



**Ural Federal
University**

named after the first President
of Russia B.N.Yeltsin

**uAnalytiCon
2021**

THE PROBLEM OF THE WORLD: WITTGENSTEIN, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND MUNDO-SKEPTICISM

Andrei Patkul
St. Petersburg State University
E-Mail: a.patkul@spbu.ru



**St. Petersburg
University**
www.spbu.ru

THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN THE TODAY'S WORLD-CONCEPTIONS

- Analytical: Wittgenstein
- Phenomenological: Husserl, Tengelyi
 - Mundo-Skeptical: Gabriel

THE CONCEPT OF THE WORLD IN LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

1. The world is everything that is the case

1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things

1.11 The world is determined by the facts and by these being *all* the facts

1.2 For the totality (in German: Gesamtheit) of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case

1.3 The facts in logical space are the world

1.2 The world divides into facts

1.21 Any one can either be the case or not be the case, and everything else remain the same.

2. What is the case, the fact, is the existence of atomic facts

THE ESSENTIALS OF WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPTION OF THE WORLD

- The world is totality
- The concept of the world is related to the concept of fact
 - The world includes so-called *negative facts* in itself.

WITTGENSTEIN: WORLD AS TOTALITY

- **Alexander Baumgarten:** “Mundus, universum, πᾶν est series (multitudo, totum) actualiam finitorum quae non est pars alterius”(Metaphysica (1739), p. 87)
- **Christian Augustus Cruisius:** “A world means such a real connection of finite things, which is not again a part of another, to which it would belong through a real connection. ” (Entwurf der notwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten (1745), § 350, p. 657).
- **Immanuel Kant:** „... the sum total of all phenomena (the world) is the object-matter of Cosmology” (A334 / B391)

WORLD AND FACTS

- **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz:** truths of reason (necessary things) VS truths of fact (contingent things)

“Therefore one must seek the reason for the existence of the world, which is the whole assemblage of *contingent* things, and seek it in the substance which carries with it the reason for its existence, and which in consequence is *necessary* and eternal” (Theodicy. Part one. § 7).

- **Immanuel Kant:** „The whole, therefore, of substances is a whole of contingent things, and *the world consists essentially of only contingent things*“ (De mundi sensibilis. § 19)

WITTGENSTEIN'S INNOVATIONS

- OPPOSITION OF THINGS AND FACTS: 1.1 “The world is the totality of facts, not of things“
- INCLUDING OF THE NEGATIVE FACTS INTO THE WORLD: 1.2 “For the totality of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case“

TO BE COMPARED WITH KANT'S NOTION OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEAL (OMNITUDO REALITATIS) AND SCHELLING'S NOTION OF KNOWLEDGE *CUM EMPHASI*

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH



László Tengelyi (1954 – 2014)

World and Infinity (2014): Interpretations of EDMUND HUSSERL'S concepts of thing and world (Ideas II).

In his monograph, Tengelyi takes also into account the ideas both of analytical philosophies (Sellars, Kripke, Putnam, Lewis, Chisolm etc.) and post-Kantian continental philosophies (Nicolai Hartmann)

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH: THING AND WORLD

In contrast to Wittgenstein, the concept of world is defined on the basis of the concept of thing: World is the horizon of a thing (Welthorizont), more precisely, universal horizon of the experience of a thing.

Tengelyi: „We can reach the world each time only [starting] from a thing and switching from immediate environment of this thing further to the more and more distant environments“ (World and Infinity, p. 311).

„On the basis of the reflections of such a kind, the world can be interpreted as cumulative environment of a thing“ (ibid).

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH: THE CONCEPT OF THING

- A thing is not a substantial unity of properties but horizontal unity of aspects and perspectives of the givenness of this thing
- A thing is continuum of appearances in the horizon of the world

Types of Aspects:

- (1) Unexpressed aspects of a thing
- (2) Immediate environment of a thing
- (3) Correlations of the aspects of a thing
- (4) Environments of immediate environment of a thing

PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH: WORLD AS A FACT

- The world is contingent itself but its contingency is of absolute different kind. The world is a fact of transcendental consciousness. Although the non-being of the world is formally thinkable but there is no doubt that it exists
- There is non-eidetic necessity of the being of the world
- Since the transcendental consciousness is each time aware of the world, it cannot be 'modalized'. The fact of the world is the fact of the *coherence of experience*

MUNDO-SKEPTICISM



Marcus Gabriel (b. 1980) *Why the World does not Exist* (2013)
Translation in English (2015)

The concept of world means the region of all regions (including ideal entities and entities which are only in consciousness). It is bigger than universe (universum) as a common object of natural sciences.

Gabriel: “Consequently, the world would be the domain in which there exist not only all things and facts which occur without us, but also all the things and facts which occur only with us”.

MUNDO-SKEPTICISM - II

The main point Gabriel's: There is no world

- “Still, to be precise, this allinclusive being, the world, does not exist and cannot exist”.
- “For I claim not only that the world does not exist but also that everything exists except the world”.

MUNDO-SKEPTICISM

Existence = appearance in a field of sense.

Gabriel: “Existence is the circumstance that something appears in a field of sense”.

The universal field of sense (the field of all senses) is impossible

ONTOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS IN GABRIEL

- (1) *ONTOLOGY*: “By this term I understand the systematic answer to the question ‘What is existence?’ and what the term ‘existence’ means”.
- (2) “By *METAPHYSICS* I understand the systematic answer to the question ‘What is the world?’ and what the term ‘world’ means”.

GABRIEL'S QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENTS

1. Can an object exist which has all of the properties there are?
2. Are all objects differentiated from all other objects?

Gabriel: "I answer both questions with 'no.' From this I will infer that the world does not exist. For, firstly, the world would be the object which has all properties and, secondly, in it all objects would have to be differentiated from all other objects".

GABRIEL'S ARGUMENTS-II

“Objects are those things about which we can reflect with thoughts that are apt to be true”.

“By that I mean the following: a thought that is apt to be true is a thought that can be true or false. This does not apply to all thoughts”.

“An object that would have all possible properties – let us call it the SUPER-OBJECT – cannot exist, however, or stand out against the mass of other objects. The reason for this is easy to see: the superobject would have all the other objects in itself; it would encompass all other objects, and so it could not emerge out of them or stick out among them. It could also not stick out against a background, as it would have to encompass any possible background within itself”.

GABRIEL'S POSITION

There is no one and the same world as the universal field of sense but there are many worlds (fields of sense) in which objects can appear, therefore exist.

MULTIPLICITY OF THE WORLDS

CONCLUSION: PROBLEMS TO BE INVESTIGATED

- ✓ *The facticity of the world. Is the existence of the world itself (if it exist) a fact?*
- ✓ *The correlation between logical and factual dimensions of the world. Is the world the logical framework for facts as in Wittgenstein?*
- ✓ *The correlation between the world the universal field of sense and traditional notion of omnitudo realitatis. Did Gabriel extrapolate the concept of the sum of possibilities (the sum of proprieties) to the world?*
- ✓ *The necessity of the reference of the world to a (constitutive) consciousness. Does the world – for being as a world – need to be an object of consciousness? (See also the notion of correlationism in **speculative realism**).*

THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION!