

I. Martin Heidegger's (1889-1976) Hermeneutical Phenomenology before and After the Turn and its Relevance to Classical and Post-Classical Islamic Philosophy

Prelude:

This short study briefly introduces Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology with its roots in Kant's transcendental philosophy, Husserl's phenomenology and theory of the lifeworld (*lebenswelt*) and Dilthey's hermeneutical approach to the human sciences and the poetic nature of human dwelling in the historical world. It briefly explores the relevance of Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology to scholars of Islamic philosophy.

The first part highlights the roots of Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology and in the thought of Kant, Husserl and Heidegger—focusing mostly on Heidegger's seminal work *Being and Time*. The discussion in this part will primarily focus on Heidegger's justification of the primordial meaning of being based on his project of de-structuring of the history of Western metaphysics, Heidegger's analysis of the structure being-in-the-world, Heidegger's argument for the analysis of the being of Dasein (the being concerned in its being with the question of being) in terms of its finitude, and the finite structures of understanding and affectivity.

The second part succinctly discusses the relevance of Heidegger's project to classical and post-classical Islamic philosophy.

Part I: *Being and Time: The Unfulfilled Quest for the Meaning Being*

1. Introductory synoptic remark:

Heidegger was inspired by Husserl's interest in examining the foundation of meaningfulness by suspending the subject-object dichotomy at the heart of modern epistemology since its inception in the 17th century, and returning to the lifeworld (*lebenswelt*).¹ Both Husserl—especially in his later writings—and Heidegger shared an interest in Kant's concept of the transcendental conditions. Heidegger criticizes Kant in the 'Introduction' to *Being and Time* and other works for reducing fundamental ontology to the ontology of epistemic subjects, focusing on defining the transcendental as the conditions of constructing knowledge by rational subjects of phenomena in space and time. Both Husserl and Heidegger were concerned about how meaning (*Bedeutung*) is primordially fulfilled in the lifeworld/the every-day experience apart from the concerns of material knowledge and without assuming that the subject-object relationship is the foundation of meaning construction. Husserl investigated the origins of meaning through his study of the noetic and noematic components of consciousness. By contrast, Heidegger investigated the way meaning hermeneutically unfolds in the existential structure of the being of which is always concerned about the meaning of its being,

¹ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences* (trans. David Carr; Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1978), §§8-45.

namely, the human-being. Hence, Heidegger was interested in defining the transcendental conditions as the existential and existentiell conditions of being-in-the-world (*sein-in-der-welt*), which is his reformulation of Husserl's concept of the lifeworld as scholars, such as Steven Crowell, have pointed out.² Following Dilthey's thesis that the human being in the historical world poetically constructs meaning through the interpretation,³ Heidegger was interested in the way these existential and existentiell structures manifested interpretative/hermeneutical characteristics, and how these hermeneutical characteristics, as much as they are conditioned by tradition and environment, define historical occurrence (*geschehen*). This is briefly how these three thinkers had formative influence on Heidegger's quest for understanding the meaning being by understanding the being of Dasein (the human being which is the being whose being is defined by its concern for the meaning of its own being).

2. Summary of the Argument and the Impasses of Being and Time

2.1 Formulating the Problem: The Introduction of *Being and Time*

Heidegger argues that the question of being has been forgotten, or trivialized, though it has guided philosophical inquiry from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel. There are three reasons why the question of being is considered immaterial: 1) "Being" is treated as the most universal (and therefore the emptiest) concept, 2) "Being" is said to be indefinable, 3) "Being" is said to be self-evident.⁴ Heidegger objects to all three of these reasons for denigrating the question of being. In response to 1), he insists the universality of being is not the universality of the highest genus. In response to 2), he says the inability to define Being as a being does not mean that Being is not a problem. In response to 3), he argues that it must be explained how Being can be said to be self-evident. Indeed, the self-evidence of being is nothing short of an "enigma." To assert that something is self-evident, and not explain how or why, is a "dubious procedure."⁵

Heidegger then argues that, if the question of the meaning of being is a question, then it is a "seeking." "Every seeking takes its direction beforehand from what is sought."⁶ So, there is a pre-thematic awareness of what it is that we are seeking. We are already familiar with the object of our inquiry, though only vaguely and implicitly. Heidegger says "This average and vague understanding of being is a fact." "Formulating" the question means taking that "prior guidance," the "fact" of our prior understanding of being, which is "already available to us in a certain way," and making it explicit (as a problem, as a question). This differs from "telling a story" about the origin of beings, or offering a causal account of their derivation. "Insofar as being constitutes what is asked about, and insofar as being means the being of beings, beings themselves turn out to be

² Stephen Crowell. *Husserl, Heidegger and the Space of Meaning: Paths Towards Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

³ Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* (trans. Rudolf Makkreel & Frithjof Rodi; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002),

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans. Joan Stambaugh; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 3-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

what is interrogated in the question of being. Beings are, so to speak, interrogated with regard to their being.” So, the question of the meaning of being can be formulated as the question of the being of beings. The being of beings is (already) known in three ways. 1) it is found in “thatness and whatness, reality, the objective presence of things,” 2) it is known through subsistence, validity, existence, and 3) it is understood in the “there is.” The question of the following inquiry will be how these “understandings” of being are constituted. Ultimately, this requires that we “make a being—one who questions—transparent in its being. Asking this question, as a mode of being of a being, is itself essentially determined by what is asked about in it—being.” The Hermeneutic circle: “To have to determine beings in their being beforehand and then on this foundation first pose the question of being.” In this “circle,” being is not presupposed as a concept. Thus, the interpretation of the Being of beings is not a formal fallacy. Instead, “this guiding look at being grows out of the average understanding of being in which we are always already involved and which ultimately belongs to the essential constitution of Dasein itself.” Inasmuch as this pre-thematic awareness of being, understanding of being, and concern for being is constitutive of Dasein, Dasein has “a particular priority with respect to being.” Thus, Dasein is “the exemplary being that is to function as what is primarily interrogated as pre-given.”⁷

Heidegger is interested in “an *a priori* condition of the possibility not only of the sciences which investigate beings of such and such a type—and are thereby already involved in an understanding of being—but it aims also at the condition of the possibility of the ontologies which precede the ontic sciences and found them.”⁸ Here, Heidegger draws the difference between the “ontological” and the “ontic.” The ontic is “regional,” inasmuch as it deals with particular types of beings, which may be organized in different specific and general classes. The ontological is concerned with being in general (although in a different way than ontic generalities). “All ontology, no matter how rich and tightly knit a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains fundamentally blind and perverts its innermost intent if it has not previously clarified the meaning of being sufficiently and grasped this clarification as its fundamental task.”⁹ Heidegger adds that “Dasein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather, it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being, this being is concerned about its very being. Thus, it is constitutive of the being of Dasein to have, in its very being, a relation of being to this being. And this in turn means that Dasein understands itself in its being in some way and with some explicitness. It is proper to this being that it be disclosed to itself with and through its being. Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Dasein. The ontic distinction of Dasein lies in the fact that it is ontological.”¹⁰ Glossing this quote: 1) Dasein is a being. 2) Dasein is a being which understands Being to some extent, and for whom Being is an issue. 3) Dasein is a being for whom ontic questioning is insufficient. 4) Therefore, Dasein’s questioning of its being extends from the ontic to the ontological. 5) The ontic priority of ontology is the result of Dasein’s ontological

⁷ Ibid., p. 4-8.

⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

concerns.¹¹

Dasein's ontological concerns are the result of the fact that Dasein "always understands itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself." This existence (and identity) is not simply a "what," or a kind of "material content." Rather, it is a matter of relation, and, more specifically, relation to what is Dasein's "own." The kind of inquiry which extends from ontic questioning to ontological questioning is called "fundamental ontology." Fundamental ontology is the "existential analysis of Dasein. There are two priorities to this analysis, two reasons why Dasein should be the subject of fundamental ontological analysis: 1) Dasein is the being "defined in its being by existence" (the ontic priority), 2) Dasein is the being which "on the basis of its determination as existence, Dasein is in itself ontological" (the ontological priority). With respect to the following analysis, the "ontic" priority has priority. That is, it comes first. So, we begin with an analysis of how Dasein is "defined in its being by existence," and why it should be concerned with its Being. The priority of the "ontic" priority of ontology is called "existentiell" analysis. Ontological questions are raised by existentiell analysis, so, really, the analysis is ontic-ontological, and extends into the "existential." Dasein has ontic-ontological priority with respect to fundamental ontological inquiry (which is existentiell-existential).¹²

The ontic, ontic-ontological, existentiell-existential analyses of Dasein allows us to formulate the question of being. Dasein is structurally central to this analysis, but that does not mean that Dasein's self-understanding is actually "ontological." Dasein generally understands itself ontically, in relation to the world, which is "that being to which it is essentially, continually, and most closely related." This means that "Dasein is ontically nearest to itself, ontologically farthest away; but pre-ontologically certainly not foreign to itself." The following analysis must pass from a "pre-ontological," ontic understanding of being to an ontological understanding. This passage will constitute Dasein's self-knowledge or return to itself. "The manner of access and interpretation must instead be chosen in such a way that this being can show itself to itself in its own terms."¹³

Dasein is not the only being "in time." In fact, temporality "is at the same time the condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of being of Dasein itself, regardless of whether and how its being is in time..." The point is that there is a more general determination of Dasein than Dasein's "being in time," or temporality. Historicity is the ground for the general determination of what or which time Dasein is in. Historicity therefore determines the "occurrence" of Dasein. It is the "constitution of being of the occurrence of Dasein as such." Historicity colors the ways in which Dasein understands itself and understands Being. As an example, Heidegger discusses the ways that history and tradition both reveal and conceal the meaning of Being for Dasein, through the ways they determined Dasein's self-understanding. If Dasein understands itself historically (that is, on the basis of historicism), it may not appreciate the historicity which founds or

¹¹ Ibid., p. 12-3.

¹² Ibid., p. 13-5.

¹³ Ibid., p. 16.

explains historicism. Likewise, if it understands itself as the bearer of a tradition, it may not understand what it means to “transmit” that tradition through time, or how it is itself determined by its historicity. It therefore “uproots” Dasein from its historicity. Tradition and history are the results of Dasein’s “inclination to be entangled in the world in which it is and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light.” The history of metaphysics (which is both a tradition and subject to historical scrutiny) bears out this entanglement in the world, and the confusions of the meaning of being that it entails. This entanglement is “structured” in a certain way by its historicity. Fundamental ontology is charged with the task of “de-structuring” the “traditional content of ancient ontology which is to be carried out along the guidelines of the question of being.” It is curious that Heidegger singles out ancient ontology here, when, in the previous paragraph, he discusses ancient, medieval, and modern approaches to the question of being.” The “de-structuring” of the history of metaphysics is an attempt to “stake out the positive possibilities of the tradition, and that always means to fix its boundaries.” Its concern is primarily with contemporary problems, “today,” rather than with attaining the definitive truth of historical moments past. Still, the de-structuring “does not wish to bury the past in nullity.”

Kant fails to understand temporality because of “the lack of a preliminary ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject.”¹⁴ Kant’s failure to present an “ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject” is the result of his having adopted Descartes’ ontological position. Basically, Descartes thinks of the subjectivity of the subject as *res cogitans*. The *res cogitans* is an *ens*, and the meanings of *res* and *ens* are derived from medieval philosophy. Medieval philosophy derives its concepts of *res* and *ens* from ancient philosophy. So, “the de-structuring sees itself assigned to the task of interpreting the foundation of ancient ontology in light of the problem of temporality. Here, it becomes evident that the ancient interpretation of the being of beings is oriented toward the world and nature in the broadest sense and that it indeed gains its understanding of being from time. The outward evident of this—but of course only outward—is the determination of the meaning of being as *ousia*, which ontologically and temporally means presence. Beings are grasped in their being as presence, that is to say, they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time, the present.” Ancient ontology is more or less naive with respect to its temporal determination of being (as presence): “this Greek interpretation of being comes about without any explicit knowledge of the guideline functioning in it, without taking cognizance of, or understanding, the fundamental ontological function of time, without insight into the ground of the possibility of this function.” Consequently, ancient ontology conceives of being as determined by language (dialectic). Heidegger says this is “a genuine philosophical embarrassment” in Plato, and becomes even more problematic in Aristotle, who identifies *ousia* with *legein* (which is, itself, identified with *noein*), forgetting that it was ever a problem to identify language and being. Basically, Heidegger thinks that because all ontology after Aristotle shows, at some implicit level, the mark of the identification of being and presence, it remains “Greek” inasmuch as it has not been able to make this link explicit. One way of approaching the question “what does being mean?” is through the de-structuring of the history of metaphysics.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 18-22.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22-7.

Heidegger argues that “the task of ontology is to set in relief the being of beings and to explicate being itself...Such a discipline can be developed only from the objective necessity of particular questions and procedures demanded by the things themselves.” It is not the “what” of the objects that determines how they are to be approached, but, precisely, the “how”; how one approaches objects in general. Thus, “the more genuinely effective a concept of method is and the more comprehensively it determines the fundamental conduct of a science, the more originally is it rooted in confrontation with the things themselves and the farther away it moves from what we call a technical device—of which there are many in the theoretical disciplines.” Phenomenology is the most vital and most comprehensive “concept of method” because its maxim is “to the things themselves. There are two components to (concepts belonging to) phenomenology: 1) *phenomenon*, and 2) *logos*.¹⁶

A phenomenon is what “shows itself.” Phenomenon means “what shows itself, the self-showing, the manifest” in Greek. It derives from a “middle voice” construction of the word meaning “to bring into daylight” and “to place in brightness.” Thus, “the meaning of the expression phenomenon is established as what shows itself in itself, what is manifest. The phenomena are thus the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light.” Only because something shows itself can it show itself as something that it is not. This is the meaning of the distinction between being and seeming. Thus, phenomena can be said to “be” originally, and to “seem” derivatively (as a “privative modification”). Every phenomenon is the showing of something (an appearance). Every appearance shows itself “as” something, either “as” it is (being), or in a way in which it “is” not (seeming, “merely” appearing). “Appearing is possible only on the basis of a self-showing of something... Appearing is a making itself known through something that shows itself.” So, the concept of the phenomenon is presupposed whenever something appears. Heidegger has presented merely the “formal” (common) concept of phenomenon.¹⁷

The “concept of logos” deals with the possibility of “a science of” phenomena. We must refrain from identifying logos with speech. What is important in speech is not language itself, but what is made manifest in speech. That is, what is important is not speech itself, not the logos itself, but the things themselves, which we talk about when we speak. Talking “about” things makes them “manifest,” “appear,” etc. “Logos lets something be seen, namely what is being talked about, and indeed for the speaker (who serves as a medium) or for those who speak with each other. Speech ‘lets us see’ from itself, what is being talked about in speech, insofar as it is genuine, what is said should be derived from what is being talked about.” The concern for “genuineness” here is a concern with truth versus falsity. The logos of truth lets things appear as they are. It brings them out of concealment. So, truth is originally, for the Greeks, *aletheia* (un-concealing, un-forgetting). “The being true of logos as *aleteuein* means: to take beings that are being talked about in *legein* as *apophainesthai* out of their concealment; to let them be seen as something unconcealed (*alethes*); to discover them” “Similarly, being

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 27-8.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 29-31.

false, *pseudesthai*, is tantamount to deceiving in the sense of covering up; putting something in front of something else (by way of letting it be seen), and thereby passing it off as something it is not.” Corruption of truth as *aletheia* into *aisthesis*, *idia*, and *noein*. Falsehood is as important to the conception of the phenomenon (as appearance) as truth. Some sort of falsehood is often involved in seeing something “as” something. In this case, what appears merely indicates what is actually present.¹⁸

Phenomenology “neither designates the object of its research nor is it a title that describes their content. The word only tells us something about the how of the demonstration and the treatment of what this discipline considers.” As such, phenomenology “can be formulated in Greek as *legein ta phainomena*. But *legein* means *apophainesthai*. Hence, phenomenology means: *apophainesthai ta phainomena*—to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. That is the formal meaning of the type of research that calls itself “phenomenology.” But this expresses nothing other than Husserl’s maxim: “To the things themselves!” Ontology is concerned with “What it is” that is phenomenology “let’s be seen.” This “what it is” remains concealed. It is not “manifest.” “Manifestly it is something that does not show itself initially and for the most part, something that is concealed, in contrast to what initially, and for the most part, does show itself. But at the same time, it is something that essentially belongs to what initially, and for the most part, shows itself, indeed in such a way that it constitutes its meaning and ground.” In terms of Heidegger’s later essay *On the Essence of Truth*, Being is the *lethe* (forgetting, concealment, nothingness, nihilation) in the midst of, at the heart of *aletheia*. Here, Heidegger says “Being covered up is the counter-concept to phenomena.” Being is uncovered in the being of beings, but in such a way that it “falls back and is covered up again or shows itself only in a distorted way.” This concealment can be so radical that the question of being is (almost) entirely forgotten.” Still, “ontology is possible only as phenomenology.” There is no other means of access to Being than through the being of beings, which are derivative of it, and modifications of it, because “nothing else stands behind the phenomena of phenomenology. As such, phenomena must be the “point of departure” for ontology. Strangely, Heidegger says that “as far as content goes, phenomenology is the science of the being of beings—ontology.” It is strange that he says this, because he has just marked the difference between what appears in phenomenon, and what remains concealed in them (which is nothing less than their Being). “The access to the phenomenon, and passage through the prevalent coverings [to what is concealed, Being] must secure their own method.” This method is interpretation. So, phenomenological ontology is hermeneutical. Phenomenologically, ontological hermeneutics “works out the conditions of the possibility of every ontological investigation.” It is addressed to Dasein because “Dasein has ontological priority over all other beings—as a being in the possibility of existence—hermeneutics, as the interpretation of the being of Dasein, receives a specific third and, philosophically understood, primary meaning of an analysis of the existentiality of existence.” The “existentiality of existence” is the “universality” of Being and its “structure.” “Being and its structure transcend every being and every possible existent determination of a being. Being is the *transcendens* pure and simple. The transcendence of the being of Dasein is a distinctive one since in it lies the possibility

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 32-4.

and necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of being as the *transcendens* is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (disclosedness of being, *aletheia*) is *veritas transcendentalis*.” Heidegger’s insistence, inspired by Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, that “higher than actuality stands possibility. We can understand phenomenology solely by seizing upon it as a possibility” shows that he is a real philosopher.¹⁹

Being and Time contains only two of the three projected divisions of the first part of the treatise Heidegger planned. It excludes the projected third division of the first part, as well as the entire second part, which consists of his projected de-structuring of the history of metaphysics. This second part was projected to contain three divisions: one on Kant and the problem of the schematism, one on Descartes’ *cogito sum as res cogitans*, and one on time in Aristotle’s physics.

2.2 Division II: Dasein and Temporality and the Crisis of Historical Destiny

Heidegger starts by summarizing the findings of the analytic that have so far been secured: “we have found the fundamental constitution of the being in question, being-in-the-world, whose essential structures are centered in disclosedness. The “what” of this structural whole revealed itself as care. The being of Dasein is contained in care. The analysis of this being took as its guideline existence, which was defined by way of anticipation as the essence of Dasein. The term “existence” formally indicates that Dasein is as an understanding potentiality-of-being which is concerned in its being about its being.” Our major question concerns the meaning of being in general. Yet “freeing the horizon in which something like being in general becomes intelligible amounts to clarifying the possibility of the understanding of being in general, an understanding which itself belongs to the constitution of that being which we call “Dasein.” The understanding of being, however, cannot be radically clarified as an essential factor in the being of Dasein unless the being to whose being it belongs has been primordially interpreted in itself with regard to its being.” The question that thus arises is as to whether or not the ontological characterization of Dasein as care does in fact give a primordial interpretation of this being. Every interpretation has a threefold constitution: the fore-having, the foresight, and the fore-conception. Now “if such an interpretation becomes an explicit task of an inquiry, the totality of these presuppositions needs to be clarified and made secure beforehand, both in a fundamental experience of the object to be disclosed and in terms of that experience.” [The fore-having is our preliminarily taking of the ontologically freed being that is to be inquired about qua its being, the fore-sight provides a guidance for us as far as the meaning of the being interrogated qua its being is concerned, and the fore-conception allows us to delineate the conceptuality of being]. Now the primordial ontological interpretation requires not only the above three elements but also “the explicit assurance that the totality of beings taken as its theme have been brought to a fore-having.” Thus, the question as to whether or not care as the ontological characterization of Dasein provides a primordial interpretation of this being turns out to be as whether or not that characterization satisfies the preceding criterion. All what we have so far achieved was mainly guided by our fore-having of the inauthentic everydayness. In order for a primordial interpretation to be possible, we will have to

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 35-8.

“bring the being of Dasein in its possible authenticity and totality existentially to light beforehand.”²⁰

There is a seeming impossibility of ontologically grasping and determining Dasein as a whole. As has been made clear in the previous section, in order to advance a primordial ontological interpretation of Dasein, the being of Dasein which in itself is in question, must be fore-had in its wholeness. The analysis so far advanced of Dasein as care has, as was mentioned in the preceding section, only been conducted on the everyday inauthentic level. Care as the “potentiality-of-being” that is always mine was only addressed in the inauthentic mode of entanglement in-the-world in the taking care of things and falling prey to the they-self. Yet, care as an ontological characterization of Dasein that for Dasein something is always already ontologically outstanding. This very ontological character is what establishes the impossibility of experiencing Dasein ontically. The possibility of experiencing the Death of others and the possibility of grasping Dasein as a whole. Heidegger starts the section by immediately characterizing the event he will take as the gate for the ontological characterization of Dasein as a whole, namely death.²¹

“When Dasein reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the being of there. The transition to no-longer-being-there lifts Dasein right out of the possibility of experiencing this transition and of understanding it as something experienced.” Now the death of others can be employed as representation of the death oneself. But this still belongs to the inauthentic realm of Mitsein. Thus, this could not be taken as a guideline to the fore-having of the whole of the being of Dasein through death. Heidegger then raises the question: if in death qua an end Dasein reaches its wholeness, if that wholeness is what manifests itself as the outstanding in the potentiality-of-its-being, what is the nature of death as an end fulfilling the ontologically essentially outstanding? Heidegger then shows that it can it’s the not-yetness of the outstandingness of death is different from being-present-at-hand not-yetness of a debt. “The not yet that belongs to Dasein, however, not only remains preliminarily and at times inaccessible to one’s own or to others experience, it ‘is’ not yet real at all.” Heidegger then likens the not-yetness of death as the ontologically outstanding of Dasein to that of fruit in the sense that for both the not-yetness is constitutive of their essential isness. Yet “even unfulfilled Dasein ends...Dasein so little needs to ripen only with its death that it can already have gone beyond that ripeness before the end. For the most part, it ends in fulfillment or else disintegrated and used... Ending does not necessarily mean fulfilling oneself. It thus becomes more urgent to ask in what sense, if any, death must be grasped as the ending of Dasein.” Heidegger then gives his famous answer—and indeed one of the most brilliant insights of his philosophy: death is an end in the sense of having always already accompanied the horizon of Dasein; Dasein is at the end with death, not biologically or even by way of fulfillment, but Dasein is always towards, unto death as an event.²²

²⁰ Ibid., p. 231-5.

²¹ Ibid., p. 236-8.

²² Ibid., p. 240-6.

All other interpretations of death are only possible when death as an ontological horizon is being fleshed out. A preliminary sketch of the existential and ontological structure of death is required. "Death is a possibility of being that Dasein always has to take upon itself. With Death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-of-being. In this possibility, Dasein is concerned about its being-in-the-world absolutely...When Dasein is imminent to itself as this possibility; it is completely thrown back upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being. Thus, imminent to itself, all relations to other Dasein are dissolved in it...Thus, death reveals itself as the ownmost non-relational possibility not to be bypassed." Dasein is already thrown into this possibility and is attuned to it through Angst. The major indication of ownmost character of death as a possibility of Dasein is manifested in the way we try to flee from it in the they-self. Heidegger points to another everyday phenomenon of relating to death, namely the certainty of death. "Everydayness gets stuck in this ambiguous certainty of death in order to weaken the certainty by covering dying over still more and alleviating its ownmost thrownness into death...one says that death certainly comes, but not right away. With this but, the 'they' denies that death is certain...Death is postponed to sometime later, by relying on the so called general opinion." Yet this "authentic being-toward-death" signifies an existentiell possibility of Dasein. This ontic potentiality-of-being must in its turn be ontologically possible. What is the existential condition of this possibility?" The core of the argument of that section centers around the notion of possibility. The absolute sense of possibility of death should not be weakened by forcing it to take part of the real through actuality. This being towards possibility is what Heidegger labels "anticipation." "Anticipation shows itself as the possibility of understanding one's ownmost and extreme potentiality-of-being that is as the possibility of authentic existence." This ownmost possibility is also nonrelational; it is essentially individual and solitary. In its individuating nature, this anticipation renders Dasein free of the falling prey to the they self. "Anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself, primarily unsupported by concern of taking care of things, but to be itself in passion anxious freedom towards death, which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain of itself."²³

Heidegger raises the question as to how are the phenomena of care and resoluteness to be brought together. In other words, how can what has been existentially attested in resoluteness be connected with the phenomena of anticipation as so being towards death, which is the ontological ground of being-whole of Dasein. Heidegger writes: "Being guilty is not just a lasting quality of something constantly objectively present, but the existentiell possibility of being authentically or inauthentically guilty. 'Guilty' is always only in the actual, factual potentiality-of-being. Thus, being-guilty must be conceived as a potentiality for being-guilty because it belongs to the being of Dasein. Resoluteness projects itself upon this potentiality of being, that is, understands itself in it. Thus, this understanding stays in a primordial possibility of Dasein. It stays in it authentically when resoluteness is primordially what it tends to be. But we revealed the primordial being of Dasein toward its potentiality-of-being as being-towards-death, that is toward the eminent possibility of Dasein which we characterize...Thus, resoluteness becomes a primordial being towards the ownmost potentiality-of-being of Dasein only as

²³ Ibid., p. 247-67

anticipatory. Resoluteness understands the ‘can’ of its potentiality-for-being-guilty only when it qualifies itself as being-toward-death. Hence, Heidegger writes: “Care does not need a foundation in a self. But existentiality as a constituent of care gives the ontological constitution of the self-constancy of Dasein to which there belongs, corresponding to the complete structural content of care, the factual falling prey to unself-constancy.”²⁴

In being itself, Dasein is always being-in-the-world. This being-in-the-world characterizes the primordial encounter of Dasein with its world not as something that it comes across, but rather, as something that it can only be as it is by Being-in-it. It thus does not characterize a spatial relation that conceptual thinking is likely to project on a present-at-hand being. In this primordial being-in-the-world, beings are given to Dasein in their handiness. Dasein comports itself towards such beings in the mode of caring or concern. Even in the state of total negligence or indifference to what is given in-the-world, Dasein still comports itself by caring yet at a minimal level, or rather, in a negative way. Dasein is thus always already in the mode of being-in-the-world. It’s constitutive of its being that it is in-the-world. But in what way is it in-the-world? How does it inhabit its Da (there) as it is in the mode of caring in-the-world? In other words, what is the mode in which Dasein find itself as being-in-the-world? As such, Dasein always is equiprimordially in the modes of understanding and attunement (state-of-mind). For the purpose of this presentation, we will be mainly concerned with understanding. Understanding always accompanies attunement (the affective mode in which Dasein comports itself as it is in-the-world). As such, understanding is prior to and grounds for all cognizing or cognitive activities. It rather refers to the primordial form of Dasein’s knowing²⁵ of its ownmost potentiality-for-being. As a being in the world, Dasein is always contextually for-the-sake-of something. But Dasein is not definable in terms of an essence as any being in the mode of being present-at-hand. Dasein is always concerned for what is given in-the-world in the way of being towards its own most possibility. Such possibility is, however, not given as a thematically identified thing or prospect. Rather, even if it is so, it is as a derivative of its essential givenness as a sheer possibility. The primordial disclosedness of this potentiality-for-being is what in the Heideggerian investigation of Dasein’s ontology referred to as “understanding.” This is what establishes the clearedness or transparency of Dasein’s sight; sight is not merely visual perceptual sensing, but rather, the letting-be-seen of the things as they give themselves unconcealedly in their primordial form. As such, this primordial understanding is always of a fore-having character. Understanding is what makes possible²⁶ all interpretation and

²⁴ Ibid., p. 302-10.

²⁵ The sense in which understanding is defined here is comparable to the notion of knowing in Dilthey that is distinguished from and contrasted with reflective knowledge/cognizing.

²⁶ This is more or less one of the fundamental criticisms Heidegger addressed to the Kantian onto-epistemological system. If the Kantian system was intent at investigating the structure of the knowing process qua itself, it was, in essence, attempting at establishing an ontology of epistemology. One of its main downturns is its failure to recognize knowing as one possible access to phenomenon, not the main one. It is definitely credible for, in contrast with all other epistemologies that preceded it, that it turned towards the process the way it is qua itself in terms of the interaction of the subjective and objective spheres. However, in defining the conditions of the possibility of knowing, it failed to capture this very primordial moment of understanding. Even though it could be counter argued that given that the Kantian system was intent on developing an ontology of epistemology, this cannot be taken as a drawback, still the

therefore all other derivative forms of cognation and conceptualization. But what is interpretation and in what way does it differ from that primordial understanding? Interpretation is the “as” of understanding. It precedes all thematic objective delineations of beings, yet it pre-supposes the fore-structure of understanding. It is the way that which is given in-the-world as a contextual instance is disclosed as understanding and is given “as something.” Such “as” is not given for the first time; it is always there yet in interpretation it is expressed for the first time.²⁷ The “as” is always hovering as the “expressible” horizon in Dasein’s comportments in its being as it is being-in-the-world. But within which sphere does the “as something” hover and on what grounds does it give itself? Beings in the world are discovered in their being-in-the-world in terms of the upon-which of the projection of Dasein of its potentiality-for-being contextually. This is what meaning is. Meaning educes its structure from the fore-having of understanding and, as such, serves as the formal-existential framework for it that in its turn allows interpretation to occur. Both understanding and interpretation thus make assertion or judgment possible, as both a pointing-out which gives something a definite character and a communication of that something as such. Judgment understood in this sense precedes all suppositions about the notion of “validity” that permeates all modernist theories of judgment.²⁸

But if Dasein is as it is in the mode of being-in-the-world, and if Dasein is thus as it comports itself towards that which is given in-the-world in the mode of care, what is the meaning of care? In other words, what is the ontological significance of this mode of comportment of Dasein that we refer to as care? Also, how can we connect the meaning of care to our forgoing analysis of understanding and meaning? Meaning as explained above is “the “upon-which” of a primary projection in terms of which something can be conceived in its possibility as that which is.” To flesh out the meaning of care, then, we have to follow this projection to the point at which care’s “upon which” is seen. But what is projected is the being of Dasein and that which is projected upon is its potentiality-for-being-a-whole. But Dasein is being-in-the-world and, as such, its potentiality-for-being-a-whole resides in the meaning of the totality which is given in-the-world. But only Dasein has meaning; insofar as it understands, it is the only being that has meaning. When we say that a being has meaning, we are actually saying that it is interpreted and understood by being-in-the-world in its being. Thus, the meaning of being-in-the-world comes down to the meaning of being-in-the-world of Dasein. But as explained above, Dasein is always being-in-the-world as a projection towards its ownmost possibility, its potentiality-for-being. But how does Dasein project itself towards its ownmost possibility? It does so in being-towards-death. Death is always the Dasein’s own Death. As such, it stands as its accompanying horizon; as the end it is always on-the-way-to. In this sense, it defines Dasein’s futurity. All what Dasein is potentially capable of is projected against this primordial ownmost potentiality of Death.

way the failure to capture this moment even impacts the potency with which it pursues its project (for instance as far as the notion of subjectivity is formulated).

²⁷ Here the understanding of interpretation could be compared with the way Dilthey explains the transition from reflexive knowledge to reflective cognition and then back to knowledge again. However, Heidegger would always try to avoid the reflective stage as a derivative mode of understanding and interpretation.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 334-9.

Accordingly, Dasein *is* authentically insofar as it is towards-death. In this being-towards-death, Dasein is always futurally what it has been. In other words, it understands itself in terms of the possibility of being or not being itself which, since it is indefinable in terms of an *essential*, is what it has been. This meaning of authentic care is what establishes the notion of temporality. Thus understood, temporality precedes all derivative forms of time as past, present, and future. Temporality primordially temporalizes itself in ecstasies of present, past and future; such ecstasies are what make possible the inauthentic derivation of time in the ordinary sense in terms of the past, present, and future.

Therefore, Heidegger writes “What is characteristic of the time accessible to the vulgar understanding consists among many other things, precisely in the fact that it is a pure succession of nows without beginning and without end, in which the ecstatic character of primordial temporality is leveled down. But this leveling down in accordance with its existential meaning, is grounded in the possibility of a definite kind of ‘time’ we have just mentioned... Thus, if we demonstrate that the time accessible to the common sense of Dasein is not primordial but arises rather from authentic temporality, then...we are justified in calling the temporality now set forth temporal time.” Now, as we have seen “the future has priority in the ecstatic unity of primordial and authentic temporality, although temporality does not first originate through a cumulative sequence of ecstasies but always temporalizes itself in their equiprimordiality...Primordial and authentic temporality temporalizes itself out of the authentic future, and indeed in such a way that futurally having been, it first arouses the present. The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future.” Yet being entangled in the world, falling prey in the taking care ultimately leads to the quantification of time in terms of a series of ‘nows’ as Aristotle did in the *Physics*. From that arises the derivative notion of time as an infinite. This is the positive Heideggerian grounding of the notion of infinite time in the fleeing away of Dasein from its ecstatic primordial unity to the they-self of entanglement in the world.

The question is how does temporality as the authentic being-towards-death unfold as the horizon of the fundamentals constitutive of Dasein’s being-in-the-world? This requires an analysis of how temporality makes possible the characters of being-in-the-world as delineated above. However, before proceeding to that, we have to start with an analysis of the temporality of the two equiprimordial modes of being of being-in-the-world. As explained above, understanding is taken to be the very primordial disclosedness of the potentiality-for-being of Dasein. But Dasein is always ahead of itself, a projection due to the very reason that as it is being-in-the-world, it comports itself towards itself and that which is given in-the-world in the mode of care. But care is grounded in temporality; understanding is thereby only possible against the horizon of temporality. Inauthentic understanding emerges when Dasein seizes to be concerned for its projection towards its ownmost possibility as possibility, and gets caught up in being concerned for what is urgent or pressing in everyday business. Even inauthentic understanding is only graspable when the grounds of authentic primordial understanding are fleshed out.

Attunement or state-of-mind is similarly grounded in temporality. All moods are possible in terms of temporality as the anticipation of Dasein's ownmost possibility of death. Authentic and inauthentic moods occur on such basis. This is how anxiety is taken to be an authentic mood, from which, the inauthentic mood of fear is derived. In anxiety, Dasein is thrown-towards its ownmost possibility as a sheer possibility. In other words, it is in the mood of anticipation. In fear, Dasein is always awaiting an object of fear. Such delineation of the object of fear is what a derivative of the authentic mood of anxiety is.²⁹

How does Dasein's being-in-the-world give itself? The inquiry into the temporal grounds should start with this question. In order to apprehend the temporality of being-in-the-world, we have to recall how being-in-the-world is primordially given. Dasein is thrown in the world. In this thrownness, beings-within-the-world are given to it in terms of their handiness or use. Such handiness however is not given in a fragmentary individual manner. To the contrary, handiness of the beings-within-the-world is given to Dasein in an interconnected nexus of wherefore's and whereof's that constitute the wholeness of the tool character of those beings. But how is handiness understood in this sense possible? It is possible only given Dasein's comportment towards being-in-the-world in the mode of care. But care is grounded in temporality. Thus, the handiness of those beings given within-the-world is only possible on the grounds of temporality. But beings-within-the-world are not only given as handy. They are given as present-at-hand or objectively. How does this move towards the theoretical appropriation of those beings-within-the-worlds take place? This transition also grounds on care and temporality. In *praxis*, those beings-within-the-world are brought closer to us by way of deliberation. In deliberation, the wholeness of the equipmental nexus is reduced to the mere presently delineated object, thus abstracting it in a theoretical way to serve the purposes of experimentation and/or scientific observation. This is how theoretical present-at-handness is explainable in terms of care and temporality as a derivative praxis.

Heidegger returns to the problem of Dasein as stretching-of-itself. If the analysis of temporality was originally inspired and guided by an attempt to develop a primordial interpretation of being-as-whole of Dasein, and if that being as a whole of Dasein was seen as consummating its end in death, and if death was taken as the ground for the authentic temporal finitude of Dasein that temporalizes itself through Future, does not this analytic still miss an important aspect of Dasein, namely Dasein as the stretching of itself between birth and death? How can we lay claim to an understanding of Dasein as a whole if the connectedness of the stretching itself of Dasein between the birth and death is not fully captured and explicitly brought to the foreground, not as the series of objectively present fragmentary associations, but rather, as a continuous whole that is always already a stretching between birth and death? "Understood existentially, birth is never something past in the sense of what is no longer objectively present, and death is just as far from having the kind of being of something past in the sense of what is no longer objectively present, but will come. Factual Da-sein exists as born, and born it is already dying in the sense of being-towards-death. Both ends and the 'between' extends between them as long as Dasein factually exists, and they are in the sole way possible on the fleeting or else anticipatory being-towards-death, birth and death are connected in

²⁹ Ibid., p. 350-72.

the way appropriate to Dasein. Dasein as care is the between.” Heidegger then defines his terms: “The specific movement of the...stretching...we call the occurrence of Dasein. The question of the connectedness of Dasein is the ontological problem of its occurrence. To expose the structure of occurrence and existential and phenomenal condition of its possibility, means to gain an ontological understanding of historicity.” He then sets the aim which he will show in this pivotal section of *Being and Time* as: “The analysis of historicity of Dasein attempted to show that this being is not temporal because it is in history, but because on the contrary, it exists and can exist historically only because it is temporal in the ground of its being.”

After reiterating the role of resoluteness in the fleshing out of the constitution of primordial time as the structure of care, Heidegger reminds us that we are always factually in the world entangled in our theyself and derivative taking-care of things around. Thus, in resoluteness as taking over of Dasein possibilities in actuality, we are bound to take the possibilities impinging on the horizon of our thrownness through the they-self. Remember that, as we learnt earlier, we always already grow into the past. Accordingly, as anticipatory resoluteness individualizes us through being unto death, we find ourselves plunged into ownmost possibilities of the present, which is nothing but the horizon of tradition, of destiny, of fate, of choosing our hero against that unfolding horizon of the traditional past into which we grow. “Everyday, Dasein is dispersed in the multiplicity of what happens daily. The opportunities and circumstances that taking care keeps tactically awaiting in advance, result in fate. Inauthentically existing, Dasein first calculates its history in terms of what it takes care of. In so doing, it is driven about by its affairs. So, if Dasein desires to gather itself, it must first pull itself together from the dispersion and the disconnectedness of what has just happened. It is only then that there at last arises from the horizon of the understanding of inauthentic historicity the question of how one is to establish Dasein’s ‘connectedness’ if one does so in the experiences of the subject also objectively present. The possibility that this horizon for the question should be the dominant one, is grounded in irresoluteness that constitutes the inconstancy of the self” [thus the problem of the connectedness between birth and death as the completion of the whole of Dasein is secure by explicating the ontological necessity of the dependence of such connectedness on anticipatory resoluteness that in its own turn is only possible through the temporalization of Dasein in between the primordially of future thrownness and the past.

Part III: Relevance of Heidegger’s Hermeneutical Phenomenology and Concern for Thinking to Islamic Philosophy

It is quite unfortunate that the interest in Heidegger among scholars of Islamic philosophy has mostly been confined to scholars of Sufism, and particularly the Iranian *‘irfānī* tradition. It is true that Heidegger’s critique of the history of Western philosophy as mainly denominated by substance and later object metaphysics of presences, whether studied from the perspective ontology or theology, intersects, at least nominally, with Sufi criticisms of philosophy and theology. However, the purpose of each criticism needs further investigation. Heidegger’s hermeneutical criticism led him to an ambiguous

interest in thought that is post-metaphysical as he clearly explains in his 1964 lecture *Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens* (*The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*). Islamic philosophical mysticism was deeply metaphysical, that is it stayed committed to the importance of universal ideas as an ultimate logos and reference of interpretation.

What calls for serious investigation in Heidegger's project from an Islamic perspective is his criticism of the classical and modern metaphysics of objects, poetic imagination and, above all, his rich discussion of the relationship between ontology and theology from his 1956/7 lectures *Identity and Difference* and *Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics* to his many criticisms of Western philosophy as an essentially metaphysics, and particularly metaphysics of substance. The interests among Muslim philosophers, theologians, Sufis in modality and identifying things as *possibilia*, along with their criticism of key aspects of Aristotelian essentialism, should be brought in conversation with Heidegger's aforementioned critique. The intention of this philosophical dialogue should not be centered around the limitation of rational thinking, as it has mostly been hitherto. The intention should be to see how Islamic modal criticisms of essentialism offered new prospects for overcoming the impasses of Western metaphysics beyond the desperate ambiguity of Heidegger's concern for thinking—let alone his earlier proneness to cultural and traditionalist fascism.