

intrinsically present at hand structure of Dasein either. We can never look upon the phenomenon of world directly. It is true that even here we could extract some content from a given interpretation of the phenomenon of world without reference to its indicative character, and set it out in an objective definition which could then be passed on. But this would deprive the interpretation of all its reliable power, since whoever seeks to understand would not then be heeding the directive that lies in every philosophical concept.

**b) The second misinterpretation: the false interconnection of philosophical concepts, and their isolation from one another.**

On account of this failure, philosophical speculation proceeded to establish—and this is the *second aspect of misinterpretation*—a *false interconnection between philosophical concepts*. We all know that since Kant laid the foundations for metaphysics the tendency toward *system* has made itself felt within Western philosophy to a previously unheard of degree. This is a remarkable phenomenon, the reasons for which have still not been explained. It has to do with the fact that the conceptuality of philosophy, considered in accordance with its inner essence, reveals a tendency to refer one concept to another, and this suggests that we should look for an immanent interconnection between the concepts themselves. But since all formally indicative concepts and contexts of interpretation address whoever is trying to understand with respect to his or her Dasein, a properly *unique* interconnection of these concepts is also given at the same time. This interconnection does not consist in the relations that can be obtained by dialectically playing off such concepts against one another without reference to their indicative character or by thinking up something like a system of Dasein, for example. On the contrary, *the one and only originary interconnection of concepts* is already *established through Dasein itself*. The vitality of this interconnection depends upon the extent to which Dasein in each case comes to itself (and this is not the same as the degree of subjective reflection involved). The interconnection is intrinsically historical and is concealed within the history of Dasein. Consequently there is no system of Dasein for the metaphysical interpretation of Dasein. Rather the intrinsic conceptual interconnection is that of the history of Dasein itself, something which, as history, transforms itself. This is why formally indicative concepts and especially fundamental concepts can in an exemplary sense *never* be taken *in isolation*. The historicity of Dasein refuses, even more than any system does, any isolation or isolated consideration of individual concepts. This temptation also lies within ordinary understanding, where it is coupled in a peculiar fashion with the tendency to take everything encountered as something present at hand. We shall give an example of this as well, though not, let it be

understood, in order to illustrate the failure of ordinary understanding, but rather to sharpen our attention to the difficulty and the inner requirements of a correct understanding.

I shall merely propose the example in a rough and ready way here. Amongst other things Dasein means: comporting oneself in being toward beings as such, and indeed doing so in such a way that this comportment also constitutes Dasein's *being a being* [*das Seiend-sein des Daseins*], and such being we designate as *existence*. What Dasein is consists in *how* it is, namely in how it exists. The what-being of Dasein, its essence, lies in its existence (*Being and Time*, p. 42). All human comportment toward beings as such is only intrinsically possible if such comportment is capable of understanding what is *not* as such. What is not and nothingness can only be understood if Dasein in understanding holds itself from the outset and fundamentally toward the *nothing*, is held out into the nothing. The task is to understand the innermost power of the nothing, precisely in order to let beings be as beings, in order to have and to be beings in all their powerfulness as beings. Now if ordinary understanding encounters this clarification of the fundamental relations of Dasein and its existence, and hears talk of the nothing and the fact that Dasein is supposedly held out into this nothing, then it hears only the nothing—which is somehow present at hand—and it also knows Dasein only as something present at hand. Thus it concludes that man is present at hand in the nothing, properly speaking he has nothing and consequently is himself nothing. Any philosophy which asserts such a thing is pure nihilism and the enemy of all culture. And this is all perfectly correct if we understand things the way in which they appear in the newspaper. For here the nothing is *isolated* and Dasein is placed into the nothing as something present at hand, instead of seeing that being held into the nothing is not some present at hand property of Dasein as compared with something else equally present at hand, but is rather a fundamental way in which Da-sein as such brings forth its ability to be. The nothing is not an empty nothingness that allows nothing to be present at hand, but is that power which constantly thrusts us back, which alone thrusts us into being and lets us assume power over our Dasein.

Now if intelligent and even inwardly gifted individuals inevitably fall victim to such an interpretation, utterly reversing its true meaning, this only shows once again that the most sharp-sighted conception, and even the most penetrating presentation of the problem, remains ineffectual until and unless a transformation of Dasein occurs; and this not through the apron strings of instruction, but from out of a free ability to hearken to things. But this is also to say that in this misunderstanding on the part of ordinary understanding we are not remotely concerned with the situation of opponents or reviewers of my work, but rather with a situation that each of us must constantly

combat for ourselves—and indeed even more seriously in the case of so-called followers than in that of so-called opponents, which is why the philosopher must treat both as equally important, i.e., as equally unimportant, if he or she understands the task at hand. True understanding never proves its mettle in repeating something after someone, but only in its power to lead understanding into genuine action, into objective achievement, which by no means primarily consists in the production of more philosophical literature. Thus this argument and our reference to the types of ordinary understanding can only help us if we grasp that this ordinary understanding is not peculiar to those who are too stupid or who are not fortunate enough to have heard things more clearly. Rather we all find ourselves afflicted in this way in varying degrees in each case.

If accordingly we now attempt a thematic exposition of the problem of world, we must take care not only to *avoid* understanding *world* as something *present at hand*, but also to *avoid isolating* the phenomenon of world. Consequently we must aim, in accordance with our theme, to let *the intrinsic relationships between world, individuation, and finitude* emerge together. In addition, however, we must not shirk the difficulty of leading ourselves into the problem through a genuine exposition and explication of it. We must renounce the apparently convenient but actually impossible path of providing a direct account of the essence of world, because we can know nothing about world, nor indeed about individuation or finitude, in this direct way.

Let us briefly summarize once again our methodological reflections in retrospect. We undertook a general excursus concerning philosophical concepts themselves, and the way in which they signify meaning: the fact that they do not directly intend what they mean as something present at hand, but that their meaning-function has the character of formal indication. The one who attempts to understand is thereby already challenged to comprehend that which is to be understood in their own *Dasein*, which does not imply that every philosophical concept is one that can be related to *Dasein*. We then elucidated the misinterpretations to which philosophical concepts as such are subject, using various examples: the concepts of death, freedom, and the nothing. We came to recognize two fundamental forms of misinterpretation which the conceptions of ordinary understanding tend to adopt, namely [1.] to take what is meant as something present at hand; [2.] to take what is meant as something isolated in each case. Just as death, freedom, and the nothing must be understood in their specifically philosophical sense, so too with the concept of world. And precisely before we begin the exposition of this concept it is particularly important to be clear about such misinterpretation, because this term in particular tends to encourage us to grasp its meaning as something present at hand, to grasp the world as an aggregate.

§71. *The task of returning to the originary dimension of the 'as', taking an interpretation of the structure of the propositional statement as our point of departure.*

We said that *world* means the *manifestness of beings as such as a whole*. Our explication of the problem began with the 'as'. We found that it is a structural moment of the statement, or more precisely that it expresses something which is always already understood in every propositional statement. But it thereby already becomes questionable whether the 'as' belongs primarily to the statement and its structure or is not rather presupposed by the propositional structure. Consequently it is necessary to ask positively about the *dimension* in which this 'as' originally moves and within which it arises. But the *return into this origin* must thereby open up for us the whole context within which whatever we mean by the manifestness of beings and the 'as a whole' essentially prevails. Yet in order genuinely to accomplish this return to the origin of the 'as', we must be much more circumspect within the approach we have adopted, i.e., we must ask about the direction in which the propositional structure as such points us back.

There are various possible paths we can take in this interpretation of the propositional statement. Here I shall choose one that will simultaneously lead us toward a phenomenon which, however obscurely, has always already stood at the centre of our questioning: the 'as a whole'. The statement 'a is b' would not be possible with respect to what it means and the way in which it means what it does if it could not emerge from an *underlying experiencing of 'a as b'*. If accordingly the 'as' is not specifically expressed in the linguistic form of the statement, that does not prove that it does not already underlie the accomplishment of understanding the statement. Why must the 'as' underlie the statement and how does it do so? What is a *statement* in general? We talk about sentences and statements in various senses. We are familiar on the one hand with statements of wish, with interrogative statements, with imperative statements, with propositional statements. But we are also familiar with statements of principle, statements of inference, statements of instruction, and auxiliary statements. In both groups the term 'statement' means something different. In the first case we mean particular forms of linguistic expression, which we can also articulate and distinguish through particular signs (the question mark, the exclamation mark, the full stop), but above all through a particular rhythm or tone. In the first group we mean units of linguistic expression, by means of which a particular comportment of human beings is expressed in each case—wishing, questioning, commanding, requesting, discovering, ascertaining. In the second case on the other hand we do not mean the sort of statement which serves to express various kinds of human comportment, but rather statements in which something is established about something