarity is thought either within the limited sense of recognition or in the extended sense of commonality both thought according to determined and objective criteria. Neither of these modes of thinking otherness can be maintained from within the phenomenological attitude and neither can become the basis for the politics predicated on infinite tasks or an infinite responsibility, the twin poles of a phenomenological politics.

Communality, rather than being predicated on the exclusion of the other and the discovery of identities, is the opening of the tradition onto the horizon of the universal horizon. As such it involves commitments, but without determinate contents; it involves determination, but a determination that must be perpetually vigilant and infinitely responsible for its determination. It involves a coming together through commitment and determination, but it also demands from within this coming together that each and all retain a responsibility for the specificities of tradition. Communality demands a perpetual vigilance against the objectivization of theory, of the specific knowledge that emerges through the specificities of tradition, of the translation of knowledge into an object to which we must submit. Communality, as the infinite task within the common life of the people and not only people, demands the perpetual critique of existing knowledge and norms and a perpetual resistance to the tendencies towards naturalization.¹⁵

References

- ¹ *The Vienna Lecture*, also known as *Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity* // Husserl E. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Trans. D. Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970. P. 269–299.
- ² *The Vienna Lecture*, p. 273.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid., p. 270.
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 269.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 272.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 273.
- ⁸ Ibid., p. 285.
- ⁹ Ibid., p. 275.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 291.
- ¹¹ For an excellent discussion of Derrida's relation to Husserl, see: Lawlor L. *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- ¹² *Origins of Geometry* in: Husserl, *The Crisis...* Op. cit. P. 353–378.
- ¹³ *The Vienna Lecture*, p. 283.
- ¹⁴ Nowhere is the paradox of naturalism more evident than in the so-called environmentalism which has become increasingly significant in Western societies. An increased and increasing recognition of the effects of human activities on the ability of the earth to sustain human life has occurred at the same time as an increase in building of single family dwellings and the production of a society increasingly dedicated to the use of the automobile. The demand for low energy consumption, centralized, high-rise accommodation has not experienced the same kind of boom. The goal is to sustain present conditions through a fix that emerges through the political and economic systems that are already in place. As we recognize that our very being is intimately tied to the well-being of the planet we become more and more fixated on the naturalized systems which we have created. That people can be demanding tax cuts when the world is in the condition it is today is one of the greatest perversions of human history. No doubt it will not be long before sustaining this attitude will no longer be possible.
- ¹⁵ *The Vienna Lecture*, p. 283.