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UNVEILING THE HIDDEN:

ON THE MEDITATIONS OF DESCARTES AND GHAZZALI

INTRODUCTION

Any reader of René Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* would be amazed at the close resemblance the skeptical beginnings of this work bear to the work of the well-known Muslim philosopher and theologian, Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali, titled *Deliverance from Error and Attachment to the Lord of Might and Majesty*. This amazement would only multiply when the reader recognized that these two thinkers are not only separated from each other culturally, but that they are also more than five centuries apart historically. Ghazzali was born 1058 AD in northeastern Iran, taught at Baghdad in the *Nizamiya*, and after travelling widely throughout the Islamic world died in Tus, Iran, in the year 1111 AD. Descartes was born in a village in Tourain, France, in 1596, traveled as a soldier and then as a philosopher throughout Europe, and died in Sweden in 1650. Despite the cultural and historical gulf separating these two thinkers, an investigation of their relevant works is ideal for comparative philosophy, because the momentous cultural and temporal differences weaken the need for (distractive) efforts to establish historical lines of influence. In saying this, I am not dismissing the value of historical scholarship in philosophy.[1] What I am disputing is a tendency towards historicizing philosophy, treating it as merely a subject for historical sciences.

In this essay, I adopt a non-historicist approach to comparative philosophy. At the outset, I would like to acknowledge my debt to the comparativist approach laid out by Henry Corbin. In *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, Corbin argues that comparative philosophy should approach its subject matter phenomenologically. Phenomenology, according to Corbin, "consists in 'saving the appearance,' saving the phenomenon, while disengaging or unveiling the hidden which shows itself beneath this appearance."[2] The phenomenologist, according to Corbin, refuses to explain phenomena by forcing them under general theories that we construct. Rather, he recognizes that phenomena must be seen as they are in themselves, and in this process the phenomenon that makes possible all others (and conceals itself) should also be unveiled. Comparative philosophy, from this point of view, would be an examination and assessment of such phenomenological efforts in philosophical texts.

In what follows, I begin by giving a short account of my phenomenological methodological assumptions and argue that the texts under consideration contain similar phenomenological moves. Then I present a synopsis of how the authors

employ skeptical arguments to initiate the phenomenological process of unveiling the phenomena. I contend that these arguments are different in important respects. These differences point to what is unique in the phenomenological approaches of Ghazzali and Descartes. Finally, I will conclude by giving a short account (and assessment) of the intellectual and political reasons which may have motivated the production of the *Meditations* and the *Deliverance* and have subsequently constrained their success as works in philosophical phenomenology.

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD AND COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Henry Corbin's comparative technique was a result of a careful study of the Islamic and continental traditions of philosophy. He began his career as a student of Heidegger's early, phenomenological phase (he turned to Heidegger's phenomenology to escape the rationalism of French academic philosophy). Many years later, in 1966, on the eve of the first Western colloquium on Shi'ism at the University of Strasbourg, Corbin confided to Seyyed Hossein Nasr that he used to drive through Strasbourg when he was younger to get to Freiburg to find solace in the company of his mentor, Heidegger. But he no longer desired to travel that path, as he had found a kind of contentment in Islamic philosophy that he could never hope to find in Heidegger's "limited and truncated" philosophy.[3] Corbin's turn to Islamic philosophy occurred in the 1930's when Louis Massignon, the author of the famous *Passion of al-Hallaj*, gave him a work by the twelfth century mystic and philosopher, Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardī, with the comment, "I think there is something in this book for you."[4] In 1939, Corbin went to Istanbul and stayed there for six years, during which he published nothing and immersed himself in the study of Suhrawardī, and Islamic philosophy. In 1946, he re-started his career, and in the thirty-two years before his death in 1978, he divided his time between Paris and Tehran and worked exclusively on Islamic philosophy.[5]

I will begin my exploration of Corbin's indebtedness to phenomenology by providing a short account of Heidegger's phenomenological method. As with Corbin, Heidegger distinguishes between phenomenological philosophy and the positive sciences (including the positive study of history).[6] A clarification of this distinction requires the working out of the concept of interpretation (*Auslegung*), as discussed in §32 of *Being and Time*. According to Heidegger,

in interpreting, we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it; but when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by interpretation.[7]

Interpretation appropriates its subject matter in the disclosure of involvement relations (the normative context) of social practice. Interpretative appropriation (*Zueignung*) is an attempt to make explicit what is implicitly understood in its pragmatic involvement relations.

Heidegger distinguishes between hermeneutical and apophantical modes of interpretation. The apophantical interpretation does not keep the relation of its subject matter to the involvement relation in view.

In its function of appropriating what is understood, the 'as' no longer reaches out into the totality of involvements. As regards its possibilities for articulating reference-relations, it has been cut off from that significance which, as such, constitutes environmentality. The 'as' gets pushed back into the uniform plane of that which is merely present-at-hand.[8]

Once the appropriating of what is understood is severed from the involvement relations, the entity appears as "present-at-hand". In other words, in the apophantical encounter, the entity appears in itself and by itself as present-at-hand. The present-at-hand appearance of entities makes possible the theory of truth peculiar to positive sciences, the correspondence theory of truth. According to Heidegger, assertions, as positive knowledge claims, are items in the apophantical mode of interpretation. An articulation of the hermeneutical interpretation becomes a present-at-hand assertion when it comes up for confirmation. In confirmation, the proposition as the immanent present-at-hand entity must correspond to the object as the transcendent present-at-hand entity. In this context, it becomes acceptable to say that the transcendent entity exists; it has a being separate from the observer, possessing its own attributes and properties.

I agree with Robert Brandom's claim in "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*" that objective entities (the present-at-hand), which at first may appear to be different from equipment, are not an entirely different category of entities.

The crucial point to understand here is that the move from equipment ready-to-hand, fraught with socially instituted significance, to objective things present-at-hand, is not one of decontextualization, but of recontextualization. Asserting and the practices of giving and asking for reasons which make it possible are themselves a special sort of practical activity.[9]

The present-at-hand entities do not exist independent of human social practices, but rather they appear as the equipment of the social practices of giving and asking for reasons. Positive sciences are social practices of giving and asking for reasons that involve the confirmation of a logically organized body of assertions.[10]

Heidegger organizes the various forms of interpretation in the following passage: "Assertion and its structure (namely, the apophantical "as") are founded upon interpretation and its structure (viz., the hermeneutical "as") and also upon understanding — *Dasein*'s disclosedness."[11] I have already discussed the grounding of assertion in the hermeneutical interpretation in the sense that assertion is an articulation peculiar to a mode of practice, which is itself susceptible to a hermeneutical interpretation. The hermeneutical interpretation, on the other hand, appropriates its subject matter in its practical context. It is itself grounded in *Dasein*'s understanding in terms of its "for-the-sake-of-which" and significance. The former as *Dasein*'s self-projection is the condition of the possibility of any understanding whatsoever.[12]

In "Heidegger on Being a Person", John Haugeland refers to *Dasein* as a vast and intricate normative pattern and the human being as a case of *Dasein*.[13] I sympathize with this approach to Heidegger's *Dasein Analytic* and find that Haugeland's interpretation of *Dasein*, as a vast normative pattern, is in agreement with Brandom's notion of social practice. A social practice is a normative pattern, for it possesses rules and demands conformity and adjustment from its practitioners.[14] In "Heidegger on Being a Person," Haugeland claims that the human

individual is a form of social practice. However, Haugeland maintains that "people are primordial institutions".[15] The primordiality of human beings is due to their power of understanding. "Understanding something is equated with competence or know-how."[16] As having understanding, the human beings can recognize improper behavior in a social practice and make efforts to make adjustments.[17]

Heidegger describes the function of understanding as the power of casting or projecting the intelligibility of *Dasein* in terms of its possibilities:

Why does the understanding -- whatever may be the essential dimensions of that which can be disclosed in it -- always press forward into possibilities? It is because the understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call "projection." With equal primordiality the understanding projects *Dasein*'s Being both upon (*auf*) its "for-the-sake-of-which" and upon (*auf*) significance, as the worldhood of its current world.[18]

The German preposition, '*auf*', can be translated as 'in terms of' rather than 'upon.' Understanding projects or casts *Dasein*'s being in terms of its "for-the-sake-of-which" *and* "significance." Projecting in terms of significance means that the human *Dasein* always already understands itself in terms of the worldhood of the world.[19] In other words, the human *Dasein* learns and knows how to engage in various social practices. Moreover, the human *Dasein* is always already thrown in a world (State-of-mind) and has fallen away from its primordial for-the-sake-of-which. Heidegger illustrates this point in a passage about Parmenides' famous dream: "The goddess of Truth who guides Parmenides, puts two pathways before him, one of uncovering, one of hiding; but this signifies nothing else than that *Dasein* is already both in truth and in untruth."[20] As already in the world, *Dasein* has access to things themselves (is in truth), yet this access is obfuscated (covered over) by *Dasein*'s falling away from its primordial for-the-sake-of-which. However, *Dasein*, as always already thrown and fallen away, also understands, knows how, to be itself and to reclaim its primordial for-the-sake-of-which.[21] Therefore, *Dasein* is either authentic, under-standing itself in terms of its primordial for-the-sake-of-which, or inauthentic.

Haugeland clarifies the concept of authenticity by maintaining that people not only possess understanding (projection in terms of significance), but they also have self-understanding (projection in terms of the for-the-sake-of-which) in that they can censure their own failures.[22] A self-owned (authentic) *Dasein* is a social practice designating a human individual who, as the self-understanding *Dasein*, "critically takes over its roles.... The result is a critically realized, maximally self-constant ability to lead an individual, cohesive, life: *mine!*"[23] In the authentic mode, *Dasein* casts its being in terms of its *own* self as the "for-the-sake-of-which." *Dasein*'s "uncritical" projection of its being in terms of an unowned "for-the-sake-of-which" accounts for *Dasein* in the inauthentic mode. Heidegger writes: "Proximally and for the most part the self is lost in the 'they'. It understands itself in terms of those pos-sibilities of existence which 'circulate' in the 'average' public way of interpreting *Dasein* today."[24] Authenticity, as the process of taking over one's roles critically, implies that one is not in the grip of this or that "public" ideal. As a result, the authenticity of *Dasein* makes possible a genuine encounter with things themselves, not as they fit into the mold of public ideals imposed on an inauthentic *Dasein*.

To put the matter concisely, authenticity makes the ideal of phenomenology possible.[25] Heidegger writes: "To have a science 'of' phenomena means to grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly".[26] In a phenomeno-logical encounter that reaches to things themselves, things appear in their relevant contexts, and the inquirer is free of interpretive constraints that abduct things from those contexts. These interpretive constraints are caused by *Dasein*'s inauthenticity, its appropriation of phenomena for the sake of possibilities imposed on *Dasein*. Authenticity frees *Dasein* from such interpretative constraints and paves the way for a phenomenological investigation.

To sum up, let's consider this passage from *Being and Time*: "The meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation ... through which the authentic meaning of Being and also those basic structures of being which *Dasein* itself possesses, are made known to *Dasein*'s understanding of Being."[27] Bringing the structures of being possessed by *Dasein* to view, by means of a hermeneutic *Dasein*-analytic, allows the phenomenologist to resolutely seize upon his possibility for authenticity (authentic meaning of being), which, in turn, removes the illusions that block the transparent encounter with the things themselves.

Corbin, however, seems to go beyond Heidegger and his efforts to reveal entities as they are in themselves:

[T]o save the reality demands the same procedure: *kashf al-mahjub*, to detach, to unveil that which reveals itself while remaining hidden in the *phainomenon*. I said just now that this is what phenomenology is.... It is a matter of leading the observer to a point where he allows himself to see what it is that lies hidden. This essentially is what hermeneutic is.[28]

What Corbin means -- when he maintains that phenomenology and its Islamic counter-part, *kashf al-mahjub*,[29] lead the observer to allow himself to see what is hidden -- accords with Heidegger's account. For Heidegger, as we have seen, phenomenology is that project which aims to present the individual with the choice of authenticity and its consequent unveiling of the phenomena (if one accepts the challenge of authenticity). The technical, phenomenological conception of phenomenon, however, concerns that phenomenon, which accompanies and makes possible all that shows itself (i.e., phenomena in its ordinary sense).[30] The phenomenon, in the specific sense, is *Dasein* in its authentic mode. Authentic *Dasein* is *phenomenon* in the specific sense (that phenomenon which makes other phenomena possible), because it appears as lived time or temporality.[31] Heidegger, writes: "Temporality reveals itself as the sense of authentic care."[32] The term 'care,' for Heidegger, denotes the unity of the various structural dimensions of *Dasein*.

Essentially ahead of itself, it [*Dasein*] has projected itself upon its ability to be before going on to a mere consideration of itself. In its projection it reveals itself as something which has been thrown. It has been thrownly abandoned to the "world," and falls into it concernfully. As care -- that is, as existing in the unity of the projection which has been fallingly thrown -- this entity has been disclosed as a "there."[33]

The three basic structural components of *Dasein* are thrownness, falling, and projection or in other terms, being already in, being amidst, and being ahead of itself. They map into what Heidegger calls the horizontal temporal structure of

having a past, present, and future. Temporality, or lived time, is then the referent of the conceptual unity of the three main structures of *Dasein* in care. An authentic appropriation of the existential structure is made possible by *Dasein*'s recognition of the structures making up care and their referent, temporality.

Corbin's commitment to unveiling the phenomenon, as that which is hidden and makes possible all appearances, should not imply that there are no significant differences between Corbin and Heidegger. Corbin, in contrast to Heidegger, takes mystical and prophetic experiences very seriously and grounds his phenomenology upon the phenomena in these experiences. I will explore this crucial difference and its implications at the conclusion of this essay. Before that, however, I will present a phenomenological comparison of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* and Ghazzali's *Deliverance*. Both of these texts are especially suitable for a phenomenological consideration in that they put forth an account of a meditational practice experienced by the author or, more accurately, the narrator, which is provided (albeit in outline) for the reader to experience as well. Both authors aim to bring about certain transformations in the meditators so that their perception of phenomena will become unclouded. The texts begin with skeptical forms of intellectual asceticism, in which the authors describe a process of rigorous examination of beliefs and their suspension, given the presence of any trace of error or falsehood. The result is at first a skeptical crisis, subsequently overcome through an enlightenment that allows the meditator to see the phenomena as they are in themselves and unveil the hidden which makes them possible. I believe that a comparison of the phenomenological practices set forth by these two authors will illuminate the strengths of their views (from the point of view of phenomenological hermeneutics supplied by Heidegger) and will shed some light on the assumptions of Islamic philosophy and modern European rationalism.

A COMPARISON OF THE USE OF THE SKEPTICAL PROCESS BY GHAZZALI AND DESCARTES

Leo Groarke, in "Descartes' First Meditation: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed," reports a similarity between the arguments in Descartes' first Meditation and those in section two of Ghazzali's *Deliverance*. Groarke's basic thesis is that

> both [Ghazzali and Descartes] adopt the methodological principle that they will reach certainty by doubting all they can, and both begin by questioning the fundamental principles on which their beliefs are based. Both proceed in step by step fashion, beginning with doubts about sense perception and raising the level of doubt until first principles are called in question. The result in both cases is a skeptical crisis, a *crise pyrrhonienne*, which occurs when they are forced to the conclusion that their beliefs cannot be justified.[14]

I agree with Groarke that both Ghazzali and Descartes begin the process of doubt by questioning the basis of their beliefs or claims to knowledge. However, a careful reading of the *Meditations* and *Deliverance* reveals a major difference in the process of doubt employed by Ghazzali and Descartes, a difference which is overlooked by Groarke.

Descartes and Ghazzali are engaged in examining the truth of propositional judgments, but they emphasize different aspects of the truth of judgments. Ghazzali's emphasis is epistemological; that is, he is concerned with the justification of predications in a judgment. He begins by testing the fallibility of the judgments of different faculties, i.e. sensory and intellectual. For example, Ghazzali rejects the theory that knowledge is a sensory judgment as such, by arguing that the power of intellect proves some of the sensory judgments to be false. In contrast, Descartes' emphasis is more ontological. He is concerned with the existential import of propositions, that is, the existence of the predicated objects. Descartes focuses on knowledge as judgments about things. In order to overrule this theory of knowledge, he casts doubt on the existence of things about which we form judgments. On the one hand, Descartes doubts the existence of composite things through the dream analogy. On the other hand, he uses the evil deceiver argument to cast doubt on the existence of simple and general things.

In the first page of the *Meditations*, Descartes' narrator expresses his discontent when much of his knowledge proves false upon examination. He claims that a substantial number of the propositions he believed to be true have proved false upon further scrutiny. As a result, he denies the status of knowledge to his beliefs (or judgments), if he can find the slightest doubt concerning them. He sets as his task the development of an infallible system of judgments.

Descartes' analysis of judgment is deconstructive; he "strips" his judgment by withholding his assent, the attitude comprising the judgment, from the contents of judgment. As a result, he is left with the content of judgment or the proposition as such. Descartes' project has two purposes: First, he wants to examine what he believes to be the object of judgment and discard that belief if its existence is found doubtable. By the object of judgment, I mean the thing or the subject whose existence is asserted in a judgment. Second, he wants to find the proper object of judgments that can withstand doubt and that can serve as a foundation for a scientific edifice that is "stable and likely to last."[35]

In *Deliverance*, Ghazzali's narrator also begins with a similar distress concerning the falsity of the beliefs which he has endorsed all along:

> [F]rom my early youth, since I attained the age of puberty before I was twenty, until the present time when I am over fifty, I have ever recklessly launched into the midst of ocean depths, I have ever bravely embarked on this open sea, throwing aside all craven caution; I have poked into every dark recess, I have made an assault on every problem .... All this I have done that I might distinguish between true and false, between sound tradition and heretical innovation.[16]

The distress stems from a religious concern: the narrator is worried about the assault of innovative heresies on *sunnah*, the Islamic tradition.[37] He sets out to investigate the foundations of traditional opinions, but his philosophical curiosity pushes him beyond the basic principles of tradition. He says to himself: "To begin with, what I am looking for is knowledge of what things really are, so I must undoubtedly try to find what knowledge really is."[38] So, the narrator digs deeper; he seeks to define knowledge, what it is to know something, and assesses the tradition and the challenges to it in light of this definition. However, Ghazzali's method does not begin by considering the ontological question concerning the existence of the objects

of knowledge. Instead, it begins by investigating the justifiability of judgments supplied by the perceptions of different cognitive faculties.

This preliminary investigation fortifies the fundamental difference between the projects of Ghazzali and Descartes. Ghazzali begins by testing the fallibility of judgments whose contents are determined by his sensory faculty. His project is epistemological in that it seeks *justified* true beliefs (judgments). Descartes, on the other hand, separates judgments into an epistemological attitude and a content; he suspends the attitude, affirmation and denial, and investigates the existence of the objects of the content. Hence, Descartes' project is ontological in that it questions the objects of knowledge concerning their existence.

Here, I compare some of the details of the process of doubt as employed by Ghazzali and Descartes. Ghazzali investigates the theory that knowledge is sense perception using the test of certainty. To achieve certainty, the judgments based on sense perception must be infallible. As an example, Ghazzali considers the movement of the shadow of a stick. Sense perception reports that the shadow is standing still. "Then by experiment and observation after an hour it knows that the shadow is moving."[39] He concludes that the judgments of sense perception are fallible and uncertain, because the intellect can prove them wrong. "In this and similar cases of sense perception the sense as judge forms his judgments, but another judge, the intellect, shows him to be wrong in such a way that the charge of falsity can be rebutted."[40] The senses by themselves cannot give us justified true belief; it is the intellect that improves upon the cognitive work of the senses and purports to give us the truth.

According to Ghazzali, there are at least two faculties beyond the sensory faculties. The first is "discernment (or the power of distinguishing -- *tamiz*).... [Through this faculty, one] now apprehends more than the world of sensibles; and none of these additional factors (sc. relations, etc.) exists in the world of sense."[41] The other faculty is intellect through which one "apprehends things necessary, possible, impossible."[42] Intellectual judgments are therefore divisible into those dealing with the relations among sensory objects and the first principles "such as the assertion that ten are more than three, that the same thing cannot be both affirmed and denied at one time, that one thing is not both generated in time and eternal, nor both existent or non-existent, nor both necessary and impossible."[43] In section two of the *Deliverance*, Ghazzali brings together the above faculties and their judgments under the general faculty of intellect and intellectual judgments respectively.

Descartes begins his project of systematic doubt in a fashion similar to Ghazzali. He writes: "whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses."[44] With this statement, Descartes directs the thrust of the first Meditation towards knowledge of external things through or from the senses. In order to test the certainty of this theory of knowledge, he employs the so-called dream analogy. "How often, asleep at night, am I convinced of just such familiar events -- that I am here in my dressing gown, sitting by the fire -- when in fact I am lying undressed in bed."[45] Descartes' narrator discovers that when asleep he has perceptions of external things. But, when he is awakened, he realizes that those perceptions were only illusions and in fact he was "lying undressed in bed."[46] Such a discovery places the existence of particular external things in doubt.

Next, Descartes examines the more general kinds of objects. He dismisses things like "eyes, head, hand and so on"[47] as possibly imaginary, but he asks about certain other "even simpler and more universal things."[48] The class of simple and universal things includes "corporeal nature in general, and its extension; the shape of extended things; the quantity, or size and number of these things; the place in which they may exist, the time through which they may endure, and so on". With this statement, Descartes concludes that sciences such as physics, astronomy, and medicine are doubtable because they deal with particular composite things whose own existence is doubtable. But how about arithmetic and geometry which deal with simpler and more universal things?

Harry G. Frankfurt, in *Dreamers, Demons and Madmen*, claims that Descartes does not consider the distinction between physics, astronomy, and medicine on the one hand and various branches of mathematics on the other "as a contrast between sciences to which existence is relevant and those to which it is not. He presents it primarily as a contrast between sciences that deal with complex existents and those that deal with very simple and general things."[49] For Descartes, the sciences of "complex existents" are uncertain because of the dream analogy. However, "whether I am awake or asleep, two and three joined together are five, and a square does not have more than four sides."[50] Therefore, it seems that the dream analogy is not a ground for doubting the arithmetic and geometrical things. But what if there is "some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning (who) has employed all his energies in order to deceive me?"[51] Through the evil deceiver argument, Descartes finds the existence of arithmetic and geometric objects doubtable. Therefore, the judgments that are based on them are also doubtable.

This stage has been the source of Groarke's claim that Descartes achieves his *crise pyrrhonienne* in the first Meditation. One may allege that there is a kind of skeptical crisis in effect when Descartes finds arithmetic and geometry doubtful. However, this crisis is due to the collapse of the theory that the indubitable objects of knowledge are external things. Therefore, it is not, *pace* Groarke, the crisis in part two of Ghazzali's *Deliverance*.

In part two of the *Deliverance*, sense perception addresses the ego in the following manner, "do you not see ... how, when you are asleep, you believe things and imagine circumstances, holding them to be stable and enduring, and so long as you are in that dream-condition, have no doubts about them? And is it not the case that when you awake you know that all you have imagined and believed is unfounded and ineffectual?"[52] This is identical with Descartes' formulation of the dream analogy except that here the personification of sense perception delivers the argument. This difference alerts us to the different use of the dream argument in the *Deliverance*, and it comes to the fore, when sense perception concludes thus: "Why then are you confident and that all your waking beliefs, whether from sense or intellect, are genuine."[53] Ghazzali uses the dream argument to question the certainty of the judgments of the intellect, not those of sensory perceptions.

Ghazzali's argument for doubting the judgments of intellect asks of the possibility of a power of the soul that stands in the same relation to the intellect as the latter stands to the senses.

And is it not the case that when you awake you know that what you have imagined and believed is unfounded and ineffectual? Why then are you confident that that all your waking beliefs, whether from sense or intellect are genuine? ... It is possible that a state will come upon you whose relation to your waking consciousness is analogous to the relation of the latter to dreaming. In comparison with this state your waking consciousness would be like dreaming.[34]

Ghazzali corroborates the possibility of this supra-intellectual faculty by referring to the claim of the Sufis that through their mystic ecstasies "they witness states (or circumstances) which do not tally with these principles of the intellect."[55] Ghazzali also quotes a passage from the *Quran* that describes death: "'The people are dreaming; when they die, they become awake.' So perhaps life in this world is a dream by comparison with the world to come; and when a man dies ... (these) words are addressed to him: 'We have taken off thee thy covering, and thy sight today is sharp' (*Quran* 50: 21)."[56] In other words, Ghazzali casts doubt on the judgments of intellect by asking whether God has deprived humans of a higher consciousness capable of evaluating the truth and falsity of intellectual judgments. The plausibility of this higher consciousness casts doubt on the infallibility of intellectual truths, and Ghazzali's narrator is thrown as a result into a profound skeptical malaise.

The skeptical malaise is overcome "by a light which God most high cast into my breast."[57] According to Ghazzali, this light was cast upon him by God in order to guide him to Islam. *Islam* literally means surrender to the will of God, and for Ghazzali, such a surrender involves the recognition of the infinite power and wisdom of God and the inadequacy of intellect in comprehending God's purposes. Ghazzali concludes

the point of these accounts is that the task is perfectly fulfilled when the quest is prosecuted up to the stage of seeking what is not sought (but stops short of that). For first principles are not sought, since they are present and to hand; and if what is present is sought for, it becomes hidden and lost. When, however, a man seeks what is sought (and that only), he is not accused of falling short in seeking of what is sought.[58]

Intellectual truths define the limits of intellect. The doubt concerning intellectual truths recognizes the limits of intellect but wants to go beyond them. Surrender to the will of God affirms these limitations *and* accepts as the gift of God an experience of truth that transcends the power of intellect. I will say more about the plausibility of this move in section V, but at this point we should get clear about the contrast between Ghazzali's overcoming of doubt and that of Descartes.

After he has doubted the existence of an external world, Descartes' narrator wonders, "does it follow that I too do not exist?"[59] But he realizes that the logic of his skeptical procedure cannot allow this conclusion. The skeptical procedure had culminated in the claim that "there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me."[60] From this, the narrator of the *Meditations* draws the conclusion that "I too undoubtedly exist, if he is deceiving me."[61] Descartes identifies the claim "I am a thinking being" as the indubitable ground of the system of knowledge pursued in the *Meditations*, and this seems to fly in the face of Ghazzali's appeal to divine illumination to remove his doubts. I will examine the limit and the significance of this opposition in the next section.

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN: DESCARTES

I have argued that Descartes' skeptical procedure can be characterized is ontological, as he is concerned with the existence of the subject matter of predication. It is not a stretch of imagination, then, to characterize the Cartesian process of thinking about the knowledge status of thoughts as the viewing of a performance. Thinking is the act of witnessing the drama of consciousness and inspecting the ontological status of the items (i.e., ideas) on the stage of the mind. This inspection concerns the representational quality of the items in the mind, the ideas.

According to Descartes, ideas are ideas of something; they have objective reality:

For just as the objective mode of being belongs to ideas by their very nature, so the formal mode of being belongs to the causes of ideas -- or at least the first and most important ones -- by their very nature. And although one idea may perhaps originate from another, there cannot be an infinite regress here; eventually one must reach a primary idea, the cause of which will be like an archetype which contains formally (and in fact) all the reality (or perfection) which is present only objectively (or representatively) in the idea.[62]

Here, Descartes asserts that all ideas are by nature representative, that they have objective reality (i.e., they are of something).[63] The causes of these ideas also have a formal reality, or an essence, which the ideas represent objectively. The formal reality of the cause contains all the reality that is present objectively in the idea.

The regression from an idea to its cause is not infinite. According to Descartes, there is a primary cause, which contains formally all the reality which is present objectively in the ideas. For instance, the ideas of fragrance and color are caused by the idea of extension which is, in turn, caused by the idea of matter. Matter, however, is a primary idea whose nature (or essence or form) is the objective reality of the idea of extension.[64] The extension of wax, for example, has as its nature, essence, or form, the innumerable sensory qualities of wax each of which constitutes the objective reality of each sensory idea. On the other hand, ideas as such are caused formally by the idea of thinking which itself is caused formally by the idea of mind. Mind is a primary idea whose nature or essence as form is the objective reality of the idea of thinking. Thinking has as its nature, essence, or form various operations of the will and the power of perception, each of which contributes to the constitution of the objective reality of an idea.

Descartes also contends that the ideas of substance have more objective reality than the ideas that represent modes or accidents. "In so far as different ideas (are considered as images which) represent different things, it is clear that they differ widely. Undoubtedly, the ideas which represent substances to me amount to something more and, so to speak, contain within themselves more objective reality than the ideas -- which merely represent modes or accidents."[65] In other words, modes and accidents are not things as such but only modes and accidents of things.[66] They derive their objective reality from the form of the attribute of a thing, and the attribute has objective reality in that it contains the form of the thing, but it has less objective reality than the thing itself. Hence the ideas that represent modes and accidents of something have less objective reality than the idea of that thing in that their object is not a thing but the form of that thing. The ideas that represent wax as fragrant, sticky and square are only ways or modes of wax as an extended thing.

They have less objective reality than the idea of extension, which is the nature of wax as a division in the infinitely divisible matter.

It is important to keep in mind that all the above distinctions are perceived by the faculty of thought proper, i.e., understanding.[67] Mind, or the "I", is the formal and efficient cause of the ideas. Understanding perceives the ideas, their causal relationship, and distinguishes them with respect to their objective realities.

The perceptions of understanding can be clear and also distinct. Perceptions depict the essential connection between ideas. 'The sky is blue,' connects the idea of "blue" to "sky" in such a way that the "sky" is the formal cause of the "blue" and contains the objective reality of the blue formally. Judgments affirm or deny a perception of an idea, and they vary from volitions and emotions in that they are prone to error. When I affirm a desire or a want or a feeling, I am not willing or desiring falsely. Ideas also by themselves cannot be formally false. It is not false that I have an idea of the unicorn. Judgments, on the other hand, are capable of being false, because they affirm a relation between ideas. If I perceive an idea clearly and distinctly, I can affirm it. To perceive an idea clearly and distinctly, its existence must be indubitable and I must know what is included in it and what is not. The above attempt at identifying the objective reality and the formal reality of ideas shows that the faculty of understanding enables us to perceive clearly and distinctly. Once we have a clear and distinct perception of an idea, we can affirm or deny something about it without risking error.[68]

We are now in possession of a more perspicuous version of the earlier characterization of Descartes' account of thinking as consciousness inspecting the drama of consciousness; but we still need to clarify the status of Descartes' claim that the existence of the thinking being is indubitable. In *Cartesian Meditations*, Edmund Husserl maintains that Descartes' account of the certainty of the *ego cogito* has an essential epistemological function: it provides a foundation for an "all-embracing science."

For him [Descartes] a role similar to that of geometrical axioms in geometry is played in the all-embracing science by the axiom of the ego's absolute certainty of himself, along with the axiomatic principles innate in the ego – only this axiomatic foundation lies even deeper than that of geometry and is called on to participate in the ultimate grounding even of geometrical knowledge.[69]

Although Husserl is right in identifying an excessively strong commitment to the mathematical mode of inquiry in Descartes' philosophy, his [Husserl's] construal of the certainty of *ego cogito*, as a foundational axiom, is not warranted by the textual evidence. The *certainty* of the *ego cogito* is not a foundational axiom, because when Descartes claims that the idea of the thinking being is indubitable, he is not as yet entitled to claim that it has objective reality. The latter is required for the *judgment* about an idea to have the status of knowledge. The objective reality of clear and distinct ideas, including that of the *ego cogito*, is secured – according to Descartes – by the demonstration that God necessarily exists and that He is good.[70] Since he declares the certainty of the "thinking I" before these demonstrations, the certainty of the *ego cogito* must have another function. I submit that the thinking being, in Descartes' *Meditations*, is that idea (in the sense of appearance or phenomenon) which makes possible other ideas (once the belief in existing world as the referent of

our mental appearances, i.e., ideas, has been bracketed). To use more phenomenological terminology, the thinking being is that phenomenon which makes possible other phenomena. This is precisely the role that Husserl attributes to the *ego cogito* in his own philosophy; he calls it the transcendental ego.[71] But Descartes' appeal to God to establish the objective reality of his thoughts bestows on God a higher reality than that of the *ego cogito*. Therefore, it is God that deserves the title of the hidden phenomenon that makes other phenomena possible. This consideration brings Descartes' view closer to the position espoused by Ghazzali.

UNVEILING THE HIDDEN: GHAZZALI

Ghazzali's account of the process of doubt accords with the conception of the intellectual activity of thinking as an inner dialogue. This conception is implied by Ghazzali's epistemological approach to the process of doubt, according to which beliefs are scrutinized insofar as the justification of their truth is concerned. Justification as giving reasons for a belief is a discursive/dialogical practice. Furthermore, Ghazzali's literary invocations of a dialogue between sense perception and the self accentuate his commitment to the dialogical account of thinking.[72] This account of thinking can be traced back to Plato's definition of it as the silent solitary dialogue. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes thinking "as discourse, and judgment as a statement pronounced, not aloud to someone else, but silently to oneself."[73] In the *Sophist*, the Eleatic stranger tells Theaetetus that "thinking and discourse are the same thing, except that what we call thinking is, precisely, the inward dialogue carried on by the mind with itself without spoken sound."[74] I submit that Plato's "silent discourse" should be seen on the model of a Platonic dialogue, where the self divides into Socrates and the interlocutor, the one who must measure up to Socrates' exacting and rigorous examination. Ghazzali portrays the conversation as that between the different cognitive powers of the soul. The conversation concerns the justifiability of judgments delivered by them.

Ghazzali's account of the conversation between the cognitive powers of the soul culminates in the illumination by a divine light whose source is external to the soul. This is the light of the active intellect, first set forth and characterized as a light in Aristotle's *De Anima*, Book III, Chapter 5. This text has had the deepest impact on the subsequent conceptions of the active intellect, especially those of Islamic philosophers.[75] Aristotle, in this famous text, postulates explicitly a transcendent active intellect. He maintains that "in fact mind, as we have described it, is what it is by virtue of becoming all things, while there is another which is what it is by virtue of making all things: this is the sort of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential colours into actual colours."[76] Here, the creative intellect or the productive mind (*nous poietikos*) is contrasted with the mind as passive (*pathetikos*), the conforming mind.[77] The creative intellect shines like light on potential intelligibles, causing them to become actualized. This light delivers the conforming intellect from the grip of falsehoods and illusions, which have their source in the ways (the fire of) unexamined and dependent modes of thinking and acting obfuscate reality. The sun of creative intellect, like its counterpart in Plato's *Republic*,[78] overcomes the limitations of the conformious passive intellect, and

paves the way for originality, where originality is identical with truthfulness and goodness; it is in keeping with the way the world is or ought to be. It is important to note that the illumination is not a silent intervention, rather it is manifested in the spoken word of God, available for those not in possession of the power of prophecy in the *Quran*. The illumination clears the soul for the understanding of the word of God.

In his famous *Mishkat al-Anwar* (translated as *The Niche of Lights*), Ghazzali ponders the significance of the famous Light Verse from the *Quran* ("Ayat al-Nur," *Quran* 24:35). An examination of the details of Ghazzali's commentary on this fascinating verse is beyond the scope of this paper; however, his argument for the claim that the divine light is the phenomenon which makes other phenomena possible is worth exploring. He begins by defining 'light' (*nur*) as that "which is seen in itself and through which other things are seen, such as the sun."[79] He then discriminates between the objects which we call light. He concludes that that "which sees itself and others is more worthy of the name 'light.' So if it be something that also allows other things to see, while seeing itself and others, then it is [even] more worthy of the name 'light' than that which has no effect at all on others."[80] In the process of reaching this conclusion, Ghazzali dismisses the sun, the eye, the intellect, and the prophetic revelation as the true bearers of the name 'light.' It is "the holy prophetic spirit" (i.e., Gabriel, the angel of revelation, or the transcendent active intellect) that truly deserves this name in relation to earthly lights.[81] Of course, insofar as the heavenly lights are concerned, God, "the Lordly Presence," is the most perfect, and the angels (heavenly lights) are ranked in accordance with their proximity to the divine light.[82]

It is important to recognize that in Islamic philosophy the "holy prophetic spirit" is regularly identified with the Aristotelian notion of the transcendent active intellect. In *al-Siyasat al-Madaniya*, Abu Nasr al-Farabi identifies (the Peripatetic) creative or active intellect (*aql-e fa'al*) with Islam's angel of revelation.[83] Abu 'Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna) also adopts Alfarabi's strategy of identifying the active intellect with Gabriel, the angel of revelation.[84] However, he modifies some of the details of Alfarabi's account of prophecy. For Alfarabi and Avicenna, the illuminative conjunction with the active intellect is a special experience. It corresponds to experience of the hidden phenomenon that makes possible other phenomena. Active intellect is the giver of form (*wahib al-suwar*, *dator formarum*); it is that which inserts intelligibility into the sublunar world. The experience of the conjunction with the active intellect presents us with the phenomenon that, in making possible other phenomena, hides itself.

Aside from the *mashsha'un* (i.e., Islamic Peripatetics) mentioned above, the idea of the intellect's discursive practice culminating in divine enlightenment was also a central feature of Isma'ili Shi'ism. The hierarchy of the various agents of Isma'ilism, having its terrestrial peak in the authority of the Imam as the *wali*: one, who is intimate with the divine, was based on the discursive/illuminative intellectual practice set forth above.[85] It is surprising, then, that in *Deliverance*, Ghazzali attacks the *mashsha'un* and the Isma'ili Shi'ites (the *batiniyya*) rather vehemently, accusing them of distorting Islam.

In order to account for Ghazzali's opposition to the *mashsha'un* and the *batiniyya* (Isma'ili Shi'ites), we should recognize that Ghazzali was a protégé of Nizam-al-Mulk, the powerful Sunni vizier of Saljuq Sultans.[86] Saljuq military had conquered the eastern Islamic world, but it faced resistance from the Isma'ili Fatimids in the west and the Isma'ili assassins from within its own borders. It is also important to note that the western part of the Saljuq territory was previously governed by the Buyids, who were Persian Shi'ites, and these governors and leaders had, for the most part, promoted the work of *mashsha'i* philosophers.[87] In any event, Nizam-al-Mulk sought to challenge the intellectual influence of Shi'ism,[88] and he did so (in part) by instituting several colleges (*madrasa*) throughout the Saljuq domain. They were called *Nizamiya* and were given the task of cultivating a Sunni intellectual tradition.[89] Ghazzali was a professor at the most prominent *madrasa*, the *Nizamiya* of Baghdad, and his works, including the *Deliverance*, contain lengthy attacks on Shi'ism, in particular on their notion of an Imam as the spiritual guide to understanding the word of God. As I mentioned above, the Shi'ite theoreticians (and *mashsha'i* philosophers) maintained the same intellectual framework for thinking and enlightenment as that of Ghazzali. The main difference was their interjection of an elaborate process of cultivation (guided education) meant to expose the inner meaning of revelation. In his attack, Ghazzali dismissed the Shi'ite and *mashsha'i* process of guided education[90] and emphasized the inner capacity of the person to achieve worthiness for illumination through intellectual rigor and mystical practice. In this, he sought to legitimize Sunnism as intellectually coherent and independent of Shi'ism. But due to the political motivations of his arguments, Ghazzali's challenges were not (and were not perceived to be) irrefutable objections to the traditions against which they were launched.[91]

ASSESSMENTS

To be sure, for Ghazzali and Descartes, the form of meditation[92] – which begins with cleansing the agent of worldly impurities, proceeds to establish a link between the agent and the divine (which results in the enlightenment of the agent) and concludes by returning the enlightened agent to the world of ordinary experience – is essential to their task of unveiling the phenomenon.[93] But these similarities (the form and the purpose) should force the urgency of an explanation of the marked differences between the philosophies of these thinkers, especially the contrast between the mathematical/scientific and the religious approaches to the encounter with phenomena. After all, if phenomenology can yield such strikingly varied stances, its legitimacy is highly suspicious. In what follows, I contend that the fault is not with phenomenology but with the misappropriations of the phenomenological method. In the case of Ghazzali and Descartes, these misappropriations are the results of religious and scientific prejudices respectively. After all, phenomenology's promise of access to things themselves cannot become available by scientific or theological prejudice. In the remainder of this essay, I argue that this criticism is detrimental to Descartes' project, but not to Ghazzali's. In regard to the latter, it should simply issue a warning about the interference of religious commitments in philosophical activity.

Descartes had conceived his philosophical task as the inauguration of a universal mathematics. This project, claims Descartes, came to him in a dream, and he set about to realize it.[94] The skeptical procedure --set out in the first Meditation-- supplied him with an ideal tool to dispense with non-mathematical knowledge. Furthermore, his ontological approach to the process of doubt together with his account of thinking as the witnessing of a drama bolstered his agenda of submitting the whole of consciousness to a mathematical regime. Both prepared the way for an indiscriminate quantitative stance in relation to phenomena, since the latter are regarded as particulars subject to universal laws. The mathematical prejudice becomes entrenched when Descartes' attempts to resuscitate the physical world following the discovery of the *ego cogito* and the proof that God is good and cannot be a deceiver. The salvaged physical world bears only a nominal resemblance to the world of our experiences. It is a material world whose essence is extension, which he defines in purely quantitative terms.[95]

As we saw above, Husserl points to the centrality of the mathematical method in Descartes' project. Despite Descartes' profound phenomenological insights, his commitment to founding a universal mathematics is in stark opposition to the demands of the phenomenological method. We have seen that the phenomenologist aims to let things appear as they are and avoid any prejudice in regard to them. The proponent of universal mathematics, however, thrives on the very opposite assumption; he purports to treat all things as the objects of a mathematical research program. Heidegger identifies this problematic aspects of Descartes' project in the following manner: "Descartes' discussion of possible kinds of *access* to entities within-the-world is dominated by an idea of Being which has been gathered from a definite realm of these entities themselves."[96] He refers to Descartes' specific idea of Being as "permanent presence-at-hand."[97] So, not only are all entities forced to appear as objects of positive mathematical research, the mode of access to them, *Dasein*'s mode of being, is also conceived in the same way. Heidegger writes that Descartes "takes the Being of '*Dasein*' ... in the very same way as he takes the Being of the *res extensa* – namely, as substance."[98] Although this mathematical monopoly is in sharp opposition to the spirit of phenomenology, it does not make Descartes' project less intriguing. It is a project that has captivated the imagination of western philosophy since the seventeenth century and, even to this day, continues to exert itself on the great minds of that tradition. One could say that Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* is aimed at reversing the impact of Cartesianism on western thought.[99]

Ghazzali's project, on the other hand, could be criticized for its focus on the experience of the divine for its completion. One could wonder if such a move is legitimately phenomenological. At this point, it would be useful to return to Henry Corbin's phenomenological interest in Islamic philosophy. As we saw earlier, he shares Heidegger's commitment to hermeneutic phenomenology – the leading of the inquirer to a point where she can see what it is that lies hidden. Where Corbin differs from Heidegger, though, is in his concern with the experience of the transcendent. Heidegger is silent about any encounter with a transmundane reality. For Corbin, however, *kashf al-mahjub* (i.e., the unveiling of the hidden) involves the unveiling of a transcendent world of intelligible objects as well as, "the *'alam al-mithal*, the

mundus imaginalis, that imaginal world which is not imaginary at all, but the *barsakh*, the space between, the intermediary between the sensible and the intelligible."[100]

I do not believe that Corbin's concern with the imaginal world and the intelligible world is an abandonment of the phenomenological project. Rather, Corbin is developing further the domain of phenomenological concern in order to include the phenomena of spiritual experience. Heidegger was notoriously reluctant to consider religious experience, despite his earlier training in theology. Corbin is not, and he adds an exotic twist to the legitimate expansion of the inclusiveness of the phenomenological domain. He engages, in a serious and consistent manner, the works of the mystical theosophists of Islam, especially the Shi'ite Iranians, and especially their accounts of mystical and prophetic experiences.

With this in mind, it is not difficult to appreciate phenomenologically the mystical moments in Ghazzali's meditation. However, we are still left with the question concerning the legitimacy of Ghazzali's criticism of other Islamic movements of phenomenological interest, i.e., Islamic Peripatetics (*mashsha'un*) and Isma'ili Shi'ites (*batiniyya*). I argued above that Ghazzali's criticism is motivated by political considerations. Ghazzali, as the most prominent and politically influential Sunni theologian of his time, would have a vested interest in attacking viewpoints that challenge the ruling ideology. I am suggesting that that is precisely the justification for Ghazzali's attacks and not the alleged intrinsic incoherence in the views of *mashsha'un* or the *batiniyya*.[101] If we keep this in mind, the phenomenological insights of Ghazzali's texts are delivered from their political limitation and assume their rightful place in the spiritual phenomenology explored by Islamic thinkers.

NOTES

[1] I have encountered two versions of how Ghazzali's works found their way to Europe. Both sources indicate that Ghazzali's works were available between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Harry A. Wolfson in "Nicolaus of Autrecourt and Ghazzali's Argument Against Causality", *Speculum*, 44: 2 (April 1969), pp. 234-38, maintains that Ghazzali's works, especially the *Incoherence of Philosophers*, were available to Nicolaus of Autrecourt and Bernard of Arezzo. Wolfson argues this etymologically and philosophically by referring to a particular argument in the *Incoherence of Philosophers*. This argument concerns the causal factors that are involved when a piece of cotton is brought next to the fire. The official version of Ghazzali's *Incoherence of Philosophers* was translated into Latin by Jewish scholars, Kalonymous ben Kalonymous (1328), and Kalonymous ben David (1527). These versions included Averroes' commentaries. Wolfson also indicates that some of Ghazzali's arguments were available to Albert the Great through the works of Maimonides (1135-1204) and Averroes.

R. E. A. Shanab, in "Ghazzali and Aquinas on Causality," *The Monist*, 58: 1 (January 1974), pp. 141-50, refers to another source for the availability of Ghazzali's works to European Scholars. Shanab maintains that the Dominican Raymund Martin had exposure to many of Ghazzali's works, which were available in Toledo in the thirteenth century. Shanab wants to argue that Thomas Aquinas, through the study of the works of Raymund Martin and correspondence with him, was at least indirectly exposed to the thought of Ghazzali. In particular, Shanab's argument concerns Aquinas' attacks on Muslim Peripatetic philosophers. Shanab argues that the Peripatetic doctrines under attack were the ones that Ghazzali attacked in the Incoherence of Philosophers. It is important to note that Shanab maintains that *Deliverance from Error, Al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal*, was one of the texts available in the thirteenth century.

It is interesting to note that Lenn E. Goodman argues that Descartes' argument for the existence of the *ego cogito* has its source in Avicenna's argument for the immortality of the soul ("Ibn Sina's Argument

for the Existence of the Soul", *Philosophical Forum* 1: 4 (Summer 69), pp. 547-62). This point may go some distance in explaining the similarities between Ghazzali's *Deliverance* and Descartes' *Meditations*, since Ghazzali was a careful reader and critic of Avicenna. Goodman's argument is persuasive, but it is based on philosophical evidence; it is much harder to make the case historically. In this essay, I will not develop Goodman's account.

[2] Henry Corbin, *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, Peter Russell (trans.), Ipswich: Golgonooza Press, 1981, p. 5.

[3] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Henry Corbin: The Life and Works of the Occidental Exile in Quest of the Orient of Light," in *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, New York: KPI, 1987, p. 276.

[4] Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Religion after Religion*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 146.

[5] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Recollections of Henry Corbin and Reflections upon his Intellectual Significance," *Temenos Academy Review* (Spring 1999), pp. 34-45.

[6] Refer to Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (trans.), New York: Harper & Row, 1962, 71-75/H45-50.

[7] *Ibid.*, 190-1/H150.

[8] *Ibid.*, 200/H158.

[9] Robert Brandom, "Heidegger's Categories in *Being and Time*," *Monist* 66: 3 (1983), p. 403.

[10] Refer to *Being and Time*, 409-H358, where Heidegger advances the claim that "[t]heoretical research is not without a *praxis* of its own".

[11] *Ibid.*, 266/H223.

[12] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Albert Hofstadter (trans.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 312.

[13] John Haugeland, "Heidegger on Being a Person," *Nous* 16: 1 (1982), pp. 19-20.

[14] Brandom, p. 388. I should mention that my endorsement of Brandom's reading of *Being and Time* and Haugeland's Brandomism is not wholesale. What I find problematic in Brandom is his reductive approach to epistemic authority, and his insertion of this philosophically problematic view into Heidegger's *Being and Time*. He attributes to Heidegger's early philosophy the notion of the primacy of the category of the social; he writes: "The ontological primacy of the social can be justified by appeal to a more specific thesis, pragmatism concerning *authority*. This is the claim that all matters of authority or privilege, in particular *epistemic* authority, are matters of social practice, and not objective matters of fact" (*Ibid.*, pp. 389-90). I agree with Brandom that the category of the social is of paramount importance in accounting for epistemic authority, but I believe that he goes too far. Brandom wants to maintain, for example, that perceptual judgments are not justified by what is perceived, but by social structures that throw legitimacy on the claim. I have argued against this view in my dissertation, *Experience Conceptualized: Between Coherentism and the Myth of the Given* (UVA Philosophy Dissertation), pp. 91-97. I believe that the view I defend in my dissertation is, in many ways, similar to the one advanced by Heidegger in *Being and Time*. The defense of this claim, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

[15] Haugeland, p. 20.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[17] It is clear then that although *Dasein* as such is not a fancy way of referring solely to human beings, *Dasein* is not possible without human beings.

[18] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 184-5/H145.

[19] The world as an existential of being-in-the-world is constituted by signifying relations. These relations are the unity of the conditions of the possibility of the world, the worldhood of the world. What exactly is this system of signifying relations and how does it relate to the intelligible coherence of *Dasein*'s world? Heidegger maintains that "the relational totality (*das Bezuganze*) of this signifying we call 'significance' (*Bedeutsamkeit*). This is what makes up the structure of the world" (*Ibid.*, 120/H87). Furthermore, Heidegger's mentions "the relational totality of *this signifying(be-deuten)*." What is "this signifying"? In a rather revealing passage, Heidegger describes the system of signifying relations as follows: "The 'for-the-sake-of-which' (*Worumwillen*) signifies an 'in-order-to' (*Um-zu*); this in turn, a 'towards-this' (*Dazu*); the latter, an 'in-which' (*Wobei*) of letting something be involved; and that, in turn, the 'with-which' (*Womit*) of an involvement. These relations are bound up with one another as a primordial totality" (*Ibid.*). The system of signifying relations is the worldhood of the being-in-the world, *Dasein*. It would not be inappropriate to maintain that the worldhood of the world is something like the structural framework constitutive of all social practices.

[20] For further exploration of Heidegger's claim that *Dasein* is essentially in truth, refer to *Being and Time*, 262-9/H219-226. Also see 300/H256.

[21] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims that "inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity" (303/H259).

[22] Haugeland, p. 23.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[24] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435/H383.

[25] *Ibid.*, 50/H28, 58/H34.

[26] *Ibid.*, 59/H35.

[27] *Ibid.*, 61-2/H37.

[28] Corbin, pp. 14-5.

[29] In Islamic thought, *kashf al-mahjub* is a term that has wide usage. It means the unveiling the veiled, the shy, or rather the one that conceals himself. Along with its usage in philosophical texts, there are two mystical treatises that bear it as their title: 1) Abu Ya 'qub Sijistani's "*Kashf al-Mahjub*," in *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, Vol II, S. H. Nasr & M. Aminrazavi (eds.), London: Oxford University Press, 2001). 2) 'Ali ibn 'Uthman al-Hujwiri, *The Kash al-Mahjub, The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, R. A. Nicholson (trans.), London: Luzac, 1959.

[30] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 54-5/H31.

[31] In an effort to relate his project to that of Kant, and, at the same time, distinguish it from Kant's critical philosophy, Heidegger writes: "If we keep within the horizon of the Kantian problematic, we can give an illustration of what is conceived phenomenologically as a 'phenomenon', with reservation as to other differences; for we may then say that that which already shows itself in the appearance as prior to the 'phenomenon' as ordinarily understood and as accompanying it in every case, can, even though it thus shows itself unthematically, be brought thematically to show itself; and what thus shows itself (the 'forms of intuition') will be the "phenomena" of phenomenology. For manifestly space and time must be able to show themselves in this way – they must be able to become phenomena – if Kant is claiming to make a transcendental assertion grounded in the facts when he says that space is the a priori "inside-which" of an ordering" (*Ibid.*, 55/H31). Having tied his account of phenomenon to Kant's account of space and time, which condition the possibility of any appearance and are themselves appearances, Heidegger considers time more fundamental than space and rejects Kant's account of time: "in spite of the fact that he (Kant) was bringing the phenomenon of time back into the subject again, his analysis of it remained oriented towards the traditional way in which time had been ordinarily understood; in the long run this kept him from working out the phenomenon of a 'transcendental determination of time' in its own structure and function"(*Ibid.*, 45/H324). I take this to mean that Kant understood time as mathematicized and not in the original, lived, sense of the word, which Heidegger is trying to resuscitate.

[32] *Ibid.*, 374/H326.

[33] *Ibid.*, 458/H406.

[34] Leo Groarke, "Descartes' First Meditation: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 12: 3, p. 291. Sami N. Najm also advances this thesis. In "The Place and Function of Doubt in the Philosophies of Descartes and Ghazzali," he writes: "The method of doubt in both cases proceeds by a process of elimination or reduction. Every type or source of knowledge is set aside as inadequate until a completely certain foundation is discovered" (*Philosophy East and West* 16 (1966), p. 138).

[35] René Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, & Dugald Murdoch (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 12.

[36] Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazzali, "Deliverance from Error and Attachment to the Lord of High and Majesty," in *The Faith and Practice of Ghazzali*, W. Montgomery Watt (trans.), London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967, p. 20.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-54.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, Ghazzali's intellect is Descartes' understanding, the faculty that relates various perceptions and is able to distinguish between them.

[44] Descartes, p. 12.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[49] Harry G. Frankfurt, *Demons, Dreamers, and Madmen*, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970, p. 74.

[50] Descartes, p. 14.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[52] Ghazzali, p. 24.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[59] Descartes, pp. 16-17.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[63] Earlier Descartes asserted that ideas are a mode of thinking which is, itself, an attribute of the mind.

[64] Descartes does not give matter the status of substance until the sixth Meditation. A discussion of that argument is beyond the scope of this paper.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[66] The same thing about modes and accidents in relation to substances can be said of attributes in relation to substances. Mind as a substance has the attribute of thinking while the body has the attribute of extension.

[67] In the French version of the *Meditations*, Descartes' term for understanding is *entendement*. *Entendement* has its roots in the Latin *intendère* which means stretching out towards something. According to Descartes, I perceive the objective reality of ideas through understanding. The concept of objective reality is not Descartes' invention. In Medieval philosophy, the concept of objective reality has its first appearance in St. Anselm's ontological argument. More modern treatments of this concept can be found in the works of Franz Brentano especially *Psychologie Vom Empirischen Standpunkt*. Edmund Husserl also treats this concept extensively.

[68] In *Principles of Philosophy*, Descartes maintains that "pain, color, and other things of that sort are clearly and distinctly perceived when they are considered just as sensations or thoughts. However, it must be noticed that when they are judged to be certain things existing outside of our mind, it is absolutely impossible to understand in any way what things they are", Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller (trans.) Boston: Kluwer, 1983, Part I, §68. We suffer from error when we do not perceive our sense perceptions distinctly and ascribe to them an objective reality that is not theirs. Color is not a thing but a mode of an extended material thing. Pain is not a thing but a mode of the union of mind and body. As long as "I simply refrain from making a judgment in cases where I do not perceive the truth with sufficient clarity and distinctness, then it is clear that I am behaving correctly and avoiding error" Descartes' *Meditations*, p. 41.

[69] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, Dorion Cairns (trans.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, pp. 7-8.

[70] In the *Meditations*, Descartes offers three arguments for the existence of God. The ontological and the cosmological arguments are rather standard. His third argument, the causal argument, can be paraphrased as follows: (1) I have the idea of God (formal reality of this idea). (2) I understand this idea clearly and distinctly (objective reality of this idea). (3) This idea has greater objective reality than I have formal reality. (4) The cause of an idea must have at least as much formal reality as the idea has objective reality. (5) Therefore, I cannot be the cause of this idea. (6) Therefore, something other than me must have been the cause of this idea. (7) Any other finite substance will have less formal reality than the idea of God has objective reality. (8) Therefore, no other finite substance could be the cause of this idea. (9) Therefore, the

cause of this idea cannot be any substance whatever. (10) Therefore, the cause of this idea must be an infinite substance. (11) Therefore, there exists an infinite substance, which corresponds to and is the cause of my idea of God. (12) Therefore, God exists, and necessarily exists (pp. 28-31).

Once Descartes establishes the existence of God, he argues that God is perfect and good. Furthermore, he states that deception is a defect. Therefore, God cannot be a deceiver; therefore, what we clearly and distinctly perceive is necessarily true. However, Descartes does not want to state the above conclusion too strongly. In the fourth Meditation, Descartes argues that "for since I now know that my own nature is very weak and limited, whereas the nature of God is immense, incomprehensible and infinite, I also know without more ado that he is capable of countless things whose causes are beyond my knowledge. And for this reason alone I consider the customary search for final causes to be totally useless in physics; there is considerable rashness in thinking myself capable of investigating the (impenetrable) purposes of God". (*Ibid.*, p. 39).

In this argument, Descartes wants to establish that although God is not a deceiver, the comprehension of his purposes lie beyond the reach of understanding. Therefore, Descartes wants to assert that what I clearly and distinctly perceive is not necessarily real. Descartes emphasizes this point in a number of his works. In the Appendix to Fifth Objections and Replies, Descartes maintains that "while the soul is in doubt about the existence of all material things, it knows itself *praecise tantum* – 'in the strict sense only' ... I showed that by the words 'in the strict sense only' I do not at all mean an entire exclusion or negation, but only an abstraction from material things; for I said that in spite of this we are not sure that there is nothing corporeal in the soul, even though we do not *recognize* anything corporeal in it" (*The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II, p. 276, my Italics). The important point here is that Descartes does not want to talk about the world as it is in itself, as planned by God. This is beyond the powers of understanding. Hence, Descartes does not want to say that the soul is in reality incorporeal. But, he does want to say that the soul is recognized by understanding to be incorporeal.

[71] Husserl, p. 26.

[72] Ghazzali, pp. 23-25.

[73] Plato, "Theaetetus," in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (eds.) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962, 190a.

[74] Plato, "Sophist," in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Hamilton and Cairns (eds.), 263e.

[75] The writings of Aristotle's Hellenistic commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias, were instrumental in strengthening the impact of Aristotle's psychology on Islamic philosophers, beginning with al-Kindi (Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Liadain Sherrard (trans.), London: Kegan Paul International, 1993, p. 156.)

[76] Aristotle, "De Anima," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Jonathan Barnes (ed.), W.D. Ross (trans.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, 430a 14-17.

[77] *Ibid.*, 430a 25.

[78] Plato, "Republic," in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Hamilton and Cairns (eds.), 515c-518d.

[79] Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *The Niche of Lights*, David Buchman (trans.), Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1998, p. 4.

[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[82] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[83] Abu Nasr al-Farabi, *On the Perfect State*, Richard Walzer (trans.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.406.

[84] See, for instance, Avicenna's "On the Proof of Prophecies and the Interpretation of the Prophets' Symbols and Metaphors," in *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (eds.), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961, p. 115.

[85] Refer to Henry Corbin's "Divine Epiphany and Spiritual Birth in Isma'ilian Gnosis" in *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, Ralph Manheim (trans.) London: Kegan Paul International, 1983.

[86] Refer to W. Montgomery Watt's "Ghazzali and Later Ash'arites," in *Islamic Philosophy and Theology*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985, p. 86.

[87] The Buyid court's support for Avicenna is rather undisputed. It should also be noted that Alfarabi enjoyed the protection of Hamadanid Shi'ite dynasty in Aleppo (refer to Corbin's *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 158.

[88] Refer to Carla S. Klausner's *The Seljuk Vazirate*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 58-59.

[89] Refer to Bayard Dodge's *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, Washington D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1962, pp. 20-22.

[90] Refer to Ghazzali's *Deliverance*, pp. 48-54. Also Refer to Watt, p. 88.

[91] For an Islamic Peripatetic reply, refer to Averroes' famous *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, London: Luzac & Co., 1954. In the *History of Islamic Philosophy*, Corbin also mentions a voluminous Isma'ili response to Ghazzali, p. 183, also refer to Corbin's "The Ismaili Response to the Polemic of Ghazali," in *Ismaili Contributions to Islamic Culture*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed.) Tehran: The Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1979, pp. 67-98. This work is as yet unavailable for scholarly examination.

[92] The similarities between the form of Islamic prayer and the meditations of Descartes and Ghazzali are noteworthy. They all begin with an act of cleansing the self from attachment to the world, they move to a contemplation of God, and they end with returning to the world. Some such similarities might also be observed in regard to Catholic ritual worship.

[93] Husserl also adopts a meditational approach to initiating his phenomenological investigations. In the *Paris Lectures*, he writes: "To be a meditating philosopher who, through these meditations, has himself become a transcendental ego, and who constantly reflects upon himself, means to enter upon often endless transcendental experience ... It means to see all that which is to be seen, to explain and penetrate it, to encompass it descriptively by concepts and judgments. But these latter must only be terms which have been derived without alteration from their perceptual source ... I am detached inasmuch as I "suspend" all worldly interests (which I nonetheless possess)" Peter Koestenbaum (trans.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975, pp. 12-14.

[94] See Jacques Maritain's *The Dream of Descartes*, Mabelle L. Andison (trans.) New York: Philosophical Library, 1944, pp. 13-17.

[95] Refer to the wax experiment, in the second Meditation, where Descartes maintains that the essence of wax is not a sensory idea (Descartes, pp. 20-21). This point becomes elaborated in the opening lines of the fifth Meditation where Descartes gives his mathematical account of the essence of matter, i.e., extension (*Ibid.*, p. 44).

[96] Heidegger's *Being and Time*, 130/H97.

[97] *Ibid.*, 130/H98.

[98] *Ibid.*, 131/H98.

[99] According to Heidegger, Descartes' impact is visible in all subsequent philosophy (*Ibid.*, 45-7/H24-5), including Husserl's phenomenology. What is unique in Heidegger's phenomenology is perhaps a sustained effort to remove the last remnants of Cartesian mathematicism.

[100] Corbin's *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy*, p. 14.

[101] Please refer to footnote 85.

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THE SHARED QUEST BETWEEN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND MODERN PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology is not a philosophical field, but the beginning of a great revolution in the thinking of the modern world. From the outset, Edmund Husserl saw a degradation in western philosophy. He depicted his attitude towards this trend in his *Crisis* in a sad tone mingled with hopelessness. Initially, Husserl was optimistic about the revival of philosophy, since he believed that European civilization would not survive without philosophy. By European civilization, Husserl meant the modern world. How is it possible to revive philosophy?

Following Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, Husserl did not intend to replace contemporary European philosophy with a form of Greek or Medieval philosophy. Yet, he had to refer to the ancient philosophies in order to discover the cause of deviation and the time of its occurrence.

When we talk about degradation, it may be thought that we mean that philosophy was perfect at the beginning, and that it has had a retrogressive trend. Husserl did not think that Greeks and Medievals had reached the perfect and ideal philosophy. However, he had learned from them that philosophy is a general science in which the essence of things appears. Phenomenology is, in fact, the manifestation of essences. But how are essences manifested? Are they hidden under the appearances? Husserl did not believe in Kant's being in itself and noumenon. Instead, he maintained that phenomena, which are the very essences he sought, appear in our consciousness in two reductive stages —the eidetic reduction and the transcendental.

The question of perception, which had become more and more complicated in Descartes' time, and which was considered a resolved problem in Kant's era, seems to have been set forth again by Husserl, who does not ignore the *cogito*. He takes Descartes' meditation seriously, but avoids his objectivism and rationalism. In Husserl's view, the *cogito* is devoid of content, and perception cannot be devoid of content. What is the content of perception? Do we perceive objects such that they exist in the external world? In a sense, the answer to this question is "yes." However, perception is not the impression of objects on the mind; rather it is the manifestation of essences in the mind. This is similar to theories held by Mullā Sadrā who considered external objects as accidentally known, and the form that the mind creates as essentially known. There is a difference, however: Mullā Sadrā believed in the external existence of objects, while Husserl put this issue in parentheses, or rather, he suspended it.