

C H A P T E R - I I

'MAN' IN HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY

What does it mean to say that Dasein is essentially related to the world ? For Heidegger this is not a world to which we are cognitively related, a world which we know. This in fact is the way in which the relation between man and the world has been conceived by most modern philosophers. This again is the reason why one could doubt like Descartes the world or could bracket it like Husserl. Heidegger holds that man's first encounter with the world does not take place through a cognitive relation. According to Heidegger, our primitive view of the world is not an experience of entities which can be bracketed. Heidegger accuses Husserl of making his philosophy based on presuppositions, although ostensibly he proposes to build up a presupposition-less philosophy. Husserl's presupposition is that the world can be bracketed and set aside from human reality because our view of the world is the product of philosophical imposition.

It is true that the distinction between the subject and the object which is a grammatical one may not be ontologically neutral. Heidegger is not willing to put much importance to this grammatical distinction. Why should we suppose, he

asks, that the necessity of referring to a subject and an object must be conceded ? Is it only because there is a grammatical dictation ? In brief, there is not grammatical or non-grammatical need to emphasize the distinction between the subject and the object. Consequently he believes that man (and not the subject) finds himself in a world. This finding is made possible through his dealing with the entities of the world. This dealing, Heidegger says, " is not a perceptual phenomenon, but the kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use ". This is also a kind of knowledge though not a " knowing that ". Man's encounter with the world is a creative encounter as Heidegger says, Dasein " worlds ". This sort of knowing which is virtually a kind of creativity, means " having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something,..... undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining." The terms used in this description of Dasein's knowledge clearly indicate that there is no passivity, no simple receptivity which

Dasein displays in its knowledge. Here we hear from Heidegger that knowledge of Dasein ensues in use, in interrogation and even in determining.

The above remark of Heidegger speaks of different forms of our practical attitude. Heidegger describes this practical attitude as "concern". Through concern we create our world. The world which we so create is not a world of thing but an altogether different world characteristically described by Heidegger as "a world of equipment". This again is not a world which is made out of the world of things. Heidegger's thesis is that the concept of equipment is more fundamental than the concept of thing or entity.

The concept of man in Heidegger's philosophy is concentrated in the notion of Dasein which is translated into english as Being-in- the world . Although this concept gives us the notion of human reality yet the proper picture of man is available in the sort of self-investigation which appears in the question : " what is it for me to exist ? ". In Kierkegaard's philosophy no ostensive attempt is made to distinguish man from non-human reality although we understand that it is not possible for a non-human entity to make a choice in favour of any one of the stages on life's way. Heidegger, on the other hand, believes that Being pervades not only the human reality but also the non-human world. But he holds that there is a fundamental relationship between man and Being because it is only man who is in a position to raise question about Being.

So, if we go through the first few pages of Heidegger's Being and Time we find that the concept of man presented by him is the conception of a reality which is " ontically " distinct in that it is ontological.

Heidegger, as we know, draws a distinction between ontic and ontological existence. To be in space and time is to have existence of a certain kind which finds expression in the term ontological. So, Heidegger does not concede existence only to man ; nevertheless the special sort of existence which is expressed in the term " ontological" has been conceded only to man - the chief reason being that man is essentially concerned with the question about his own existence.

But it is not a question which may be so important as manifesting the nature of human reality. Where am I to find out the answer ? If we go through Heidegger's philosophy, we find that Heidegger describes Dasein as inseparably connected with a world. As Heidegger would say that phenomenologically it is true that my most primitive experience is the experience of myself as connected with a surrounding. Man and the world in Heidegger's philosophy, constitutes a unity so much so that a separation would destroy the very nature of man.

It is from this point that we can try to find out the peculiarity of man as suggested by Heidegger's philosophy. There are reasons why Heidegger does not accept the

method of Husserl's phenomenology. The world cannot be bracketed and left outside the human reality. Like Descartes again the human self cannot be isolated from the world. Heidegger prefers to cancel the method of bracketing or epoche because it goes against a truth which we get phenomenologically, namely, man and the world constitutes a single unity.

But how is it possible to prove that the subject and the object are inseparably connected ? It may be a truth which, as Heidegger claims, is phenomenologically given. Yet it goes against our ordinary thinking. The world, which we perceive cannot enter into the very constitution of the human reality.

What is an equipment ? Heidegger distinguishes an equipment from a thing. In his thought the world is not a totality of things or entities as a realist would believe, nor again is it totality of facts as Wittgenstein would believe. By the term " thing " or " entity " we understand something that has independent or trans-subjective existence. Naturally, man stands outside such a world of things or objects. Actually, the notion of subjectivity is related to

the notion of an object. A subject is that which stands against an object. Since in Heidegger's philosophy, there is no thing or object-world for Dasein, the Dasein is not a subject.

Heidegger's man is a Being which of course is in possession of consciousness but is not for that reason a cognising subject. Heidegger, as has been said by some commentators, undercuts the distinction between subject and the object. This is so because the world of Dasein is a world of equipment. Heidegger and his commentators have to bring out the distinction between a thing and equipment. A thing is an object of perception, an equipment is not. It is only through the projection of his plans that a world is created by the individual.

This is illustrated in the remark of Heidegger that the world is an essential characteristic or structure of Dasein. He further tells us that the world is constituted by Dasein and Dasein is constituted by the world. How is this constitution possible unless there is a sense in which the two are mutually creative ?

Heidegger says that the notion of thinghood is a derivative concept and the concept of equipment is more primary. Let us look at the relation between thing and equipment. Equipment is not to be categorised in which we can categorise a thing. We cannot say that like a thing an equipment exists in space or in time or can enter into casual relationship with other things. An equipment is not an object of observation as a thing is. It is not something that we can notice. In simple terms an equipment is not a material.

A tool or an equipment is something that has use in a project. Naturally, outside the context of a project there is no equipment. Out of this context, it is a thing. An equipment is context-dependent. But a thing is independent of context. Heidegger therefore says that " taken strictly , there is no such thing as an equipment ". An equipment does not have the kind of existence that a thing has. It gets its being in a context.

Solomon expresses this idea in an excellent way, " Our concern for equipment is inseparably tied to a total context of task-to-be-done here. We do not notice individual things, therefore, but only the entire context." For the writer the table, the chair, the pen, the paper and the typewriter, for example, constitute a total equipment context within, which individual equipments find place.

The creation of the world of equipment by Dasein may be understood after the concept of intentionality as we find in Husserl's phenomenology. The subject performs many intentional acts towards objects. But the intentional acts of knowing or believing, judging etc. are theoretical acts while the concept of concern is a practical concept. In other words, we can say that " concern" may be understood as practical intentional acts. As Solomon says, " Care is intentionality, but with a new emphasis on the more practical and non cognitive acts which were neglected by Husserl". Dasein is not consciousness, at least not defined in terms of consciousness. Consequently intentionality of Dasein is not be defined as a kind of directedness towards objects. Heidegger speaks of intentionality

of a practical kind which puts meaning in a world thereby also creating it for itself. Dasein therefore, is not, again, a cognitive subject. It is here that we find an echo of Kierkegaard.

So, Dasein's relation to the world is a practical relation. The object of such world are equipments, not things. But why this care and concern ? Why should Dasein have this practical relationship to world ? Why should it create a tool-world of his own ? The answer to these questions will be found in Heidegger's idea of " search for self-identity" or simply self- recognition. What is self-recognition in Heidegger's philosophy ? It is to be found out in the answer to the question - what is it for me to exist ? It is to find out this nature of one's own existence. What is this recognition of self identity ? It is the awareness of one's authenticity as all existentialists would say. The authentic Dasein raises the question—what is Being ? and finds an answer in three main existential structures which are called by Heidegger " existence ", " facticity " and " fallenness". What Heidegger calls "care"

is actually the unity of these structures. This is clear further in the way in which "care" is defined by Heidegger. Care is "ahead-of-itself already being in the world as being near-to (being encountered) within the world." These three phrases represent existence, facticity and fallenness respectively.

We shall try to understand the phrases. Heidegger explains "existence" as the projection of possibility. This shows that the concept of possibility is of prime importance for Heidegger, so much so that existence for him "is" possibility. It is not the case that Dasein first exists and displays its possibilities. The truth is that apart from possibility we cannot conceive of existence. Thus Heidegger conceives of Dasein as the centre of possibility. Man's existence can be conceived only through this possibility. The term "possibility" indicates that Dasein has freedom, because possibility is not necessity and therefore there is no constraint in it. Consequently we can discover Dasein's freedom when we consider it as the centre of

possibility. This possibility, Heidegger says, is with every Dasein, but it is not the case that everyone has a tendency to realise it in all its fullness. Since Heidegger believes that in some men this possibility is projected as realised, in others it is not, we are sure that Heidegger believes that man is free.

Now, what is the nature of this possibility? If Dasein is possibility then it must be possibility of something or other. In Kierkegaard the concept of possibility is rather clear because he holds that an individual is the possibility of realising his authenticity by elevating himself on the religious level of existence.

The notion of possibility can be understood in two ways. In the first place, Heidegger holds that here we are talking of the possibility in Dasein of authenticity and inauthenticity. A man must be either authentic or inauthentic. One must choose whether he is to be authentic or inauthentic. The first level of freedom of Dasein is that it makes a free choice in favour of anyone of the two alternatives.

In the second place, how does a man realise his authenticity ? If we believe with Heidegger that a man has the possibility of realising his authentic being or ontological being, the question is, how does he realise this possibility. Heidegger speaks of the "projection" of possibility. What are the possibilities that Dasein projects ? The answer is contained in the idea that Dasein differs from every other form of Being in that the former has his projects, aims and values. Since "there is no human nature", there are no projects and values that may be supposed to be constant properties of man. In his own projects and goals and values a man is unique or authentic. Through this projection of possibility man endows meaning to his world. Every man is seeking his own identity. But some find it in inauthenticity. This man does not have his own project and value. But Dasein does not have any fixed possibility. Perhaps the notion of possibility loses much of its meaning if we impose fixity on it. The value, aims and projects of every Dasein is unique. And once that is projected Dasein encounters its authentic existence.

Heidegger, therefore, defines Dasein as possibility. Now this concept is bound up with the concept of facticity. Dasein projects its possibilities in a world thereby giving meaning to it. Facticity is a term which means, that Dasein exists in a particular world. Heidegger says, " the concept of facticity implies that an entity within the world has Being-in- the World in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its destiny with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world " .

My association with the world is not like the association of the table with the room. I give sense to what is about me by making use of it. So, there is a sense in which I construct my world. This is what Heidegger understands by authenticity. The tree or the table exists in the world in the sense that it is placed in the midst of the world. But as Heidegger says : " The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist " . The point of Heidegger is that man is not literally "in" the world. His Being-in-the world is merely

a presence to the world. By projecting his unique possibilities Dasein creates a world of his own by ascribing unique meanings to it. He is authentic when he recognises the radical duality between the human and the non-human, between being-in-the world and being-in-the -midst -of -the world. Blackham presents an excellent synopsis of the whole idea in the following lines-

" Dasein then, being possibility, exists by projecting itself and these tentative projects are interpretations, not conceptual but existential . My comprehension of the world springs together with my sense of being cast into the world from a common root in the basic human situation, for I recognise what I exist for in my possibilities and what the things about me exist for in their answering to my possibilities. The meaning of human existence is elaborated in the possibilities of action of Dasein. I give sense to what is about me by making use of it ."