CHAPTER VI

WORLD AND EPOCHÉ IN HUSSERL AND HEIDEGGER

It has often been noted that the basic difference between Husserl and Heidegger boils down to their different interpretation of the concept of "world." Desan, for example, believes that the world presented to Husserl the familiar epistemological problem of whether or not we are justified in believing in its existence. Heidegger and Sartre, on the other hand, take our being-in-the-world for granted and do not consider it worth questioning on the epistemological level. Consequently, Husserl's method of "bracketing" our belief in the existence of the world by the transcendental-phenomenological reduction should prove to be either superfluous or obnoxious to Heidegger and Sartre. It is indeed true that Heidegger never mentions this reduction (which is sometimes called the "epoché" by Husserl) and that Husserl seems to have been aggrieved by this fact. But whereas Sartre criticizes Husserl's epoché openly, matters are not so easy in the case of Heidegger. In fact, Tugendhat has recently suggested that Heidegger did not need to discuss the epoché because his own writings were done from "within" this operation, i.e. because Heidegger performed this operation before he began to write.

Tugendhat's suggestion is contrary to both Husserl's own opinion and to the opinions of most commentators. Yet I think that his contention is basically sound and in fact may even be consistent with the widely accepted view which is expressed by Desan. Both positions,

however, require some modification. I therefore propose to study Husserl's notion of "world" in more detail than is usually done and then to go on to Heidegger's notion of this same concept. In Husserl's case I will concentrate my efforts on the works of the middle period, covering mainly his *Ideas* and his lectures on *Primary Philosophy, Part II*; concerning Heidegger the discussion will be limited to his *Being and Time*.

### I. World and Experience in Husserl's *Ideas*

Husserl tries in his *Ideas* to establish phenomenology as a new science which has a definite field of its own. He claims that this new science "lies far removed from our ordinary thinking, and has not until our own day therefore shown an impulse to develop." In order to show the conceptual implications of this new science and its peculiar objects, he contrasts the "phenomenological attitude" with what he calls the "natural attitude" and the objects of phenomenology with the objects of the natural sciences. Supposedly, being in the phenomenological attitude, one gains knowledge of "phenomena" and thus attains *phenomenological knowledge*, whereas in the natural attitude one gains knowledge of "the world," thus attaining *natural knowledge*. Our problem is to determine what exactly Husserl refers to with the term "world," and also, to establish what it means to pass from trying to know the world to trying to know phenomena. However, since our primary interest lies with the development of this notion of the world, we are in an unfortunate position concerning any guidance to be derived from Husserl. He is, after all, only interested in developing this new science and hence uses the development of the natural attitude only as a springboard for this task. It was only gradually and after he had published the *Ideas* that Husserl saw more fully the obstacles which one has to overcome in the transition from the natural to the phenomenological attitude. It will be argued in this paper that the very notion of "world" proved to be the most troublesome.

The notion of "world" does not define what natural knowledge seeks

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7 *Ideas*, p. 37.