



Politics of Dasein and the Tragedy of Dasein in Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

Ehsan Khoshdel¹, Fatemeh Azizmohammadi^{2,*}, and Mojgan Yarahmadi³

Ph.D. Candidate of English Language and Literature, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran
Email: eh.khoshdel@gmail.com

²*Corresponding author: Associate Professor of English Language and Literature, Department of English, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran*
Email: f-azizmohammadi@iau-arak.ac.ir

³*Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature, Department of English, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran*
Email: mojgan.yarahmadi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to provide a political reading of Dasein that might result into tragedy of Dasein in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Politics can be regarded as an element to reach existence and Dasein. The phenomenological methodology that Heidegger introduces rejects all the history of western philosophical tradition. Heidegger believes that the metaphysical thinking that has dominated western philosophy since Plato to Nietzsche is insufficient for the study of being. The western history is depicted in the story of *A Song of Fire and Ice*. Applying these assumptions to the context of Westeros, it becomes clear that ruling and domination over is the only way to appoint the matter of existence. In a realm where every lord and lady nurtures his or her own dream of sitting on the Iron Throne, the nation's notion of unity and democracy degenerates into a sort of oligarchic dogma that treats the lives of ordinary people as dispensable means to the ultimate end: total power. In such a state, an idealistic politician would find little to no room for advocating purely positive values like equality or justice. Indeed, as he often finds out soon enough, the profits of the elite often rely directly on the losses of the public.

Keywords: Heidegger, politics, Dasein, sentimentality, A Song of Fire and Ice novels

ARTICLE INFO

Research Article

Received: Sunday, May 29, 2022

Accepted: Monday, December 5, 2022

Published: Thursday, December 1, 2022

Available Online: Monday, December 5, 2022

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22049/JALDA.2022.27855.1431>

Online ISSN: 2821-0204; Print ISSN: 2820-8986



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Introduction

A Song of Ice and Fire is a continuous series of epic dream books by American author and screenwriter George R. R. Martin. Martin started composing the series in 1991 and the primary volume was distributed in 1996. Initially arranged as a set of three, the series presently comprises of five distributed volumes; a further two are arranged. Likewise, there are three prequel novellas presently accessible, with a few more being arranged, and a progression of novella-length extracts from the fundamental Ice and Fire books (Flood, 2015).

The narrative of *A Song of Ice and Fire* happens in a fictional world, basically on a mainland called Westeros yet in addition on an enormous landmass toward the east, known as Essos. Most of the characters are human yet as the series advances others are presented, for example, the cold and threatening otherworldly Others from the far North and fire-breathing winged serpents from the East, both ideas to be wiped out by the people of the story. There are three head story lines in the series: the chronicling of a dynastic common battle for control of Westeros among a few contending families; the rising danger of the Others, who abide past an enormous mass of ice that frames Westeros' northern line; and the desire of Daenerys Targaryen, the ousted girl of a killed in another common ruler war fifteen years prior, to get back to Westeros and guarantee her legitimate seat. As the series advances, the three-story lines become progressively intertwined and subject to one another. The series is told as an outsider looking in through the eyes of various perspective characters. Before the end of the fourth volume, there have been seventeen such characters with various sections and eight who just have one part each. A few new perspective characters are presented by the finish of the fifth volume, making way for the significant occasions of the 6th book (Taite, 2018). The whole series is filled with tragic scene and the characters who become the victims of fate or brutality of the world. As such characters attempt to prove their Dasein to the world or the society, they fail and their being or Dasein ends up futile. One of these characters who attempts to depict his Dasein is Ned Stark who can be realized as the most tragic character of the series which becomes the focus of this study.

Tragic characters attain self-recognition when they are posed into situations which explicate their existential structures, and relations to the surrounding world (Poole, 2005). The world of Westeros tragedy is bizarre and serious towards its inhabitants, yet they contain an aesthetic harmony in themselves. Sometimes, the tragic world merges the character in itself, carries him into a new world, then ambiguously distances from him, and dispatches his cultural and historical ground, as with Ned Stark who is confronted with a new realism unknown to his past. The tragic world would merge into the character driving him into rebellion and mental struggle, yet suddenly segregates itself from him to drown him into new sorrows that he has caused himself with the new Kingdom.

Dasein's "natural historicity" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 171) directs that the conventional approaches to deciphering should be de-organized to permit the legitimate remarkable substance to arise. The strategic meaning of Dasein's historicity is that this substance essentially winds up associated with a universe of importance organized by

the custom from which it cannot remove itself freely. This is planned to appear differently in relation to Husserl's detached supernatural inner self. As Heidegger asserts, "all exploration and not least that which works inside the scope of the focal inquiry of Being-is an ontical plausibility of Dasein" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 45); or, in other words, phenomenological research should begin from the manner by which peculiarities are now perceived. The "roots" of the existential insightful of Dasein are ontical and phenomenology is something that must be "jumped all over in an existentiell way as a chance of the Being of each current Dasein" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 45). Dasein's historicity is to such an extent that it should essentially get itself as far as the practice, yet there stays an opportunity for Dasein to deal with this legacy and set up the ground for definite work (Groth, 2002).

Crowell frames the apparent tension historically in terms of the "dispute between Husserl and Heidegger over the nature of philosophy and the character of the philosophising subject" (Malpas, 2003, p. 100). Lafont's transcendentalized reading denies the existential logical of Dasein of its power since it is grounded in historicity and "nothing 'basically factual' ought to have a flat out power over us" (Lafont, 2015, p. 279). Lafont's reading is included two hermeneutic circumstances that are conclusive for understanding her study of Being and Time as a work of supernatural way of thinking in the conventional sense. The main condition is that "significance decides reference" by which "how we might interpret the being of elements should decide ahead of time the thing we are alluding to". The subsequent condition is the "comprehensive construction" of the comprehension by which without a "projection of importance [of the whole] no movement of understanding can make headway" (Lafont, 2015, p. 279).

The whole series of *A Song of Ice and Fire* is a fantasy genre, but it is associated with history as, in this regard, Selling also points out the correlation between fantasy literature and medievalism, which she calls "fantastic neo-medievalism...a very selective and positive image of the Middle Ages" (Selling, 2004, p. 214). As a result, political aspects of the novel which are related to Stark's Dasein can be studied in the books.

Review of Literature

"Politics, Hidden Agendas and *A Game of Thrones*: An Intersectional Analysis of Women's Sexuality in George R. R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones*" by Elin Sandqvist offers an examination of George R. R. Martin's novel. The novel is dissected according to a diverse point of view; it spotlights on ladies' situations in the power order and in what ways they utilize their sexuality to get to drive. The investigation, moreover, examines the family idea, and how ladies safeguard their families to keep up with natural ties. The diverse hypothesis utilized in this paper mostly comprises of the definitions given by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, and the idea of family structure is grounded in the perspectives on Patricia Hill Collins. In mix with the investigation, an interconnected model, which comprises of eight unique social and social classes, is introduced to mirror the clear pecking order inside the society depicted in the book. The model shows that orders inside this general public exist, and that the male orientation, straight sexuality, and fruitfulness are profoundly special variables (Sandqvist, 2012).

Since this work reflects the structures of the families and the role of the society, it could be a useful source to use some parts of the essay in this research.

“Narrative structure of *A Song of Ice and Fire* creates a fictional world with realistic measures of social complexity” by Gessey-Jones et al. shows that regardless of its vast scope, *A Song of Ice and Fire* is organized so as not to surpass the regular mental limits of a wide readership. Notwithstanding its dynamic expanded transient premise, the construction of its social world mirrors that of normal interpersonal organizations in manners liable to limit the mental weight on the reader. Simultaneously, the narrator has controlled the course of events of the story in such a way as to make it constantly more engaging by making huge occasions appear to be arbitrary to elevate the reader's commitment. The distinguishing proof of examples of verisimilitude, cognizance, and, unusualness through computational techniques may motivate more extensive quantitative ways to deal with different areas of abstract study, including show, TV, film, periodicity, type, canonicity, writing, history, and fantasy. Since this work deals with social complexity, it can be used in the present essay to analyze Ned Stark's subjectivity (Gessey-Jones et al., 2020).

“Archetypes in Contemporary Anglophone Literature: *A Song of Ice and Fire*” by Petra Leštinská manages paradigms in George R. R. Martin's books from series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. In particular, it is centered around original investigation of a picked character. The investigation depends on creators who are connected with legends and paradigms in dream writing, yet additionally it depends on C. G. Jung's work, who depicted paradigms rather according to a mental perspective. After the examination, there was the synopsis of found prime examples and the person improvement. It was found, that the personality of Jon Snow satisfied the legend paradigm and the chivalrous excursion prime example. Moreover, his personality tracked down components of different originals, like fighter, darling, and traveler. The concept of archetype might be helpful to conduct this research and analyze tragedy and Dasein (Leštinská, 2017).

“Forgive me for all I have done and all I must do – Portrayals of Negative Motherhood in George R. R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones*, *A Clash of Kings* and *A Storm of Swords*” by Aino Tegelman is going to concentrate on the initial three volumes of American creator George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series with respect to their depiction of mother characters who utilize power on political and private circles, as well as the negative repercussions in that. The analyst contends that Martin both violates conventional high dream stories yet additionally utilizes different generalizations as overall writing with respect to parenthood and female power, frequently negative in tone. The work deals with political power which can be found influential in this present research (Tegelman, 2013).

Charles Guignon discusses the authentic Dasein and the possibility of such modification of Dasein from inauthenticity. Dasein as "event or happening" is "beyond immediate givenness" which is its projective being. Projectively existing, Dasein is toward the inevitable impossibility of itself--its death. The anxiety of death shatters the ambiguous Dasein and wakes it in the midst of its being as always and already thrown to the possibility of its death. In this procession Dasein wins itself back from the They.

Guignon discusses the shortcomings of epistemological interpretation from Heidegger's philosophy. He argues that the knowing of the world is not separate from the being of Dasein. In fact, Dasein is explicated as being-in-the-world by Heidegger. Heidegger argues that Dasein is not absolutely ignorant of being, but that to some extent it has an understanding of the world, itself, and being in general. Guignon proposes that the possibilities of interpreting the world and being are part of the "heritage" of Dasein. Being is not completely closed off from Dasein. Guignon discusses the mode of being of authentic Dasein. He suggests that authentic Dasein in temporalization of itself locates itself in "primordial truth". Only as temporal and being-toward-death can Dasein authenticate itself and disclose the world in the truth of its existence (Guignon, 2004). The idea of Dasein in this work helps the researcher to understand a general overview of the concept and apply it to this research.

Discussion

As Heidegger believes, the proper ground upon which our being (sein) has to be seen is phenomenology; and that phenomenology must make available to us the ontology of that being; in other words, what it is for a being to be (Heidegger, 2010). Therefore, the first task is to explicate this phenomenology as the approaching method to the being which is called Dasein. Dasein is always mine; the life that it must lead, the possibilities that it must face, and the death that it must finally take into itself are determinatives of Dasein's own self. Its essence is its existence (Heidegger, 1993); in its being, it is concerned to its own being, the being that only through existence can win or lose itself. It is distinctive in a way that to things objectively present their being is neither a matter of indifference nor non-indifference. Dasein's essentiality lies in its possibilities, Dasein is its possibilities; through its possibilities, it can win its authenticity or fall prey to inauthenticity; for Dasein possibility is higher than actualization of reality or even actuality. Authenticity and inauthenticity are two kinds of being of Dasein and do not show value judgment in any way about the being of Dasein. Dasein is initially and for the most part inauthentic; it must choose itself through possibilities that face it. Since Dasein understands itself based on its possibilities and possibilities lie before in its existence, the explication of the essential structures of its being must be gained through existentiality of its existence.

The same mechanism and features of Dasein that has been mentioned can be found in Ned Stark's life. Dasein is for Stark as his life leads his possibilities and eventually it leads to his tragic death. In fact, based on Heidegger's theory, Stark intends to obtain his authenticity by fulfilling his role in the politics (Gall, 2003). When Eddard Stark is appointed by Robert Baratheon as the Hand of the King, he knows well that he has been cast into a pit of vipers. Corrupted and ridden with sycophants and opportunists as the king's court is, Eddard must carry the heavy burden of ruling the Seven Kingdoms through the Small Council, an office of appointed agents who are tasked with handling the governance of the realm through the power of the king. As the King's Hand, who is the second most powerful man in all Westeros, Eddard obviously holds the strongest voice in the council, and therefore, every decision made by him is laden with serious consequences. This all demands from Eddard exceptional political skills in order to both secure the realm and his head which, considering the corrupted nature of Westeros' political world, would require him to

frequently make important decisions that fall into a grey moral zone. But, being a Stark down to the core, whose famed virtues are honor, justice, and integrity, Eddard fails to operate properly as the Hand of the King, and is therefore executed as a traitor near the end of *A Game of Thrones*. Stark acquires the authenticity of his Dasein through Robert's decision, and he attempts to face it as Martin writes:

Robert looked at him. "I think you do. If so, you are the only one, my old friend." He smiled. "Lord Eddard Stark, I would name you the Hand of the King." Ned dropped to one knee. The offer did not surprise him; what other reason could Robert have had for coming so far? The Hand of the King was the second-most powerful man in the Seven Kingdoms. He spoke with the king's voice, commanded the king's armies, drafted the king's laws. At times he even sat upon the Iron Throne to dispense king's justice, when the king was absent, or sick, or otherwise indisposed. Robert was offering him a responsibility as large as the realm itself. (Martin, 1997, p. 59)

At the beginning of the novel, Eddard Stark is appointed by Robert Baratheon as the Hand of the King, an office that prompts him to travel to King's Landing, the capital city of the Seven Kingdoms, in order to rule in the King's name. Upon his arrival, however, Eddard soon comes to the realization that the political system of Robert's court is corrupted beyond repairs as each and every member of the Small Council pursues his own goals and interests. Eddard also begins investigating the suspicious death of the former Hand Jon Arryn, who used to serve Robert faithfully for fifteen years before his sudden death. During his role as the King's Hand, Eddard struggles with Robert's exceeding lavishness and his constant refusal to heed to any counsel. Before long, Eddard is approached by the spymaster Lord Varys, who informs him of the Lannisters' plot to kill Robert and usurp the throne, a conspiracy which, he believes, can be countered by the joint efforts of the King's Hand and the Master of Whisperers. When news of Daenerys' pregnancy reaches the court, Robert mentions the assassination of the young Targaryen, much to Eddard's dismay, who strongly speaks against this act. The discussion soon turns into a heated dispute, during which Eddard officially resigns from his office. Before he can head back for Winterfell, however, Eddard is attacked by Jaime Lannister in the streets of King's Landing, who demands Tyrion's release from Catelyn Stark's custody. During the fight that ensues, Eddard's guards are all massacred, with his own leg severely injured. Upon being taken back to the Red Keep, Robert makes amends with Eddard and asks him to act as his Hand once again, before going on a long hunting trip (Taite, 2018). The authenticity that he has within his own Dasein is tied to the political relations, and this might prepare the grounds for Stark's tragic downfall. Martin narrates:

Luwin plucked at his chain collar where it had chafed the soft skin of his throat. "The Hand of the King has great power, my lord. Power to find the truth of Lord Arryn's death, to bring his killers to the king's justice. Power to protect Lady Arryn and her son, if the worst be true." (Martin, 1997, p. 78)

In the King's absence, Eddard is left to rule in Robert's stead, during which time he also discovers the truth behind Cersei's children's parentage, all being the product of incest with Jaime Lannister. Knowing full well that this knowledge would bring down

the queen and the rest of the Lannisters residing in King's Landing, Eddard instead confronts Cersei directly with the intention of forcing her into exile. His plan backfires, however, when Cersei instead arranges for one of Robert's escorts to poison him during the hunt, after which a boar fatally wounds him. On his deathbed, King Robert asks Eddard to write down his will, declaring Joffrey as his heir (Taite, 2018). The tragic fate of Stark is backboned here once Joffrey is appointed as the heir to Robert and Stark does not stop him as the hand of the king. In fact, here he has failed to fulfill his role which is advising the king and protecting the kingdom. This is how tragedy escalates for Stark.

Heidegger believes that "tragedy always begins with the *Untergang* of the hero" (Heidegger, 2010). One of the general meanings of *Untergang* is decline and going down. Heidegger believes that metaphysic does not end by going beyond it but by a going down in a tragic world which is nearest to *Dasein*. This resonates which Nietzsche's Zarathustra who declines from his mountain solitude, and his madman who carrying a lantern in the daylight announcing the death of God. Another meaning of *Untergang* is happening between the world, as an event, to be thrown in the midst of the world. This is a going between in time: "Tragedy shows us a passage, a going-between and falling-between past and future that nonetheless holds together ('intimates', i.e., announces) past and future in and through the present" (Gall, 2013, p. 34). The tragic *Dasein* happens into its there as having a past that is continuous is its present which determines and get determined by a future. Heidegger states that an authentic *Dasein* in temporalizing itself always has a past (have-been) which arises out of a future in presenting in the present. The structure of tragedies is such that a present is seen while the past is already in action toward a future which gives meaning to the totality of past, present, and future. The future as the upon-which of meaning determines and is determined by a given past.

The same mechanism of Heidegger's tragedy can be applied to Stark as his own tragedy begins with his *Untergang* in which he goes to the tragic world which is nearest to his *Dasein*. Moreover, this tragedy is rooted in the past, continues in the present, and continues to the future. In fact, Stark is between the worlds and between the times. Going between the worlds refers to the struggle between politics and family that Stark experiences and between the times is related to Stark's tie with Robert in the past as they used to be close friends and his concern for the future of Westeros since Robert is unstable. The world of politics defines Stark's tragic path to his own downfall.

In the world of politics, every single opportunity counts and an ambitious mind should never miss the chance of using them. And while over-ambition is a dangerous trait in political games (as was the case with Viserys Targaryen), lack of ambition is likewise an equal disadvantage. It is shown quite clearly from the beginning that Eddard Stark hates the game of thrones. When he is appointed as the Hand of the King, the first thing that crosses his mind is: "Robert was offering him a responsibility as large as the realm itself. It was the last thing in the world he wanted" (Martin, 1997, p. 60). Eddard also despises the constant witticism exchanged between the members of the Small Council: "He had no patience with this game they played, this dueling with words" (Martin, 1997, p. 228). And there are also other instances where Eddard is shown to have apathetic feelings towards his office. At one point, when comparing

himself to Petyr "Littelfinger" Baelish, Eddard reflects that: "He had no taste for these intrigues, but he was beginning to realize that they were meat and mead to a man like Littlefinger" (Martin, 1997, p. 228).

A game in which the principal rule says "you win or you die," lack of ambition serves very ill for a man who happens to play the second most powerful role in the game (Martin, 1997, p. 580). The court of Westeros is ridden with two-faced sycophants and scheming, ambitious agents bent on obtaining the most profit out of everything, which in turn makes the role of the King's Hand all the more crucial in creating a balance in the power struggle. One way to accomplish this objective is for the Hand himself to exercise such high ambitions in order to prevent the other members of the court from obtaining everything for their own. Indeed, an apathetic politician surrounded by ambitious colleagues is soon wiped out from the face of the game, an event which eventually happens to Eddard Stark when he is executed as a traitor.

Joffrey orders Eddard to be executed notwithstanding Eddard's admission. Sansa thinks back on the awful trial and reviews that "he'd grinned and she'd had a good sense of reassurance" (Martin, 1997, p. 280). It is from this second onwards, that Sansa understands that Joffrey is an awful individual rather than the courageous sovereign she expected and saw right away (Verweij, 2017). She gives careful consideration to what at no point in the future has a similar naïveté:

Whenever she had cherished Prince Joffrey with everything that is in her, and respected and confided in his mom, the sovereign. They had reimbursed that adoration and entrust with her dad's head. Sansa could at absolutely no point commit that error in the future. (Martin, 1999, p. 50)

Hence, her dad's execution has caused her to understand that Joffrey and Cersei are not reliable, and that she should be more careful in the future as opposed to gullibly clutching heartfelt convictions. That she has completely given up her affections for Joffrey additionally becomes obvious when she honestly depicts him to Margaery and Olenna Tyrell after Sansa's pledge to Joffrey is finished:

Joffrey is a beast. He lied with regards to the butcher's kid and made Father kill my wolf. Whenever I disappoint him, he has the Kingsguard beat me. He's detestable and savage, my woman, it's so. Furthermore, the sovereign also. (Martin, 2002)

Sansa's words obviously show that she currently completely gets Joffrey's temperament.

The tragedy of Dasein, for Eddard takes place for Eddard as the world plays uncanny tricks on him. Eddard's engagement in his own codes, however, sometimes blinds him to outer signs and events and their implications. In her first point-of-view chapter in *A Game of Thrones*, Catelyn Stark describes her husband Eddard as a "man who put no faith in signs" (Martin, 1997, p. 34).

Eddard's cases of simplicity start boiling to the surface after his appointment as the Hand of the King, which required him to leave his homeland and travel into the treacherous world of the South. Instead of adapting himself to the Machiavellian world

of the South, however, Eddard opts to uphold his firm beliefs in the old ways while disregarding the danger of pure honesty and trust in a political world. Petyr Baelish constantly warns and derides Eddard about his naiveté throughout the novel. At one point, Baelish directly asks Eddard about his degree of trust in his own men: "Is there a man in your service that you trust utterly and completely?" "Yes," said Ned. "The wiser answer was no, my lord, but be that as it may" (Martin, 1997, p. 305). And in the same chapter, after Baelish discloses for Eddard the identity of a number of spies employed by Varys and the queen, the Lord of Winterfell ironically sways his trust towards the man who until just now "struck him as too clever by half": "Perhaps I was wrong to distrust you." "You are slow to learn, Lord Eddard. Distrusting me was the wisest thing you've done since you climbed down off your horse" (Martin, 1997, p. 306). Thus, a disillusioned Eddard soon finds himself missing his homeland where intrigue is considered an uncommon coin: "for a moment Eddard Stark wanted nothing so much as to return to Winterfell, to the clean simplicity of the north, where the enemies were winter and the wildlings beyond the Wall" (Martin, 1997, p. 382).

Eventually, Baelish seems to have been right about Eddard being a "slow learner" because the truth and consequences of his mistakes dawn upon him only in the depths of the dungeons of the Red Keep, where he is imprisoned for having challenged the legitimacy of King Joffrey, who had illicitly succeeded Robert. His epiphany, however, could not have been more ill-timed as at this point, there is absolutely nothing Eddard can do to undo the errors of his way. In the end he blamed himself. "Fool," he cried to the darkness, "thrice-damned blind fool" (Martin, 1997, p. 746). Little by little, he keeps remembering his mistakes and the prices others had to pay for them: "Ned had played and lost, and his men had paid the price of his folly with their life's blood" (Martin, 1997, p. 746). And, in the end, when Eddard finally decides to swallow his pride and restore the outcomes of his mistakes by falsely confessing to crimes he did not commit, it seems that he is too late after all as he is ironically executed in front of a large crowd at the Sept of Baelor near the end of *A Game of Thrones*.

Eddard Stark's policies and decisions in *A Game of Thrones* are a perfect example of how pure idealism fails to operate properly in a corrupted world and leads into tragedy. The Lord of Winterfell is known worldwide for his honor, pride and integrity, a paragon of virtue that, according to Maester Aemon, is found only once in every ten thousand men. And yet, despite the fact that such traits are definitely admired in a person, a strict adherence to these qualities can be detrimental as a good politician should be open to corruption at times of need in order to avoid vulnerability to intrigues and deception. Referring to Eddard, Jaime Lannister once stated: "Give me honorable enemies rather than ambitious ones, and I'll sleep more easily by night" (Martin, 1997, p. 100).

Curiously, Eddard's idealistic views on compassion closely resemble those of Daenerys, the very girl he refuses to assassinate, when he declares that "Mercy is never a mistake" (Martin, 1997, p. 418). Eventually, his persistent refusal in killing Daenerys pushes Eddard to a very tricky forked way: either he participates in the action by giving his consent, or he steps down as the Hand of the King. After Eddard chooses the latter (much to Robert's fury) Petyr Baelish openly confronts him about his lack of skill in politics: "You rule like a man dancing on rotten ice. I daresay you will make a noble splash. I believe I heard the first crack this morning" (Martin, 1997, p. 426). This

disobedience by Eddard and moving between different worlds define his tragedy and downfall to his self-destruction which has been discussed by Heidegger. In fact, Eddard experiences two types of Dasein in his life including authentic and inauthentic. Regarding these two types, Heidegger points out that the two kinds of being of Dasein as authentic and inauthentic relate to the different modes of being of this being. Dasein is initially and for the most part in the mode of its average everydayness fallen prey to the identification with worldly objects. The everydayness of Dasein is not a lower degree of existence, but the initial state of the being of Dasein which is decided upon by the thrownness of Dasein. Only through existing its existence and projecting upon the own most possibilities of Dasein can it choose itself as an authentic self. Both kinds of Dasein would bring tragedy for Stark as he is a political man that is invested in him by Robert as his authentic Dasein; also, his inauthentic Dasein is characterized by his situation to the worldly objects such as being a father, a husband, brother, and a friend. These relations mean ordinariness for Stark that expose him to identification with the initial stage of Dasein (Heidegger, 1993).

Within his own Dasein, Stark faces multiple possibilities to have his own self as a mediator between different worlds. Upon discovering Joffrey's true parentage – being the product of an incestuous relationship between Cersei and Jaime – Eddard finds it his duty to inform the king of this knowledge, but hesitation clutches at his heart once more as he realizes that Robert would immediately kill Cersei and her children: "Ned could not let that happen again. The realm could not withstand a second mad king, another dance of blood and vengeance. He must find some way to save the children" (Martin, 1997, p. 574). This is yet another instance of a purely idealistic view on life: instead of letting the queen pay for her incestuous liaisons with her brother at the cost of only three extra lives, Eddard fruitlessly strives to find another way which involves no loss of blood at all. What is worse, Eddard actually decides to confront none other than Cersei herself about the truth in an attempt to blackmail the queen and force her into exile, which is eventually failed: Cersei:

"You should have taken the realm for yourself. It was there for the taking. Jaime told me how you found him on the Iron Throne the day King's Landing fell, and made him yield it up. That was your moment. All you needed to do was climb those steps, and sit. Such a sad mistake." Eddard: "I have made more mistakes than you can possibly imagine," Ned said, "but that was not one of them." Cersei: "Oh, but it was, my lord," Cersei insisted. "When you play the game of thrones, you win or you die. There is no middle ground" (Martin, 1997, p. 580).

Dasein is being-in-the-world. Its being-in does not follow the spatiality which defines objectively present beings as being in another thing. The being-in as a constitution of Dasein relates to its familiarity with, and dwelling in the world. Dasein does not just occur in the world like objects present within the world, "...it is a site of the understanding of being". Being-in is an existential of Dasein, its inness differs from objectively present entities in that Dasein is open to the world, being-in is not a property of Dasein but a determinative of its being (Heidegger, 1993). Stark did not know the dwelling in the world after Robert's and his rebellion against the mad king. He failed to constitute his own authentic self and Dasein as he could become the king himself. He let Robert become the king which shows he was the victim of his

inauthentic Dasein as a friend. His failure at this action defines his tragedy that is reminded to him when he becomes the Hand of the King.

In fact, another negative outcome of Eddard's action is that, by informing the queen about his knowledge and threatening to share this secret with her husband, he actually helps Cersei arrange Robert's fatal "accident" in his hunting, leading to the death of the king. Thus, not only does Eddard fail to inform Robert about the true origin of his children (which was his primary intention) but he also fails to subdue the queen and her children into his own will. With the eventual death of Robert, his younger brother Renly approaches Eddard with a new offer: with the joint power of Renly's and Eddard's household guards, the two men can lead a surprise attack on the Lannisters and hold the queen and her children as hostages so that Renly himself can succeed Robert as the next king. Viewing this as an act of treason and dishonor, Eddard strongly refuses to assist Renly, stating that "I will not dishonor his last hours on earth by shedding blood in his halls and dragging frightened children from their beds" (Martin, 1997, p. 604). His reason behind his refusal is simply that "he had no taste for these intrigues, and there was no honor in threatening children" (Martin, 1997, p. 605).

It is rather strange that, by this time, Eddard had not realized that Cersei Lannister, being a queen, is not a woman who would merely bow down to rules so long as there is a way to bend or break them. The fact that Eddard relies on the power of a dead king's will to bring down those who ironically brought the king's downfall explicitly shows how naively idealistic Eddard's notion of justice and law really is. It is only in the depths of the dungeons of the Red Keep that Eddard finally realizes and admits to his blind idealism, which is too late: "You stiff-necked fool," he muttered, "too proud to listen. Can you eat pride, Stark? Will honor shield your children?" (Martin, 1997, p. 748). As a reminder, Varys too tells Eddard about his mistake when visiting him in the dungeon: "You have been foolish, my lord. You ought to have heeded Littlefinger when he urged you to support Joffrey's succession" (Martin, 1997, p. 753). Viewing this as an act of both treason and dishonor, Eddard insists on informing Stannis Baratheon, who is second in line to power, to come to King's Landing to rule. By this, Eddard is ignoring the fact that such opportunities will not last forever, as the Lannisters' infidelity to the crown is a well-proven fact. Therefore, by delaying to act in the right time, Eddard soon finds the crown occupied by Joffrey and Cersei, who ironically arrest him as a traitor.

Obsession with rules Games is made and shaped by rules. Without a set of clear, defining principles to determine right from wrong, a game would fall into a chaotic rat race. The level of difficulty in a game's rules determines the competence of the players. However, the same principles that help shape a game can also act as mere hindrances to lead unwary players to defeat. This is where cheating frequently occurs as a partial reaction to the excessive difficulty of the rules. In such an environment, the ones who play with the rules fare far better than those who play by them.

Eddard Stark, according to Pareto's division of elites, falls into the group of "lions," who are marked for their insistence on abiding by the laws and involving themselves in affairs that pose minimum amount of risks. This characteristic, coupled with his inborn honesty and sentimentality, makes Eddard Stark an extremely

predictable player in the game of thrones. When Eddard confronts Cersei about the true origin of her children, he warns her of his plans to inform Robert of the same truth, viewing it as his duty: Eddard: "You know what I must do." Cersei: "Must? A true man does what he will, not what he must" (Martin, 1997, p. 579).

This sense of duty and conformity to the rules is in fact one of the most driving forces behind some of Eddard's most vital actions. He makes the same mistake again after Robert's death. While Petyr Baelish urges him to support Joffrey as Robert's heir to prevent another war, Eddard instead opts to abide by the rules and insists on proclaiming Stannis Baratheon, Robert's next in line, as the next king. Again, his motivation is purely defined by his obsession with the laws rather than the actual consequences that follow them. Even Baelish's long speech about the negative ramifications of Stannis' ascent to power against the ultimate beneficial outcomes of Joffrey's succession fails to change Eddard's mind:

Baelish: "Stannis cannot take the throne without your help. If you're wise, you'll make certain Joffrey succeeds." Eddard: "Have you no shred of honor?" Baelish: "Oh, a shred, surely. Hear me out. Stannis is no friend of yours, nor of mine. Even his brothers can scarcely stomach him. The man is iron, hard and unyielding. He'll give us a new Hand and a new council, for a certainty. No doubt he'll thank you for handing him the crown, but he won't love you for it. And his ascent will mean war... Joffrey is but twelve, and Robert gave you the regency, my lord. You are the Hand of the King and Protector of the Realm. The power is yours, Lord Stark. All you need do is reach out and take it. Make your peace with the Lannisters. Release the Imp. Wed Joffrey to your Sansa. Wed your younger girl to Prince Tommen, and your heir to Myrcella. It will be four years before Joffrey comes of age. By then he will look to you as a second father, and if not, well... four years is a good long while, my lord. Long enough to dispose of Lord Stannis. Then, should Joffrey prove troublesome, we can reveal his little secret and put Lord Renly on the throne." (Martin, 1997, p. 609)

In keeping with this vague promise, Eddard steps way out of the line of sanity when he decides to conceal the truth of Cersei's children from Robert out of sympathy for the dying man as well as staying true to his promise. This is another instance of Eddard's preference for sentimentality rather than logical reasoning in political affairs. Dearman writes that "Juxtaposing his knowledge of how the game is played to his actions, it is clear Robert metaphorically gave up his seat of power somewhere along the line. His death comes right at the moment" (Dearman, 2016, p. 42). Ned Stark was ready to reveal Cersei's betrayal and the illegitimacy of Robert's heir and other children. This timing symbolizes Robert's final departure from the game of thrones as his death frees him from the casualties of the game.

After weeks of searching, Eddard finally finds out the truth behind the origin of Cersei's children, who turn out to be the product of incest. The sheer monstrosity of this truth is enough to overthrow Cersei from her position of queen. Here, logic would urge any sane man to tell the fact to the king and put an end to all threats of usurping the throne. Eddard, however, decides to confront the queen herself with this knowledge.

His motivation behind this act was that Robert would order the execution of all Lannisters at the Red Keep if he discovered such a shocking truth.

"This [Robert] could never forgive, no more than he had forgiven Rhaegar. He will kill them all, Ned realized" (Martin, 1997, p. 574). Dearman notes that "Robert's marriage to Cersei Lannister was a move made not out of love, but out of strategy to ensure his power in Westeros shows his awareness that it takes more than honor to maintain power" (Dearman, 2016, p. 42). While an admirable choice in theory, grave consequences follow this single decision, starting with the orchestration of Robert's hunting "accident" which leads to his suffering a mortal wound. When Robert's fatally injured body is carried back to King's Landing, it is made absolutely clear that he would not last much longer. Before the king passes away, however, Eddard still has time to bring the matter of Cersei's children to his king and eliminate the threat of usurping the throne in its early stages. And yet, wrong mercy finds its way into Eddard's heart again and prevents him from telling the truth: "Robert Joffrey is not your son, he wanted to say, but the words would not come. The agony was written too plainly across Robert's face; he could not hurt him more" (Martin, 1997, p. 599).

Since the world is the homely and unhomely for Dasein, this conflict gives rise to the concept of truth in tragedy as *aletheia*. For Heidegger, being reveals and conceals itself as *aletheia*. In revealing itself in one mode of its presencing, being conceals its other manifestations; the homely covers over the unhomely of the world. Gods, as being itself, represent this conflictual character of being. Apollo as the god of prophecy determines the possibility of a tragic Dasein in his future and his past, Dionysus as the god of wine and ecstasy brings also frenzy dances of Bacchanal which causes death and destruction.

After Sansa Stark pleads for her father's life in front of the court, Cersei decides to give Eddard a chance to confess to his "crimes" so he can evade execution and join the Night's Watch. When Varys brings the words of the queen to him, however, Eddard once again retracts to his old idealistic self, refusing to confess to his false crimes, saying that "If I did, my word would be as hollow as an empty suit of armor. My life is not so precious to me as that" (Martin, 1997, p. 756). Eventually, he does confess to his crimes after he is told that his daughter's life rests on his choice, but in a cruel act of irony, Joffrey does not fulfill his end of the bargain and calls for Eddard's head. In the end, Eddard dies as a traitor he never was. Stark's last confession depicts the fact he has desire towards life and his inauthentic Dasein. However, Stark is not able to get over his own tragedy and fate and he falls into the prey of his inauthentic self and political relations in Westeros. In other words, it is Stark's past that leads him into his destruction.

Conclusion

Tragic characters are analyzed through Dasein's existential structures and the general mode of temporalization belonging to them is cleared. In every step of our analysis the existing Dasein is the sole guidance to our phenomenological methodology. Our phenomenological methodology requires that Dasein must be approached in a way that it shows itself as the being it is; that it, as existing. Since in this phenomenological view Dasein reveals its being in existing, our methodology also

covers ontology. Being is evasive. In order to illuminate what being is, one must propose the proper mode of questioning through which being itself becomes available. To this end, the discussion cannot begin by saying being is such and such, because the very structure of subject / predicate presupposes that being is already determined in some ways. This predication of being has its root in tradition of western philosophy-metaphysics. Being as the subject of this predication is a noun which essentially must refer to beings to be intelligible. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* is an account of the beginning of a transformation from individual to polis and political. Eddard Stark, a prominent example of an idealistic politician, is cast deep into a dangerous power circle which crushes idealism. Heidegger believes destiny and fate are always grounded in a heritage which is part of Dasein's thrown ground.

While examining Jon Arryn's advantage in Robert's illegitimate youngsters, Eddard finds regrettably that Robert's three genuine kids are the result of interbreeding between Queen Cersei and her sibling, Jaime. Eddard chooses to defy Cersei, allowing her an opportunity to escape with her youngsters while she still can. However, Cersei has coordinated Robert's death. Ned's tragedy originates from his trust that others are noteworthy as he seems to be. Ned has tried many times over, and his choices are justifiable given what he knows, or thinks he knows, about honor and obligation. He starts his excursion to King's Landing, figuring he can believe that Robert is as yet a decent man. Eventually, Robert leaves Ned without looking for equity against Jaime Lannister, and Ned's catch is effectively achieved after Robert's death. Ned believes that Littlefinger will respect his assertion and assist him with deposing Joffrey and Cersei, and, typically, Littlefinger sells him out. Ned might try and believe that Joffrey will save him assuming he admits. Ned's lost confidence in the distinction of others is firmly connected the normal blemish of overlooking troublesome bits of insight. Ned will not see that Robert has changed before he leaves for King's Landing,

Moreover, despite his coveted political position, Eddard's many character flaws and mistakes bring about his downfall towards the end of *A Game of Thrones*. Despite wielding tremendous amount of power, rivaled only by that of the king, Eddard's apathy towards politics and his reluctance to exploit his power to make some grand changes in the state greatly neuters his potentials. His aversion to involve himself in the darker sides of politics also makes Eddard an extremely predictable player, giving his rivals and enemies a great advantage in challenging him. While this trait is devastating enough for any politician, when considering Eddard's rank, it greatly undermines his position and makes him vulnerable to his rivals. Eddard's honorable nature and good rapport with the king, and his favorable relationship with his subordinates make him an especially promising politician, but what cripples all those potentials is his simplistic attitude towards politics. Eventually, his inauthentic self makes him the victim and brings about his tragedy.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all who worked so diligently with me throughout my time at Islamic Azad University of Arak. When the research reached a dead end, their guidance and assistance helped me see new possibilities and new avenues I had not yet explored.

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Author's Biography



Ehsan Khoshdel is a PhD candidate of English Literature at Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Iran. His research areas include Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and American Literature.



Dr. Fatemeh Azizmohammadi is an Associate Professor of English Literature at Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Iran. Her research interests include Modern and Postmodern Criticism, Short Stories, Poems, and Plays. She teaches several subjects related to Literature while supervising and advising MA theses on English Language and Literature at Islamic Azad University of Arak.



Dr. Mojgan Yarahmadi is an Assistant Professor of English Language Teaching at Islamic Azad University, Arak Branch, Iran. Her areas of research include Language Teaching, Language Testing, Materials Development, and Academic Writing. She also teaches courses related to Language Teaching, Testing, and Research Programs at Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels.