

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF THE WORLD IN HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGY

I

The term "world" is used continually in ordinary conversation and in a great variety of sciences. It appears to be a familiar and readily understandable concept without any apparent need of stating its exact meaning. In fact, the world is the point of intersection of the ordinary man, the scientist and the philosopher in the sense that each is concerned with it in one way or another. To the ordinary man, the world is the factual world of objects of perception; the belief in the world and the certainty of the world is the basis of all his attitudes and acts of valuing or willing. The scientist investigates the world as the natural world governed by natural laws, and the world stands at the gateway of epistemology and metaphysics for the philosopher's reflection.

There is a long history of philosophical reflection on the theme, which the Greeks called "Nature" or "*kosmos*" and we call "World". Almost every Greek philosopher wrote a book titled *On Nature*. The Greek philosophers were not interested in particular physical phenomenon. They wanted to answer the question concerning the ultimate structures of natural objects and our experience of these. They attempted to ground the whole of appearances of the world, the totality of experiences. They laid the foundation of philosophy as a reflection on the world in its wholeness.

The culture of philosophy after the age of the Greeks continued to be a philosophy of the world. The Christian notion of creation *ex-nihilo* played a crucial role in the development of philosophical thinking. In Christian philosophy, the Greek concept of infinity, originally an attribute of the world as totality, became a positive attribute of God. Thereafter, the created world was seen in finite terms. The notion of a finite world is philosophically important because unlike the infinity of God, a finite world can be known as a whole. This was motivation enough for man to initiate the process of the knowledge of the world.

Along with the interest in the process of knowledge there was also an interest in the subject as carrier of this process. The history of epistemology till the modern period is a history of emphasis either on the world as independent of the subject (realism) or dependent on the experiencing subject (idealism) or on the fundamental structure of human understanding (critical philosophy).

In course of time the problem of the world became so central to philosophy that it dominated the discipline of metaphysics as ontology of the world. However, in the process of the positivistic questioning of the traditional organization of philosophy in the nineteenth century, this fundamental problem of the world was as good as forgotten. The scientific description of the world is not a philosophical clarification, a certain acquaintance with which is presupposed in the scientific description of what the world is for a particular species or of what the world is for a particular group of human beings, the animal world, the child's world, the psychopath's world besides the worlds of different natural scientific disciplines.

II

The problem of clarifying the structure of the world resurfaced in a systematic manner with the emergence of Husserl's phenomenology. And thus, he was the one in whom we find the clarification and deepening of the concept of the world that occurs in special sciences. The notion of the world is at the beginning of Husserl's phenomenology, and it recurs in the inquiries of his last period repeatedly and in various forms. From the notion of the world as a germ in his early philosophy there developed the central philosophical problem for Husserl, namely that, philosophy claims to provide a theoretical foundation of the principles of the sciences. Not only that; it provides also a universal science in its own right.

The phenomenological investigations, to which the problem of the world has given rise to, are significant in two ways. Besides helping to clarify and deepen the concept of "world" that occurs in special sciences, they help to reawaken an understanding for the old philosophical problems concerning the world and aid us in giving those problems a new interpretation. A person, who proposes to clarify the concept "world", cannot ignore Husserl's results, cannot but see their presuppositions and their limits and come to terms with them. It is, of course, not possible to present an exhaustive account of them because the subject matter of the investigations belongs, for the most part, to Husserl's unpublished writings. One can only fall back on the published works.

But there is also the nature and value of normal, everyday knowledge, by which, and only by which, we are able to function in our world. The problem of this kind of knowledge, *doxa*, in Husserl's words, is a kind of knowledge in its own right and not inferior to scientific

knowledge. Every kind of higher order knowledge, scientific, theoretical, abstract draws on it as its source and finds there its meaning. How Husserl conceives of the world is related to this notion of knowledge. Knowledge, for Husserl, is the sphere of intuition, perception, in other words, with its modifications (remembering and other re-productive acts).

Husserl's interest in what he calls the problem of the world develops in two ways. In concentrating on the problems about the psychological foundation of logic in the first volume of the *Logical Investigations (Prolegomena)*¹ he defines the external world as the most general presupposition of sciences. What does the word "presupposition" mean in this context? The existence of the world is not a logical presupposition. It is not a premise. No science can start its investigation without a world being there. The world is what a science studies. Without a world the sciences would lose the ground of their existence. Sciences function by explicating the world in categories, claiming to define the world objectively as a set of given objects and relationships existing in themselves and capable of being grasped by exact methods. Our way of apprehending the world is determined by the fact of science, by the fact that mathematical-natural sciences have explicated the world in categories that – although they undergo continuous development and correction – claim to define the world objectively. The scientist's concept of the world, therefore, involves, quite as a matter of course, the belief that there is an objective, exactly determined and determinable world. Later, specially in the *Ideas I*², he realizes that the world of everyday experience, the natural world, is one of the central problems of philosophy in the sense that the task of philosophy is to understand and comprehend the relationship (1) between the natural sciences and the world, and (2) between the knowing (perceiving) subject and the world in

its totality as the object known. Hence, in the Husserlian thesis, the central problem is not ontological, that is, determining the ontological status of the world; it is rather, *how* the world as ontological reality is given to the knowing subject.³ To put it in the words of Aron Gurwitsch:

Raising ontological problems, means, on phenomenological grounds, embarking upon investigations of acts of consciousness, especially the privileged acts of genuine apprehension, through which the object in question presents itself as existing and from which it derives the specific meaning of its existence.⁴

That the notion of the world appears early in Husserl's philosophy has already been referred to it. The notion of the world is also found in Husserl's *First Philosophy*, in the first and second volumes of the *Ideas*, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, in his *Cartesian Meditations* and in *Experience and Judgment*⁵. The development of his ideas of the world, in many respects, remained essentially unchanged from those found in the *Ideas I* (1913 German edition).

In the *Ideas I*, we have Husserl's conception of the natural world. Here, in the first chapter the second section he develops the thesis of the natural standpoint. The natural world is the world of "natural standpoint"-that is, the standpoint from which human beings imagine, feel, will and act. For a human being, immersed in the natural attitude, the world is there, spread out in space endlessly and in time becoming and become, without end.⁶ The presence of the world is discovered immediately, intuitively, in the different sensory perceptions, through sight, touch, hearing, etc. The world is the sum-total of things and includes corporeal

things, animals and fellow human beings (like myself), each of which is an individual. I may attend to them; I may not, though they are there immediately for me. But it is not necessary that they should be present in my field of perception. Some of them are directly perceived. Some others are in a distinct or indistinct co-present margin, forming a continuous ring around the actual field of perception, and a vast number of other objects reach rather in a fixed order of beings into the limitless beyond. This 'limitless beyond' cannot be completely outlined, yet it has the "form" of the world as "world."⁷ Thus, in sense perception, I discover individual objects as "objects of the world", or having the form "world".

The natural world contains things and beings of infinite variety and infinite quantity. They are not static either. The world, in respect to its ordered being, is in the succession of time. Change is a permanent feature of the world. But though the objects of the world pass through constant change, the world remains one and ever the same. It is continually "present" for me. I myself am a member of it. "Therefore this world is not there for me as a mere *world of facts and affairs*, but, with the same immediacy, as a *world of values*, a *world of goods*, a *practical world*."⁸ That is, things are not "pure things of nature", but are endowed with value characteristics. I find the world before me with value character, "such as beautiful or ugly, agreeable or disagreeable, pleasant or unpleasant, and so forth."⁹ But the value characters are founded upon the positive, material qualities, which themselves form the substrate of the individual things of the world.¹⁰ If anything is to be the object of valuing or of a practical action (a striving, goal-setting or of willing) it must be first and fundamentally something perceived. Husserl expresses this most succinctly in *Experience and Judgement*. To quote him:

In the world of experience, nature is the lowest level, that which founds all others. The existent in its simple, experienceable properties as nature is the substrate which lies at the basis of all other modes of experience, of all evaluation and conduct.¹¹

Material nature, which is the correlate of the acts of sensory perception, founds all other characteristics of the world in that it is *constitutive* of the *individual* objects of the world. For Husserl, this means that the objects of the world are “individuals” in a purely logical sense of the term. He says:

Every perceiving consciousness has this peculiarity; that it is the consciousness of *the embodied selfpresence (leibhaftigen) of an individual object*, which on its own side and in a pure logical sense of the term is an individual or some logico-mathematical modification of the same.¹²

The perceiving of these “logical individuals”, the things of nature, is not an isolated occurrence in the natural standpoint, but is the way in which the world is continually apprehended. In Husserl’s words:

The natural wakeful life of our Ego is a continuous perceiving, actual or potential. The world of things and our body within it are continually present to our perception.¹³

Our perceptions may be illusory; we may have doubts about aspects of our perceptual life, still the world remains the basis underlying everything. Belief in the world in which we find ourselves consciously living remains certain, even when particular parts of it undergo correction or cancellation. According to Ludwig Landgrebe:

This means that every particular positing or negating presupposes a *universal basis*: belief in the world, certainty of the world. Every positing is a positing and every canceling is a canceling *on* this basis, which we can never disturb in our “natural attitude.”¹⁴

Also, in his 1935 lecture, “Philosophy and the Crisis of Man”, Husserl characterizes our environing world as a world comprised of the individual things of nature:

The environing world shows that nature is a homogenous totality, a world for itself, so to speak, surrounded by a homogenous spatiotemporality and divided into individual things, all similar in being *res extensa* and each determining the other causally.¹⁵

Husserl also observes that the things in their immediacy stand there as objects to be used, the ‘table’ with its ‘books’, the ‘glass to drink from’, the ‘vase’, the ‘piano’ and so forth. “The same considerations apply of course just as well to the men and beasts in my surroundings as

to 'mere things'. They are my 'friends' or my 'foes', my 'servants' or 'superiors', 'strangers' or 'relatives', and so forth."¹⁶

From what has been said so far, it appears that for Husserl the world is a totality of physical and psychic nature, to which belong as much the sciences as the human self. As a physical body I am included in the natural world as an object among other objects in it. The empirical self and its states and processes are also parts of nature.

We find that in the *Ideas I*, several senses of the world are distinguished. They are the natural world, the world as available, the world as reality, the world as horizon, the surrounding or environing world, the world of values, of goods, of practical interest, the psycho-physical world, the inter-subjective world, the world as horizon, the world as correlate of consciousness, the world as unity of meaning and the world as constituted being. These concepts of the world can be arranged in two groups. To the first belong those different notions of the world which initiate Husserl's concept of the natural world, excepting the last three, that is, world as correlate of consciousness, as unity of meaning and as intentional being, which form the second group. We shall defer the discussion of the second group till we have discussed the suspension of the thesis of natural standpoint. These two groups, however, are not disconnected – rather an analysis of the first group will show an organic connection with the second groups. For instance, from Husserl's notion of the natural world, one arrives at an insight into the necessary character of his conception of the world as co-relate of consciousness. We give below an account of the several notions of the world which we have put in the first group.

The Natural World: The natural world is the world already elucidated above. The world is the collective horizon of possible investigations carried out in the natural attitude. The natural attitude is the attitude of the “man in the street”. It is the normal, taken for granted way of approaching the world; its ‘general thesis’ of an existent world is always running as it were. In a later work Husserl states that “The natural attitude is the form in which the total life of humanity is realized in running its natural practical course.” From the naturalistic viewpoint the world does not simply exist, it is rather seen as existent, thought as existing, perceived as real. Consequently, the “general thesis”, the universally fundamental *doxic* positings (acts of believing) of the world is not a blind “prejudice”, an innate or acquired habit. On the contrary, all the habits formed in a man or acquired in the course of his life, belong to him as a man who already stands on his belief in the world, and is aware of himself as one existent object among others. The ego “lives in a world.”

In the natural attitude we at once experience reality as factually existing, and consider it as an object of reflection. According to Husserl, external reality means, first of all, the totality of things outside of the knowing subject. Second, it means this subject himself, inasmuch as he is part of external reality, can be made his own object in self-reflection. In brief, the world as the horizon of our total attitude is understood as our intentional directedness in all our acts.

The World on Hand: The world, as something fundamentally other, is available for us. It is present to someone who is awake. The world is not on hand in an absolute sense or even to someone at all times, but to someone who is in a certain state. It concerns a project or relation to some thing within the context of an interest.

The Surrounding World: Husserl's characterization of the natural world as surrounding world means the world-about-me. The various forms of my theorizing consciousness, such as observing, describing, comparing, collecting, inferring, etc., the diverse acts and states of sentiment and will, such as approval and disapproval, joy and sorrow, motivation, decision and action, etc., stand related to the fact-world. Whether in a concrete individual thing or in a group of things, the objects of the surrounding world are known exclusively through a subject's given set of motivations, and as such it includes the world of values, goods and practical interests. Here practical interest is an epistemological expression suggesting that there is no knowing without the subject's being motivated to know and taking interest in that knowledge.

The Inter-subjective World: The natural world is not only the world-about-me; it is also the world-about-us. Whatever holds good for me personally, also holds good for all other men whom I find present in my world-about-me. I understand them as ego-subjects, units like myself, and related to their natural surroundings. I understand that each has his fields of perception, memory and imagination, etc., which are different from mine, even when we apprehend something common. "Despite all this, we come to understandings with our neighbours, and set up in common an objective spatio-temporal fact-world *as the world about us that is there for us all, and to which we ourselves nonetheless belong.*"¹⁷

The World as Horizon: The world is the all-embracing total horizon. It is the collective horizon of possible investigations carried out in the natural attitude. It means that these are objects or events, etc., not just in my immediate surroundings but also beyond them. These two are there

for me and this thereness points to certain potentialities of consciousness linked to the actual consciousness I am living through. As such, the notion of horizon has a double meaning for Husserl. On the one hand, the internal horizon, identical to the objects given in the act of knowing; on the other, the external horizon, the sphere or realm of objects and their interconnections in which the object of a given act of knowing is located. There are, in other words, the act-horizon and the object-horizon. The world as horizon is not real existence. The subject posits the world in a mode of knowledge. It is a performance of the subject, in which the subject summarizes the particular horizons given in experience - of things, of space, of persons, of time and so on. It means that there are objects or events, etc., not just in my immediate surroundings but also beyond them. These two are there for me and this thereness points to certain potentialities of consciousness linked to the actual consciousness I am living through. Husserl prepares us for the horizon analysis in the *Logical Investigations* itself. There the perceptual thing is always a thing in front of its objective background, a background of objects consciously and more or less explicitly meant along with it. The table is “a table in the room”, “in front of the window”, “in my house”, etc. - spatial horizon; the table that we see over there is the table that was already there on a previous occasion, the table on which I intend to work later – temporal horizon. Thus, every particular datum involves references to perceptions that might take place from there on – references to them as potentialities of experience.

We may explain the horizon analysis of Husserl by means of a concrete example of seeing a physical individual – Husserl’s own paradigm in the discussion of horizon in the *Cartesian Meditations*. Suppose we are seeing a tree in the distance. We see a fruit tree, but

cannot see precisely what kind of fruit is hanging from it. The colour and shape is determined and genuinely perceived from my particular perspective. It is possible that I perceive more than this. I see it as an orange tree in full fruit and perhaps dimly perceive some of its environment – say, other orange trees around it in the orchard, From these ‘determinations’ of the tree along with more specific visual characteristics ‘genuinely’ perceived of its front side by implication implies further properties of the object, namely, that it is a fruit tree, not a conifer; that it has a back side containing leaves and fruits as its front side, but that it will not hold watermelon etc. In this way, Husserl says, my act of perception “intends beyond” itself, it “points forward” to other possible perceptions. The possibilities that the sense of an act leaves open about the object as intended in the act, Husserl calls the horizon of the *object* as it is intended. Husserl shows that in the perception of the physical objects, the aspect which is immediately and directly presented to consciousness, is surrounded by and given with a ground of interlocking ‘horizons’ which constitute the sense or the structure of the perceptual experience. The early analysis of the perception of an individual thing to disclose a structure is now seen as a determination of “the world”, “the world” as the horizon of conscious acts.

Thus, the general characteristics of the natural world of natural attitude are as follows:

1. The world is one continuous world.
2. The world is a fact-world.
3. The world is a world of values.
4. The world persists through the whole course of our life of natural endeavor.
5. The world is on hand.

6. The world is the surrounding world
7. The world is an inter-subjective world.
8. The world exhibits a horizon structure.

The most universal feature of the natural world and thus of the natural attitude Husserl regards as the “thesis”, “thesis of the natural attitude.” The thesis is “the world that I find to be out there, and also take it just as it gives itself to me as something that exists out there.” This is certain because all doubting and rejecting of the natural world leaves standing the *general thesis of the natural standpoint*. The thesis of the natural attitude is more fundamental than the thesis of such other standpoints, as, for example, the arithmetical standpoint. When I adopt the arithmetical standpoint, the arithmetical world is there for me. But, “*The arithmetical world is there for me only when and so long as I occupy the arithmetical standpoint.*”¹⁸ But the natural world and thereby the “natural standpoint”, is constantly there for me, whatever standpoint we occupy, arithmetical or any other. The thesis is self-evident. The thesis posits the world universally, but is not posited in any act of judgment. It is itself is not a worldly experience. It is an inborn attitude of mind which we are not normally conscious. And we shall see that the thesis remains as it is even after the phenomenological bracketing is effected.

III

What is of importance for us is that *Ideas I* is the work where the doctrine of the “general thesis” of the natural attitude was presented for the first time; it is herein too that the thesis is bracketed. According to Husserl, if the bracketing is to be really universal and not limited to particular acts

and their meant objects *qua* meant, it must apply to or embrace the whole world, the basis for all particular positings of *all* our attitudes and acts, the general thesis essential to the “natural attitude” must be “put out of action.” The universality thus claimed for bracketing necessitates an explication of the world in immediacy as given us in experience: the formulation of a “natural-world-concept.” This explication has the character of a preliminary survey of the world-structures, which taken all together, are to undergo bracketing. This explains also the puzzle as to why would Husserl so carefully build up the “thesis” if he is going to exclude all actual or possible positings of the world as existing. To effectuate the *epoché* we must begin with the existent as it is given and accessible to us. The world as it is experienced must be our starting point.

Now the question is: Why the *epoché* is introduced at all? What is the motivation behind it? Philosophy has been historically perceived as a break with natural life. For the common man such a break means some kind of abnormality or craziness. For the philosopher it signifies freedom from the unstable, superficial appearances, freedom from the naïve way of thinking. Husserl’s answer would be that he was looking for the ground of our accepting the natural attitude. For Husserl, nothing short of a philosophical grounding will suffice as the ultimate grounding of the beliefs about the natural world. This involves questioning the legitimacy of the natural attitude and its general thesis. The presuppositions of the natural attitude are to be inhibited; for the task of providing grounds cannot make use of the presuppositions of the natural attitude; that will be begging the question at issue. The presuppositions must be suspended. This suspension of the presuppositions of the natural attitude, Husserl calls *epoché*. “We put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural stand point.”¹⁹ He further says:

*We do not abandon the thesis we have adopted, we make no change in our conviction... And yet the thesis undergoes a modification – whilst remaining in itself what it is we set it as it were “out of action”, we “disconnect it”, “bracket it”. It still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connexional system ... but we make “no use” of it.*²⁰

Husserl has used a variety of words to characterize the practice of *epoché*: “bracketing”, “disconnecting”, “setting out of action”, “making no use of”, “putting out of play” our normal unquestioning faith in the reality of the world, “refraining from judgment” which posits the world as an actuality; and all this suggest most importantly, “altering the [natural] standpoint”, that is, changing the orientation. What this means is this:

The natural world *still remains “present”*, I am at the natural standpoint after as well as before, and in this respect undisturbed by the adoption of new standpoints ... [only] the natural world remains unconsidered.²¹

Husserl calls the *epoché* as “something quite unique”. It is a certain refraining from which is compatible with the unshaken and unshakable self-evidencing conviction of truth. and when the thesis is “put out of action”, “bracketed”, the judgment also passes off into the modified status of a “bracketed judgment” The *epoché* does not involve a denial of the “world” or a skeptical doubt of the world but a change of attitude or

orientation which “*completely bars me from` using any judgment that concerns spatio-temporal existence (Dasein).*”²²

Husserl compares his *epoché* with Descartes’ programme of doubt and says that the phenomenological *epoché* is not a temporary affair. It remains operative throughout the whole course of transcendental phenomenology. What, then, is the outcome of the *epoché*? The motivation behind it, as we have seen is to focus on the most fundamental evidences on which our beliefs about objects of nature are based. Setting aside his ordinary concern with the world the subject can explicitly focus on the experiences that he undergoes, which experiences purport to be of external objects and on himself as the subject or ego undergoing the experiences. If the whole world must be set in brackets as also all theories and sciences which relate to the world, does that mean that the world is lost? Maurice Natanson’s explanation of Husserl’s *epoche* will help us here. He explains it as follows:

Positively understood, *epoché* is a method the phenomenologist employs to place in relief what common-sense men take for granted: their acceptance of the world as real ...

Nothing is denied in the *epoché* and nothing is forgotten. Instead what had hitherto been simply accepted as obvious – so obvious in fact, that it went beyond the barest notice of mention – is now recognized reflectively as a performance of consciousness and subjected to analysis. While that analysis goes on, the phenomenologist remains as much in the world as he ever was,

retains all of his interest and knowledge and persists in his human concerns. The only change (and it is a crucial one, to be sure) is that he reflects selectively on what he had hitherto simply lived, though both the reflecting and the living continue, side by side in the life of consciousness.²³

Nearly the same idea is expressed somewhat sarcastically by Marvin Farber, "To take off into the "transcendental" dimension is not to escape the need for shelter, food and a place in an existing social system."²⁴

In the *Cartesian Meditations* too Husserl describes the *epoché* as an abstention from existence claims as opposed to a denial that anything exists outside the mind. Husserl takes our conception of the objective at face value but turns away from positing existence.²⁵

The question, however, remains as to how to account for the world as it naturally gives itself to us as something that exists out there? *Epoché* has denaturalized consciousness along with the world. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which seeks to work out the foundation of knowledge and experience as are directly or indirectly grounded in our belief in the real existence of the world transcends the scope of the natural attitude of mind. Yet, we cannot say that transcendental phenomenology is not concerned with the world. It is concerned with the denaturalized world. From the higher point of view of transcendental phenomenology the same content, which, as the subject matter of naturalistic thesis has received censure, is admissible for consideration,

though only under a “change of signature.” Phenomenology is opposed to the naïve transcendence of objects. But such transcendence is also to be explained and not “passed over in silence” or explained away. The world is there but stripped of its materiality, its actuality. The world is the world-as-phenomenon; it is the phenomenological world. Husserl points out that they are not two different worlds. They are the same world from different points of view. Viewed from the natural standing point, the world is the real world; viewed under the aspect of the *epoché* the world is the world-as-meaning. The “whole being of the world consists in certain meaning”. According to Husserl, all transcendence must be represented, in the phenomenological sphere by the whole nexus of corresponding meanings and positions. The pure transcendental consciousness is the giver of this meaning or sense. Husserl’s theory of meaning is neutral to existence, consciousness is meaning-giving consciousness, and consciousness generates meaning by virtue of those acts which are essentially intentional. Intentionality has its two-sidedness in the form of noesis and noema, and the intended object is the noematic unity of sense. All this assertions give a systematic exposition of the general position that the world-as-meaning derives its being from pure of transcendental consciousness. Husserl claims that the world is the totality of unities of meaning related to certain organizations of pure absolute consciousness.

Husserl also speaks of the world as correlate of consciousness and as constituted in consciousness. In what has gone before, we have seen that a thorough investigation of the concept of world in Husserl’s philosophy leads to the insight that the world is experienced exclusively as the surrounding world with the subject at its center. We have further seen that the world as collective horizon is an idea posited by the

subject's experience, specifically, perception. Since the world as such cannot be given in experience, the world, therefore, represents a kind of being which exists exclusively in relation to the subject. Husserl gives the following explication of a correlate:

A correlate as such, has its support in persons and in their experiences ... The absolute being of the latter precedes the relative being of the former the individuation of these correlates as such – of “appearances” – depends on the absolute individuation of the subject and its experiences. On the other hand, however, a subject, with its acts, is thereby directed toward correlates in its turn, indeed, toward a world of correlates, for as a person I am what I am (and each other person is what he is) as *subject of a surrounding world*. The concept of ego and surrounding worlds are related to one another inseparably.²⁶

On the basis of the above consideration we can explain Husserl's concept of the world as correlate of consciousness. Here one is faced with the same problem which Husserl raised to begin his discussion of the natural world. How can the world and the human consciousness, two radically different orders of being, be epistemically connected? An argument to this effect can be found in the *Ideas I*. The only way, Husserl answers that the way they can be connected is that in essence they possess the same kind of being. This requires an explanation. The world is not the world as it is naturally given. The world is the de-naturalized world. It is the meant world, the world intended by consciousness. It is

not the object-world but the phenomenological world. This makes the epistemological relation possible. Let us have a look at what Husserl means by the world-as-meaning.

IV

In the *Ideas I*, Husserl writes that the objects of the world are unities of meaning. The phenomenological world is the world-as-meaning or the world-as-sense. Every unity of meaning presupposes the meaning-giving act of consciousness. Husserl points out that actually the phenomenological world and the natural world are not two different worlds. They are the same world looked at from different points of view. Viewed naturally, the world is the fact-world, the existent world; viewed under the attitude of *epoché*, the world is the world as meaning. Unities of meaning presuppose a sense-giving consciousness, which on its side is absolute, not having its sense bestowed on it from another source.

Husserl's theory is that meaning or sense is neutral to existence; that consciousness is meaning-giving consciousness; that consciousness generates meaning by virtue of those acts which are essentially intentional; that intentionality essentially has its two-sidedness in the form of act and object, *noesis* and *noema*; that the intended object is the noetic unity of sense – all this gives a systematic exposition of the general position that the world-as-meant derives its being from pure or transcendental consciousness. The world as correlate of consciousness is to be understood initially in terms of Husserl's notion of intentionality, having its original formulation in the *Logical Investigations*, and, then, at a deeper level, after the initiation of 'phenomenological reduction' and

'constitutional analysis', elaborated in such works as *Ideas I* and *Cartesian Meditations*.

Here a problem arises. Husserl's claims that "the whole being of the world consists in a certain 'meaning'", that "all real unities are 'unities of meaning'", seem to create difficulty in making the distinction between sense and existence. On the one hand, the thesis of the natural standpoint posits the world, on the other, the *epoché* "completely bars us from using our judgement that concerns spatio-temporal existence." The world which is captured in the phenomenological approach is not the real world outside. It is the noematic correlate precisely as it lies immanent in experience. Husserl argues that we cannot in principle exclude the possible non-existence of the world. Husserl goes so far as to write that The whole world as it is comprehended by the knowing subject in terms of space and time, is merely an intentional being, whose being is only secondary and relative as opposed to consciousness. The world as such, the world in itself, is nothing. Every fact, he writes, is contingent; whatever we experience in sense perception exists differently from the form given in our experience. This conclusion is equally valid for the world. But when we identify the world with the noematic correlate of conscious acts, the question of its existence and non-existence does not arise. Perception, for instance, has its *noema* and at the base of this, its perceptual meaning, that is the perceived as such. The real perceived object is meaning -- "perceived as such" and existence fused to a unity with the perceived as such is only meaning.

Husserl's horizon-analysis may be seen as an exercise in meaning-analysis. We may explain it by means of a concrete example of seeing a physical individual -- Husserl's own paradigm in the discussion of

horizon in the *Cartesian Meditations*. Let us take the example of my looking at an orange tree in the garden. The colour and shape are determined and genuinely perceived from my particular perspective. It is possible that I perceive more than this. I see that it is an orange tree in full fruit and perhaps dimly perceive some of its environment - say, other orange trees around it in the orchard. From these "determinations" of the tree along with more specific visual characteristics "genuinely" perceived of its front side by implication implies further properties of the object, namely, that it is a fruit tree, not a conifer, that it has a backside containing leaves and fruits as its front side, but that it will not hold watermelon, etc. In this way, Husserl says, my act of perception "intends beyond" itself. It "points forward" to other possible perceptions. The possibilities that the sense of an act leaves open about the object as intended in the act, Husserl calls the horizon of the *object* as it is intended. Husserl shows that in the perception of physical objects, the aspect (the perceptual noema), which is immediately and directly presented to consciousness, is surrounded by and *given with* a ground of interlocking "horizons" which constitute the sense or the structure of the perceptual experience. According to Smith and McIntyre:

The internal and external horizons of the perceptual *noema* are perceived as implicated in and by the *noema* itself. It is due to this concentration on the structure (or "sense") of the perceived (figure-ground, noema-horizons) that phenomenology can escape phenomenalism from the start. The phenomenon does not block one's contact with the "thing itself. It is that which is experienced - the visual contact with the "thing

itself” - and not an intellectual or conceptual construction.²⁷

From the natural standpoint the tree exists in the transcendent reality of space and time. Let us now pass over to the phenomenological standpoint. The transcendent tree enters into “bracket” in respect of its real being.

Husserl also speaks of the “constitution” of the objectivities corresponding to intentional experiences, the objective world being constituted by its subjective “sources”. What would he mean by “constitution” and “sources”? “Constitution” is a central notion in Husserl. As early as *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl had employed the term “constitution”, with regard to the constitution of mathematical entities. In the *Logical Investigations*, “constitution” refers to the manner in which non-intentional sensations are interpreted and brought into objectifying intentions so as to produce objects of consciousness. Objects are considered not as independently given but as intentional constitutions of conscious experience. In his mature writings of a transcendental nature, *Ideas I* and *Cartesian Meditations*, “constitution” expresses the manner in which objects of consciousness come to have the kinds of “sense and being” that they do as subjectivity carries out its function of sense giving .

The term “constitution” has received different interpretations from Husserl scholars. All responsible interpreters are in agreement that constitution is an achievement of consciousness. But there seems to be no agreement on what this achievement is. According to Eugen Fink, it means, “putting together” in the sense of “constructing”, “producing”,

“making” or even “creating”. J. N Mohanty, however, does not accept the interpretation of “constitution” as creation. “Creation”, according to him, is a matter of temporal attainment through a process. True philosophical analysis is reflective. It is from this point of view that we are to consider the present question. For him, constitution in Husserl means the constitution of the sense of objects. Mohanty says as follows:

The reference to “constitution” is not to be interpreted ontologically; that is, it contains no implication of “creation”. The object is not “created” by some subjective processes, nor do certain subjective processes by working together, result in an objective formation. The idea of such “creation” does not strictly belong to the philosophical level.²⁸

According to Sokolowski “consciousness constitutes the world” means that it is *a* necessary condition for the world to become real”. “It allows (objects) to be real”.²⁹ David Carr denies that this is what Husserl means. In his interpretation, consciousness is constitutive of the world in the sense that it is responsible for the givenness of objects.³⁰

The problem of constitution of the world does not simply mean that consciousness is intentional. Intentionality of consciousness is not something that Husserl sets out to demonstrate through an argument; it is simply a descriptive finding. World-constitution is not the same as intentionality although the latter is a fundamental aspect of the former. Don Welton³¹ says that demonstrating the thesis of constitution involves showing 1) that consciousness has such a scope that its intentional

content is wide enough to be co-extensive with the world, and 2) that the transcendent reality of the world can be accounted for in terms of consciousness. The world is not just any transcendence, it is an actuality. One example of a part of Husserl's concrete demonstration is his attempt in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation to show the inter-subjective sense of the world. However, this is part of a more encompassing demonstration of his transcendental idealism.

Nevertheless, the above determination of objects in terms of correlation, horizon-structure or constitution leaves open the question that if meaning or sense is neutral to existence, how can the phenomenological world recapture the "whole being of the world?" That the distinction between sense and existence is a fundamental distinction is clear from Husserl's analysis of noesis, noema and "meaning". In the *Ideas I* Husserl introduces the distinction between noesis and noema. Noesis stands for what was called the real content in the *Logical Investigations*. Noema is the intentional content of an act. Now noesis is correlated with noema such that intentionality is seen as consisting of the noesis-noema correlation. To every real object-directed components of the act, there corresponds a different noema. What is called meaning lies at the base of the noematic correlates of an intentional experience. An intentional experience intends the object by virtue of that meaning which lies immanent in experience. Perception as an intentional experience has its noema and at the base of this its perceptual meaning, that is, the perceived as such.

When the phenomenological reduction takes place the real existence of the world outside is left out of consideration; it is not taken notice of. What remains for consideration is the world-as-meaning. What

can we then say about the real being of the world? There is substantial difference between the real world and the phenomenological world. The reality of the world strikes us with its massivity. The phenomenal world is not massive. Again, the sciences of the world are concerned with the studying the physical and chemical properties of the world. Though not the sufficient condition, the world is the necessary condition of scientific inquiry. Hence it appears counter-intuitive to say that the world is nothing but the phenomenological world. One may ask whether the description of the real world as a phenomenological world should be regarded as “nothing but” a description.

There are remarks in the *Ideas I*, Sections 40 through 42 which are set to introduce the topic of the essential differences between the concepts of “consciousness and natural reality”. These remarks lend to a realistic construal of the world. There Husserl notes that even if one regards the latter concept as the concept of something relatively subjective, as opposed to the theoretical concepts of reality offered by science, nevertheless the concept of a physical phenomenon is not subjective in the sense in which an experience is subjective. For Husserl experiences are “immanent”. At each moment there is nothing more to them than what is present to mind. Physical phenomena, on the other hand, are given perspectively and thus necessarily “transcendent”. This is because they cannot be simply identified with what is present to the mind at a particular moment. This gives the impression that even when Husserl speaks of “merely phenomenal being of the transcendent” and the “absolute being of the immanent” what Husserl means is, experience is “absolute” simply in that the appearance of an experience gives us the whole experience adequately and absolutely, whereas the appearance of a thing is always inadequate, incomplete.

We have mentioned earlier that according to Husserl the world is correlates of consciousness. What Husserl is saying is that no matter how closely related propositions about things and about consciousness are, the former are still not identical or reducible to the latter. As correlates items of the world remain distinct from consciousness and never become immanent. The point of Husserl's remark is just that for each level in the complexity of reality there is a corresponding level of experience without which that reality would not be properly assertible. In *Formal and Transcendental Logic* Husserl devises a counterfactual condition of imagining people incapable of learning the laws of physics. It does not mean that just because those people's minds impoverished physical things obeying those laws could not exist in the world.³²

Let us now turn to Husserl's talk of things as "constituted" in consciousness. Husserl takes it to mean "to manifest oneself". In a letter to William Hocking, Husserl explains that the term "konstituieren" is to be taken as meaning "to manifest oneself".³³ Things are constituted in consciousness in the sense that that is where they display their form and meaning. For each thing we know, there are, according to Husserl, certain constitutive forms. These are accessible only through experience, and as experiences become articulated we can say that things are constituted or take on meaning within it. This does not mean that the existence of things is compromised. What Husserl did believe is that things can only manifest or constitute themselves as such for a mind which is "bucket" for receiving data but has a capacity to organize and understand what is before it in terms of concepts laws and inferences from them. This is not sheerly realistic but it is contrary to think that the mind makes things.

The real world and the meant world exhibit very different essences. Husserl appears to hold that by virtue of the *epoché* the real world is transformed into the world as a system of phenomena. The meant world is the universe of phenomena that is retained through the operation of reduction. But the real world is incapable of being transformed into the world-as-phenomena. The two worlds are given differently, are known and are affected differently. Thus the one cannot be assimilated to the other. Husserl rightly pointed out that between the real world and consciousness there yawns an abyss.

V

We think that Husserl's words are not to be taken on their face value. The relation between the world and consciousness can be elucidated by a consideration of the role played by the *epoché*. The function of the *epoché* is to reveal relationships of constitution, and thus the nature of such relationships can be made clear via an examination of the *epoché* and what it reveals/leaves behind. Husserl describes his *epoché* as an abstention from existence claims³⁴, as opposed to a denial that anything exists outside the mind or a claim to the effect that transcendental ego *contains* everything. In the *epoché*, the natural (objective) attitude is not turned into an idealist attitude but is simply put "out of play"; its meaning is preserved. Instead of turning the objective onto the subjective, Husserl takes our conceptions of the objective at face value but turns away from existence to existence-sense and inquires as to how objective being with its sense of 'objectivity' or 'transcendence' is constituted, how it appears to us with the sense it has:

By *epoché*, we effect a reduction to our pure meaning (cogito) and to the meant purely as meant. The predicates *being and non-being*, and their modal variants, relate to the latter – accordingly, not to objects simpliciter but to *objective sense*.³⁵

Husserl is concerned, not with the actual existence of being but with its existence-sense: How is it that being is intelligible to us? However, it is important to note that “constitution” as “sense-giving” is very different from the sort of conceptual dependence that holds between terms such as “gold” and “having the atomic number 39”. Husserl uses the term to capture the way in which sense is conferred upon things by the ego *in and through their experiential appearing*. Experience does not simply “reveal” a world but also confers upon the world its implicit meaningfulness enabling things to appear as what they are with the sense they have. Hence, “constitution” singles out a certain *kind of experiential meaning-giving* whose comprehension requires adoption of the *epoché*, an epistemological stance that departs radically from the implicit acceptance of things that is partly constitutive of everyday experience and also of objectivist epistemologies. As Husserl remarks, Phenomenology involves “a new way of looking at things [that] contrasts at every point with the natural attitude of experience and thought.”³⁶

CHAPTER II

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, trans., J.N. Findlay, Lecture I, Sec. A. London and NY: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.
2. *Ideas I*, trans., W.R. Boyce Gibson, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969.
3. In this regard Husserl will not agree with Aristotle. According to the Aristotelian concept of philosophy, the focus of philosophy is a question of what this or that is.
4. Aron Gurwitsch, "The Problem of Constitutive Phenomenology", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. LVIII, 1961, p. 626. 1973, Sec. 10, p.54. Also see *Ideas I*, Sec. 39, pp.114-115 and Sec., 152, pp. 421-422.
5. *First Philosophy*, *Ideas I*, *op. cit.*, and *Ideas II*, trans., R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans., D. Cairns, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1969, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans., D. Cairns, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1977 and *Experience and Judgment*, trans., J.S. Churchill and K. Ameriks, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
6. *Ideas I*, Sec.27, p.101.
7. *Ibid.*, p.102.

8. *Ibid*, p. 103. In a later work of 1924, Husserl states, "The natural attitude is the form in which the total life of the humanity is realized in running its practical course." Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy, trans., Ted E. Klein and William F. Pahn, *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 5, 1974, p.20.
9. *Ibid*.
10. *Ibid*.
11. *Experience and Judgment*, *op. cit.* Sec.10, p.54, also pp. 82 off. See *Ideas I*, *op. cit.* Sec. 39, pp. 126-127 and also Sec. 152, p. 422 in which Husserl says: "Material reality as the lowest formation remains in the last resort the foundation of all other realities, ..."
12. *Ideas I*, Sec.39, p. 127.
13. *Ibid*.
14. Ludwig Landgrebe, "The World As a Phenomenological Problem", trans., Dorian Cairns, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*", Vol., I, No. I, 1940.
15. Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man" in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans., Quentin Lauer, NY: Harper and Row, 1965, p. 182.
16. *Ideas I*, Sec.27, p. 103.
17. *Ideas I*, Sec. 29, p. 105.
18. *Ibid.*, Sec. 28, p. 104.

19. *Ibid.*, Sec.32, p.110.
20. *Ibid.*, Sec.31, p.108.
21. *Ibid.*, Sec. 28, p.104.
22. *Ibid.*, Sec. 32, p. 111.
23. Maurice Natanson, *Edmund Husserl: Philosopher of Infinite Task*, Evanston:Northwestern University Press, 1972, pp.58-59.
24. Marvin Farber, *Phenomenology and Existence*, NY: Harper Torch Books, 1967, pp.1-2.
25. *Cartesian Meditations, op. cit.*, Sec.8, p.20.
26. "Common Sense in the Ideas", *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, eds., Smith and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 424. Husserl points out that the natural world is a correlate of consciousness, "We must always bear in mind that what things are...they are as things of experience". *Ideas I*, Sec. 47, p. 147.
27. Smith and McIntyre, *Husserl on Intentionality*, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231, *cf.* *Experience and Judgment*, Sec. 21C, pp. 96-98, on "open possibilities" and on the "horizon of open possibilities", sec. 67.
28. J. N. Mohanty, "Constitution and Life-World", *Social Research*, Vol. 42, 175, p. 160.
29. Robert Sokoloski, *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, pp. 136-39, 159.

30. David, Carr, *Phenomenology and the Problem of History*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974, p. 15.
31. Don Welton, *The Origin of Meaning: The Thresholds of Husserlian Phenomenology*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983, p. 11, pp. 12-13.
32. Dorian Cairns, trans., *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, op. cit, p. 165.
33. Quoted in Walter Biemel, "The Development of Husserl's Philosophy", in *The Phenomenology of Husserl*, ed., R. Elveton, Chicago: Quiderangle Books, 1970, p. 158.
34. *Cartesian Meditations*, Sec.8, p.20.
35. *Ibid.*, Sec. 2,3 p.56.
36. *Ideas I*, p.43.