

THE TRANSCENDENTAL AND HERMENEUTICAL APPROACHES IN  
HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

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## ABSTRACT

### THE TRANSCENDENTAL AND HERMENEUTICAL APPROACHES IN HEIDEGGER'S *BEING AND TIME*

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My thesis is an inquiry into to what extent Martin Heidegger managed to provide a fundamental ontology in his book *Being and Time*. My claim is that *Being and Time* suffers from a tension caused by Heidegger's preference for both transcendental and hermeneutical methods. On the one hand, he explicates existential structures of Dasein as a transcendental framework that enables us to have an understanding of Being. These structures are thought to be universal, necessary, and static. On the other hand, Heidegger proceeds to provide an analysis of the factual existence of Dasein, which turns out to be thoroughly historical. His analysis of death and conscience clearly show the influence of Christian and modern European thought on his philosophy. While this does not necessarily devalue the work, it creates the risk of taking what is limited in scope, in the sense of belonging to a particular epoch, into a universal and necessary understanding of Being.

**Keywords:** Heidegger, Transcendental, Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, Philosophy of death

## ÖZ

### HEIDEGGER'İN *VARLIK VE ZAMAN*'INDA TRANSANDANTAL VE HERMENÖTİK YAKLAŞIMLAR

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Tezim, Martin Heidegger Varlık ve Zaman kitabında hedeflediği fundamental ontolojiyi sunmada ne derece başarılı olduğuna yönelik bir araştırmadır. Eserin hem transandantal hem de hermenötik yaklaşımların tercih edilmesinden doğan gerilimden olumsuz yönde etkilendiğini iddia ediyorum. Heidegger, bir yandan transandantal bir çerçeve sunarak Dasein'in Varlık anlayışına sahip olmasını sağlayan varoluşsal yapıları inceliyor. Bu yapıları evrensel, zorunlu ve sabit olarak düşünüyor. Öte yandan ise Dasein'in derinlemesine bir şekilde tarihsel olduğu ortaya çıkacak olan faktikal yaşamına dair bir analiz sunuyor. Bu analizin bir parçası olan ölüm ve vicdan üzerine düşünceleri Hristiyan ve modern Avrupa düşüncesinin felsefesindeki etkisini net bir biçimde ortaya koymaktadır. Bu durum eserin değerini azaltmıyor olsa da belli bir döneme ait sınırlı bir Varlık anlayışını evrensel ve zorunlu bir Varlık anlayışı olarak sunma ihtimalini içinde barındırıyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Heidegger, Transandantal, Hermenötik, Fenomenoloji, Ölüm felsefesi

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the conflicting philosophical traditions at work in Martin Heidegger's magnum opus *Being and Time*. Heidegger was influenced by transcendental philosophy, hermeneutics and phenomenology in various degrees throughout his philosophical career. Eric S. Nelson indicates that

*Heidegger attempted to "overcome" transcendental philosophy and its "static," ahistorical, idealizing conception of constitution through a hermeneutics of factual life, only to return to an explicitly transcendental-horizonal language in the period of Being and Time and Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics. It is noteworthy that he recurrently rejected transcendental philosophy and then would return to it by employing its language and strategies.<sup>1</sup>*

This tension between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches can be seen clearly in the way the early Heidegger employs phenomenology and in his understanding of death, as well as the latter's role in shaping human existence. Heidegger's hermeneutic commitments should have stopped him from making over-generalizations on the subject of death. However, his attempt to arrive at a whole and complete account of human beings, which is an indication of his lingering attachment to transcendental philosophy, led him to overlook the possibility of different interpretations of death across different cultures. This, in turn, causes severe doubts about the validity of the existential analytic of human beings he puts forward. Considering that this analytic is the initial step towards the main aim of *Being and Time*, which is answering the question of the meaning of Being in general, the problems it encounters have overall repercussions for Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*.

I shall begin my thesis by explicating Heidegger's roots in transcendental philosophy and how he interprets Immanuel Kant's thinking. Heidegger is quite explicit in the influence of Kant on *Being and Time*. He states that

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1 Eric S. Nelson "Heidegger's Failure to Overcome Transcendental Philosophy" in *Transcendental Inquiry: Its History, Methods and Critiques* (edited by Halla Kim and Steven Hoeltzel, 159-179. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 171.

*If we radicalize the Kantian problem of ontological knowledge in the sense that we do not limit this problem to the ontological foundation of the positive sciences and if we do not take this problem as a problem of judgment but as the radical and fundamental question concerning the possibility of understanding being in general, then we shall arrive at the philosophically fundamental problematic of Being and Time.*<sup>2</sup>

However, such a reading of Kant did not have a consensus among Kantian scholars. For instance, Heidegger's philosophical opponent Ernst Cassirer puts forward an epistemological reading of Kant. He argues that philosophy should leave metaphysical questions behind by rejecting any inquiry into the Being of the objects of knowledge. Rather, a philosophical inquiry should solely focus on the formal conditions that deal with the validity of the judgments about these objects.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, his interpretation of Kant is more in line with regarding him as a theoretician of knowledge rather than as an ontologist in the way of Heidegger. It is not my purpose here to argue for a particular reading of Kant. As I will argue below, both sides can find some support for their positions in the different definitions Kant provides for the notion "transcendental." My aim is to compare and contrast Heidegger's Kant interpretation with the competing alternatives to shed light on the former's own philosophical convictions.

Kant's influence on Heidegger also shows itself in the role of subjectivity in the general framework of *Being and Time*. Kant's revolutionary change regarding the formation of experience stems from the active status subjectivity now enjoys. The subject is no longer a mirror that, in various degrees of success, reflects upon the sense data it passively intakes. Instead, the subject now actively produces experience through "imparting structure to the input of sensory data."<sup>4</sup> The new role of subjectivity puts it right at the center of philosophical inquiry, and this applies to Heidegger's project as well. He declares that "[our investigation] asks about Being itself in so far as Being enters into the intelligibility of Dasein."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly,

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2 Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. (Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 289.

3 Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 54.

4 Lee Braver, *A Thing of This World: A History of Continental Anti-realism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 36.

5 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 193.

Heidegger seeks to illuminate the existential structure of Dasein, that is, human being, in order to clarify and answer the question of the meaning of Being in general.

After I complete showing Heidegger's transcendental roots, I move on to the other aspect of his thinking: hermeneutics. While traditionally being a discipline limited to establishing the rules of interpretation for classical texts, hermeneutics now plays a fundamental role in philosophical analysis. Heidegger argues that human beings are always in a context that provides them with an interpretative framework, which is not possible for Dasein to leave behind in order to escape to some sort of neutral vantage point that supposedly sees reality as it is. In a letter to Karl Löwith, he states that "I work concretely and factually out of my 'I am,' out of my intellectual and wholly factic origin, milieu, life-contexts, and what-ever is available to me from these as a vital experience in which I live."<sup>6</sup> In this regard, I emphasize Heidegger's views on historicism and language, as these most clearly show us the situated character of any kind of inquiry. Both historical conditions and language provide us with certain assumptions and conceptual frameworks that we cannot transcend at will and shape our interpretations. Nevertheless, if this is the case, how is it possible to ascertain the transcendental structures of the human being that apply to every time and place? Lee Braver indicates the impasse Heidegger finds himself in by stating that "[t]he existentialia [i.e. structures of Dasein] are themselves constant and unchanging throughout history and end up functioning, despite his own warning, as 'a rigid framework, within which Dasein's possible ways of comporting itself towards its world run their course without touching the 'framework' itself as regards its Being."<sup>7,8</sup>

This tension between transcendental and hermeneutic outlooks also shows itself in the method Heidegger employs in the investigation: phenomenology. He aims to put forward Dasein's existential structures by analyzing how they show themselves in the everyday existence of Dasein. This will allow Heidegger to claim that his phenomenological findings are not accidental, but rather necessary structures of Dasein that underlie any concrete existence of it: "In this everydayness there are

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6 Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 7.

7 *Being and Time*, 221.

8 *A Thing of This World*, 226.

certain structures which we shall exhibit – not just any accidental structures, but essential ones which, in every kind of Being that factual Dasein may possess, persist as determinative for the character of its Being.”<sup>9</sup> However, the crucial question is *whose* everyday existence will Heidegger choose as the object of his phenomenological research? Considering that historical and linguistic conditions will have a profound effect on the everyday existence of particular human beings, it seems highly unlikely to find some sort of “generic” human being whose structures apply to every human throughout history. While his hermeneutical commitments should have shown Heidegger that his phenomenology had to be limited in scope, his attachment to the transcendental tradition leads him to still seek a unified basis for all possible concrete manifestations of human characteristics.

In the last section of my thesis, I analyze Heidegger’s account of death as an instance of the tension between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches. Death plays a crucial role in the existential analytic as it is the key to the authentic existence of Dasein. Thanks to death, wholeness of Dasein can be taken into investigation. Furthermore, Heidegger distinguishes between two kinds of approaches towards death. The inauthentic approach tries to avoid death by conceiving it as a future event we do not have to concern ourselves with. According to Heidegger, this is how society i.e. public discourse, handles death. Society tranquilizes us against death and robs us from a courageous anxiety towards it.<sup>10</sup> Now, the problem I see here is that Heidegger seems to take a particular cultural approach towards death and generalizes it as a condition that every human faces when it is entangled in public discourse. If Heidegger had merely stated that every society, through public discourse, provides its inhabitants with a certain view on death, it could have been acceptable since he would not have suggested a specific content. However, when he argues that this public discourse is constituted by an avoidance of death, this can be challenged by empirical data. It is entirely plausible that there might be some societies where the public discourse can approach death differently. Finding such a society does not need to be our concern here. What matters is that Heidegger generalizes the specific conditions of his society and claims them to be the universal conditions that underlie human existence. On the one hand, he could not have done otherwise. His

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9 *Being and Time*, 38.

10 *Ibid.*, 298.

hermeneutical analysis clearly shows that the inquirer cannot escape the context she operates from. Nevertheless, Heidegger could at least limit his phenomenological findings to a specific time and place. However, this time he could not claim to be seeking the meaning of Being in general, as his transcendental approach requires him to do. Now that I have provided a brief excerpt of the issue, I shall move on to analyzing deeper the transcendental philosophy at work in Heidegger's *Being and Time*.

## CHAPTER 2

### HEIDEGGER AND TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY

I shall begin assessing the impact of transcendental philosophy on Heidegger's *Being and Time* by elaborating on the very meaning of the notion "transcendental." Kant attempts to give several definitions. In the introduction of the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*, he defines transcendental as all cognition "that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our a priori concepts of objects in general."<sup>11</sup> However, in the second edition we have a different definition: "I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori."<sup>12</sup> Henry E. Allison rightly points out to the difference between two definitions by stating that the former is more conducive to an ontological reading of Kant's project. This stems from the Wolffian legacy as "Wolff describes ontology, which he equates with first philosophy, as 'that part of philosophy which treats of being in general and of the general affections of being.' Wolff thereby defines ontology as 'the science of being in general, or insofar as it is being.'"<sup>13</sup> By its stress on our mode of cognition, the latter definition may lead one to receive Kant's work as an epistemological theory that seeks to establish formal conditions regarding the validity of our judgments about objects. Such an approach would not bother itself with the nature of these objects and thus would deny making any ontological claims. This clarification on the definition of "transcendental" is important because it illustrates the contrast between Heidegger and Neo-Kantians of his time. While the former will build his philosophy on an ontological reading of Kant's work, the latter shall consider transcendental philosophy as an epistemological theory.

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11 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 133.

12 Ibid., 149.

13 Henry E. Allison, "From transcendental realism to transcendental idealism", in *The Transcendental Turn*, (edited by Sebastian Gardner and Matthew Grist, 20-34. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 22.

The final definition I want to stress comes from *Prolegomena* and shall be crucial in Heidegger's account of how we have an understanding of Being: "transcendental does not signify something that surpasses all experience, but something that indeed precedes experience (a priori), but that, all the same, is destined to nothing more than solely to make cognition from experience possible."<sup>14</sup> Here we can see the rupture Kant performs from the tradition of philosophy. Experience does not occur just because external objects provide sense data to the human subject. Human subjectivity itself also should play a role in the formation of experience, and unlike the traditional understanding of knowledge, this role does not amount to decreasing the quality of representations in adequately mirroring objects.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, human subjectivity makes possible nature as the sum total of appearances, and it lays down the rules these appearances are subject to. Thus Kant argues that "the highest legislation for nature must lie in our self, i.e., in our understanding, and that we must not seek the universal laws of nature from nature by means of experience, but, conversely, must seek nature, as regards its universal conformity to law, solely in the conditions of the possibility of experience that lie in our sensibility and understanding."<sup>16</sup> It is important to note here that Kant does not adhere to a full-blown idealism. He explicitly states that there are things that exist outside of us, and they act as the sources of objects of our senses, but we cannot know them in themselves.<sup>17</sup> To understand what led Kant to this fundamental position, we need to turn our attention again to *CPR*.

Kant begins his preface of the first edition of *CPR* with a synopsis of the status of metaphysics. He claims that human reason, by its nature, is burdened with some questions that it can neither ignore nor answer. The problem arises when human reason tries to extend the application of its principles that are justified in experience to a domain in which there can no longer be empirical testing. Hence metaphysics turns into a "battlefield of endless conversations."<sup>18</sup> Kant aims to remedy this situation through an overall evaluation of reason's capacities so that we can have a better expectation of what it can and cannot achieve. Nevertheless, this will not

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14 Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. (Translated and edited by Gary Hatfield. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 125.

15 *A Thing of This World*, 36.

16 *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 71.

17 *Ibid.*, 40.

18 *Critique of Pure Reason*, 99.



happen through an external delimitation of reason; rather this evaluation will take a form of self-critique, that is, a critique of pure reason, in accordance with reason's "own eternal and unalterable laws."<sup>19</sup> In the preface he wrote for the second edition of CPR, Kant remarks about how mathematics and natural science benefited from "a single and sudden revolution." He suggests that the procedure they follow should be imitated in order to turn metaphysics into a proper science. The result is a change of perspective that will have quite remarkable effects:

*Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them a priori through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get farther with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with the requested possibility of an a priori cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us.<sup>20</sup>*

Béatrice Han-Pile claims that for Heidegger, Kant was a forerunner as the latter focused on phenomena and the conditions of their disclosure.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Heidegger wants to show us that Kant, in contrast to epistemological readings of his work, is actually an ontologist. The transcendental inquiry is an ontological investigation of how entities appear to us as entities: "[T]ranscendental knowledge is a knowledge which investigates the possibility of an understanding of being, a pre-ontological understanding of being. And such an investigation is the task of ontology. Transcendental knowledge is ontological knowledge, i.e. a priori knowledge of the ontological constitution of beings."<sup>22</sup> Kant himself occasionally made remarks that paved the way for an ontological interpretation of his work. For example, he writes that "the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and on this account have objective validity in a synthetic judgment a priori."<sup>23</sup> Sebastian Gardner argues that while Copernican Revolution may imply purely epistemological concerns, to consider objects and not just their representations still amount to treat them qua their being. Hence transcendental philosophy can still be identified with a kind of

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19 Ibid., 101.

20 Ibid., 110.

21 Beatrice Han-Pile, "Early Heidegger's Appropriation of Kant", in *A Companion to Heidegger* (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 80-101. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), 80.

22 *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 186.

23 *Critique of Pure Reason*, 283.

ontological inquiry supplanted by epistemology.<sup>24</sup> Now, it might be a good place to discuss Heidegger's position against Neo-Kantians of his time to better situate the former's work in transcendental tradition.

When Ernst Cassirer asks for a definition of Neo-Kantianism, Heidegger answers by drawing our attention to the context which gave birth to it. He argues that both natural and social sciences have saturated what we deem as knowable; thus there comes the point in which we need to ask "what still remains of philosophy if the totality of beings has been divided up under the sciences?"<sup>25</sup> Neo-Kantian answer to this question is to see philosophy as a theory of knowledge, and similarly see Kant as "a theoretician of the mathematico-physical theory of knowledge." Heidegger, on the other hand, argues that Kant was not interested in any kind of theory of natural science. Rather, he wanted to put forward the problem of ontology:

*What he wanted was a theory of beings in general. Kant sought a theory of Being in general, without assuming Objects which were given, without assuming a determinate region of beings (either psychic or physical). He sought a general ontology which exists prior to an Ontology of Nature as object of Natural Science and prior to an Ontology of Nature as object of Psychology.<sup>26</sup>*

It is not my purpose here to defend Heidegger's interpretation of Kant over alternatives. What I want to emphasize is that for Heidegger, transcendental philosophy meant an ontological affair, and he appears to see himself building upon what Kant has started. An analysis of the way Heidegger embarks on his philosophical quest in *Being and Time* should give us a clear picture.

## 2.1 Heidegger's Question of Being

Heidegger begins *Being and Time* with a diagnosis: We do not have any answer to the question of the meaning of Being, and worse still we are not even aware of our lack of understanding of it. Hence he claims that this question should be put forward once again and its meaning has to be clarified.<sup>27</sup> The initial move is to remove the

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24 Sebastian Gardner, "From transcendental realism to transcendental idealism", in *The Transcendental Turn*, (edited by Sebastian Gardner and Matthew Grist, 20-34. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 11.

25 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, (translated by Richard Taft. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 193.

26 *Ibid.*, 196.

27 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 19.

presuppositions that such a question is actually unnecessary. According to this presupposition, since “Being” is considered as the most universal concept, it is already included when one apprehends an entity. Heidegger objects to this by indicating that “the ‘universality’ of ‘Being’ is not that of a class or genus. The term 'Being' does not define that realm of entities which is uppermost when these are articulated conceptually according to genus and species.”<sup>28</sup> Hence universality by itself cannot entail that the meaning of Being needs no further clarification. The second presupposition moves to the opposite extreme and argues that because of its universality, it is impossible to define Being. Heidegger argues that this perspective has a point. Since Being is not an entity, it is not possible to define it as one does in traditional logic regarding entities.<sup>29</sup> The closest to a definition Heidegger puts forward is to say that “what is asked about is Being – what which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood, however we may discuss them in detail.”<sup>30</sup> Yet, this should not mislead us to consider Being as a property of entities. Taylor Carman indicates that Being cannot be a property as the entities lacking this supposed property are inconceivable: “What would entities be without the putative property of existence? Nothing. And what could actually have such a property? Only entities. Yet the entity-ness of entities is just what possession of the property was supposed to explain.”<sup>31</sup> Finally, Heidegger discusses the claim that of all concepts, Being is self-evident and thus requires no further inquiry. We use Being in our daily lives whenever we assert, cognize and comport ourselves. Nevertheless, this understanding is merely an average one, and when pressed upon, it fails to give us a clear picture on what it means to be. The fact that we have an average understanding of Being itself is a reason why we should begin an investigation on the question of the meaning of Being.<sup>32</sup>

Heidegger proceeds by explicating what belongs to the nature of any kind of inquiry. First and foremost, every inquiry is “guided beforehand by what is sought.”<sup>33</sup> There cannot be a pure, undetermined seeking. This stems not only from what is sought but

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28 Ibid., 22.

29 Ibid., 23.

30 Ibid. 25-26.

31 Taylor Carman, “The Question of Being”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 84–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 85.

32 *Being and Time*, 23.

33 *Being and Time*, 24.

also from the entity that performs the inquiry since every investigation is conducted by a situated agent with a preliminary understanding. In our case, the daily understanding of Being, no matter how obscure, enables us to raise the fundamental question of being:

*Out of this understanding arise both the explicit question of the meaning of Being and the tendency that leads us towards its conception. We do not know what 'Being' means. But even if we ask, 'What is "Being"?', we keep within an understanding of the 'is', though we are unable to fix conceptionally what that 'is' signifies.<sup>34</sup>*

Being, which determines entities as entities, cannot be taken as an entity itself. It is not a primordial entity that gave birth to others; it does not constitute entities as an atom constitute matter. That is the reason why Heidegger insists that “what is to be found out by the asking-the meaning of Being-also demands that it be conceived in a way of its own, essentially contrasting with the concepts in which entities acquire their determinate signification.”<sup>35</sup> Carman argues that in the distinction between Being and entities we see transcendental orientation of Heidegger’s work. The focus is not on the nature of entities, but on the structure and the conditions of our understanding of Being.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, as Being always means the Being of some entity or other, Heidegger argues that entities should still be the focus of our investigation to some extent, that is, to the extent that they are investigated in regard to their Being. However, we call many different things entities and Heidegger asks if we can arrive at a particular kind of entity that may serve as a springboard for our investigation. There is such an entity for which the activity of inquiry belongs to its very Being. Heidegger names this entity “Dasein.” He writes: “This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘Dasein’.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, it is Dasein whose constitution should be clarified so that we can have a better grasp on the question of the meaning of Being. It is here that we can draw a methodological similarity with Kant. William Blattner notes that Heidegger’s putting human beings at the center in dealing with the question of Being is rather surprising.<sup>38</sup> Considering that Being is what determines

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34 Ibid., 25.

35 Ibid., 26.

36 Taylor Carman, “The question of Being” , in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (Edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 84–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 86.

37 *Being and Time*, 27.

38 William Blattner, “Laying the ground for metaphysics: Heidegger’s appropriation of Kant,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Charles B. Guignon, 149–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 149-150.

entities as entities, it could be expected that ontology would be a general account of Being. That is, through a general survey of entities, we could determine what they shared in common and consider this as what made them entities. Just as we do not investigate our existence first when we study animate objects in biology, why do we have to do this when we conduct ontological investigations? In order to make sense of this, Blattner draws our attention to Kant's Copernican Revolution. Kant puts human beings at the center by claiming that objects should conform to our knowledge and not the other way around so that we can derive a priori knowledge of them by investigating our subjective conditions. Similarly, Heidegger puts our understanding of Being at the center in order to derive an ontology of entities in general. In this regard, he explicitly establishes a linkage to Kant in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*: "the path he [namely Kant] follows, by returning to the subject in its broadest sense, is the only one that is possible and correct."<sup>39</sup>

Heidegger's way of establishing the ontological priority of the question of Being also resonates with the way he considers Kant's *CPR*. As mentioned above, Heidegger sees Kant's work not as a theory of knowledge but as a work of ontology that seeks to uncover Being in general underlying any specific objecthood. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger discusses how sciences rest on basic concepts that pre-determinate the way we understand the objects that these sciences take as their themes. An investigation of entities themselves regarding their Being may clarify these concepts and it can and must "run ahead of the positive sciences."<sup>40</sup> Heidegger distinguishes this kind of inquiry from a kind of logic that seeks to discover the method of a given science. Instead, it is a laying the foundations of science that discloses the constitution of some area of Being in order to enable it for a scientific inquiry. Heidegger states here as well what he defended against Cassirer: "[T]he positive outcome of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason lies in what it has contributed towards the working out of what belongs to any Nature whatsoever, not in a 'theory' of knowledge. His transcendental logic is an a priori logic for the subject-matter of that area of Being called 'Nature'."<sup>41</sup>

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39 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 73.

40 *Being and Time*, 30.

41 *Being and Time*, 31.

The centrality of human being and the question of Being as disclosing the foundations of any kind of inquiry find their expression in Heidegger's philosophy in the form of peculiarity of Dasein. Heidegger argues that Dasein is distinguished from other entities because it has an understanding of Being, and thanks to this it is able to put forward the question of Being.<sup>42</sup> Apart from this specific constitution of it, one cannot tell "what" a Dasein is. Unlike other entities, there is no specific way of Being that can be called Dasein's essence. Dasein is always a possibility, whether it acknowledges this or not. Even its ignorance of the open-ended character of its Being is simply a possibility among others. Asking the question of the meaning of Being is also a possibility Dasein can take, and Heidegger argues that an existential analytic of Dasein is necessary for a fundamental ontology that may serve as a basis for more limited ontological investigation of specific domains.<sup>43</sup> Heidegger is crystal clear about the importance of an analytic of Dasein for his ontological inquiry, yet this focus on human beings may also turn this inquiry into a philosophical anthropology. This risk is not far away from Heidegger's thinking and he has some arguments to counter it.

## 2.2 Analytic of Dasein and Philosophical Anthropology

While Dasein's priority in answering the question of Being is set forth, the proper way of approaching it remains unanswered. To be sure, there are many ways of taking Dasein, or human existence, in the philosophical tradition. However, Heidegger is careful not to take any dogmatic position regarding Dasein's way of being, no matter how self-evident it seems to be. What we need is "such a way of access and such a kind of interpretation that this entity can show itself in itself and from itself. And this means that it is to be shown as it is *proximally and for the most part* – in its *average everydayness*."<sup>44</sup> This will enable Heidegger to claim that the existential structures he finds are not dependent on a particular possibility of Dasein that it happens to take, but essential ones that constitute it in any given situation.

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42 Ibid., 32.

43 Ibid., 34.

44 Ibid., 37.

Nevertheless, he reminds us that this endeavor must be a limited one<sup>45</sup> as the aim of the inquiry is the fundamental ontology:

*The question of the meaning of Being becomes possible at all only if there is something like an understanding of Being. Understanding of Being belongs to the kind of Being which the entity called 'Dasein' possesses. The more appropriately and primordially we have succeeded in explicating this entity, the surer we are to attain our goal in the further course of working out the problem of fundamental ontology.*<sup>46</sup>

Here it might be helpful to once again emphasize Heidegger's transcendental roots. Lee Braver argues that similar to Kant, Heidegger emphasizes the subject's constitutive role in forming reality.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned above, Kant establishes a new path for philosophy by arguing that we are not passive receivers of a pre-established nature but rather constitute it through the workings of the structure of our mind. Heidegger is also interested in Being in so far as it is understood by Dasein, hence the focus on the existential analytic of it. Braver directs our attention to Kantian terminology Heidegger employs when the latter indicates that "[i]f Dasein harbors the understanding of being within itself, and if *temporality* makes possible the Dasein in its ontological constitution, then temporality must also be the *condition of the possibility* of the *understanding of being* and hence of the *projection of being upon time*."<sup>48</sup> The term "condition of possibility," introduced by Kant, finds its way to Heidegger's philosophy and shows the extent Heidegger sees himself in the transcendental camp. This can also be seen in his letter to Husserl:

*What is the mode of being of the entity in which 'world' is constituted? That is Being and Time's central problem – namely, a fundamental ontology of Dasein. It has to be shown that the mode of being of human Dasein is totally different from that of all other entities and that, as the mode of being that it is, it harbors right within itself the possibility of transcendental constitution.*<sup>49</sup>

Emphasizing the centrality of human existence regarding the ontological investigation brings forth the question of anthropologization. Heidegger argues that the analytic of Dasein has to be distinguished from other research endeavors that superficially look similar, such as anthropology, psychology and biology. These

45 "[The analytic of Dasein] cannot attempt to provide a complete ontology of Dasein, which assuredly must be constructed if anything like a 'philosophical' anthropology is to have a philosophically adequate basis." *Being and Time*, 38.

46 *Ibid.*, 244.

47 *A Thing of This World*, 176.

48 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 280.

49 Edmund Husserl, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger*. (Translated and edited by Thomas Sheehan and Richard E. Palmer. Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer Academic Publishers), 186.

sciences have already assumed what man is, without grounding it on an ontologically adequate basis: “If man is only man on the grounds of the Dasein in him, then in principle the question as to what is more original than man cannot be anthropological. All anthropology, even Philosophical Anthropology, has already assumed that man is man.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, anthropology, as a social science concerned with human societies and culture, conducts its research with a preconceived idea of what it means to be human. Therefore, a philosophical clarification is needed to ascertain the ontological grounds a particular conception of human rests on. Yet, this does not mean that Heidegger seeks a more “primitive” existence of Dasein as an object of analysis to avoid cultural conceptions so that he can reach a more primordial base. Everydayness does not amount to primitiveness, and he claims that everydayness is a mode of Dasein’s Being.<sup>51</sup> There can be different specific content to everydayness of Dasein in different cultural contexts. However, Heidegger is not crystal clear about how to pick a certain “everydayness” of a particular Dasein. This is a rather crucial point since this initial choice may affect the results of the existential analytic and subsequently the way we can answer the question of Being. Further, it is a bold attempt on Heidegger’s part to ask what is “more original than man.” Can it be the case that what he considers as an existential analytic of Dasein is just another conception of man, being at the same level with other competing accounts? Charles Guignon addresses the issue by stressing that “Heidegger is trying to find a middle ground between Husserlian and neo-Kantian rationalism on the one hand and a naturalistic empirical anthropology on the other.”<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, he attempts to describe our average everyday existence, reminding an empirical study. Yet, what he aims is to find transcendental conditions that enable us to have an understanding of Being. However, as Guignon also argues, these two aspects of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* shall cause a fundamental tension jeopardizing the aim of the project. Before explicating this tension, it is necessary to discuss how Heidegger transforms hermeneutics from a limited discipline of textual interpretation to a broader philosophical outlook.

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50 *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 161.

51 *Being and Time*, 76.

52 Charles B. Guignon, *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 62.



## CHAPTER 3

### HERMENEUTICS

The prominence of hermeneutics for Heidegger shows itself in the years before the publication of *Being and Time*. A brief account provided by István Fehér can be illustrative. He argues that Heidegger's transformation of Husserlian phenomenology is greatly influenced by the philosophy of life developed by Karl Jaspers and Wilhelm Dilthey's historicist point of view<sup>53</sup> Heidegger's struggle against naturalism and positivism of his day, sharing the anti-psychologist tendencies of phenomenology and Neo-Kantianism, is the first step in the hermeneutical path he will follow. Naturalism and positivism try to position philosophy as a positive knowledge following the lead of natural sciences or as a branch of psychology. Meanwhile, the anti-psychologist camp stresses "the distinction between the fact of cognitive acts going on in the psyche of existing human beings, on the one hand, and the validity or truth claims pertaining to those acts, on the other."<sup>54</sup> By stressing the importance of the latter, anti-psychologism tries to assert the autonomy of philosophy and opposes what it sees as relativism stemming from the psychologist position. This is the background that young Heidegger operates from. While he sides with anti-psychologism, he criticizes its eventual Platonism in the sense of a strict two-world view, that is, an irremediable gap between sensible and intelligible worlds.<sup>55</sup> Heidegger argues that "logical is embedded in psychic" and Fehér sees here a preliminary step towards the existential analytic of *Being and Time*.<sup>56</sup>

From these early debates of psychologism, a much more comprehensive outlook follows in Heidegger's post-war years. Fehér claims that there are two main focuses at work in Heidegger's philosophical work in those years: "To go back to original experience (i.e., to gain a new access to life), and -together with it- to find

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53 István M. Fehér, "Phenomenology, hermeneutics, lebensphilosophie: Heidegger's confrontation with Husserl, Dilthey, and Jaspers" in *Reading Heidegger From the Start*, (edited by Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren, 73-89. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 73.

54 Ibid., 76.

55 Ibid., 77.

56 Ibid., 78.

appropriate means for its description, to develop a conceptuality adequate to it.”<sup>57</sup> Heidegger is critical of contemporary philosophy as the latter approaches to the question of everyday life and its world from a theoretical conceptuality. He rejects the primacy of the theoretical by seeing it as a derivative mode, one that cannot adequately grasp our factual existence. Thus, “[t]heoretically (and ahistorically) neutral knowledge is opposed to, and gives way to, existentially (and historically) involved understanding (or preunderstanding) and interpreting, whereby knowledge becomes at best a subdivision of understanding.”<sup>58</sup> This perspective will have important consequences as it implies that there cannot be a pure theory or description, and interpretation cannot be seen as an external addition to the brute facts. Therefore, Heidegger generalizes hermeneutics from being a discipline that provides rules for interpreting texts to the interpretation of human existence. Since humans are self-interpreting animals, “the activity of *interpreting a meaningful text* offers the most appropriate model for understanding any human experience whatsoever.”<sup>59</sup> Now I turn to the Heideggerian understanding of interpretation.

### 3.1 Understanding and Interpretation

Heidegger names Dasein’s fundamental structure as “Being-in-the-world.” He conceives it as an “a priori” structure that always has to be taken as a whole. While analytical reasons necessitate that we need to take its aspects individually, Heidegger urges us to always keep an eye on its totality.<sup>60</sup> It is crucial to emphasize that “Being-in” of “Being-in-the-world” does not imply a spatial relation. Heidegger stresses the etymological roots of the word “in” which comes from “to reside” and “to dwell.”<sup>61</sup> What this implies is that Dasein is embedded in its surroundings, a condition Heidegger indicates through the concept of “facticity”: “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

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57 István M. Fehér, “Phenomenology, hermeneutics, lebensphilosophie: Heidegger's confrontation with Husserl, Dilthey, and Jaspers” in *Reading Heidegger From the Start*, (edited by Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren, 73-89. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 80-81.

58 *Ibid.*, 83.

59 Cristina Lafont, “Hermeneutics” in *A Companion to Heidegger* (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 265-284. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), 265.

60 *Being and Time*, 65.

61 *Ibid.*, 80.

which it encounters within its own world.”<sup>62</sup> A clarification of what Heidegger means by the “world” is preliminary step in grasping the factual existence of Dasein and the role of understanding and interpretation in its constitution. He lists four meanings for the concept of world.<sup>63</sup> The first one is its ontical, straightforward sense: It merely means as the sum total of entities. The second one stresses the ontological constitution of these entities, as a way of grouping them according to their Being. As an example, Heidegger refers to the “world of a mathematician.” World here stands for all the actual and possible entities of mathematics. Thirdly, world can be understood in pre-ontological existentiell sense. It stands for where Dasein lives, as in the case of belonging to a social and cultural environment. Heidegger tells us that this will be the sense he will employ throughout the book. However, he also mentions a fourth meaning for world, which expresses the worldhood of a world; hence it takes an ontological and structural meaning. Thus, the notion of “world” plays a different and subtle role in Heidegger’s vocabulary: “The world itself is not an entity within-the-world ; and yet it is so determinative for such entities that only in so far as 'there is' a world can they be encountered and show themselves, in their Being, as entities which have been discovered.”<sup>64</sup> Cristina Lafont sees in this new notion of world the key to grasping the hermeneutical rupture Heidegger performs vis-a-vis traditional philosophy.<sup>65</sup> Instead of the conception of a subject that observes a totality of entities in a detached manner, Heidegger puts forward the existentiality of Dasein that understands itself and entities it encounters against the background of a pre-established context which Heidegger calls a “world.”

Now that the sense of “world” is clarified, “Being-in” aspect of “Being-in-the-world” can be discussed. I shall limit myself to “understanding” and “interpretation” as they are more directly related to the topic here. The initial point to make is for Heidegger understanding has a much more fundamental role in the structure of Dasein. He takes it as an existantiale which indicates “Being-possible” aspect of Dasein.<sup>66</sup> Dasein always has some definite possibilities regarding the way it interacts with other entities. It understands these possibilities and finds its way through them, but this

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62 *Being and Time*, 82.

63 *Ibid.*, 93.

64 *Ibid.*, 102.

65 Cristina Lafont, “Hermeneutics” in *A Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 265-284. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), 270.

66 *Being and Time*, 183.

understanding does not have to take the form of explicit knowledge. Since Dasein is always its “there,” that is, it is embedded in a cultural context, it can never totally lack an understanding. This is the sense of its being a part of Dasein’s existential structure: “Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of.”<sup>67</sup> While understanding is the minimal intelligibility that always stays in the background of Dasein’s existence, it has the capacity to develop itself into an interpretation: “In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. Such interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former. Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working out of possibilities projected in understanding.”<sup>68</sup>

Heidegger argues that interpretation is founded upon three aspects of fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception.<sup>69</sup> Fore-having stands for the current context that provides an intelligibility to our interpretations, even if this intelligibility is still veiled and unclarified. The average everyday understanding of Being Heidegger refers to at the beginning of his investigation can be seen as fore-having in this regard. Fore-sight stands for a particular point of view that guides an interpretation in a direction. Fore-conception refers to the set of available conceptual tools that enable us to conceive an entity, whether or not these tools fit the latter’s nature. For instance, Heidegger rejects traditional philosophy’s application of categories to Dasein: “Because Dasein’s characters of Being are defined in terms of existentiality, we call them ‘*existentialia*.’ These are to be sharply distinguished from what we call ‘*categories*’ – characteristics of Being for entities whose character is not that of Dasein.”<sup>70</sup> This fore-structure of interpretation is the reason why Heidegger declares that interpretation can never be presuppositionless. When one claims to perform a “neutral” interpretation in the sense of transmitting what simply “stands there,” there are still implicit assumptions that shape this interpretation.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, traditional philosophy’s aspirations to an absolute standpoint that will give us the reality

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67 *Being and Time*, 184.

68 *Ibid.*, 188.

69 *Ibid.*, 191.

70 *Ibid.*, 70.

71 *Ibid.*, 192.

undistorted by human input is misguided. We cannot simply transcend our contingent historical contexts, or worlds we are thrown into, to arrive at brute facts of existence.<sup>72</sup> Lafont argues that Heidegger's position leads us to abandon the idea of "one true description" and embrace conceptual pluralism, which implies that there can be many different interpretations of reality.<sup>73</sup> She further argues that Heidegger's hermeneutic approach transforms the conception of a priori knowledge we see in Kant. A priori knowledge no longer provides us with an absolute validity since it is only a historically contingent fore-sight and fore-conception.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, I am doubtful if Heidegger would acknowledge that his existential analytic is a contingent one. It is crucial to keep in mind what the aim of the existential analytic is: "All our efforts in the existential analytic serve the one aim of finding a possibility of answering the question of the *meaning of Being* in general."<sup>75</sup> If Heidegger puts forward an existential analytic that is limited to a certain time and space, how can he really claim that this analytic will lead us to an understanding of the meaning of Being in general, and not a meaning of Being that is limited to a particular context? This issue shall be more stark when historicism, which is paramount in *Being and Time*, comes to our view.

### 3.2 Fundamental Ontology and Historicism

The historical existence of Dasein stems from the constitutive aspect of temporality in Dasein's Being. Heidegger indicates that the unity of the existential structure of Dasein, which he names as care, lies in temporality.<sup>76</sup> Temporality in his terminology does not stand for a succession of moments in a chain like structure. While this everyday understanding of temporality cannot be denied for methodological reasons – as Heidegger vows to begin from our average everyday understanding – it is still not primordial in the sense that it is founded on a more fundamental understanding of temporality.<sup>77</sup> Heidegger's definition of temporality is much more subtle:

*The character of 'having been' arises from the future, and in such a way that the future which 'has been' (or better, which 'is in the process of having been')*

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72 Cristina Lafont, "Hermeneutics" in *A Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 265-284. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2005), 277.

73 Ibid. 281.

74 Ibid. 279

75 *Being and Time*, 424.

76 Ibid., 375.

77 Ibid., 377.

*releases from itself the Present. This phenomenon has the unity of a future which makes present in the process of having been; we designate it as 'temporality.'*<sup>78</sup>

The point Heidegger trying to make here is that the primordial temporality is not a series of “nows” that come and go successively. Its aspects, which Heidegger calls ecstasis, cannot be considered as coming after or before each other. The future does not refer to a moment that comes after having been, and similarly having been is not before the present. Primordial temporality can only be taken as a whole:

*[I]n every ecstasis, temporality temporalizes itself as a whole; and this means that in the ecstatical unity with which temporality has fully temporalized itself currently, is grounded the totality of the structural whole of existence, facticity, and falling—that is, the unity of the care-structure.*<sup>79</sup>

Heidegger repeats his analysis of existential structures of Dasein by interpreting them through temporality. While every structure shows itself in every ecstasis, there is still a dominant one for each of them. In understanding, “[t]he future makes ontologically possible an entity which is in such a way that it exists understandingly in its potentiality-for-Being. Projection is basically futural; it does not primarily grasp the projected possibility thematically just by having it in view, but it throws itself into it as a possibility.”<sup>80</sup> This type of futurity is concerned with our everyday concern, and Heidegger indicates that Dasein is “constantly ahead-of-itself”<sup>81</sup> which implies that it is future oriented when it comes to its possibilities and their realization. Dasein always makes projections towards its future possibilities. These projections might be well-thought of, or they can be made unconsciously, but in any case Dasein is open towards a certain way to be in its future existence. While futurity is distinguished in understanding, other ecstasis play a role as well: “Understanding, as existing in the potentiality-for-Being, however it may have been projected, is primarily futural. But it would not temporalize itself if it were not temporal - that is, determined with equal primordiality by having been and by the Present.”<sup>82</sup> Dasein’s futurity is contextual in the sense that it is directed towards possibilities which it inherit in its factual situation. Having-been aspect of temporality indicates the network of meanings, understandings and social roles that Dasein finds itself delivered over. Having-been also shows itself in a forgetting that allows Dasein to project towards its current

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78 *Being and Time*, 374.

79 *Ibid.*, 401.

80 *Ibid.*, 385.

81 *Ibid.*, 386.

82 *Ibid.*, 387.

factual possibilities: “[w]hen one projects oneself inauthentically towards those possibilities which have been drawn from the object of concern in making it present, this is possible only because Dasein has forgotten itself in its ownmost thrown potentiality-for-Being.”<sup>83</sup> Heidegger argues that “forgetting” should not be understood in its negative connotations, it represents a positive ecstatical mode. We forget the question of Being so that we can move on with our current concerns and dealings, and this allows us to “remember” things and their particular characteristics. Ecstatical mode of have-been allows Dasein to immerse itself in its factual environment and to take a particular understanding of Being as granted.<sup>84</sup> This condition is also made possible by the ecstatical mode of Present, which lets Dasein to be along the entities of its concern, by busying and losing itself with them, in accordance with its futural projections and inherited relations of facticity. As a result, temporality plays a fundamental role in Dasein’s existential constitution, working as a fabric that unites its different aspect of existence. Thanks to the wholeness of temporality entities are encountered in “there” Dasein dwells.<sup>85</sup> The importance Heidegger attaches to temporality can be seen from his remark that “Dasein’s temporality is not the empty, formal fact that moments pass, but rather the concrete inheritance of understandings of Being and roles and projects from tradition and society.”<sup>86</sup>

The primary role assigned to temporality paves the way for a thoroughly historical conception of Dasein. Heidegger argues that in the end, historicity is a “concrete working out of temporality.”<sup>87</sup> Dasein is not historical simply because it is in the middle of the workings of world history. Rather, it is *primarily* historical. The rest of entities earn their historical status thanks to Dasein’s worldly constitution.<sup>88</sup> What is important for the discussion here is that Dasein’s historicity has consequences for its investigations as well. Heidegger argues that “[i]f Dasein's Being is in principle historical, then every factual science is always manifestly in the grip of this historizing.”<sup>89</sup> Yet, this proclamation can be taken further, and I argue that it applies

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83 *Being and Time*, 388.

84 Carol J. White, *Time and Death: Heidegger's Analysis of Finitude*, (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2005), 105.

85 “The ecstatical unity of temporality is the condition for the possibility that there can be an entity which exists as its ‘there’.” *Being and Time*, 401.

86 *A Thing of This World*, 226.

87 *Being and Time*, 434.

88 *Ibid.*, 432-433.

89 *Ibid.*, 444.

to an ontological investigation as well. In *the Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger claims that

*The consideration of being takes its start from beings. This commencement is obviously always determined by the factual experience of beings and the range of possibilities of experience that at any time are peculiar to a factual Dasein, and hence to the historical situation of a philosophical investigation.... Because the Dasein is historical in its own existence, possibilities of access and modes of interpretation of beings are themselves diverse, varying in different historical circumstances.*<sup>90</sup>

If this is the case, then it is not difficult to see that *Being and Time*'s main goal, i.e. finding the meaning of Being in general is not attainable. There cannot be a Being in general, rather different epochal understandings of Being. Similarly, it is hard to argue for an ahistorical existential analytic of Dasein. If Dasein is primordially historical, its constitutive structures must also be subject to historical change. One may claim that if these structures change, we can no longer talk about the entity called Dasein. However, Heidegger's equation of Dasein and human being, which I will deal later on, shows that he has a fixed framework for human beings that runs counter to their historical constitution.

The implications of historicism are not unnoticed by Heidegger. As I mentioned above, every interpretation operates within the fore-structure of understanding: "Any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted."<sup>91</sup> This creates a dilemma for any scientific inquiry, or any kind of inquiry that claims to be critical since "we may not presuppose what it is our task to provide grounds for."<sup>92</sup> However, considering that we always already have an understanding of Being, does not this lead us to a circle since our assumptions guiding the inquiry predetermine the results we will reach? Heidegger claims that even in historiology it is desired to transform the discipline in accordance with natural sciences, which are supposedly independent from the situated being of the observer. Yet, this circularity does not appear as a defect to be remedied for him as long as we are clear on the sources of our assumptions:

*What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way.... in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to*

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90 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 22.

91 *Being and Time*, 194.

92 *Ibid.*, 194.



*us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves.*<sup>93</sup>

This condition applies to the existential analytic of Dasein as well. Heidegger admits that “a definite ontical way of taking authentic existence” underlies his ontological investigation. Nevertheless, he sees this condition as a positive necessity and claims that philosophy can never deny its presuppositions. Rather, “it conceives them, and it unfolds with more and more penetration both the presuppositions themselves and that for which they are presuppositions.”<sup>94</sup> In fact, the circular structure of the ontological investigation stems from the very constitution of Dasein, who always has a historical understanding of Being and act in accordance with it. Therefore, Heidegger argues that “[w]e must rather endeavour to leap into the ‘circle,’ primordially and wholly, so that even at the start of the analysis of Dasein we make sure that we have a full view of Dasein's circular Being.”<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, Guignon identifies two problems that this circularity implies for the overall aims of *Being and Time*.<sup>96</sup> The first one is the problem of closure for our interpretation. While Heidegger begins by describing our average everydayness, he seeks to uncover deeper and deeper layers of existence of Dasein in the name of securing a primordial analysis of it. Heidegger is not unaware of the ever-lasting character of such an inquiry:

*In any investigation in this field, where ‘the thing itself is deeply veiled’ one must take pains not to overestimate the results. For in such an inquiry one is constantly compelled to face the possibility of disclosing an even more primordial and more universal horizon from which we may draw the answer to the question, ‘What is ‘Being’?’*<sup>97</sup>

The second problem Guignon mentions is the problem of finding the criteria of truth for the results of *Being and Time*. If we always interpret out of our fore-structure, how can we find an independent criterion to select among conflicting interpretations of Dasein that arise from fundamentally different fore-structures? From what we have said so far regarding the situated character of inquiry and worldly or historical character of the inquirer, there cannot be an absolute ground to evaluate the results of *Being and Time*. Guignon suggests that the key to understanding Heidegger’s solution to these problems rests on the latter’s use of the notion “primordial.” It amounts to both transcendental and historical meanings. In the transcendental sense,

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93 *Being and Time*, 195.

94 *Ibid.*, 358.

95 *Ibid.*, 363.

96 *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 72.

97 *Being and Time*, 49.

X is more primordial with respect to Y when the former grounds the latter. In the historical sense, primordially means being earlier or more ancient, so X comes before or closer to the origin than Y does. Guignon argues that for Heidegger both these senses amount to the same thing. Thus, the closure and conformation of the hermeneutic analysis of *Being and Time* are achieved by “the [historical] origin of our basic ontological concepts by an investigation in which their ‘birth certificate’ is displayed.”<sup>98</sup> Guignon’s remark clearly shows the importance of historicity in *Being and Time*: “Primordial and authentic truth is discovered not by transcending our historical context to reach a vantage point of pure reason or intuition of essences, but by remembering the historical origins embedded in our contemporary interpretations.”<sup>99</sup> However, we are still far from a satisfactory conclusion regarding the closure of *Being and Time*. If we assess the results of the investigation by showing the way they stem from a historical origin, then the problem begins anew in the form of choosing the appropriate historical period. Furthermore, when an investigator chooses a specific historicity, such as the one that belongs to Western Europe, then how can she claim that our interpretations stemming from it has a universality that makes existential analytic appropriate for each and every Dasein? Validating the results of *Being and Time* by referring to its roots in a certain historical epoch can only work if one is eager to limit its scope to the very same epoch. This does not seem to be the case for Heidegger as he seeks to illuminate the meaning of Being in its *generality*.

### **3.3 The Role of Language**

The last piece of the hermeneutic transformation that Heidegger conducts is language. Here the discussion centers around the status of language: Is it a tool employed by a subject, helping it externalize its internal sensations and thoughts, or does it have a constitutive being in Dasein’s existence? Heidegger appears to be revolving between two poles, and there is textual support for both sides. However, an overall assessment of *Being and Time*’s hermeneutic claims tips the balance in favor of taking language in its constitutive dimension. The preliminary discussion of language occurs in the sections where Heidegger deals with the status of signs and

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98 *Being and Time*, 44.

99 *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 78.

reference. Heidegger argues that signs are peculiar entities in the sense that apart from being ready-to-hand entities that we use in our daily lives, they also by their very existence indicate us to a totality of equipments and their worldly character.<sup>100</sup> All items of equipment refer to entities other than themselves through the purpose they are used for. For instance, a doorknob refers to a door, and then the latter refers to house built as a shelter. However, the peculiarity of signs is that they are exclusively for referring: “[a] sign is something ontically ready-to-hand, which functions both as this definite equipment and as something indicative of the ontological structure of readiness-to-hand, of referential totalities, and of worldhood.”<sup>101</sup> It is here where we first get the impression that language, as a sign system, distinguishes itself in showing the contextual existence of Dasein. This is because the latter cannot exist without the factual environment providing necessary tools to accomplish certain social possibilities. Nevertheless, the explicit discussion of language appears when Heidegger introduces a third fundamental existentials: equiprimordial with understanding and state-of-mind: discourse. Discourse is the articulation of intelligibility and the existential-ontological foundation of language.<sup>102</sup>

Lafont argues that

*With this separation [between discourse and language], Heidegger thinks that discourse or ‘articulation’ gives him a unity to which the variety of ways of interpretation inherent in the particular natural languages could be traced back. This unity would make it possible to discover the ‘basic forms in which it is possible to articulate anything understandable [in general].”<sup>103, 104</sup>*

Thus, Heidegger tries to limit the consequences of the hermeneutic turn he initiates. The constitutive view of language, as I shall expound more below, argues that language shapes the very existence of human beings by constituting their understanding of reality. This implies that every natural language is key to a different reality. However, Heidegger cannot accept this pluralistic conclusion due to his transcendental commitments. That is, he seeks to ground particular natural languages on a common basis so that a unified structure can be reached. In fact, Lafont claims that Heidegger’s preference of Dasein as the distinctive entity to be interrogated stems from his “lingering attachment to transcendental philosophy.”<sup>105</sup> This

<sup>100</sup> *Being and Time*, 110.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-204.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>104</sup> Cristina Lafont, *Heidegger, Language and World-disclosure* (Translated by Graham Harman. Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2000), 56.

<sup>105</sup> *Heidegger, Language and World-disclosure*, 21.

contradicts with the hermeneutic turn *Being and Time* represents, which claims that “what is responsible for our access to entities is not a unique synthesis of apperception, identical for all human beings, but rather the holistic structure of understanding that unavoidably leads to plural outcomes.”<sup>106</sup> The basic issue is that if language stems from Dasein’s existential constitution, how can one claim that Dasein is always in an already constituted world since the latter is made possible by language beforehand?<sup>107</sup> Heidegger is explicit that language is Dasein’s worldly character:

*In language, as a way things have been expressed or spoken out, there is hidden a way in which the understanding of Dasein has been interpreted.... Proximally, and with certain limits, Dasein is constantly delivered over to this interpretedness, which controls and distributes the possibilities of average understanding and of the state-of-mind belonging to it.*<sup>108</sup>

This point of view is what Guignon names as the constitutive view of language.<sup>109</sup> It suggests that language is not simply a tool that works as a medium for intelligible communication. In contrast, language founds this intelligibility in the first place. There cannot be a pre-linguistic field of meaning that is later expressed in words. Hence, language shapes our existence and situates us in a particular context so deeply that we can never talk of it as a tool that is in the service of a non-linguistic practice. Heidegger indicates that

*This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating anew, are performed. In no case is a Dasein, untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted, set before the open country of a ‘world-in-itself,’ so that it just beholds what it encounters.*<sup>110</sup>

This condition also applies to assertions (judgements). Heidegger defines the latter as “a pointing-out which gives something a definite character and which communicates.”<sup>111</sup> However, this does not mean that by pointing-out, an entity is seen in its bare, in-itself state. The reason is that even assertion “maintains itself on the basis of Being-in-the-world.” Thus, the fore-structure of understanding operates in assertions as well. Every assertion begins with a particular understanding of Being,

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106 Ibid., 61.

107 Ibid., 41.

108 *Being and Time*, 211.

109 *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, 118.

110 *Being and Time*, 213.

111 Ibid., 199.

and has a particular point of view that is directed towards an entity in order to predicate and distinguish it from the rest. Furthermore, this whole procedure occurs through a specific way of conceiving and conceptual structure, since “the language already hides in itself a developed way of conceiving.”<sup>112</sup> Hence, a theoretical endeavor constituted by -broadly understood- scientific assertions is still a situated endeavor and cannot claim to be neutral. Yet, this also creates a dilemma for *Being and Time* as well. Heidegger also develops his philosophy through a natural language filled with interpretations and fore-structures. Therefore, how can he claim that the existential analytic of Dasein *he* develops in *German* will be the key to arriving at the meaning of Being in general? In order to tackle this issue, Heidegger’s methodological convictions must be laid open.

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112 *Being and Time*, 199.

## CHAPTER 4

### PHENOMENOLOGY

Heidegger picks phenomenology as the method of his inquiry. The first thing he emphasizes is that phenomenology does not imply a stand-point or a particular direction given to the inquiry beforehand.<sup>113</sup> It is simply a methodological conception that does not have to do with the specific character of the objects of inquiry: “[Phenomenology] does not characterize the what of the objects of philosophical research as subject-matter, but rather the *how* of that research.”<sup>114</sup> Thus, phenomenology is different from the similar terms such as theology, sociology, biology etc. in the sense that the latter indicates the subject matter they take as their theme, while phenomenology deals with phenomenon in general. Heidegger defines phenomenology formally as “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”<sup>115</sup> Hence, phenomenology is a kind of inquiry that directly exhibits and demonstrates the subject matter it happens to consider. In our specific case, Heidegger indicates that what phenomenology “lets us see” and uncover it from its hidden status is the *Being* of entities.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, phenomenology plays a pivotal role in Heidegger’s ontology:

*Phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, and it is our way of giving it demonstrative precision. Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible. In the phenomenological conception of ‘phenomenon’ what one has in mind as that which shows itself is the Being of entities, its meaning, its modifications and derivatives.*<sup>117</sup>

Heidegger’s emphasis on demonstration and showing things themselves as they are in themselves may imply that his phenomenology aspires to be a neutral viewpoint. As a matter of fact, he claims that “descriptive phenomenology” is a tautological expression.<sup>118</sup> Yet, description here cannot stand for an endeavor performed by a

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113 “Thus our treatise does not subscribe to a ‘stand-point’ or represent any special ‘direction’; for phenomenology is nothing of either sort, nor can it become so as long as it understands itself.”  
*Being and Time*, 50.

114 *Ibid.*, 50.

115 *Ibid.*, 58.

116 *Ibid.*, 59.

117 *Ibid.*, 60.

118 *Ibid.*, 59.

detached observer as Heidegger tells us that “[o]ur investigation itself will show that the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation.”<sup>119</sup> Hence, the inquirer’s status is not a passive, detached observer; instead she is an active interpreter such that she will not let common understandings or traditional presuppositions blur the way entities really are:

*Dasein's kind of Being thus demands that any ontological Interpretation which sets itself the goal of exhibiting the phenomena in their primordially, should capture the Being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up. Existential analysis, therefore, constantly has the character of doing violence, whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation, or to its complacency and its tranquillized obviousness.*<sup>120</sup>

Nevertheless, there is still a problematic aspect of Heidegger’s insistence on phenomenology’s descriptive character. Wayne Martin addresses this issue by stressing the lack of a discussion on modal claims of phenomenology. Martin indicates that descriptions are thought of as giving information about how things are, and not how they must or could be. So he asks how a descriptive phenomenology can give us modally robust conclusions.<sup>121</sup> In other words, when we describe a particular Dasein in its everydayness, how can we make sure that it stands for *all* Daseins, instead of for ones we happen to describe at that moment? Note that this problem is very similar to Kant’s initial concerns. Faced with the lack of a sure path to establishing universal and a priori knowledge through experience, Kant chose to investigate those transcendental conditions that enable objects to appear to us. As noted above, Heidegger makes a similar transcendental move in the sense that he seeks to discover the transcendental conditions that enable us to have an understanding of Being. However, his phenomenological method is at odds with this aim as it is too immersed in factual analysis of Dasein in its everydayness, which is presumed to be the same for each and every Dasein across cultures. Yet, this point requires a brief discussion about semantics, following Martin’s lead. He compares two main approaches to establish the meaning of the term “Dasein.”<sup>122</sup> In the extensionalist approach, it is established by specifying its referents in familiar terms, such as “human being.” In this case, providing a coextensive term settles the debate

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119 *Being and Time*, 61.

120 *Ibid.*, 359.

121 Martin Wayne, “The Semantics of ‘Dasein’ and the Modality Of Being and Time,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 100–128. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 103.

122 *Ibid.*, 106.

and the term “Dasein” is used interchangeably with “human being”, which is assumed to have an ontological homogeneity.<sup>123</sup> The other approach is an intensionalist one which seeks to define the term “Dasein” without trying to decide which referents it applies to. Hence while a human being can be a Dasein, this is not a necessity and there can perhaps be other entities that could be seen as Dasein if they carry the structures that are deemed to constitute Dasein. Heidegger, on his part, seems to be elusive on this point. While he mentions in several places that we are Dasein,<sup>124</sup> it is not clear at all what this “we” stands for. Can it be German people? Or 20th-century European peoples? Perhaps Heidegger does claim that every human being is Dasein, hence sharing the same existential structures that are indicated in the book. I spend considerable space on what one might consider a minor semantic issue because if Dasein does not extend exclusively to human beings, then it might be said that Heidegger can avoid the dangers of taking a particular conception of human being as universal.

Nonetheless, when we take a broader look at Heidegger’s declarations in some of his other early works, it appears that human beings, without further specification, occupy the center of philosophical thinking in the 1910s and 1920s. For instance, in the 1928 lecture course *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* he remarks that “[t]he basic question of philosophy, the question of being, is in itself, correctly understood, the question of man.”<sup>125</sup> Similarly, in *Essence of Human Freedom*, lecture courses given in 1930, he claims that “the properly posed question of Being, thus the question concerning being and time, concerning the essence of time, necessarily leads to the question of the human being.”<sup>126</sup> Heidegger even explicitly establishes a linkage to Kant in his 1919 lecture course *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*: “the path he follows, by returning to the [human] subject in its broadest sense, is the only one that

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123 Martin Wayne, “The Semantics of ‘Dasein’ and the Modality Of Being and Time,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 100–128. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 107.

124 See for instance: “Ontically, of course, Dasein is not only close to us—even that which is closest: we are it, each of us, we ourselves.” *Being and Time*, 36.

125 Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (Translated by Michael Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 16.

126 Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Translated by Ted Sadler. London; New York: Continuum, 2002), 85.



is possible and correct.”<sup>127</sup> Such quotations give us enough reason to consider that Heidegger had a generic human being in mind when he was writing *Being and Time*.

As Carman notes, another part of the problem is that what Heidegger describes is not some sort of an immediately given object or state of affair that is perceptually available as in the case of empirical sciences, but rather “what is available to ethical interpretations of human conduct and aesthetic interpretations of works of art, namely, a certain way things have of hanging together and making sense in a context, under an aspect, which goes beyond anything we simply register or straightforwardly observe.”<sup>128</sup> This also explains why Heidegger emphasizes phenomenology as an attempt to uncover what is usually covered up in the daily existence of Dasein.<sup>129</sup> This extensive foundation on interpretation may cast doubts about the extent to which Heidegger’s phenomenological findings can be said to be universally valid, as an existential analytic of Dasein would require. Keeping in mind the general framework of phenomenology and the emerging tensions located in it, now I turn to evaluate how well his transcendental and hermeneutical commitments fit with phenomenology.

#### **4.1 Transcendentalism, Hermeneutics and the possibility of Phenomenology**

The tension between transcendental and hermeneutical approaches that I have covered so far reaches its climax in phenomenology. I will exemplify this by mentioning two essays. The first essay, authored by Steven Crowell, argues that Heidegger’s focus on facticity does not remove him from the transcendental camp, while Lafont, in her part, argues that the hermeneutic turn Heidegger initiated creates an insurmountable gap between his philosophy and transcendental position. In his *Facticity and Transcendental Philosophy*, Crowell argues that the claim regarding Heidegger’s abandonment of transcendental phenomenology by embracing the hermeneutics of facticity is misleading. According to this claim, with *Being and Time*, Heidegger effectively leaves behind his transcendental tradition in favor of a

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127 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 73.

128 Taylor Carman, “Phenomenology as Rigorous Science,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy* (edited by Brian Leiter and Michael Rosen, 9- 33. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2007), 18.

129 Ibid., 24.

historicist way of doing philosophy. This stems from Heidegger's emphasis on the hermeneutics of facticity which claims that, as I have discussed above, the philosophizing subject is situated in a historical, cultural and linguistic context. As it is not possible to transcend these contexts to make claims to a priori or universally foundational knowledge, the project of transcendental phenomenology is no longer tenable. However, Crowell will argue that "facticity, properly understood, can illuminate the character of transcendental phenomenology itself."<sup>130</sup> He defines transcendental philosophy by emphasizing its cognitive and autonomous character. The former indicates that philosophy is "theoretical or scientific in the broad sense of the German term *Wissenschaft*." Yet, this does not mean philosophy is simply continuous with empirical sciences on an abstracted level. This is because philosophy is also an autonomous i.e. self-grounding practice. It cannot take any premises from other disciplines for developing further constructions based on them. This is what makes philosophy a cognitively distinctive endeavor. Crowell argues that the positions which he labels as "aestheticist" "dogmatically assume certain premises drawn from the concept of facticity to contextualize philosophical practice in such a way that philosophy turns out to have no cognitive significance at all."<sup>131</sup> How Crowell frames the terms of the debate is similar to Heidegger's when he argues that philosophy cannot be a world-view, since the latter takes a particular factual condition of *Dasein* as granted:

*To the world-view there belongs this multiple positivity, that in each case it is rooted in a Dasein which is in such and such a way; that as such it relates to the existing world and points to the factically existent Dasein. It is just because this positivity – that is, the relatedness to beings, to world that is, Dasein that is – belongs to the essence of the world-view, and thus in general to the formation of the world-view, that the formation of a world-view cannot be the task of philosophy.<sup>132</sup>*

The reason Heidegger distinguishes between a world-view and philosophy is that he still thinks philosophy as a science that seeks to uncover the a priori and universally valid structures of factic life.<sup>133</sup> Then what might be the reason for Heidegger to introduce the facticity to picture if he still seeks a priori or universalist categories?

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130 Steven Crowell, "Facticity and Transcendental Philosophy" in *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental* (edited by Jeff Malpas, 100-121. London; New York : Routledge, 2003), 100.

131 *Ibid.*, 101.

132 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 9-10.

133 Steven Crowell, "Facticity and Transcendental Philosophy" in *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental* (edited by Jeff Malpas, 100-121. London; New York : Routledge, 2003), 103-104.

Crowell finds the reason in Heidegger's attempt to remedy Neo-Kantian impasse regarding the link between transcendental subject and empirical ego. Neo-Kantians consider that mental processes such as experiencing, judging and sensing are considered to fall beneath the empirical science of psychology. They are concrete manifestations that require transcendental subjectivity as their form. The latter enables empirical ego to have objectively valid knowledge. Yet, Neo-Kantianism is ambiguous on how the connection between transcendental subject and empirical ego is established. Heidegger's answer to this dilemma is to introduce factic subjectivity so that concrete subjectivity will no longer be limited to empirical-psychological domain, and shall be a topic of philosophical inquiry.<sup>134</sup> Hence Heidegger manages to occupy a space in which both formalism and empiricism is overcome: "[T]he subject of such philosophizing is not the empirical self (an item in the world), it is no purely formal construct either, since it is evident only along with what shows itself meaningfully as belonging to its own concrete experience."<sup>135</sup> Thus, according to Crowell, Heidegger's introduction of factual subjectivity cannot be seen as an attempt to eradicate a priori from philosophy, rather it is a new episode in the self-grounding, autonomous character of transcendental philosophy. Crowell admits the importance of cultural differences and historical distance yet do not agree with the view that these undermine grasping trans-cultural universals and a priori insight.<sup>136</sup>

At this point, Lafont's response can be illustrative. She agrees with Crowell regarding the primacy of a priori in *Being and Time*. However, this does not stop the work from being a radical rupture from transcendental philosophy, at least in its traditional form.<sup>137</sup> Heidegger's turn to hermeneutics puts forward the structures of understanding and interpretation as the conditions that enable human beings to have any kind of experience whatsoever. Yet, Lafont argues that these have a crucial difference from the transcendental conditions traditionally understood. They are not "the product of pure reason or of a transcendental subject, but of Dasein as it is, in its

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134 Steven Crowell, "Facticity and Transcendental Philosophy" in *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental* (edited by Jeff Malpas, 100-121. London; New York : Routledge, 2003), 105.

135 Ibid., 106.

136 Ibid., 108.

137 Cristina Lafont, "Transcendental versus Hermeneutic Phenomenology in *Being and Time*" in *The Transcendental Turn* (edited by Sebastian Gardner and Matthew Grist, 278-293. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 279-280.

facticity and historicity.”<sup>138</sup> Thus, a priority can no longer be equated with universality and Heidegger’s hermeneutics involve a conceptual pluralism. This stems from the claim that Dasein’s understanding does not arise from a set of invariant conditions, but from the fore-structure of interpretation. Since these are dependent on a particular historical and linguistic context as I have discussed before, there can be many different interpretations of reality that are mutually irreducible. We simply lack any so-called independent reality to assess a particular interpretation as the true one and give it the right to monopolize definitions of reality.<sup>139</sup> How Lafont frames Heidegger’s phenomenology already gives it a more limited force to the extent that its findings shall be based on a particular fore-structure of interpretation. In this case, I find it highly unlikely to arrive an understanding of the meaning of Being in general, since there can only be particular understandings of Being arising from delimited historical periods. Even different social groups of same historical epoch may have different understandings of Being. Heidegger’s discussion of truth shall be crucial for this line of thinking, but before I move on to that topic I have one more reference to make.

So far I have discussed Heidegger’s phenomenology in terms of its transcendental and hermeneutic facets. Now I will discuss a more fundamental issue: Are there any aspects of *Being and Time* that actually undermine the very idea of phenomenology? According to Blattner, Heidegger’s belief in the primacy of practice and his aim of providing a transcendental a priori ontology is especially at odds when a further assertion is made: That philosophy is theoretical-conceptual enterprise.<sup>140</sup> I will begin by clarifying what Blattner means with the “primacy of practice.” He argues that Heidegger considers cognition as a form of interpretation, and since interpretation is a developed form of understanding and thus derivative, cognition is also derivative of understanding.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, Blattner claims that the difference between understanding and interpretation is that the latter stands for the forms of intelligibility that can be expressed in propositions, while the former for those that cannot. In

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138 Cristina Lafont, “Transcendental versus Hermeneutic Phenomenology in *Being and Time*” in *The Transcendental Turn* (edited by Sebastian Gardner and Matthew Grist, 278-293. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 282.

139 Ibid., 288.

140 William Blattner, “Ontology, the A Priori, and the Primacy of Practice” in *Transcendental Heidegger* (edited by Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas, 10-27. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 10.

141 Ibid., 11.

contrast to understanding's inexplicit grasp of the entire framework and environment in which humans are operating, the fore-structure of interpretation that I have discussed before provides the latter with explicitness and conceptuality.<sup>142</sup> This means that our grasp of the world fundamentally rests on some pre-conceptual understanding. Blattner argues that the priority of pre-conceptual (understanding) over conceptually articulated (interpretation) is in accordance with Heidegger's transcendentalism as well. He reminds us how Heidegger conceives his ontological reflections:

*Laying the foundations for the sciences in this way is different in principle from the kind of 'logic' which limps along after, investigating the status of some science as it chances to find it, in order to discover its 'method'. Laying the foundations, as we have described it, is rather a productive logic – in the sense that it leaps ahead, as it were, into some area of Being, discloses it for the first time in the constitution of its Being, and, after thus arriving at the structures within it, makes these available to the positive sciences as transparent assignments for their inquiry.*<sup>143</sup>

Thus, ontology cannot be revised or refuted through the results of empirical inquiry, since the former makes possible the empirical concept formation.<sup>144</sup> Both the primacy of practice and the transcendently a priori status of ontology rests on pre-conceptual understandings, hence they are not inconsistent so far. However, Blattner argues that a third input changes the picture and this is Heidegger's claim that ontology is a scientific endeavor, which means that it should have a conceptual structure and propositional expression.<sup>145</sup> Heidegger tells us that “[p]hilosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structure and its possibilities”<sup>146</sup> and “[i]n ontology, being is supposed to be grasped and comprehended conceptually by way of the phenomenological method.”<sup>147</sup> However, if phenomenological ontology is articulated conceptually and expressed through propositions, then this implies that understanding of being can also be propositionally expressed. Yet, this would make it an interpretation according to the distinction Heidegger makes. Blattner sums it up by arguing that

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142 William Blattner, “Ontology, the A Priori, and the Primacy of Practice” in *Transcendental Heidegger* (edited by Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas, 10-27. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 14.

143 *Being and Time*, 30-31.

144 William Blattner, “Ontology, the A Priori, and the Primacy of Practice” in *Transcendental Heidegger* (edited by Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas, 10-27. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 21.

145 *Ibid.*, 22

146 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 11.

147 *Ibid.*, 21.

*[W]hatever it is that ontology puts into words, it cannot be an understanding of anything, including being. And if it is not an understanding of being, that is, does not line up with the pure productive imagination of Heidegger's Kant, then it cannot enjoy a priori status. It does not capture something more fundamental than the conceptual, something that would thereby prove to be immune to empirical refutation.<sup>148</sup>*

Therefore, in Heidegger's phenomenology, there is not only a conflict between transcendental and hermeneutical tendencies, but his philosophical commitments create further problems for his phenomenological approach. His fundamental distinction between understanding and interpretation casts further doubts about the extent his phenomenological approach is reliable. Finally, I shall conclude this discussion by explicating Heidegger's rather ingenious take on truth, and its consequences for phenomenology.

## **4.2 Truth and Phenomenology**

Heidegger's way of conceiving truth also falls outside of traditional philosophy. He claims that the latter locates truth in assertion (judgment) and considers it as the agreement statements with the objects they refer to.<sup>149</sup> Braver puts forward a similar view by defining this theory of truth as "the correspondence between thoughts, ideas, beliefs, words, propositions, sentences, or languages on the one hand, and things, objects, states of affairs, configurations, reality, or experience on the other; that is, between something on the side of the mind or language and something on the side of the world."<sup>150</sup> However, Heidegger does not consider that this account of truth should be discarded. Rather, he aims to show that it is derivative of a more primordial understanding of truth: "Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein. What makes this very uncovering possible must necessarily be called 'true' in a still more primordial sense. *The most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential ontological foundations of uncovering.*"<sup>151</sup> Uncovering is a way to be for Dasein, and the latter uncovers entities in its daily existence. While assertions also uncover, they require a previous disclosure of Being:

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148 William Blattner, "Ontology, the A Priori, and the Primacy of Practice" in *Transcendental Heidegger* (edited by Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas, 10-27. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 23.

149 *Being and Time*, 257.

150 *A Thing of This World*, 15.

151 *Being and Time*, 263.

*The overarching accordance of the nexus [propositions] with beings, and their consequent accord, do not as much primarily make beings accessible. Rather beings, as the concern of any predicative determination, must already be manifest before such predication and for it. For it to be possible, predication must be able to take up residence in a making-manifest that is not predicative in character.<sup>152</sup>*

Assertions highlight and determine particular characteristics of our pre-propositional, non-conceptual engagement with entities, hence they refer to a derivative form of our compartment in the world. Our pre-predicative understanding of the world is the condition of possibility for any kind of predication. Thus, the agreement between the object and assertion about it rests on a prior manifestation of entities.<sup>153</sup> It is crucial to note this prior manifest-ness, or, in Heidegger's terminology, disclosedness does not amount to a reality indifferent of human beings. There is an intimate and necessary link between Dasein and truth. That is, we cannot talk about either of them without taking into account the other:

*Dasein, as constituted by disclosedness, is essentially in the truth. Disclosedness is a kind of Being which is essential to Dasein. 'There is' truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is. Entities are uncovered only when Dasein is; and only as long as Dasein is, are they disclosed.<sup>154</sup>*

Even the truth values of, for instance, Newton's laws or the principle of contradiction depend on Dasein. Before and after Dasein, there cannot be any truth since states such as disclosedness, uncovering and uncoveredness rest on Dasein's existence.<sup>155</sup> Heidegger declares that "[b]ecause the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein's Being."<sup>156</sup> As long as Dasein is, there is an understanding of Being and truth at the same time, in the sense that entities manifest themselves to Dasein: "Being (not entities) is something which 'there is' only in so far as truth is. And truth is only in so far as and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially."<sup>157</sup>

However, this does not mean that truth is something arbitrary and subjective, as if some group of human beings come together to decide what kind of truths they will

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152 Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks* (edited by William McNeil. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 103.

153 Mark A. Wrathall, "Truth and the essence of truth in Heidegger's thought" in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Charles B. Guignon, 241–267. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 249.

154 *Being and Time*, 269

155 *Ibid.*, 269.

156 *Ibid.*, 270.

157 *Ibid.*, 272.

have. Although we cannot talk about an independent reality on which truth may be based, it is not the case that we are in control of how entities manifest themselves. The way entities manifest themselves is a result of historical conditions, they “build into us” by organizing Dasein’s worldly practices and its disposition toward them.<sup>158</sup> Thus, there cannot be a “final, correct vocabulary which every historical age needs to accept, because it sees that the way we pick out kinds of things depends on a background sensibility for the world that is subject to historical change.”<sup>159</sup> Such a point of view undoubtedly have results for the status of phenomenological findings. If truth, that is, how we uncover entities, depends on particular historical conditions, then we cannot possibly generalize these results as valid for all human beings throughout history. While this does not completely debunk Heidegger’s project, it certainly requires him to narrow down its claims. To further clarify this point, in the last section of my thesis I will analyze a particular part of *Being and Time*: Heidegger’s approach to death as a way for Dasein to be.

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158 Mark A. Wrathal, “Truth and the essence of truth in Heidegger’s thought” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Charles B. Guignon, 241–267. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 262.

159 *Ibid.*, 262.



## CHAPTER 5

### DEATH, AUTHENTICITY AND WHOLENESS OF DASEIN

So far, I have covered the fundamental tensions at work in *Being and Time*. They are caused by its ambitious attempt to combine philosophical perspectives that are at odds with each other. To put it briefly once again, I have argued that *Being and Time* suffers from aspiring to a universalism that comes with an attachment to transcendental philosophy and that contradicts with the implications of hermeneutics. The latter undermines universalism by emphasizing the contextual characteristics of each and every inquiry. I claim that this may most clearly be seen in Heidegger's discussion of death. Heidegger initiates this discussion by asking whether his inquiry has been able to take Dasein in its whole structure:

*If in care we have arrived at Dasein's primordial state of Being, then this must also be the basis for conceptualizing that understanding of Being which lies in care; that is to say, it must be possible to define the meaning of Being. But is the phenomenon of care one in which the most primordial existential-ontological state of Dasein is disclosed? And has the structural manifoldness which lies in this phenomenon, presented us with the most primordial totality of factual Dasein's Being? Has our investigation up to this point ever brought Dasein into view as a whole?<sup>160</sup>*

The importance of taking the whole of Dasein into our grasp rests on Heidegger's initial commitment that only a clarification of Dasein's Being can lead us to answering the question of Being.<sup>161</sup> He contends that the investigation so far has taken into account only the inauthentic Dasein; hence the wholeness of Dasein is missing. To achieve this, the authentic aspect of Dasein should also be laid bare, and this can only be made possible by an ontologically adequate and existential conception of death.<sup>162</sup> I shall follow the same sequence as Heidegger and put forward the structure of inauthentic Dasein first, before I delve deeper into his account of death.

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160 *Being and Time*, 273.

161 "But to lay bare the horizon within which something like Being in general becomes intelligible, is tantamount to clarifying the possibility of having any understanding of Being at all - an understanding which itself belongs to the constitution of the entity called Dasein." Ibid., 274.

162 Ibid., 276-277.

## 5.1 Everydayness of Dasein and the “They”

The theme of authenticity is deeply related to the question of who Dasein is in its everydayness. Heidegger points out that “I” or “Self” is usually considered as something that remains the same throughout the manifold of experiences, as some kind of basis that underlies and connects them. Yet, it is still unclear whether this approach, in spite of its obviousness, is phenomenologically correct.<sup>163</sup> An immediate response might be that since phenomenology begins with what shows itself in itself, and “I” of Dasein is the most evident basis one can get, it is phenomenologically appropriate to begin with the givenness of “I.” However, Heidegger questions this approach by claiming that

*Perhaps when Dasein addresses itself in the way which is closest to itself, it always says ‘I am this entity,’ and in the long run says this loudest when it is ‘not’ this entity. Dasein is in each case mine, and this is its constitution; but what if this should be the very reason why, proximally and for the most part, Dasein is not itself?’<sup>164</sup>*

This might be a puzzling way to put it, but what Heidegger argues is actually pretty straightforward. It is necessary to remind ourselves that Dasein is always-already in a world, hence “I” as an isolated subject, is never proximally given to a phenomenological analysis.<sup>165</sup> Dasein is always already lost in the world of others. Yet, these others are not added to Dasein’s existence later, they are part of Dasein’s very constitution. The existence of other Daseins is not something that needs to be proven, rather it follows necessarily from the worldly character of Dasein. In other words, Dasein is inherently social. Methodological individualism, that is, the requirement to begin with an isolated subject that is presumed to be an immediate given, is an illusion and “[t]his has merely given philosophical sanction to the view that some kind of being with one another must first be produced out of this solipsistic isolation.”<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, Heidegger conceives Dasein’s social existence through its practical engagement with its surroundings. When we exist alongside entities -and this is what

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163 *Being and Time*, 150.

164 *Ibid.*, 151.

165 *Ibid.*, 152.

166 Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*.

(Translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 206.

we always do-, they not only refer to other entities that can be part of our purposeful activity, but also to other Daseins as well. Heidegger tells us that

*When, for example, we walk along the edge of a field but 'outside it', the field shows itself as belonging to such-and-such a person, and decently kept up by him; the book we have used was bought at So-and-so's shop and given by such-and-such a person, and so forth. The boat anchored at the shore is assigned in its Being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes voyages with it; but even if it is a 'boat which is strange to us,' it still is indicative of Others.<sup>167</sup>*

The crucial point is that these Others that Dasein encounters in its worldly existence always belong to a context, they are never encountered as isolated subjects but always already embedded in a network of relationships. Therefore, even the language of encountering other Daseins may be misleading, as if Dasein were an isolated Being at first and only then could reach to other Daseins. Up until this point, Heidegger has analyzed Dasein's situated existence through its purposeful activities. Dasein encounters and utilizes entities in its environment to actualize its possibilities, and this shapes its existence to an extent that we cannot talk about a Dasein without taking account its worldly engagements. While Heidegger's focus in previous sections was on entities which only had Being of tools, he now explicates Dasein's relations with entities that share the same existential structure with it, that is, with other Daseins. In its worldly engagements, Dasein acts with a shared understanding, hence its social milieu is as much constitutive of its existence as relational totality of entities.

Heidegger emphasizes this point by indicating that "we must notice in what sense we are talking about 'the Others.' By 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me-those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself - those among whom one is too."<sup>168</sup> Specifically, Heidegger argues that Dasein's world is always a shared world, or, in Heidegger's terminology, a "with-world." Thus, being alongside others belongs to Dasein's very constitution: "The world of Dasein is a *with-world*. Being-in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with*."<sup>169</sup> An immediate objection to this proclamation might be to stress the situations in which Dasein is actually alone. Yet, this would amount to missing Heidegger's fundamental

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<sup>167</sup> *Being and Time*, 153-154.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

point. Being-with is an existential characteristic of Dasein, and it is the condition of possibility of Being-alone: “Even Dasein's Being-alone is Being-with in the world. The Other can be missing only in and for a Being-with.”<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, Being-with of Dasein does not stem from a multiplicity of subjects physically standing next to each other. It rather implies a shared social meaning. Even a “loner” Dasein can receive its possibilities only from a historical background, and can find its way through in its worldly engagements thanks to socially established ways of behavior and contexts of meaning. As Hubert L. Dreyfus puts it:

*Heidegger's basic point is that the background familiarity that underlies all coping and all intentional states is not a plurality of subjective belief systems including mutual beliefs about each others' beliefs, but rather an agreement in ways of acting and judging in to which human beings, by the time they have Dasein in them, are 'always already' socialized.*<sup>171</sup>

Now I come to an important aspect of Heidegger's analysis of the everydayness of Dasein in regard to its social existence. As I have mentioned above, Dasein always has an understanding of Being which discloses to it certain possibilities that Dasein can take. However, everyday Dasein is thoroughly determined in terms of how it sorts out its possibilities to the extent that it may not even be aware that there is a sorting. For example, it may simply take a certain social possibility such as being a religious and moralist citizen. It does not question what it means to be a citizen, religious or moralist but simply takes their traditional interpretations as granted, hence turns itself into a social automaton. Heidegger claims that everyday Dasein stands in “subjected” to Others, the latter determining the range of possibilities for the former. However, these others are not definite individuals, that is, they can be represented by anyone. To be more exact, what Heidegger has in mind is that these others stand for a particular understanding of Being which is rooted in society to an extent that it is considered as the normal way to be. By sharing it, everyday Dasein enhances the power of the traditional understanding of Being, as well as the latter's grip over each and every individual. Heidegger puts this idea in the following way:

*One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power. 'The Others' whom one thus designates in order to cover up the fact of one's belonging to them essentially oneself, are those who proximally and for the most part 'are there' in everyday Being with-one-another. The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not*

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170 *Being and Time*, 157.

171 Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 144.

*oneself, not some people, and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, the 'they.'*<sup>172</sup>

On the one hand, Heidegger draws a negative picture of the “they.” The latter levels down Dasein’s possibilities, it never allows anything exceptional to come to the fore. The “they” is publicness that determines how everyday interpretations are performed: “Publicness proximally controls every way in which the world and Dasein get interpreted, and it is always right .... because it is insensitive to every difference of level and of genuineness and thus never gets to the ‘heart of the matter.’”<sup>173</sup> By providing public criteria basically on everything, the “they” steals from Dasein the capacity to make genuine decisions. Thus, Dasein does not take any responsibility for what to do or whom to be since publicness always comes up with predetermined ways to be. Hence, Dasein loses itself in the “they,” reinforcing the latter’s grip all the way more.<sup>174</sup> From what Heidegger said so far, it is tempting to see the “they” as a calamity from which one should try to save oneself. Yet, Heidegger claims that the “they” belongs to the positive constitution of Dasein, and although its grip and dominion may change throughout history, it is there as long as Dasein is. The “they” provides us with norms which point out the intelligible way to behave in a certain context. Without these norms, it would not be possible to talk about an equipmental whole and Dasein could not find its way in its daily engagements.<sup>175</sup> The “they” allows Dasein to have a shared, common world:

*[The “they”] implies that the world is always already primarily given as the common world. It is not the case that on the one hand there are first individual subjects which at any given time have their own world; and that the task would then arise of putting together, by virtue of some sort of an arrangement, the various particular worlds of the individuals and of agreeing how one would have a common world... the first thing that is given is the common world -[the “they”]-, the world in which Dasein is absorbed such that it has not yet come to itself, just as it can constantly be this way without having to come to itself.*<sup>176</sup>

It is important to note that the common world made possible by the “they” does not rest on an ultimate foundation. That is, the “they” does not favor a particular way to be because it is “natural” or based on “reason,” although it usually tries to construct itself along these lines. In the end, the “they” just happens to be the way it is.<sup>177</sup> This

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172 *Being and Time*, 164.

173 *Ibid.*, 165.

174 *Ibid.*, 165.

175 *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, 153-154.

176 Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (Translated by Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 266.

177 *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, 157.

does not mean that human beings do not have any effect on the way the “they” is constituted. Their activity may indeed change the average intelligibility of everyday Dasein, but even this can happen only on the background of already established social practices.<sup>178</sup> There cannot be any engagement coming out of nothing, and this is crucial to understand Heidegger’s conception of authenticity. The latter does not consist of a total rejection of the “they,” rather it operates through it: “*Authentic Being-one’s-Self* does not rest upon an exceptional condition of the subject, a condition that has been detached from the ‘they’; *it is rather an existentiell modification of the ‘they’ – of the ‘they’ as an essential existentielle.*”<sup>179</sup> Heidegger’s account of the “falling” condition of Dasein also indicates the necessary role of the “they” in the existence of Dasein. “Falling” does not necessarily have a negative connotation, but rather points out to the fact that Dasein is always absorbed in the publicness of the “they” in its worldly, concerned existence. What one falls away from is the potentiality to be an authentic self.

Heidegger defines inauthenticity as “a quite distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world – the kind which is completely fascinated by the ‘world’ and by the Dasein-with of Others in the ‘they.’”<sup>180</sup> Thanks to this fascination, Dasein lives in a “tranquillized” state, as it is certain that it has the best possible life.<sup>181</sup> Dasein’s thrown Being, that is, its contingent existence is kept hidden from itself: “This downward plunge into and within the groundlessness of the inauthentic Being of the ‘they,’ has a kind of motion which constantly tears the understanding away from the projecting of authentic possibilities, and into the tranquillized supposition that it possesses everything, or that everything is within its reach.”<sup>182</sup> While the authenticity does imply an individuation on Dasein’s part, it is still thrown into certain possibilities. This is because Dasein is born into a historically shared world that has a particular understanding of Being. However, while inauthentic sense passively accepts whatever the “they” put forward, the authentic self takes an active stance towards its heritage and takes over its factual possibilities in a committed and “self-conscious” way.<sup>183</sup> That is, it understands that it has a choice and that these choices may be

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178 *Being and Time*, 161.

179 *Ibid.*, 168.

180 *Ibid.*, 220.

181 *Ibid.*, 222.

182 *Ibid.*, 223.

183 *Ibid.*, 435.

justified by nothing but the fact that Dasein makes a choice. Hence, authentic Dasein is the groundless ground of its Being. However, authentic or not, Dasein is always its “there” and constituted through its “there,” that is, through the network of meaning it is part of: “Thrownness, in which facticity lets itself be seen phenomenally, belongs to Dasein, for which, in its Being, that very Being is an issue. Dasein exists factically.”<sup>184</sup>

## 5.2 Authentic and Inauthentic Understandings of Death and Conscience

Now that I have explicated inauthenticity and the “they”, Heidegger’s views on death can be put forward. As I mentioned above, the question of death first comes up when Heidegger admits that he has not taken Dasein in its whole existence:

*[O]ur existential analysis of Dasein up till now cannot lay claim to primordality. Its fore-having never included more than the inauthentic Being of Dasein, and of Dasein as less than a whole. If the Interpretation of Dasein's Being is to become primordial, as a foundation for working out the basic question of ontology, then it must first have brought to light existentially the Being of Dasein in its possibilities of authenticity and totality.<sup>185</sup>*

Yet, there appears to be an obstacle in conceiving Dasein in its totality. As I mentioned before, what differentiates Dasein from other entities is that it does not have a predetermined essence. It is always a possibility to be, and it may become different than what it hitherto has been. If this is the case, then how can it be possible to grasp Dasein in its totality and wholeness? As long as Dasein is alive, it will always project itself on some particular possibilities, hence a sense of incompleteness seems to be constitutive for Dasein. In other words, the open-ended existence of Dasein appears to be undermining the very idea of grasping it in its wholeness. A possible answer might be that while we may not grasp a Dasein in its wholeness while it still *is*, we can try to do this with a Dasein that is no longer there, namely dead. Heidegger evaluates this response by analyzing the experience of the death of Others. As Dasein’s wholeness in death simultaneously means that it is no longer “there” to understand and interpret this experience, the death of Others may become a gateway to understand Dasein’s end.<sup>186</sup> However, even in this case we do not really understand what death means for the dying person. At most, we can evaluate what

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184 *Being and Time*, 223

185 *Ibid.*, 276.

186 *Ibid.*, 281.

her death means for the people she left behind, as in the case of mourning, for example. The question is, however, what death means to dying Dasein itself, which we are incapable of experiencing.<sup>187</sup> Heidegger argues that the suggestion of analyzing the death of Others actually stems from a presupposition that is clearly not fit to Dasein's kind of Being. Specifically, it is believed that Dasein can be substituted for another rather easily, so that what one cannot analyze in one's own experience can be made accessible in another's existence. In other words, Dasein is an entity that can be *represented*.<sup>188</sup> A lawyer may represent us in a judicial process, and people vote for particular individuals so that they are represented in a parliament. Hence, depending on the circumstances of its worldly activity, a Dasein may abandon some possibilities to others. In this regard, "representability is not only quite possible but is even constitutive for our being with one another. *Here* one Dasein can and must, within certain limits, 'be' another Dasein."<sup>189</sup> However, this possibility of representing is no longer operative when it comes to representing Dasein's end. Heidegger puts it unequivocally: "No one can take the Other's dying away from him."<sup>190</sup> Of course one may sacrifice herself for the survival of another, but the latter's death is in no way taken away from her. Hence, death cannot be taken as an impersonal or abstract phenomenon, it is my death or yours, or hers.<sup>191</sup> Heidegger sees a distinguishing aspect of death in this:

*Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time. By its very essence, death is in every case mine, in so far as it 'is' at all. And indeed death signifies a peculiar possibility of-Being in which the very Being of one's own Dasein is an issue. In dying, it is shown that mineness and existence are ontologically constitutive for death.*<sup>192</sup>

As Heidegger urges us to conceive death rather differently, it is also required to redefine what "wholeness" mean for an entity in the character of Dasein. He claims that wholeness has to be interpreted in accordance with Dasein distinctive status as an entity with a potentiality to be; only then the question of its wholeness can be

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187 *Being and Time*, 283.

188 *Ibid.*, 283.

189 *Ibid.*, 283-284.

190 *Ibid.*, 284.

191 Stephen Mulhall, "Human Mortality: Heidegger on How to Portray the Impossible Possibility of Dasein", in *A Companion to Heidegger*, (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 297-310. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.), 301.

192 *Being and Time*, 284.



settled in a phenomenologically appropriate manner.<sup>193</sup> The first thing to emphasize is that Dasein's wholeness cannot be conceived as some sort of "filling" by adding parts to it one by one. Dasein does not have a developmental scheme, it does not ripen similar to fruit as time goes by.<sup>194</sup> Dasein is constantly "ahead-of-itself" in the sense that it is open to new possibilities, but this does not end in a completeness that was missing before: "That which makes up the 'lack of totality' in Dasein, the constant 'ahead-of-itself', is neither something still outstanding in a summative togetherness, nor something which has not yet become accessible. It is a 'not-yet' which any Dasein, as the entity which it is, has to be."<sup>195</sup> Then, the idea of end has to be conceived in a way appropriate to Dasein.

The end for this entity is what we call "death": "The 'end' of Being-in-the-world is death. This end, which belongs to the potentiality-for-Being-that is to say, to existence-limits and determines in every case whatever totality is possible for Dasein."<sup>196</sup> Heidegger argues that the end of Dasein cannot be considered as fulfillment or disappearance since these are for the entities that have a different Being than Dasein. Similarly, in death, Dasein cannot be taken as some thing fulfilled, or disappeared. In fact, Heidegger makes a terminological distinction in order to emphasize the peculiarity of Dasein in regard to its end in death. He names the end of entities that "merely" lives, such as plants and animals, as *perishing*. Of course, Dasein also has its death in accordance with its biological existence, yet it never simply perishes. This is because Dasein's end is co-determined by the peculiarity of its Being. The latter is, as I have explained above, to have an understanding of Being, and develop interpretations through this understanding. Dasein, in one way or another, interprets its end and Heidegger calls this phenomenon as "*demise*." White points out to this when she says that "we take a stance toward what it is to be as perishing. This is where views of life after death enter in, and indeed determine, the significance of aspects of biological life. Demise is perishing understood in particular ways, for example, as the gateway to heaven or hell, the beginning of the next cycle of karma, or the cessation of consciousness."<sup>197</sup>

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193 *Being and Time*, 280.

194 *Ibid.*, 287.

195 *Ibid.*, 288.

196 *Ibid.*, 276-277.

197 *Time and Death: Heidegger's Analysis of Finitude*, 70.

As it is getting clear, Heidegger's notion of death has far reaching implications than mere biological connotations such as the termination of life at some point.

The crucial aspect of death in Heidegger's understanding is to see it as a distinctive possibility. Heidegger emphasizes this when he discusses death as ever impending. To be sure, there might be many impending events in the environment of Dasein, such as the arrival of a friend or a stormy weather might be impending. But such an understanding of impending does not adequately capture death's impending nature, as it might lead one to understand death as an event that one encounters in her environment.<sup>198</sup> Death as a distinctive possibility has to remain as a possibility, since its actualization means that Dasein is not there anymore. While other possibilities of Dasein come and go in accordance with the circumstances Dasein happens to find itself in, every moment of Dasein might be its last. Thus, "[death] stands before us as a possibility throughout our existence."<sup>199</sup> Heidegger tries to capture this sense when he declares that Dasein is not a Being-at-the-end, but rather it is a Being-towards-the-end. Death does not stand as an ultimate moment of Dasein's existence, but it is "a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is."<sup>200</sup>

In contrast to the "they"'s conception of death as an event that will actualize at some point in time, authentic Dasein conceives death a possibility ever present. Thus, death moves away from being a final point in the successive moments of Dasein's existence. Stephen Mulhall well puts it by stating that "we must reconceive our relation to our death not as something that is realized when we die, but, rather, as something that we realize (or fail to) in our life."<sup>201</sup> Dasein is towards death because as long as it is alive, it constructs itself by taking a stance on itself. That is, Dasein constantly puts itself on the way to the construction of the final version of its identity by appropriating socially intelligible norms, roles and interpretations in its own way and by acting accordingly. That is the reason why Heidegger says that dying is a "*way of Being* in which Dasein is *towards* its death."<sup>202</sup> But before analyzing

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198 *Being and Time*, 294.

199 Stephen Mulhall, "Human Mortality: Heidegger on How to Portray the Impossible Possibility of Dasein", in *A Companion to Heidegger*, (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 297-310. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.), 303.

200 *Being and Time*, 289.

201 Stephen Mulhall, *The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 125.

202 *Being and Time*, 291.

Dasein's authentic understanding of death, I shall first put forward how death shows itself in the average everyday discourse of the "they."

As I have explained above, Dasein, in its everyday existence, is under the spell of the "they." The latter, as a public discourse, has its own way of interpreting aspects of Dasein's worldly existence. This includes death as well. Heidegger, in a quite specific way, puts forward how the "they" conceives death and conceals the latter's primordial meaning. In the public discourse, death is considered an unfortunate event that is constantly happening. Its frequency leads to an inconspicuousness toward it and this is a way for the "they" to avoid a genuine interpretation of this event.<sup>203</sup> The "they" attempts to turn death from an ownmost possibility of Dasein into a public event that remains anonymous: "In Dasein's public way of interpreting, it is said that 'one dies,' because everyone else and oneself can talk himself into saying that 'in no case is it I myself,' for this 'one' is the 'nobody.' 'Dying' is levelled off to an occurrence which reaches Dasein, to be sure, but belongs to nobody in particular."<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, Heidegger claims that the "they" provides Dasein with a "constant tranquilization about death" by hiding it: "Indeed the dying of Others is seen often enough as a social inconvenience, if not even a downright tactlessness, against which the public is to be guarded."<sup>205</sup> Moreover, the "they" decides for Dasein the appropriate behavior in the matter of death, which is avoidance and ignorance towards it: "It is already a matter of public acceptance that 'thinking about death' is a cowardly fear, a sign of insecurity on the part of Dasein, and a sombre way of fleeing from the world. *The 'they' does not permit us the courage for anxiety in the face of death.*"<sup>206</sup> The "they" turns Dasein's utmost possibility into a future event that one has to be indifferent *now*. Hence, Heidegger argues that the average everydayness of Dasein, in its fallen state, has an avoidance of death: "As falling, everyday Being-towards-death is a constant fleeing in the face of death. Being towards-the-end has the mode of evasion in the face of it giving new explanations for it, understanding it inauthentically, and concealing it."<sup>207</sup> By conceiving death as a future event that might be avoided, at least for a while, through some worldly practices such as a

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203 *Being and Time*, 297.

204 *Ibid.*, 297.

205 *Ibid.*, 298.

206 *Ibid.*, 298.

207 *Ibid.*, 298.

healthy life style, what the “they” effectively does is to conceal the finite significance of our existence.<sup>208</sup> Thus, we forget that it is only we who can shape our lives through appropriating in our own way whatever possibilities our context makes available to us. To the extent that we ignore our finite existence, the possibilities of the “they” appear all the more necessary and obligatory. Authentic understanding of death comes exactly at this point. As a possibility of Dasein, it will enable Dasein to understand contingency and groundlessness surrounding its existence.

The authentic understanding of death is for the most part the exact opposite of the way death is understood in public discourse: “*Authentic Being-towards-death can not evade its ownmost non-relational possibility, or cover up this possibility by thus fleeing from it, or give a new explanation for it to accord with the common sense of the ‘they.’*”<sup>209</sup> Instead of seeing it as a biological event that refers to a specific point in time, authentic self of Dasein should conceive death as a possibility. Yet this possibility cannot be thought of in the manner of Dasein’s daily engagements since that would amount to actualizing the possibility, that is, “bringing about one’s own demise” in which case “Dasein would deprive itself of the very ground for an existing Being-towards-death.”<sup>210</sup> Taking death as a possibility also cannot mean to imply “brooding over death” since this degrades death into an event that we can calculate in terms of its actualization. Piotr Hoffman clarifies rather nicely the distinction of death from other possibilities that Dasein may encounter in its environment. He argues that death is constant for Dasein in the sense that it is a pure possibility that does not relate to any actuality or necessity.<sup>211</sup> This is different from a possibility that we try to predict and control by turning it into an event or process in our environment. Hoffman claims that a possibility can keep its pure character only to the extent that it is possible in all circumstances. If a possibility is made dependent on some conditions, it is less a possibility and moves more and more to the domain of actuality. Yet, he further argues that this does not mean that the possibility of death can be seen as a necessity. If we conceive death as a necessity due to causal laws, such as the biological reality of existence, then it is possible to calculate

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208 *The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*, 130.

209 *Being and Time*, 304-305.

210 *Ibid.*, 305.

211 Piotr Hoffman, “Death, Time, History: Division II of *Being and Time*”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Charles B. Guignon, 222–240. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 228.

death's realization to some degree, hence it will again turn into an actuality that will happen in relation to some circumstances, such as old age. In this regard, Iain Thomson is right in pointing out that Heidegger attempts to turn death's certainty to a transcendental or ontological one.<sup>212</sup> The latter is much more fundamental than empirical certainty that rests on the observation that no one is exempted from mortality. By elevating death to a transcendental condition, Heidegger even makes it more primordial than apodictic certainty enjoyed by theoretical and formal sciences. While the latter has its place only as an aspect of Dasein's existence, such as when it conducts scientific inquiry, "under no circumstances whatever is it possible for Dasein to liberate itself from the gnawing sense of its mortality."<sup>213</sup>

While Dasein cannot liberate itself from its mortality, it can relate to it in varying ways. Heidegger employs a terminological distinction between "expecting" and "anticipating" death. In expectation, Dasein relates to its possibilities in regard to their actualization.<sup>214</sup> In the case of death, expectation would amount to conceiving it as an event that would befall on Dasein at some point due to environmental circumstances. A seriously ill Dasein might expect death to occur, a medical study of its condition may attempt to calculate the chances of its survival. Hence, expectation is in line with the "they's" characterization of death, and it cannot be the way authentic Dasein relates to death. How Heidegger conceives death clearly shows that it is not something to "expect": "Death, as possibility, gives Dasein nothing to be 'actualized,' nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself be. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every way of comporting oneself towards anything, of every way of existing."<sup>215</sup> Thus, authentic Being-towards-death must take death as a possibility. Yet, the possibility of death only indicates the breakdown every other, daily possibility of Dasein, those that can be actualized. By anticipating death, Dasein begins to understand that it is an entity that has to project itself towards some socially

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212 Iain Thomson, "Death and Demise in *Being and Time*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 260–290. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 277.

213 Piotr Hoffman, "Death, Time, History: Division II of *Being and Time*", in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (Edited by Charles B. Guignon, 222–240. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 231.

214 "Expecting is not just an occasional looking-away from the possible to its possible actualization, but is essentially a waiting for that actualization. Even in expecting, one leaps away from the possible and gets a foothold in the actual. It is for its actuality that what is expected is expected." *Being and Time*, 306.

215 *Ibid.*, 307.

intelligible possibilities and thereby shape or complete its Being in a particular way.

Thompson summarizes this point rather well:

*Dasein can explicitly encounter its structure as the embodiment of a self-understanding when its projects all break down in death. Dasein, stranded (as it were) by the global collapse of its projects, can come explicitly to recognize itself as, at bottom, not any particular self or project, but rather as a projecting into projects, that is, as a being who fundamentally takes a stand on its being and is defined by that stand.*<sup>216</sup>

Recognizing the utmost possibility of existence, namely death, allows Dasein to keep a distance from its current way of existence.<sup>217</sup> As Stephen Mulhall puts it: “[T]o think of one’s life as fated to be stripped out, rendered hollow or void, by death is to acknowledge the utter non-necessity of its continuation, and hence its sheer, thoroughgoing contingency at every moment.”<sup>218</sup> In the first instance, a possibility of Dasein might appear as necessary and inescapable due to the public discourse of the “they”. Yet, once death is understood as the possibility of the impossibility of any kind of existence, every possibility, social identity, or role that the “they” try to portray as natural and necessary shows its true character. Every possibility of Dasein is as groundless and contingent as another. Hence, Dasein now sees that it alone is responsible for the social role or identity it has. Specifically, Dasein has to construct its identity by appropriating the possibilities of its socio-historical context, one into which it was contingently born, or thrown, into, yet it can never find a substance or an essence that can justify its choices. Mulhall argues similarly by stating that an authentic grasp of death leads Dasein to understand that its existence is the consequence of the choices it has made, and from then on these choices have to be its own, rather than determinate and indeterminate Others.<sup>219</sup> This understanding is accompanied by a peculiar state-of-mind: anxiety. The authentic Being-towards-death is not fearful of death. Fear is always about a particular entity Dasein encounters in its surrounding environment. Hence, fear makes Dasein much more embedded in its current existence, as it attempts to protect itself against the detrimental effects of threatening entities. Anxiety, on the other hand, is objectless.

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216 Iain Thomson, “Death and Demise in *Being and Time*”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger's Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 260–290. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 271–272.

217 “Anticipation discloses to existence that its uttermost possibility lies in giving itself up, and thus it shatters all one’s tenaciousness to whatever existence one has reached.” *Ibid.*, 308.

218 Stephen Mulhall, “Human Mortality: Heidegger on How to Portray the Impossible Possibility of Dasein”, in *A Companion to Heidegger*, (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 297–310. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.), 306.

219 *Ibid.*, 306.

In anxiety, worldly entities no longer matter to Dasein; they lose their significance. Thanks to this, the worldhood of world itself, that is, the possibility of any kind of significance whatsoever, thrust itself to the fore in anxiety: “entities within-the-world are of so little importance in themselves that on the basis of this insignificance of what is within the world, the world in its worldhood is all that still obtrudes itself.”<sup>220</sup> The authentic Being-towards-death is not fearful of death, rather it is anxious to have a choice in constituting its own world, instead of losing itself in its inauthentic existence and its concerns: “He who is resolute knows no fear; but he understands the possibility of anxiety as the possibility of the very mood which neither inhibits nor bewilders him. Anxiety liberates him from possibilities which ‘count for nothing,’ and lets him become free for those which are authentic.”<sup>221</sup>

At the end of his analysis of death, Heidegger tells us that so far he has only disclosed the ontological basis of the authentic existence of Dasein. Yet, this remains phenomenologically obscure, and requires a more concrete expression in Dasein’s Being. Heidegger locates this at the *conscience* of Dasein.<sup>222</sup> He observes that conscience shows itself primarily as the indicator of Dasein’s being guilty in one way or another.<sup>223</sup> Dasein may fail to pay off its debts to someone, or may be responsible for a harmful deed that befalls to another Dasein, or it may break some law. Heidegger is not interested in some particular cases of Dasein’s feeling of guilt, rather he wants to disclose the ontological basis for Dasein’s “Being-guilty” which shows itself constantly. Therefore, he formalizes the idea of guilt by emphasizing its root in “nullity”:

*[T]o the idea of ‘Guilty!’ belongs what is expressed without further differentiation in the conception of guilt as ‘having responsibility for’ – that is, as Being-the basis for ... Hence we define the formally existential idea of the ‘Guilty!’ as ‘Being-the-basis for a Being which has been defined by a ‘not’ that is to say, as ‘Being-the-basis of a nullity’.... Being-guilty does not first result from an indebtedness, but that, on the contrary, indebtedness becomes possible only ‘on the basis’ of a primordial Being-guilty.<sup>224</sup>*

In this puzzling declaration, Heidegger actually tries to draw our attention to Dasein’s contingent existence. Dasein does not have a necessary or determined way

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220 *Being and Time*, 231.

221 *Ibid.*, 395.

222 *Ibid.*, 313.

223 *Ibid.*, 326.

224 *Ibid.*, 329.

of existence, it lacks a ground that it might discover and live accordingly. Dasein has a null basis in that it is destined to make choices among alternatives, and while it might try to bring reasons for these, there is an arbitrariness it cannot escape. Heidegger claims that the call of conscience is indicative of this null basis of Dasein. However, this call does not say anything specific: “The call does not report events; it calls without uttering anything. The call discourses in the uncanny mode of keeping silent”.<sup>225</sup> In its everyday existence, Dasein is constantly under the influence of public discourse and the way it interprets things, this is the only thing that it “hears”. Hence, by keeping silent, conscience allows Dasein to save itself from public interpretations, and draws its attention to its potential to choose its possibilities for itself without presupposing that its choices are justified by the so-called naturalness of the public norms of the “they”: “One must keep in mind that when we designate the conscience as a “call”, this call is an appeal to the they-self in its Self; as such an appeal, it summons the Self to its potentiality for-Being-its-Self, and thus calls Dasein forth to its possibilities.”<sup>226</sup> Heidegger is well aware that our everyday experience of conscience do not appear in this way, but he is insistent that one cannot simply assume that everyday understanding “give[s] us any guarantee that the full possible content of the call of the voice of conscience has been heard therein.”<sup>227</sup> Similar to his interpretive approach to the meaning of death for Dasein, he begins with the everyday understanding of conscience only to show us that a more primordial understanding remains veiled due to the distorting effects of the “they.”

When we take Heidegger’s word on the true nature of the call of conscience, it still remains to show how it relates to authenticity I have discussed so far. As the call of conscience discloses the null-basis of Dasein, the latter can finally acknowledge the kind of entity it is, i.e., an entity for which its Being is an issue. Since this issue can never be “settled,” that is, Dasein can never reach a kind of existence or a way of Being that is necessary and naturally or universally grounded, it will always remain as an open-ended entity. Mulhall captures this fundamental point when he says that

*[A]uthenticity is a matter not of achieving some particular state, but of acknowledging that no particular achieved state is final or exhaustive of our individuality. Inauthenticity would then be the willingness to believe, and to live as if one believed, that one is identical with one’s present state that the human self is*

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225 *Being and Time*, 322.

226 *Ibid.*, 319.

227 *Ibid.*, 339.



*essentially self-identical, capable of coinciding with itself and fulfilling its nature when it does so.*<sup>228</sup>

Thus, authenticity requires further and further commitment, as the “they” is always there to conceal Dasein’s potential to be different than what it is, and to convince it to accept its current state as its destiny. Heidegger invokes another term, “resoluteness,” to portray the constant oscillation between authenticity and inauthenticity. In resoluteness, Dasein’s worldly existence changes: “[T]his authentic disclosedness [i.e., resoluteness] modifies with equal primordially both the way in which the ‘world’ is discovered (and this is founded upon that disclosedness) and the way in which the Dasein-with of Others is disclosed.”<sup>229</sup> This does not mean that Dasein finally reaches its “essence.” It is never the case that we can think of Dasein in its isolation from its worldly activity. That is the reason why Heidegger claims that “[e]ven resolutions remain dependent upon the ‘they’ and its world. The understanding of this [dependence] is one of the things that a resolution discloses, inasmuch as resoluteness is what first gives authentic transparency to Dasein.”<sup>230</sup> Simply put, resolute Dasein sees its situation differently than the “they,” since for the latter “the Situation is essentially something that has been closed off.”<sup>231</sup> Thus, resolution can never be fixed as a some sort of ideal of existence that the call of conscience leads us to, but rather it is always dependent upon the context Dasein finds itself.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, one can never be sure that her resolute take on a possibility will last forever. It is always possible that Dasein embraces once again “the way in which things have been prevalently interpreted by the ‘they.’”<sup>233</sup>

To recapitulate, Heidegger argues that Dasein has a null-basis, that is, it lacks any ultimate ground that justifies its mode of Being. He emphasizes this condition by stressing Dasein’s essential “Being-guilty”:

*Being-guilty belongs to Dasein's Being, and signifies the null Being-the-basis of a nullity. The “Guilty!” which belongs to the Being of Dasein is something that can be neither augmented nor diminished. It comes before any quantification, if the latter*

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228 Stephen Mulhall, “Human Mortality: Heidegger on How to Portray the Impossible Possibility of Dasein”, in *A Companion to Heidegger*, (edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, 297-310. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.), 309.

229 *Being and Time*, 344.

230 *Ibid.*, 345-346.

231 *Ibid.*, 346.

232 “This makes it entirely plain that when the call of conscience summons us to our potentiality-for-Being, it does not call us forth into the hold before us some empty ideal of existence, but *calls us forth into the Situation.*” *Ibid.*, 347.

233 *Ibid.*, 345.

*has any meaning at all. Moreover, Dasein is essentially guilty - not just guilty on some occasions, and on other occasions not.*<sup>234</sup>

Just as he did with death, Heidegger conceives guilt as a transcendental condition of Dasein that leaves its mark in every aspect of Dasein. Thus, Dasein can be authentically or inauthentically guilty.<sup>235</sup> In resoluteness, Dasein understands that Being-guilty is something constant.<sup>236</sup> It embraces its null-basis, that is, Dasein acknowledges its contingent nature and its inability to find an ultimate ground for its choices. Yet, death is also an indicator of the null-basis of Dasein, since it shows us the possibility of impossibility of all existence, that is, complete breakdown of all intelligibility for Dasein. That is the reason why Heidegger claims that the existential structure of Dasein “harbours in itself both death and guilt equiprimordially. Only anticipatory resoluteness understands the potentiality-for Being-guilty *authentically and wholly* - that is to say, *primordially*.”<sup>237</sup> Death and guilt compliment each other by illustrating the contingent and vulnerable existence of Dasein. Contingent, because it lacks any secure foothold in a supposedly necessary order of things, and vulnerable, because every existence it had cultivated so far may break down through the call of conscience. In every moment of its existence, Dasein may be invoked to follow a possibility resolutely, without any ultimate ground guiding it.

### **5.3 *Being and Time* as a World-view**

Now that I have completed my account of the way Heidegger conceives authenticity, I can put forward my critique. Considering that clarifying the existential structure of Dasein is a preliminary for the more fundamental question of the meaning of Being in general, his take on authenticity and wholeness plays a pivotal role in the overall structure of *Being and Time*. Yet, I argue that this is the place where the tension between transcendental and hermeneutical methods can most clearly be seen. There is a tendency to universalize in *Being and Time* that stems from its transcendental roots. As I have explained in detail above, Heidegger sets out to illuminate Dasein’s existential structures that enable him to understand Being. In a more Kantian terminology, he is after *the conditions of possibility* of having an understanding of

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234 *Being and Time*, 353.

235 *Ibid.*, 353.

236 *Ibid.*, 353.

237 *Ibid.*, 354.

Being. The role of death can be seen in a similar manner. Death, or more precisely, our attitude towards it, is the condition of possibility of having an authentic or inauthentic existence. However, I argue that hermeneutical premises, especially historicism, undermines any attempt to universalize death's elevated status and the "they"'s take on it. Heidegger conceives the "they"'s attitude towards death as one of avoidance and denial as he claims that "[i]t is already a matter of public acceptance that 'thinking about death' is a cowardly fear."<sup>238</sup> Yet, does this always have to be the case? Is it not possible that there were, are or will be societies that approach the question of death differently? Heidegger's phenomenological findings regarding death may fit the society he takes as the object of his analysis, but on what basis can he generalize his results as the *universal* take on death for each and every society? Does every society evade death by "giving new explanations for it, understanding it inauthentically, and concealing it?"<sup>239</sup> Is it true that each and every society sees death as a social inconvenience "against which the public is to be guarded?"<sup>240</sup> Does death have to be an anonymous event that "belongs no one in particular?"<sup>241</sup> The problem might also be framed as Heidegger's misguided attempt to include an explicit content for the public discourse on death. If he had only indicated that there is always a public discourse that shapes Dasein's existence, this could have been acceptable as putting forward a framework that might be filled differently according to various historical contexts. Instead, he makes remarks that might be challenged by empirical data: "[e]verydayness confines itself to conceding the 'certainty' of death in this ambiguous manner just in order to weaken that certainty by covering up dying still more and to alleviate its own thrownness into death."<sup>242</sup> As I discussed in the section on phenomenology, Heidegger's keen to assert that its ontological inquiry is more fundamental than empirical inquiry and thus it is immune to any kind of refutation by empirical findings. He indicates that "latent in every science of a realm of beings there always lies a regional ontology which belongs to this science, but which can never in principle be developed by this science."<sup>243</sup> That is the reason why, for instance, "the basic concepts of philology cannot be clarified with the help of philological methods; and the basic concepts of history cannot be determined by

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238 See ft. 205.

239 See ft. 206.

240 See ft. 204.

241 See ft. 203.

242 *Being and Time*, 299-300.

243 *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 24.

researching the sources, let alone be grasped by such research.”<sup>244</sup> I argue that, by putting forward substantial claims regarding society’s approach to death, Heidegger undermines the a priori character of his inquiry, and his fundamental ontology comes closer to being an anthropological work.

Heidegger’s account of authentic Dasein also suffers from similar problems. To what extent he can claim to develop an account of the authentic existence of Dasein that can be part of the existential constitution of Dasein in its universality? Is it possible that his account is only partial, that is, limited in its scope? Heidegger is not unaware this as he tells us that

*Is there not, however, a definite ontical way of taking authentic existence, a factual ideal of Dasein, underlying our ontological interpretation of Dasein's existence? That is so indeed. But not only is this Fact one which must not be denied and which we are forced to grant; it must also be conceived in its positive necessity, in terms of the object which we have taken as the theme of our investigation.*<sup>245</sup>

This line of thinking fits to the hermeneutical perspective Heidegger brings to philosophy. Since every interpretation is situated in a historical and linguistic context, every philosophical inquiry regarding Dasein’s existence must start from a given understanding of the object of investigation. In fact, there are clear signs that Heidegger carries his background to his philosophical analysis, as Thompson argues that

*[I]t is clear that Being and Time’s phenomenology of existential death seeks to secularize the mystical Christian idea that, in order for one to be born truly into the life of the spirit, one must first die to the material world – so that one can be reborn to the world in a way that will unify the spiritual and material aspects of the self.*<sup>246</sup>

To be sure, Heidegger does not exactly frame his account along these lines. In his terminology, the material world a Christian “dies” to is replaced by the world of the “they.” Furthermore, a breakdown of this world as a context of intelligibility does not lead to a life of spirit, but rather to an authentic existence. Similarly, White argues that we can see a precedent to Heidegger in Kierkegaard’s *Sickness Unto Death*. In the latter, Kierkegaard argues that in Christianity death stands for spiritual

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244 *Being and Time*, 25.

245 *Ibid.*, 358.

246 Iain Thomson, “Death and Demise in *Being and Time*”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger’s Being and Time* (edited by Mark A. Wrathall, 260–290. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 267.

wretchedness, instead of physical demise. She also refers to St. Paul, who claims that “the sinner lives a sort of ‘death,’ and, like Kierkegaard, the solution that he proposes is a ‘dying to’ the old life and a rebirth through faith in Christ.”<sup>247</sup> Christian overtones can also be seen in Heidegger’s account of guilt and conscience. Dreyfus and Rubin argue that Heidegger attempts to secularize Kierkegaard’s interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the fall.<sup>248</sup> However, Heidegger tries to reverse the relation, and argues that an idea of “original sin” is made possible by Dasein’s Being-guilty: “The Being-guilty which belongs primordially to Dasein’s state of Being, must be distinguished from the status corruptionis as understood in theology. Theology can find in Being-guilty, as existentially defined, an ontological condition for the factual possibility of such a status.”<sup>249</sup> In *History of the Concept of Time*, he is eager to differentiate his inquiry from theology, and claims that there is no relation whatsoever:

*It should be noted here that the explication of these structures of Dasein has nothing to do with any doctrine of the corruption of human nature or any theory of original sin. What is involved here is a pure consideration of structures, which precedes all such considerations. Our consideration must be differentiated quite sharply from any theological consideration.*<sup>250</sup>

Is it possible, however, to ask to ignore theological connotations, when one’s language is permeated with the concepts of a religious background? As I have explicated above, due to Heidegger’s hermeneutic turn, language can no longer be seen as a neutral medium that only carries pre-established meanings. Rather, it always carries a way of interpreting the world, even if these interpretations are not explicit and are unintended on behalf of the speaker. Hence, Heidegger’s choice of notions that represent a Christian world-view cannot be taken as mere coincidence. It rather indicates that he carries his anthropological assumptions to his fundamental ontology which is supposed to be free of these. Since Heidegger claims to be illustrating the existential structure of *any* Dasein, what he effectively does is to generalize his particular interpretations of Christianity as the ontological basis of each and every human being. Thus, he paves the way for ignoring competing depictions of human beings that arise from different cultures.

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247 *Time and Death: Heidegger's Analysis of Finitude*, 60.

248 *Being-in-the-world: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, 313.

249 *Being and Time*, 496.

250 *History of the Concept of Time*, 283.

The influence of Heidegger's background on his account of authenticity is not limited to his religious affiliations. His indebtedness to the philosophical heritage of European thought shows itself as well, especially in the idea of self as an autonomous agent of ethical choice. Simon Critchley draws a parallel between Heidegger's conception of the call of conscience and Kant's idea of autonomy. For Kant, autonomy is the basic principle of ethics. The ethical principles I should follow must stem from my own reason. If I receive them from an external source, such as tradition or religion, then this means that I fail to act autonomously.<sup>251</sup> Similarly, resolute Dasein answers the call of conscience and therefore shakes itself out from lostness in the world of the "they" in order to have its own possibilities. This is the reason why Critchley sees resoluteness as "a form of *autarchy*, self-legislation or self-origination", and Heidegger's take on authenticity as "an existential deepening of Kantian autonomy".<sup>252</sup> Herman Philipse also sees a radicalization of Kantian idea of moral autonomy in *Being and Time*.<sup>253</sup> Heidegger rejects the idea of supreme moral truth that stems from Kantian rationalism, and instead bases his ethics in free individual decisions rising from resoluteness. Philipse considers Heidegger as the last step in the historical development of ethical foundationalism, that is, in the attempt to ground ethics in the secure first principles. While in Kant we see a movement from heteronomy to autonomy, in Heidegger, universalizability of ethics that occupies a very important place in the philosophy of Kant has given way to an unrestricted freedom of moral decisionism.<sup>254</sup> It is not my purpose here to analyze the historical background against which Heidegger conceptualizes authenticity. However, these examples are indicative of the network of meaning he is part of. Yet, it is crucial not to misunderstand my intent in invoking Heidegger's religious and philosophical background. I do not claim that employing Christian world-view, or following European insistence on moral autonomy, are mistakes on the part of Heidegger's philosophy. In fact, his hermeneutic turn clearly shows us that a philosopher cannot claim to talk from a "no-where," that is, from a neutral vantage point that clearly sees the inner truth of things. Hence, it is quite justified - and inevitable - that Heidegger reflects his social context in his philosophy. The problem begins when his

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251 Simon Critchley, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London; New York: Verso, 2008), 32.

252 Ibid., 36.

253 Herman Philipse, Heidegger and Ethics (Inquiry, 42:3-4, 439-474, 1999 DOI: 10.1080/002017499321480), 468.

254 Ibid., 457.

transcendental background urges him to seek for universal structures. Then what we have is a certain interpretation of human beings, namely Christian and modern European, disguising itself as the generic essence of humanity. Thus, differences among cultures, and their varying conceptions of human beings are ignored for the sake of providing one unified account.

The discussion above can also be framed through the distinction Heidegger makes between philosophy and world-view. Heidegger indicates that a world-view comprises “an all-inclusive reflection of the world and human Dasein, and this again happens in different ways, explicitly and consciously in individuals or by appropriating an already prevalent world-view”<sup>255</sup> World-views arise from particular factual conditions of human beings: “The world-view is something that in each case exists historically from, with, and for the factual Dasein.”<sup>256</sup> This is the reason why philosophy cannot be a world-view. The former should define what constitutes the latter, its condition of possibility, yet philosophy can never develop a specific world-view.<sup>257</sup> Heidegger states that

*Philosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structure and its possibilities. Philosophy is ontological. In contrast, a world-view is a positing knowledge of beings and a positing attitude toward beings; it is not ontological but ontical.*<sup>258</sup>

In other words, philosophy is interested in providing an account of the meaning of Being in general, or what determines entities as entities, rather than a particular domain of entities. The latter is the work of sciences and world-views. The implication of a world-view philosophy would be that philosophy “is supposed to adopt specific attitudes toward and posit specific things about beings,”<sup>259</sup> and this would undermine philosophy’s universal validity and a priori status.<sup>260</sup> However, does not Heidegger posit pretty specific things when he talks about death? I argue that his views on death and the “they” come close to a world-view, that is, he puts forward particular interpretations of human beings and their community in accordance with his factual situation. He fails to develop a universal account of

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255 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 5.

256 *Ibid.*, 6.

257 *Ibid.*, 10.

258 *Ibid.*, 11.

259 *Ibid.*, 12.

260 “Philosophy must legitimate by its own resources its claim to be universal ontology.” *Ibid.*, 12.

death, but this might be inescapable due to the conflicting tendencies of his work. As Karilemla puts it:

*In Being and Time, Heidegger said, 'philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology.' But, paradoxically, Heidegger's phenomenology reveals the human self as both futural and historical, so that in the self of the human being thrownness and projection, birth and death, having-been and not yet 'form a unity' as a stretching itself along temporally or 'historizing;' that is, we exist in the manner of constantly linking up the ecstases of temporality.*<sup>261</sup>

She further argues that Heidegger's goal of providing hermeneutics of facticity is undercut by *Being and Time's* transcendental posturing.<sup>262</sup> This dilemma is also noted by Richard Rorty in relation to world-view/philosophy distinction, as he states that "Heidegger never tells us how we can be historical through and through and yet ahistorical enough to step outside our world-view and say something neutral about the 'structure' of all actual and possible world-views."<sup>263</sup> Hence, showing signs of his own world-view is not a mistake on Heidegger's part, but rather the unavoidable result of his emphasis on historicity. As he himself indicates, "a world-view belongs to the essential nature of the Dasein,"<sup>264</sup> and as a Dasein, he must show his world-view in one way or another.

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261 Karilemla (2015) Heidegger's Contrasting Notion of Worldview in the Early, Middle, and Later Writings, *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 43:3, 250-266, DOI: 10.1080/08873267.2015.1047020, 261.

262 Ibid., 262.

263 Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.), 42.

264 *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 11.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Heidegger's *Being and Time* is a peculiar work in the sense that it allows us to see a fundamental tension of philosophy. On the one hand, philosophers tend to make claims on what reality in itself is by occupying a supposedly neutral vantage points. On the other hand, philosophy is, as in the case of hermeneutical commitments of Heidegger, sufficiently aware that it is a situated inquiry with certain limitations on its scope. In the case of *Being and Time*, Guignon neatly points out what is at stake:

*[T]here is a tension in Being and Time between Heidegger's explicit aim of finding transcendental, essential structures that will serve as a foundation for an ontology in the widest sense, and the concrete results of the existential analytic which lead us to see that such findings will always be culturally and historically conditioned.*<sup>265</sup>

It is crucial to keep in mind that the purpose of the existential analytic of Dasein is to have a basis on which the question of the meaning of Being in general can be answered. Heidegger's task is to set forth Dasein's existential structures, thanks to which it can have an understanding of Being. These structures are not contingent in the sense that we happen to encounter them most of the time, rather they are a priori:

*[T]he existential-ontological Interpretation is not, let us say, merely an ontical generalization which is theoretical in character. That would just mean that ontically all man's ways of behaving are 'full of care' and are guided by his 'devotedness' to something. The 'generalization' is rather one that is ontological and a priori. What it has in view is not a set of ontical properties which constantly keep emerging, but a state of Being which is already underlying in every case...*<sup>266</sup>

Nonetheless, as I have showed above, these structures also portray Dasein as a deeply historical entity. The question is, that once historicism is allowed to flourish, does it still make sense to talk about transcendental conditions and a priori structures? Jürgen Habermas is one of those who saw the difficult terrain Heidegger stands on:

*Existential ontology had followed the transcendental approach so far that the structures it laid bare had to be attributed to Dasein as such; they had retained the*

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265 Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge, 207.

266 *Being and Time*, 243-244.

*character of being above history. This was not consistent with Heidegger's aim of subjecting the basic concepts of meta-physics to a radically temporalized analysis.*<sup>267</sup>

Heidegger himself might be aware of these issues, as his later thought appears to be favoring historicism over transcendental philosophy by stating that “transcendental philosophy too must fall.”<sup>268</sup> Braver rightly argues that Heidegger’s ground-breaking formulation of truth as unconcealment, or *aletheia*, paves the way for rupture from Kantian philosophy.<sup>269</sup> Heidegger notes that “[w]ith the relation of letting-presence to *aletheia*, the whole question about the Being of beings is removed from the Kantian framework of the constitution of objects[.]”<sup>270</sup> By conceiving truth as unconcealment of a particular understanding of Being in a specific epoch, Heidegger is able to historicize to an utmost degree everything we can think or experience.<sup>271</sup> Thus, he comes to conclusion that “thinking is intrinsically historical.”<sup>272</sup> Hence, we cannot expect to find the existential structures of Dasein that shall remain same throughout the history, as these structures themselves are not immune to historical transformation. Heidegger claims that

*1. The determination of the essence of the human being is never an answer, but is essentially a question. 2. The asking of this question and its decision are historical — not just in general, but as the essence of history. 3. The question of who the human being is must always be posed in an essential connection with the question of how it stands with Being. The question of the human being is not an anthropological question, but a historically meta-physical question.*<sup>273</sup>

Note that this perspective is at odds with what we see in *Being and Time*. The existential analysis of Dasein was only a preliminary step in answering the meaning of Being in general. As a step, it had to be completed in one way or another, and the nature of Dasein had to be clarified once and for all. Thus, in his early thinking that includes *Being and Time*, Heidegger would not see Dasein’s essential structures as open-ended because of their historical status. By turning his attention to the historicity of Being, what Heidegger effectively does is remove Dasein from its privileged status so that he can “follow Kant in carrying out his main steps but,

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267 Jürgen Habermas, *Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger controversy from a German perspective*. *Critical Inquiry*, 15, 431–456. doi:10.1086=448492, 441.

268 *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 359.

269 *A Thing of This World*, 260.

270 Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being* (translated by John Staumbaugh. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), 46.

271 *A Thing of This World*, 262.

272 Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* (translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 187.

273 Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 156.

through Da-sein, to overcome the ‘transcendental’ approach.”<sup>274</sup> Braver explains it quite well:

*The transcendental project of fundamental ontology – the grounding of all projections of Being in the unchanging focal point of the subject – has virtually been inverted. But neither does he retreat to a pre-Kantian realism of looking to individual beings by themselves; they cannot explain our access to them or their propensity to undergo fundamental, essential shifts.*<sup>275</sup>

While it is not possible to delve deeper into Heidegger’s later thought, that is, his thinking beyond the “Turn” that happened around 1930s, the references I have made clearly show that he is struggling with the tensions that occur in *Being and Time*. The uneasy relation between transcendental philosophy and hermeneutics that I have addressed in this thesis remains an important aspect of philosophical discussion. That is because it provides a fertile ground to discuss philosophy’s status regarding universalism and necessity on the one hand, historicism and contingency on the other. *Being and Time*, although an unfinished work, operates as a prominent occasion to frame the issues of the debate and possible ways to go beyond it.

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<sup>274</sup> *Contributions to Philosophy*, 138.

<sup>275</sup> *A Thing of This World*, 284.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, Alman filozof Martin Heidegger'in en önemli eseri olan *Varlık ve Zaman*'da takip ettiği felsefi gelenekler arasındaki çatışmayı incelemektir. Heidegger, felsefi düşüncesinde transandantal, hürmenetik ve fenomenolojik geleneklerin etkisi altında kalmıştır. Nitekim, bu etkilenme tek taraflı bir alımlamayla sınırlı kalmamış, bahsi geçen geleneklerde de son derece önemli dönüşümlere sebep olmuştur. Lakin, bu farklı geleneklerin bir arada bulunup bulunamayacağı önemli bir sorun olarak *Varlık ve Zaman*'da karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Tezimde, bu gelenekleri inceleyerek Heidegger'in getirdiği farklı bakış açılarını ortaya koydum. Bir arada bulunmalarının önündeki en büyük engelleri vurguladım ve eserin ölüm ile vicdan hakkındaki analizlerinde bu engellerin en bariz biçimde tezahür ettiğini iddia ediyorum.

Heidegger'in transandantal felsefe ile bağı, Immanuel Kant'ı yorumlayışı üzerinden şekillenir. Kant'ın teorisini pozitif bilimlerin bir temellendirmesi olarak ele alan epistemolojik okumaların aksine, Heidegger onda ontolojik araştırmasının bir öncülünü görür. Transandantal kavramının anlamını yorumlama biçimi de buna paraleldir. Kant, transandantal felsefenin odak noktası olarak nesnelere değil, nesnelere, yani onları deneyimlememizi mümkün kılan yapılarımızı görür. Epistemolojik yaklaşımlarda bu yaklaşım yargılarımızın geçerliliğini sağlayan formel şartları araştırmak olarak yorumlanırken, Heidegger varlıkların varoluşlarını anlamamızı mümkün kılanın ne olduğu sorusuna yönelir. *Varlık ve Zaman*'ın başlangıcı da zaten bir unutuşu işaret etmekle başlar: Antik Yunan'da oldukça önemli bir yer kaplayan var olmanın ne anlama geldiği sorusu artık ilgi görmemektedir. Heidegger bu soruyu tekrar felsefenin merkezine koymak ister. Var olmak, yalnızca varlıklara has bir durum olduğu için araştırmanın dikkati varlıkların bizzat kendisine yönelecektir. Fakat bu ampirik bir araştırma anlamına gelmemektedir. Nitekim, Heidegger tek bir varlığın diğer varlıklardan ön plana çıktığını iddia eder: Biz, yani



Dasein. İnsan için Dasein kavramını kullanarak felsefi gelenekten gelen çeşitli anlayışların okuyucu baştan yönlendirmesinin önüne geçmek ister Heidegger. Buna ek olarak vurgulamak istediği bir şey daha vardır: İnsan her daim bir "orasına" sahiptir, yani belli bir bağlam için var olur ve bu bağlam vesilesiyle bir var olmanın ne anlama geldiği hakkında bir anlayışa sahip olur. Her ne kadar bu anlayış açık ve net olmasa da, Dasein'ı ontolojik araştırmanın merkezine koymak için yeterlidir. Dasein'ın varoluşsal yapıları incelenerek onun belli bir varlık anlayışına sahip olmasının mümkün kılanın ne olduğu sorusu cevaplanmaya çalışılacaktır. Nitekim, Heidegger kendi projesini insanı merkeze alan diğer alanlardan ayırmaya çalışır. Antropoloji, sosyoloji gibi alanlar insanın hakkındaki varsayımlarını ontolojik olarak netleştirmeden araştırmalarını sürdürürler. Heidegger'in ontolojik araştırması ise bu açığı kapatması nedeniyle çok daha temel bir düzlemde hareket etmektedir. Fakat, birazdan daha detaylı bir şekilde ifade edeceğim gibi, Heidegger'in bizzat kendisinin de belli bir kültürün ürettiği insan fikrinden ne derece bağımsız kalabildiği oldukça şüphelidir.

Heidegger'in hürmenetik açılımı tam da transendental yaklaşımın evrensellik iddiaları açısından önemlidir. Hürmenetik, esasen metinleri yorumlamak için çeşitli kural ve yöntemleri ortaya koyan sınırlı bir disiplin iken, Heidegger tarafından insana yönelik felsefi analizin temel taşı olarak tekrar kurgulanır. İnsanın varoluşu bir metin gibi yorumlanmalıdır. Varoluşa yönelik sahip olduğumuz gündelik anlayış incelenerek altta yatan ve bu anlayışı mümkün kılan daha temel yapıların ortaya çıkarılması hedeflenir. Nitekim, Heidegger'in kaçırdığı nokta insanın gündelik anlayışının bütün mekan ve zamanlarda aynı olduğu düşüncesinin gerçeklikten uzak olduğudur. Tam olarak hangi insanın gündelik anlayışı incelenecektir, Avrupalı modern insan mı, Ortaçağ'da İslam medeniyetinde yaşamış bir insan mı, yoksa Antik dönemlerin Asya diyarından birisinin mi? Genel-geçer bir insan modeli üzerinden bir araştırma yürütmeyi hedeflediği görülmekte olan Heidegger'in önünde hürmenetik açılımından gelen iki engel bulunmaktadır. Bunların ilki tarihselliğin sahip olduğu önemli roldür. Zamansallık, Dasein'ın varoluşunun çeşitli yönlerini birbirine bağlayan bir çerçeve görevi üstlenmektedir. Birbirini takip eden homojen anlardan ibaret değildir. Geçmiş, gelecek ve şimdinin birbiriyle kurduğu bütüncül ilişki,

Dasein'in parçası olduğu toplum ve gelenekten miras aldığı varlık anlayışı, toplumsal roller, ve gerçekleştirebileceği projeler olarak kendini gösterir. Zamansallığın sahip olduğu bu önem, tarihselliğin de Dasein'in varoluşunda önemli bir yer kaplamasına yol açar. Tartışmam için özellikle kritik olan ise Heidegger'in her türlü bilimsel araştırmanın da tarihselliğin etkisi altında olduğunu da iddia etmesidir. Lakin, kendi araştırmasının da tarihsel oluşuna yönelik net bir vurgu yapmaktan kaçınmaktadır. Bu durum, Heidegger'in transandantal gelenekle olan bağı üzerinden açıklanabilir. Eğer kendi ontolojik incelemesinin tarihsel yönünü ön plana çıkarması, onun evrensellik iddiasının da altını oyardı. Aynı şekilde ortaya çıkardığı Dasein'in varoluşsal yapıların da tarihin etkisi altında dönüşebileceği düşüncesi ortaya çıkardı. Fakat bu durum Heidegger'in *Varlık ve Zaman*'daki amacı açısından uygunsuz bir durum ortaya çıkarırdı. Zira Dasein'in varoluşsal yapılarına ulaşma hedefi var olmanın genel olarak ne anlama geldiği sorusuna bir basamak olarak önemli. Eğer bu yapılar tarihsel olarak sürekli bir dönüşüm içinde ise, Heidegger'in ontolojik araştırması hiçbir zaman tamamlandığını iddia edemez, dolayısıyla da bir sonraki aşamasına geçemez. Benzer bir durum Heidegger'in dil üzerine yaptığı tartışmalardan da çıkmaktadır. *Varlık ve Zaman*'da dil konusunda iki yaklaşım göze çarpar. Birincisi, dili bir çeşit araç olarak görür. Dil, kendinden önce zaten var olan anlamı daha net ve gelişmiş hale getiren bir ifade biçimidir, bu yönüyle de tarafsızdır, anlamı kurmaz, onu yalnızca aktarır. Daha baskın olan diğer yaklaşımda ise dil bizzat anlamı kurar. Bu nedenle dil öncesi bir anlam dünyasından bahsetmek mümkün değildir. Böylelikle de dil basit bir araç olmaktan çıkar, insanın varoluşuna baştan aşağı belirleyen bir etkene dönüşür. Her dil, içine gömülü çeşitli yorumlar, bakış açıları ve kavramsal şemalar barındırır. Bu nedenle de hangi dilde konuşulduğu konuşulan konu üzerinde derin bir etkiye sahiptir. Heidegger'in kullandığı dil, ve düşüncelerini ifade etmekte kullandığı dil kalıpları açısından düşünüldüğünde, bunların bize evrensel bir yaklaşıma götüreceği düşüncesi, dilin anlamı kuran yönüyle çatışmaktadır. Aksine, Heidegger'in dili, diğer her dil gibi, gerçekliği belli bir açıdan ifade etmektedir, bu sebeple de evrensel, genel bir sonuca bizi götüremez.

Fenomenoloji, Heidegger'in etkilendiği ve transandantal ile hürmenetik yaklaşımlarının rekabet içinde olduğu bir başka felsefi gelenek olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Heidegger, fenomenolojinin bir araştırma yöntemi olarak belli bir pozisyon ima etmediğini vurgular. Araştırmaya konu olan nesneye nasıl yaklaşılması

gerektiğini belirtir. *Varlık ve Zaman*'da karşımıza çıktığı şekliyle de varlıkları varlık olarak belirleyen varoluşlarını görmemize olanak sağlar. Nitekim, fenomenolojik analiz yorumdan bağımsız değildir, aksine araştırmacının aktif katılımını gerektirir. Varlıkların varoluşlarını gizleyen etkenlere, gündelik yorumlamaların yanıltıcı barizliğine karşın fenomenolojik analiz temelde yatan yapıları gün yüzüne çıkarmayı hedefler. Fakat, transandantal ve hürmenetik yaklaşımlar arasındaki gerilim burada da kendini göstermektedir. Heidegger'in ulaştığı fenomenolojik sonuçlar ne derece genellenebilir? Transandantal bir bakış açısıyla yapılan okumaların bu sonuçlara evrensellik atfetme eğiliminde olacağı beklenilebilir, fakat Heidegger'in hürmenetik yanını ön plana çıkaranlar ise bu sonuçların yerel ve sınırlı yapısını, belki de Heidegger'e rağmen, savunma eğiliminde olacaktır. Ancak Heidegger'in hakikatin doğasını ele alış biçimi, fenomenolojik sonuçların kapmasını daraltarak hürmenetik yaklaşımın etkisini daha çok hissettirecektir. Hakikatin kaynağını yargılarda bulan geleneksel felsefi yaklaşımların aksine, Heidegger yargıyı ikincil bir konuma iter. Yargıları mümkün kılan çok daha temel bir hakikat vardır: Belli bir varlık anlayışı önce kendini açıklamalıdır ki buna dayanan yargılar anlam kazansın. Bir başka deyişle, nesnelere ve onlara dair yargıların birbiriyle uyuşup uyuşmadığının değerlendirilebilmesi için önce varlıkların kendilerini ortaya çıkarabilmesi gerekir. Bunun bir koşulu da Dasein'dir. Heidegger'e göre Dasein olduğu müddetçe hakikatten söz edilebilir, aksi durumda, yani Dasein olmadığında da hakikat anlamını yitirir. Fakat bu durum, hakikatin "subjektif" olduğu, keyfi bir şekilde belirlendiği anlamına gelmez. Her ne kadar hakikat yalnızca insanla mümkün olsa da, onu belirleyen çeşitli varlık anlayışlarının tarihsel belirlenimidir. Bu durumun hiç kuşkusuz fenomenolojik girişim üzerinde etkileri vardır. Eğer varlıklar tarihsel şartlara göre kendilerini Dasein'a açıyorlar ise, bu durumda onlara yönelik fenomenolojik incelemeler de tarihsel olarak değişkenlik göstereceklerdir. Her tarihsel dönemde geçerliliği olan nihai bir fenomenolojik analiz, hürmenetik bağılıklar neticesinde olası görünmemektedir.

Bu noktaya kadar transandantal, hürmenetik ve fenomenolojik yaklaşımlar arasındaki gerilimlerden bahsettim. Transandantal felsefenin evrensel geçerliliği olduğunu iddia ettiği çıkarımlarına karşın hürmenetik gelenekteki yerellik ve kısmilik vurgusu fenomenolojik incelemelerin kapsamını tartışmaya açmaktadır. Tezimde bu gerilimin bir örneği olarak Heidegger'in ölüm ve otantiklik analizine geniş bir yer ayırdım.

Otantiklik sorusu, Dasein'ın gündelik varoluşunda kim olduğu sorusuyla yakından ilgilidir. Vurgulanması gereken ilk nokta, geleneksel yaklaşımların aksine Heidegger kendinden menkul bir töz olarak benlik fikrinden hareket etmez. Bu fikir insanın solipsistik bir varoluşu olduğunu, ve kendi dışındaki varlıkların ispatlanması gibi felsefeyi fazlasıyla meşgul etmiş sorunlara yol açar. Heidegger'e göre fenomenolojik analiz bize farklı bir durum sunar. Dasein her daim belli bir bağlamın içinde var olur, diğer varlıklara derinden bağlıdır. Bu bağlar onun varoluşunu, toplumsal kimliklerini, amaçlarını, projelerini belirler; onlar olmadan Dasein'dan söz edilemez, sosyallik Dasein'ın varoluşuna içkindir. Dasein'ın diğer Dasein'lar ile ilişkilmesi de belli bir sosyal anlayış içinde gerçekleşir. İzole bir şekilde var olup birbirine ulaşmaya çalışan öznelerden bahsetmek mümkün değildir, Dasein çoğu zaman kendisini ait olduğu toplumdan ayrı düşünmez bile, içinde kaybolur. Olası bir itiraz, yalnız bir Dasein'ın çizilen bu çerçeveye nasıl oturtulacağı olabilir. Kuşkusuz Dasein'ın "yalnız" olduğu durumlar vardır. Fakat, böylesi bir itiraz Heidegger'in ifade etmeye çalıştığı anlamı kaçırmak olur. Dasein'ın sosyalliği etrafından fiziksel olarak başka Dasein'lar bulunmasını zorunlu kılmaz. Dasein için kaçınılmaz olan şey onun belli bir sosyal miras üzerine var olduğudur, eğer böyle olmasaydı gündelik hayatında neyi, nasıl ve ne için yapması gerektiği konusunda herhangi bir kavrayışa sahip olamazdı. İşte Dasein'a bu gündelik anlayışı sağlayanı Heidegger “das Man” olarak adlandırır. Bu anlayış toplumsal zeminde hakimiyet kurarak kişiyi neyin mümkün olup, olmadığı, nasıl bir varoluş hedefleyebileceği, projelerinin ne olabileceği konusunda “ikna eder.” Her Dasein bu anlayışa öyle ya da böyle dahil olarak onun toplum üzerindeki etkisini artırır. Bu gündelik anlayışa iki açıdan yaklaşmak mümkündür. Bir yandan Dasein'a gündelik varoluşunu sağlama alacak araçlar sağlamakla ona bir yön tayin eder. Öte yandan Dasein'ı genel kabul görmüş bazı kalıplara sıkıştırarak onun kendi potansiyelini keşfetmesini, kendi kararlarını vermesini ve varoluşunun sorumluluğunu ele almasının önüne geçer. İşte bu nokta gündelik anlayışı Heidegger'in gözünde otantik olmayan bir yere koyar. Nitekim, otantiklik gündelik anlayıştan tamamıyla bir kopuşa işaret etmez, daha doğrusu onun sağladığı olanaklar içinde bir dönüşümü simgeler. Dasein gündelik anlayışı tamamen arkasında bırakamaz, yalnızca belli anlarda kendi potansiyelini ortaya koyar.

Heidegger analizini sürdürürken bir noktada bir problem ortaya koyar: Dasein'ı bütünüyle inceleyebilmiş midir? Bu noktaya kadar Dasein'ın otantik olmayan, toplumda hakim olan genel anlayış içinde kaybolmuş halini incelemiştir. Halbuki Dasein'ın otantik bir varoluşu da mümkündür ve eğer Dasein bütünüyle ele almak isteniyorsa bu yönüyle de incelenmelidir. Fakat öncelikle “bütünlük” fikri Dasein'a uygun olarak düşünülmelidir. Dasein'ı diğer varlıklardan ayıran şey varoluşun onun için bir problem olabilmesidir. Dasein'ın alması gereken belli bir biçim, önceden belirlenmiş bir form yoktur. O her daim belli bir potansiyeli ifade eder, her ne kadar gündelik anlayış bunu örtbas edip belli bir varoluş biçimini ona zorunlu olarak sunsa da. Dasein'ın bu özelliği onun bütünlüğünü diğer varlıklardan ayırır, zira her daim bir potansiyelinin oluşu Dasein'ın varoluşunda bir ucu açıklık bırakır. Nitekim Dasein'ın da bir sonu vardır: Ölüm. Ölümün Dasein'a uygun bir analizi bize Dasein'ı bütüncül bir şekilde ele almak için bir fırsat sunabilir. Lakin burada da bizi karşılayan bir sorun vardır. Dasein'ın ölümü demek, onun artık “orada” yani bir bağlamda olmaması demek, dolayısıyla da onu bütüncül bir şekilde ele aldığımızı iddia etsek bile ele aldığımız şey artık Dasein olmayacaktır. Bu nedenle ölüm, ancak ve ancak Dasein'ın kendine özgü varoluş biçimine, yani onun açık uçlu potansiyeline uygun olarak ele alındığında bizi Dasein'ın bütünlüğüne götürebilir. Gündelik anlayışın otantik olmayan ölüm anlayışını ortaya koymak, Dasein'ın yapısına uygun otantik ölüm anlayışına varmak için ilk adım olarak faydalı olacaktır. Öncelikle belirtmek gerekir ki Dasein için ölüm diğer canlılar için olandan farklıdır. Heidegger'in “yalnızca yaşayanlar” olarak nitelediği bitki ve insan olmayan hayvanlar için kullandığı kavram “telef” olmaktır. Ölüm Dasein'a mahsustur. Böyle bir ayrımla vurgulamak istediği şey ise ölümün Dasein'ın yaşamında, otantik olarak anlasın veya anlamasın, derinden bir anlama sahip olduğudur. Ölümümüzün farkındayız, onu belli şekillerde yorumlarız, ve bu bizim yaşamımızı da şekillendirir. Otantik olmayan Dasein, gündelik anlayışın etkisinde, ölümü, belli bir ana mahsus olan bir olay şeklinde yorumlar. O an gelinceye kadar ölüm, saklanması gereken, talihsiz bir olaydır. Gündelik anlayış, Dasein'ı, ölüme karşı kayıtsız olmaya, gündelik işlerine gömülürken kendisine ait olan bu en uç olasılığını unutmaya teşvik eder. Ölüme yönelik otantik bir anlayış ise onu görmezden gelmeyi değil, tam aksine onunla yüzleşmeyi içinde barındırır. Onu, belli bir zaman ve mekanda gerçekleşecek biyolojik bir olay olarak görmeyip, Dasein'ın karakteristik bir olasılığı olarak kavrar.

Hiç kuşkusuz bir olasılık olarak ölüm Dasein'in gündelik işlerinde gerçekleştirdiği türden bir olasılık anlamına gelmez. Zira bu tarz olasılıklar gerçekleştirmeleri üzerinden anlaşılır, dolayısıyla da böyle bir yaklaşım ölümü ya direkt gerçekleştirmeye çalışır – intihar gibi – ya da gerçekleşeceği zaman üzerine bir kafa yormaya dönüşür. Her ikisi de ölümü tekrardan bir olay olarak ele alır, aynı otantik olmayan ölüm anlayışı gibi. Heidegger'in ölümü bir olasılık olarak ön plana çıkarırken amacı farklıdır. Onu gerçekleşmesi üzerinden değil, Dasein'in sonluluğunu ifade etmesi üzerinden okur. Dasein, ölümden kendi sonlu ve olumsal varlığının farkına vararak, gündelik anlayışın öne çıkardığı her türlü toplumsal rolün, kimliğin, projenin, bu anlayışın iddialarının aksine zorunlu ve doğal değil, olumsal ve mutlak bir temelden yoksun olduğunu görür. Böylelikle de kendi varoluşu üzerindeki yetkinliğinin farkına vararak kendi tercihlerini yapma şansına sahip olur, toplumsal olarak kabul görmüş anlayışların baskısından sıyrılarak bireyselleşir. İçinde bulunduğu sosyo-kültürel bağlamdaki saklı kalmış olasılıkların farkına vararak varoluşunu, kimliğini, ve toplumda sahip olmak istediği rolü şekillendirir. Heidegger ölüme ek olarak vicdanı da otantiklik tartışmasına dahil eder. Onda, otantikliğin somut bir tezahürünü görür. Vicdan, Dasein'da kendisini öyle ya da böyle suçluluk üzerinden gösterir: Kişi birine borcunu ödemeyi ihmal edebilir, birinin zarar görmesine sebep olabilir, veya bir yasayı çiğneyebilir. Heidegger, bu tarz örneklerle değil, bunları mümkün kılan ontolojik temeli ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu temeli de Dasein'in kökeninin dayandığı "hiçlik"te bulur. Daha açık ifade etmek gerekirse, Dasein'in önceden belirlenmiş bir varoluş biçimi, yani bir özü olmaması, onu, var olurken çeşitli alternatifler arasında seçim yapmak zorunda bırakır. Bunları çeşitli nedenlerle desteklemeye çalışsa da, son tahlilde kendi keyfi kararına dayanmaktadırlar. Bu nedenle de Dasein gündelik varoluşunda bu tercihlerinden ötürü suçlu bulunabilmektedir. Ölüm gibi suçluluk da Dasein için basit bir olay değil, tüm varoluşunu kaplayan bir durum olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Her ikisi de Dasein'in dayanaksız varoluşunu, yani evrensel olarak kabul görülebilecek, mutlak doğrulardan yoksun olma durumuna işaret eder. Böylelikle de Dasein'i bu durumu kabullenmeye, kendi kararlarını vermeye ve bunların sorumluluğunu almaya davet eder.

Heidegger'in otantiklik düşüncesini, bunun ölüm ve vicdan ile bağı kurduktan sonra tezime eleştirilerimle devam ediyorum. Öncelikle, neyin mevzubahis olduğunu tekrar vurgulamak istiyorum: Heidegger Dasein'ın varoluşsal yapılarını açığa çıkarmayı daha temel bir yerde duran genel olarak var olmanın ne anlama geldiğini bulmak için hedeflemektedir. Dolayısıyla Dasein'ın bütünlüğü ve otantikliği konusu önemli bir yer tutmaktadır ve bu alandaki bir sorun Heidegger'in felsefi araştırması üzerinde etkilere sebep olacaktır. Ölüm ile başlayalım. Heidegger, gündelik anlayışın ölüm hakkındaki düşüncelerine fazla somutlaştırarak ampirik verilere dayanan bir reddiyeye olanak sağlar. Yukarıda da belirttiğim gibi, Heidegger'in çizdiği çerçeveye göre gündelik anlayış sürekli ölümü saklamaya, onu Dasein'ın dikkatinden uzaklaştırmaya, kişinin şimdi kendisini meşgul etmesine gerek olmayan uzak bir anlık olay olarak kavratmaya çalışır. Fakat bu her toplumda böyle olmak zorunda mıdır? Kuşkusuz her toplum ölüm hakkında belli fikirleri öne çıkarır, spesifik bir söylem ortaya koyar. Eğer Heidegger bu noktada kalsaydı, içerikten yoksun, farklı tarihsel bağlamlarda farklı şekillerde doldurulabilen bir çerçeve sunduğu için kabul edilebilir olurdu. Lakin böyle bir çerçeve sunmakla kalmayıp, somut olarak belli bir toplumsal söylemi otantiklik anlayışında temel olarak alması, felsefi araştırmasının a priori karakterine gölge düşürmektedir. Hörmenetik savlarına sadık kalabilseydi, her toplumda kendi yerel şartlarına göre farklı bir ölüm anlayışı olabileceğini göz önüne alabilirdi, fakat o transandantal tarafına ağırlık vererek kısmi bir anlayışı evrenselleştirme yolunu tercih etmiştir. Bu noktada ölüme farklı bir yaklaşımda bulunan bir toplum bulmaya çalışmak gerekli bir çaba değildir, zira meselenin en başta ampirik bir araştırma olmadığını Heidegger ortaya koymuştu. Böyle bir toplumun geçmişte, şimdi veya gelecekte bulunma ihtimali bile Heidegger'in analizinin geçerliliğini zayıflatmaktadır. Benzer bir durum Heidegger'in vicdan için söylediklerinde de geçerlidir. Her ne kadar Heidegger aksini iddia etse de, vicdanı tarif etme tarzı Hristiyan bir arkaplan üzerinden hareket etmektedir. Kullandığı dil dahi Hristiyan düşüncesinin kavramsal şemasını anımsatmaktadır. Hörmenetik yaklaşımın da vurguladığı üzere, dil yalnızca tarafsız bir aracı değildir, aynı zamanda anlamı kuran önemli bir etkidir. Durum böyle iken, belli bir yerele ait olan dili kullanıyor olmak, aktarılan düşüncenin evrensellik iddiasına gölge düşürmektedir, zira mevzubahis olan dil o yerele içkin olan yorumları bünyesinde barındırır. Benzer bir tartışma Heidegger'in otantiklik vurgusunda da kendini göstermektedir.

Otantikliğe olan yaklaşımında Heidegger yalnızca Hristiyanlık düşüncesinden değil, modern Avrupa felsefe geleneğinden, özellikle de Kant'ın ahlaki otonomi fikrinden de etkilenir. Kant'a göre kişinin ahlaki tercihleri kendisine dışsal bir kaynaktan – dini ve ahlaki otoriteler, gelenek vb. gibi – değil, bizzat kendi aklından gelmelidir. Heidegger de, yukarıda belirttiğim gibi, otantikliği, içinde bulunduğu toplumda kaybolmuş Dasein'in kendi kararlarının sorumluluğunu alma, kendi projelerini belirleme ve kendi varoluşunu dönüştürme şeklinde okumaktadır. Bu bakımdan Kantçı yaklaşımın – elbette ki belli farklılıklar dahilinde – bir devamıdır.

Heidegger'in *Varlık ve Zaman*'da ortaya koyduğu felsefesinde Hristiyanlık ve modern Avrupa düşüncesinden izler taşıması, onun önlenebilir bir hatası değil, hürmenetik durumun bir sonucudur. Her araştırmacı çalışmasında kendi bağlamının izlerini taşır. Sorun, bu izlerin yerelliğini unutup, transandantal bir tavır ile onları insanın evrensel durumu olarak görmektir. Heidegger'in dünya görüşü ile felsefe arasında çizmeye çalıştığı ayırım bu konuya yaklaşmak açısından faydalı olabilir. Bir dünya görüşü, insanların kendi kısmi bağlamlarından ortaya çıkar ve dünyaya, insana olan bakışını belirler. Felsefe ise, kısmi şeylerle ilgilenmez, dünya görüşü veya bilim gibi varlığın belli alanlarıyla ilgilenen yaklaşımları mümkün kılan ontolojik temeli inceler. Fakat Heidegger de *Varlık ve Zaman*'da bir dünya görüşü ortaya koymaya yaklaşmıyor mu? İnsan hakkında özellikle ölüm ve vicdan üzerinden spesifik bazı çıkarımlarda bulunmuyor mu? Hristiyanlık ve modern Avrupa düşüncesi temelinde bir felsefi pozisyon alarak, bizzat kendi felsefe tanımının dışında hareket etmeye başlıyor. Heidegger de bir Dasein olarak belli bir tarihsellik sonucu var oluyor, bu nedenle felsefi araştırmasında bu tarihsellikten doğan bir taraflılığın söz konusu olması kaçınılmaz bir durumdur.

Tezimin sonuç kısmında Heidegger'in de transandantal ile hürmenetik yaklaşımlar arasındaki gerilimden haberdar olduğunu gösteren *Varlık ve Zaman* sonrası bazı eserlerine gönderme yapıyorum. Heidegger'in düşünsel gelişimi tarihselliğin giderek daha da ağırlık kazandığını bizlere gösteriyor. Özellikle de hakikatin belli bir varlık anlayışının açılımı olarak görme düşüncesi, varlığın farklı dönemlerde, – örneğin



antik, ortaçağ ve modern – kendisini farklı biçimlerde ortaya çıkardığı şeklinde ortaya konuluyor. Böylelikle, düşünmenin özünde tarihsel olduğu yaklaşımı güç kazanıyor. Bu yeni tavrın bir diğer sonucu da Heidegger'in artık Dasein'ı araştırmasının merkezine koymaması. Dasein'ın da tamamıyla tarihselleştirilmesi, artık onun değişmeyen, sabit ve evrensel varoluşsal yapılarını bulma amacını anlamsız bırakıyor. Bu durum Heidegger'in transandantal geleneği tamamıyla geride bıraktığı anlamına gelmemekle birlikte, en azından özne merkezli bir felsefe anlayışı yerine daha farklı bir bakış açısına perde araladığını da gösteriyor. Nitekim, Heidegger'in sonraki yıllarında gerçekleştirdiği bu dönüşümün, *Varlık ve Zaman*'ın felsefi değerini eksiltmesi mümkün değil. Transandantal, hürmenetik ve fenomenoloji gibi farklı felsefi geleneklerin bir araya gelmesinden doğan çatışmaları, uyumsuzlukları ya da belli noktalarda birbirlerini desteklemelerini incelemek açısından *Varlık ve Zaman* oldukça elverişli bir felsefi alan açmaktadır. Var olmanın ne anlama geldiği sorusunu cevaplamakta yetersiz kalsa bile tek başına bu soruyu gündeme getirmesi bile günümüz felsefesi üzerinde göz ardı edilemeyecek bir etki yaratmıştır. Bir yanda evrenselcilik ve zorunluluk, öte yanda tarihselcilik ve olumsuzluk olmak üzere felsefenin en önemli kamplaşmalarından birine önemli bir katkı sunmaktadır.

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