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**ARTICLE**

**Heidegger's death in symphony of the dead**  
Mohsen Sohrabi and Taraneh Houshyar

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Full Length Research Paper

## Heidegger's death in symphony of the dead

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The question of death is perhaps the most daring question through the history of human beings. In the Western philosophical tradition death is mostly depicted as an event, a coming of a final chapter of every human's life with which his course of life concludes its narration. Except Martin Heidegger whose conception of death is the existential constitution of human being, announcing and revealing the Nothing of the world. He interprets death as a way of life, alongside the Nothing that equally shapes the meaning of every experience. Literature can best exemplify such a living death through narratives of the Nothing of Heideggerian world. To this end, the current paper studies a Persian novel, *Symphony of the Dead* (2001) by Abbas Maroufi. In this discussion, methodology is explicitly the phenomenology of death which Heidegger explicates in *Being and Time* (1927), and it concluded that death is experienced not as an event, but the unifying structural necessity in which past and present are only possible in the future dying experience. It also concludes that dying as a way of life not only overshadows death as an event, but is also the ultimate ground for the possibility of such thinking of death.

**Key words:** Abbas Maroufi, anxiety, being and time, dasein, death, temporality.

### INTRODUCTION

The quest and question of death *had* long provided for human beings the directives and dimensions according to which his course of life could be meaningful and even necessary. From Gilgamesh and Oedipus to Hamlet and Raskolnikov death was the primary unfolding of an uncanny dimension of man's being through which man as the essential sheltering of oppositions gets revealed. Gilgamesh is a demi-god who faces with the certainty of his death; Oedipus is redeemer and sickness, exile and native to his city, husband and son to his mother, and the closest to his fate when he thought he is the farthest. In the same manner, a considerable amount of modern Persian literature deals with death and life in the face of what is an eminent death. What is to be discussed in this paper is the application of phenomenon of death

(provided by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (2010) on *Symphony of the Dead* (2001) a novel by Abbas Maroufi. It is concluded that so much like a symphony which all the notes play a significance to the overall narrative, death is also experienced not as an event, but the unifying structural necessity in which past and present are only possible in the future dying experience. It also concludes that dying as a way of life not only overshadows death as an event, but is also the ultimate ground for the possibility of such thinking of death.

Some important considerations must be kept in view. First is Heidegger's premonition in "A Dialogue on Language (1982)" about applying European concepts on Eastern literature.

He claims that such "consideration must ultimately

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remain alien" (1982: 2) to Asian's, presumably because the revelation of being and/or history of being in its un/concealing may have manifested differently. In this Heidegger does not mean that it must be absolutely impossible to work out an analysis through and within a European concept. But that such analysis must remain auxiliary to a more primordial and grounding concept of what-is in the native culture.

Second, since such primordial concept of what-is is absent for Persians in a way in which a literary text can be analyzed systematically, this paper approaches the question of death using Heidegger's phenomenology. Consequently, the explication of authenticity and historicity must be drawn necessarily from Heidegger's philosophy.

## METHODS

### Dasein, wholeness, and existential death

Heidegger begins Division II of *Being and Time* with a thematic and methodological question concerning the unity of his hermeneutic readings by which he approaches the unity of Dasein to provide a "phenomenological certainty" (*Being and Time*, 2010: 222) of what was only "formally indicated" (*BT*, 221) about Dasein's existence. His analysis entails that he must bring Dasein primordially in its wholeness into the fore-sight of the hermeneutic (Guignon, 2002a, 196). So far, he has analyzed the everyday inauthentic mode of Dasein's existence; but to have claim on primordially of Dasein Heidegger must free Dasein as it is a whole and authentic. But Dasein "whose essence [Essenz] is made up of existence opposes itself to the possibility of being comprehended as a whole being" (*BT*, 223).

This is due to the structure of care as being ahead-of-itself which states that as long as Dasein is, it is ahead-of-itself toward a potentiality-of-being of Dasein (Blattner, 2005: 315). But to have worked out through the hermeneutical analysis Dasein must have a peculiar end which does not contradict the care structure caused by mistaking Dasein as a "process" (Guignon, 2005, 395); rather the end as "belonging to the potentiality-of-being" which "limits and defines the possible totality of Dasein" (*BT*: 224). Such an end is included in the existence of Dasein, it is not an event above and beyond existing which later befalls on Dasein; but rather "incorporated" (Adkins: 17; Hoffman: 1993) as a way of being between birth and death.

The end of Dasein is a "not yet" (*BT*: 236) which belongs to its care structure as ahead-of-itself. This ending is not absent in the being of Dasein \_as if something outstanding must be added to it in order for it to reach its wholeness. Instead "Dasein always already exists in such a way that its not-yet *belongs* to it" (*BT*:

234).

The insanity which engulfs Ideen, the protagonist of the *Symphony of the Dead*, is not a mere collapse of the mind but the loss of the ground for identifying the significance of one's world and one's character. The absence of such ground belongs to the un/grounding character of the being of Dasein. This unground belong to the essence of Dasein as its existential death. To provide another example; when Oedipus turned away from Corinth, fleeing from his fate, he arrived into a crossroad. The road that he took laid bare the possibilities that he must essentially confront and realize. In stepping ahead into the road, Oedipus had already included what awaits him as his fate at the end of the road. Although Heidegger warns us that the road analogy does not benefit Dasein's ending, yet Oedipus and his fate decided by that road shed light to the belongingness of an end to the very constitution of Dasein's being.

Heidegger himself might have invited such conception of the wholeness from his reading of Greek tragedies. He refers to the Greek as the beginning of the questioning of being which has since characterized the thinking of the west. He claims that "A genuine beginning, as a leap, always is a head start in which everything to come is already leaped over, even if as something covered up. The beginning already holds the end concealed" (White, 2005: 95)

The ending which is discussed here is "a being toward the end [Sein zum Ende]" (*BT*, 236) of Dasein. Therefore, as the end of Dasein, "Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein" (*BT*: 241). Hermeneutics assert that to have the end of something is essential for it to be meaningful as a unity (Guignon, 2004a: 126), because an end limits and bounds the phenomenon and gives it its clear and distinguished character. Similarly, death of Dasein gives it a character in a definite way. Such death, as the possibility of sheer impossibility of its being is always and already included in Dasein's existence.

Dasein's existence is its *standing out toward* a possibility of itself. This projective standing out is the openness of Dasein delivered over to the openness of the thrown ground (Nichols, 2000 9). Such projection is toward a possibility of Dasein, toward an understanding of being as that which grants meaning to the projection itself and that which Dasein is projected into (White, 2002: 335). If death is the possibility of the impossibility of Dasein, then it means that it is the end for the opening of being. Since Dasein is defined by its possibilities rather than its actuality, "the appropriate conception of death refers not to its lack of actuality but to its lack of possibilities" (White, 2005: 76) Existential death brings Dasein to the understanding of its possibilities as finite, as having a "limit-situation" (Blattner, 2002: 325) in view of which what is ownmost possibility must be freed and gained (Mulhall, 2005: 303) as always factually "decided

in this or that way in its being-toward-death" (*BT*: 240). Now that existential death sets the limit to the existence of Dasein we must analyze what counts as the ownmost possibility in view of that limit.

### Being toward death, in/authenticity

The question that is addressed here is how Dasein is or must be toward its death. The significance of the question is expressed by White (2005): "If a revelation of being is what gives Dasein its able-to-be as the entity which *is* its possibilities, then...where Dasein's possibilities leave off and its impossibilities begin is also determined by its way of being" (77). Heidegger uses anxiety as "the most far-reaching and most primordial possibilities of disclosure" (*BT*: 176) to "refer to the reverse side of that openness, to the possibility that everything might close up, that the Nothing might cease to nothing" (Visker: 2004, 71). If such primordial disclosure defines the limits of Dasein's existence in a way in which Dasein has itself as a totality in view and based on it modify its way of being toward its death as "mineness [Jemenigkeit]" (*BT*: 42), then it has broken away with the everyday flow of life and has authenticated itself.

Contrary to the structure of fear, anxiety is the indefinite character of the world which howls to Dasein "a naked "that" against the background of nothingness" (Safranski: 1998, 162) in which the significance of Dasein's thrown character and null projections are disclosed. An anecdote, quoted from Freud, appeared in Visser's discussion of anxiety which depicts the anxious moment of being of a naked "that":

While I was in the next room, I heard a child who was afraid of the dark call out: 'Do speak to me, Auntie! I'm frightened!' 'Why, what good would that do? You can't see me.' To this the child replied: 'If someone speaks, things lighten up. (75)

Heidegger repeats that anxiety is "the disclosedness of the fact that Dasein exists as thrown being-toward-its-death" (*BT*: 241). But how anxiety frees this being-toward-death? By transforming what everyday Dasein understands as possibility; in other words, possibility is understood as expecting the actualization and realization of something in the future. But anxious Dasein frees possibilities as possibilities (*BT*: 250) through which the character of death is disclosed as "an eminent imminence" (*BT*: 241). Anxious Dasein in being toward its ownmost possibility anticipates it (*BT*: 251). It is not that in anticipation Dasein calculates the time and event of its death, but rather anticipation culminates in bringing the whole of Dasein in view in a way that Dasein faces its extreme possibility of impossibility, and "opens itself to a constant *threat* arising from its own there" (*BT*: 254). One

can think of Dostoevsky being on death row for treason which not only disclosed the anxious "there" of his world more penetratingly, but also brought him to the Janus face of death as belonging to him always and ever but now more manifested.

But anxiety not only opens a new projective demand, it also discloses the past anew. "It turns Dasein back to the way it is thrown into a disclosure of being as the source of possibilities which can be repeated" (White, 2005: 118). The nothing that it has come to, and the nothing that it must project into, announces itself most properly in anxiety. Anxiety brings Dasein to the *resolution* of its thrown ground which Heidegger characterizes as "the reticent projecting oneself upon one's ownmost being-guilty which is ready for anxiety" (*BT*: 284)

Resoluteness is a quality of a vision which is open in encountering every situation; it is not merely triggered by circumstances but rather brings an open view resolutely into every circumstances. White (2005) warns us that to interpret resoluteness as being "strong-willed" is a mistake, and instead we must:

...consider the optical meaning of 'resolution.' A microscope may disclose something as an indefinite blur, which is analogous to the way anxiety discloses what-is, but then adjusting its resolution will enable us to see what the thing in question is. We can also think of a resolution as resolving the question of being, that is, a re-solution. (116)

The realization of "self-constancy" (*BT*: 290) and being constantly guilty is the only way in which resoluteness has made itself "transparent" (*BT*: 292). Dasein is transparent in anticipatory resoluteness which opens for it the recognition that it is the groundless ground of its own being, while it is directed and always already delivered over to the ownmost possibility of its non-being. It is in this sense that White (2005) accords: "Running ahead to shatter itself against death. Dasein also shatters the stage of existence it had already reached and thus is prepared to take a new stand toward being" (91). On the contrary, inauthentic Dasein flees away in the face of anxiety and transforms it as fear in the face of an objectively-present entity within the world. It is in the face of fear of eminent but absent death that Urhan, the antagonist of the *Symphony of the Dead*, murders his paralyzed brother to avoid the echo of death (his brother) chewing the walls of their house. The public of everydayness tranquilizes inauthentic Dasein in the face of an indefinite and uncanny mood assailing it from the nothing and nowhere of the world. At best, for it, being toward death is thinking about death; not as an impossible possibility but as the demise of Dasein. Inauthentic life "tends to be experienced as an episodic sequence of calculative strategies lacking any cumulative significance or overriding purpose" (Guignon, 1993: 230).



## Temporality

Heidegger is not confined with care as the structural totality of Dasein's being. He presses ahead to look for the condition of possibility of having care as the totality which belongs to Dasein at all; "What makes possible this authentic being-whole of Dasein with regard to the unity of its articulated structural whole?" (*BT*, 310). Heidegger summarizes that with the analysis of care, from the anxious perspective, we have come to anticipatory resoluteness. But what is the condition of anticipating and coming resolutely to the there of Dasein? Heidegger answers that it arises from the future; "only in that Dasein *can* come toward itself *at all* in its ownmost possibility" (*BT*: 310-311). And since Dasein is always delivered over to the factual ground of itself, resolute Dasein must "*be* the thrown ground of nullity" which means "to authentically *be* Dasein in the *way that it always already was*" (*BT*: 311). Therefore, resolute Dasein is concluded and excluded in its constant guilt of its nullity which repeats itself as long as Dasein exists. This temporal unfolding is "the meaning of authentic care" (*BT*: 311). Heidegger delineates the ecstasies of temporality as the ways of Dasein's standing out toward its death. To stand out for Dasein is to have "The creation of a field of possibilities for Dasein's activity" (White, 2005: 96) through which the meaning for every projection and thrownness is provided by the primary sending of being; in this sense, the past arises from the future.

The dead narrator of the novel<sup>3</sup>, Sormelina, calls the reader and the characters in the novel to listen to the gravity of her situation where she travels within and without the mind of Ideen and *foresees* what will shape the past:

He had become a person who had cut himself off from his own future and his present and who had clung to his past. He had become despondent. He liked being alone more than anything else. Between confrontation and avoidance, he always chose avoidance [. . .] I said to myself: 'Sormelina is dead' (Maroufi, 2007: 192)

Foreseeing in this novel is to have casted oneself into the sheer weight of the possible moment and struggle to break free so that one can bring himself to the pre-sent only when one has been deeply infected. This anticipation arises from the demanding character of future through which the in/authentic identity of Dasein is revealed. From the future the question as how one forms one's character is put into the test. This questioning folds back into the past of Dasein to appropriate an understanding of what have-been, and meet Dasein in its present situation to decide its own way of being and dying. In the same manner, Ideen is called from his future

to decide his future; "Years later, whenever Ideen recalled his childhood, he realized that everything had changed from that moment on [. . .]. These were dreams or nightmares that proved real later on" (Maroufi, 2007: 89).

The future is not coming in a linear procession of ordinary conception of time, but to make possible "a standing open toward being" (White, 2005: 98). It is from this future that the past (having-been) arises as having a significant totality in the wholeness of Dasein which leads to Dasein's appropriation of its past into the thrown ground of the present. Likewise, the present is the "pre-sent (Gegen-wartigen)" (White, 2005: 97) of the cumulateness and directives of the having-been and future (Guignon, 2000: 89). Authentic Dasein *repeats* the null ground of its having-been with the view opened to it by the futural being-toward-death. The nothing that accompanies Dasein as its essential constitution follows Dasein from behind and before. The inauthentic Dasein *forgets* such nullity by being tranquilized and alienated within the publicity of its society. The authentic Dasein is delivered to the open of its pre-sent in a moment of vision in which a new understanding of being prevails. Guignon (2000) compares the authentic and inauthentic pre-sent of Dasein referring to Heidegger's interpretation of St. Paul:

For St. Paul, Heidegger claims, salvation is not a matter of waiting for a future event, but rather of decisively assuming one's context of becoming a Christian in order to be prepared for the Event which is already happening. Such a moment of decision contains in itself a moment of vision, a *kairos*, in which one lucidly grasps all that has come before and all that is yet to be in one 'twinkling of the eye' (88).

In such literature, the self of Dasein is not a substantiated phenomenon which is dormant and dominant, but rather *having* a self is an accomplishment which is futural and always already "underway" (Guignon, 2004a: 127; Gall, 2003). Dasein is characterized as "(I) am *\_\_dead Sum moribundus*" (Courtine, 102; Hoffman, 1993) who comes to its identity against the imminence death, as its essential constitution.

Being-toward-the-end is the condition of possibility of having our lives accessible to us in what is to be a "Gestalt" or "morphe" (Guignon, 2004a: 127). The character of Ideen seemed to have devised after Raskolnikov. But whereas Raskolnikov is mostly delirious and nightmarish, Ideen is poetic and ascetic. Narrated by his dead wife, Sormelina, Ideen is having a dream in which he has become Christ<sup>4</sup>. Whereas Raskolnikov tries to start a historical era and a new beginning in human understanding of himself, so much like Napoleon; Ideen's passion and will is to locate himself into a historical

<sup>3</sup> Pagination follows from English version of the book, translated by Lotfali Khonji. 2007. UK: Aflame Books.

<sup>4</sup> " That night, Ideen dreamed of himself as Jesus Christ, with a crown of thorns on his head and a cross on his back. He was being taken to a desert in order to be crucified" (Maroufi, 2007, 169)

significance within his native land. But the attuned understanding of the self in both characters bears considerable similarities. Both are melancholic and reserved, both yearn for a loneliness in which they try to gain a unified understanding of their future course of actions; and both find their way to salvation in the love for an other. In this attuned understanding, each choose different modes of comportment and projection with the look they acquired from their past significance of actions; and hence the corresponding demand to identify themselves as having a clarity and totality. Raskolnikov later yearns for company, for discussion with its people while Ideen is thrown into the open mood of solitude. It is only after his madness that we see Ideen attending the bars and reading newspapers for his audience. To project from his attuned being with the significant understanding of his past has brought Ideen into a secluded and poetic disclosure of his world in madness.

Being-toward-death recognizes a "space of possibility" (Wrathall, 2005: 340) in which a new understanding of being happens through which the authentic Dasein gathers in itself in a moment of epiphany. Heidegger has borrowed some of his existential parts of *Being and Time* from Kierkegaard. White (2005) asserts such connection in explaining a context of authentic temporality:

Because he [Dasein] projects a new future for himself, for example, that of a Christian, he comes to a new understanding of his past as despair and sin... The new understanding of this future and his past determines what he does in his life at present. This example anticipates the authentic timing of timeliness in the way a change in the understanding of being reconfigures future, past, and present. (100)

## DISCUSSION

### A narrativist view of *symphony of the dead*

Charles Guignon has provided a reading of Heidegger's authenticity and death in which the hermeneutical analytic of Dasein is assimilated to the hermeneutical approach to a text. Such reading can be applied on literary works in a sense that both the work itself and the Dasein of literature can be explicated in a narrative totality. This totality is expressed in a text as the text unfolds and moves toward its final conclusion through which the significance of past events comes into a new light and understanding. With respect to this:

We all draw our concrete ways of understanding and evaluating ourselves from the pool of possible interpretations made accessible in the social context in which we find ourselves. But, at the same time, we have the ability to shape an identity for ourselves by taking over those social interpretations in our active lives and knitting them together into a unique life story (2004b: 65).

Although Carman believes that such reading of

Dasein is inappropriate in that death cannot conclude Dasein as a narration concludes a story (Carman, 2005: 287), Guignon parallels three elements of a narration with corresponding existentials of Dasein. First, in the narrativist conception, so much like a story which is built and appropriated out of raw material of history and social context of significance, Dasein too achieves its totality of selfhood in combining and modifying its heritage to its present understanding of what is demanded of it. As a result "the self is something we *do*, not something we find. We are self-making or self-fashioning beings" (Guignon, 2004b: 65). Carman's objection to such picture is that since Dasein is existentially constituted with a thrownness in which it is delivered over to its null ground, it cannot direct its self-making as an operative projection (Carman, 2005: 287).

Carman... views *Being and Time* in terms of first-, second-, and third-person perspectives, where "Authentic modes of existence [ : : : ] are those in which Dasein stands in a directly first-person relation to itself" (2005: 285). This may not be problematic in its own right, but it is misleading, since it tends to make Heidegger's position sound too close to the tradition he is critiquing (Burgess and Rentmeester, 2015: 36-37).

Second, the narrativist view provides a foothold for the discussion that Dasein's existence and its context of sociality are dichotomous<sup>5</sup>. Guignon claims that the context of sociality for Dasein is what language is for the story teller (2004b: 66) through which original ways of understanding possibilities and directive demanding are accessible.

Third is the conception of time in such narrativist view which holds that future has the defining character over past and present. In a narration, the events and story line move toward a specific point of resolve in which the totality of meaning of every particular incident gains its content and significance. A work of literature follows the metaxy which is the characteristic of Dasein (Nichols: 2000: 5) in which "the present is experienced not as the one truly existing time, but rather as a point of intersection between future and past, the context of action in which purposes can be realized thanks to what is made accessible from the past" (Guignon, 2004b, 66). This metaxy is best manifested in literary technique of stream of consciousness.

Ideen mourns in the nostalgic feeling aroused by the dancing of his wife whom he has not even met," ...whenever he saw a girl dance, he felt sad. He didn't know why..." (2007: 90). The omniscient narrator reminds us that the same feeling assails him when his wife is

<sup>5</sup> Boedeker, Edgar C. "Individual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating *das Man*, the *Man*-self, and Self-ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure." *Inquiry*. No. 44. 2001.

Bracken, William F. "Is There a Puzzle About How Authentic Dasein Can Act?: A Critique of Dreyfus and Rubin on Being and Time, Division II." *Inquiry*. Vol. 48. No. 6. 2005.

dead (2001: 141). The present is the focal point in this novel through and around which past and future are disclosed. Such disclosure is not linear or even retrospective, but rather like Yeat's "gyre" in *Sailing to Byzantium* revolves around a point in different significances and revelations. The pre-sent is a pulsing light which sends different patterns of beams to reach different points in past and future. This pulsation has a futural movement which as far as it lightens the future, so much it discloses the past too. Stream of consciousness in this novel is dominant mostly in the form of interior monologue. It is within interior monologues as authentic dialogue of a self to itself that Ideen foresees what is to come in the future and what has been nulled in the past; "He also wondered why he wanted me to always be in his mind. But he did know that whenever he woke up in the morning, I was in his mind, I loved him, and I was not there" (2007: 193). He could resolutely see the movement of the totality of his story line in which his twin sister commits suicide, his brother Urhan substitutes the character of their father, his wife dies of cancer and his poems and books are burned in his room. It is at such moment of epiphanic revelation of future disclosure that he complains of terrible headaches which finally conclude in his madness:

Nothing was being seen. Time had stopped. There, parched soil stretched as far as the horizon and had no color. Flowers had dried up. No wind blew. Their scalps prickled. A fluid weightlessness was about to burst under [an] intense pressure. It was neither day nor night. When was it then? And why was something constantly beating? (2007: 160)

*Symphony of the Dead* opens with the story of Able and Cane, and projects what is to come in the course of its narration. In two respects such starting point harks back to the narrativist view; first the novel takes over what has been handed down to it in its heritage and hands it down to later generations with a new look projected from the primary story to the present situation of a people at war. It questions the formation of an in/authentic self who is born in the modern time but bears the same past and path that is revealed through the story of Able and Cane. Therefore, the book appropriates the story into what is important for the modern people as questioning and demanding.

Second, the question of morale, and sin, brotherhood and love, family and the individual comes into a new understanding which demands a response from its readers and its people. Guignon provides an example referring to Greek tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles:

[These tragedies]...sketch out the possible way of understanding victory and defeat, blessing and curse, and they thereby call for a choice from the people as to

how they will understand their lives in the light of these works. The world opened by the work is therefore described as "the clearing of the path of the essential guiding directions with which all *decisions* complies" (OWA: 55). (2000: 99).

One of the significant climaxes of the story is where Ideen's poems are burnt by his father in the fear that they might be Fascist's propaganda. This point in the story discloses not only what counts as morality of authenticity in a time of war, but also the classical collision between father and son in Persian literature (a significant example of the latter is *Shahnameh's* battle between Rostam and Sohrab; also depicted in Mathew Arnold's "Sohrab and Rostum" (1853). Figuratively; for Ideen, poetry enacts as the "exemplary being" (Guignon, 2002b: 48). In what Guignon calls "expressivist ontology", Dasein is such that in its expression lets the entities show themselves as what they are, while it itself as the horizon of intelligibility becomes truly itself. It is in his commitment to poetry that Ideen comes to understand himself authentically and set the path of his future in resolutely coming to every situation. The commitment to poetry for Ideen is not so much a personal endeavor but an epochal demanding for a new way of being, a new understanding of what-is.

To make a commitment is not just to leap one way or another for the sake of leaping; rather, becoming committed to something is most often experienced as *answering a call or responding* to something outside ourselves, something that makes a demand on us (Guignon, 2000: 92).

In a morbid dialogue with his wife, Ideen laments the nostalgia of his past as a poet which gave him direction and clear-sightedness toward the life that he ever hoped for. The loss of poetic self for him is not the loss of a loved object, but to have been disoriented in the absence of that which provided for him the totality of his course of life; the identity with which he was at home in the world. Visker's description explains Dasein's need for a focal orientation in its being according to which the world of Dasein gathers into a unified totality in Dasein itself as "burdensome;" Dasein's existence is by itself "burdensome" (SZ 134/173) because it is being without essence: a being that has to be its being. Not only does it have to be its being, it cannot but be its being. Whatever it does, whatever way it is, this will be a way of being its being (2004: 54).

The novel provides us with a description of the lost sense of the world, the uncanny look of the home which resembled to a blackened womb, in which is carried a man of not this world but "primitive people", thrown out of their context and identity. In this attuned disclosing of the world;

Black water covered the floor. The smell was that of ruin and death, that of primitive people and that of bestiality. It was as if a human being had been burnt alive

and their ashes had been rubbed on to the walls and the doors. The room was full of ashes and half-burnt wood (2007: 138).

In the absence of direction and demanding the burdensome character of being and the world is disclosed, the "quiet" and "monotonous" note of the symphony only howls that something or "someone was missing".

Life in the house was always monotonous and quiet. One felt tired and also felt someone was missing. There was no guest, no noise, no celebration and no mourning. Only occasionally, one could hear the noise of a raven from among the branches of the pine tree (2007: 131).

Unredeemed and broken Ideen leaves the house and finds a job as lumberman in carpentry, after which he takes refuge in a church to make wooden frames. There he meets Sormeh, and decides not to go back to his family for as long as he could. His despaired family looks for him for three years but find him in the house only when the news of Ida's suicide has reached them. In view of such conflicts in the Urkhani family the question of the father's morale and Ideen's authenticity must be addressed. Wrathall (2015) discusses that:

An agent is subject to a normative order when the significance of his or her actions is informed by the meaningful distinctions that structure the order. One could say that belonging to a normative domain is a condition of the disclosure of the meaning of certain actions (355).

Wrathall's questions the domain from which authenticity is to be measured and identified. Such domain is what Heidegger has called "existence" (Wrathall, 2015: 355). Existence provides a domain for expressivist ontology in which Dasein takes a stand toward its live and the question of being, one which characterizes Dasein as this particular being. What is to be authentic in such domain, Wrathall believes, is the coordination of what has come to Dasein in its attunement and what is demanded from it in its projection (Wrathall, 2015: 356). The attuned understanding that belongs to Dasein directs the projective potentiality of Dasein; "this understanding consists in an ability to "project onto possibilities"—to see, in other words, the significance of any particular object or event in terms of the opportunities for action that it affords me" (Wrathall, 2015: 356) Therefore, poetry provides for Ideen the clearing in which what is most essential to be authentic is declared and demanded. In poetry Ideen is brought to a new horizon of understanding of his world and himself which concludes his identity as a particular agent. It is as the consequence of the loss of such opening that he goes mad.

A heavy load of snow was constantly on their shoulders and its weight would be felt until the beginning of spring. What was bad about it was that the people, unlike trees,

died only once. And this unique occurrence was a painful catastrophe (2007: 19).

In the final chapter of the book every member of the Urkhani has died except Urhan who looks for to murder Ideen. Urhan drowns himself in revelry and despair, without finding his mad brother. The circularity of this event again repeats the dominant note in the symphony of the family, in which the note is always and already dominant and projective, yet its combination with other notes makes the whole difference: "Everything was dead silent. He was being buried under the snow. He saw the flags that had fallen in silence and buried under the snow" (2007: 266).

The book does not present any account of what has happened to Ideen, pointing to the fact that with his loss of identity as a poet, Ideen is, literary and figuratively, lost in the world of the book and the readers. It is the absence of a key note in the final chapter of a symphony which is felt most acutely but noticed very inconspicuously. Ideen's death can be analogous to the death of a shepherd in the story by which we know nothing but of which radiates the imminence belonging to one's non-being:

The shepherd who had frozen stiff while sitting on a rock had been found with his mouth open and his open eyes betraying deep anxiety. He had no doubt shivered, then sat on a rock and, eventually, accepted the fact that he had to die. When death arrives, one regains one's original dignity. (2007: 254)

## Conclusion

Dasein is essentially toward its death. It is defined by the attuned projection of its situation through which it has to be the being that it is. Its death is not an event or happening but the shape and look that Dasein takes into its being. Being toward death is a horizon which opens for it the perspective out of which it must deal with the significance of its being. Approaching a perspective in a horizon is to be essentially within a spectrum of understanding which includes and excludes every Dasein as an individual. To be is to be in the horizon of death, but which perspective one attunes makes the difference in in/authenticity. Being toward death is being essentially confronted with limit situations out of which one must appropriate a look toward its future. Existential death is not a corporeal end, but the nullifying of possibilities and options that one has to take a stand toward.

The everyday understanding defines death as an occurring event which befalls everyone, one day or the other. The same understanding is tempted to decide that Heidegger's conception of death is an unjustifiable turn of the question. To say that death is not the *end* of Dasein's life but *the way* Dasein is toward-its-death, for everyday understanding, is to have deprived the character of death

as we know and therefore to have invested it into a conception which seems to make life more morbid and gloomy. But Heidegger reminds us that this morbid life in the face of death belongs to the inauthentic everydayness. Heidegger's death illuminates that being-toward-death as the way of being Dasein and Dasein's being; opens a horizon of possibilities and a different understanding of being through which one can take a resolute stand out toward what counts to be a human.

*Symphony of the Dead* calls for a response from its people and characters within the horizon of death. It has taken the story of Able and Cane as a prototype of a question. A new reading and understanding of being human is opened through the book corresponding with the peculiarities and possibilities of the modern Persian era.

The novel does not provide an account of whether Ideen is dead [demise] or not. With a Heideggerian look it can be concluded that: first, Ideen's being [Sein] in being-toward-death has characters which distinguish him from his family and community. In the essential reciprocal movement from his future to his past, Ideen does not *wait* to have for itself ready the course of actions and possibilities belonging to him. In confrontation with his existential death Ideen genuinely discloses what is essential to his identity and to the significance of his world. He breaks away with the family, works assiduously in creating frames for paintings. This Aristotelian poesy (to make, to build), is the transformation of his poetic self into a carpenter.

Second, the paralysis of normal opportunities for him in the face of his existential death, delivers him to the insignificance of a normative ground which leaves him without demand and direction. With a perspective gained from his futural dying and the demands of his present situation as lacking and nullified, Ideen has to adapt a look from his past (having-been) in which the essential groundlessness of his being is revealed to him. This null ground as the essence of his being is and will be always and already repeated in the thrownness of his futural being. To know that one is essentially walking over an abyss (Nietzsche's Zarathustra) brings one to the anxious alertness of every present situation which does not allow one to forget the nothing of one's being. Because this abyss essentially repeats itself in Dasein, authentic Dasein *anticipates* it. For Ideen this anticipation is not a mental process of calculating the probability of some opportunities, rather anticipation brings Ideen to the anxiety of its being, to have felt open in his world and to choose to anxiously *stay open* for the world as such.

Third, the perspective that is gained from futural death, along with the direction that is pointed from the guilty past culminates in a pre-sent which shapes the identity of the self and the outlook of the world. In such a pre-sent Ideen is *resolute* and decisive about the identity that he finds arising from his own self, as a poet and a committed

character. If the being of Dasein is an abyssal ground, how can it be decisive? To be authentic is to keep oneself open to take such resolution *back at all times* when Dasein is thrown in its being. To be resolute in an indeterminate ground is to be anxiously ready to repeat this abyssal ground. This determination does not have a content; its content must be decided by the present situation itself. Ideen is grown in a classic Persian family, in the course of authentication breaks with them, and again joins them. But in the last two stages he has found his self in poetry and differentiated itself from their normative demands. Ideen is the central note of this symphony which decides the overall tune of its movement. This importance is gained by the essential being-toward-death of Ideen and the corresponding attuned dying of the symphony.

In the light of *Symphony of the Dead*, the heritage and history of Persians must wear a new significance and meaning by which concrete situations of authentic being and authentic selfhood is modified. It is in the face of such works of art that one is confronted with one's self-image in a demanding look as to how one shapes and directs the totality of its narrative being. The *Symphony* comes from the dead, to orient the living, to set a path in contrast with an *Other* which has been always and already imminent. In this contradiction, because a self is brought to itself in view of one's belonging to death, *the other* remains genuinely an *Other*.

### Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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