Introduction

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One of the oldest and most important questions of philosophy, holds Heidegger, is the history of man in amazement of Being. According to Heidegger, this problem of Being was first raised by Anaximander. He holds that Being is the closest to us than our inner most essence. Heidegger points out that pre-Socratic philosophers alone dealt with this problem in the correct perspective. Since then, philosophers for centuries considered Being as an empty concept. Heidegger says that the history of philosophy from Plato and Aristotle until Nietzsche committed a grievous error. The error was that Being came to be understood in terms of substantial beings with an over dose of the Christian concept of a personal God within the frame work of logic. Consequently, the ultimate Being was transformed into an abstract term and an empty concept. Being of beings was pushed away into oblivion. Heidegger’s contentions is that Being is the most real and we possess at least a rudimentary awareness of it. Therefore, Heidegger wants to open a new avenue to think of Being.

From the time of Plato and Aristotle, there has been a deterioration in the understanding of Being. Heidegger states that man’s thinking which tries to penetrate the ground of metaphysics is not itself a form of metaphysics. In the modern metaphysics,
the cause of being is often called God. Heidegger holds that to consider God as the cause of the world is an improper way of considering the issues. This type of thinking can be found in modern thinking especially in Descartes. He was shifting the subject of metaphysics from the realm of Being to the domain of substance. This openly gives way to the transformation of metaphysics to an ontology. In a well-known passage Descartes compares philosophy with a tree whose roots are the other science. Commenting on this passage, Heidegger remarks that Descartes forgot to mention the soil as the ground of metaphysics.

Heidegger says that the traditional metaphysics has no ground, it is not grounded. According to Heidegger, the truth of Being, which is assumed to be the ground of metaphysics or ontology, has remained hidden from the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle to that of Nietzsche. The result was that Being and beings were often confused and Being was totally ignored or eliminated.

Heidegger conceives the question of Being differently from Aristotle. To Aristotle the question of being is Being as being or Being qua being. But Heidegger sees it as a question of the Being of being. To Heidegger the subject of thinking is indeed, be.
But be points to its difference from being. According to Heidegger, the relation at be to being is the relation of being to its ground.

Heidegger in his work, *Identity and Difference*, sees the fundamental mistake of traditional metaphysics in the fact that since Plato Philosophers have forgotten or neglected the essential difference between Being and beings. For this reason, their thinking degenerated into what Heidegger designates as ontotheology which reached its peak in Hegel. The being of traditional metaphysics and the God, but they are only forms of our representative thinking, i.e., metaphysics is ontotheological. For, the ontotheological character of metaphysics has become questionable to thinking people not because of some kind of atheism but because of an experience of thinking in which still unthought unity of the essence of metaphysics is revealed in ontotheology.

The God of ontotheology is the God of metaphysics, and not the God of genuine human freedom. For him God of metaphysics is God who is *causa sui*. *In identity and Difference*, Heidegger says: this is the right name for the God of philosophy. Man can neither pray nor sacrifices to this God. Before the *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knee nor can play and dance before this God.
For Heidegger, the theologians must not be satisfied with the metaphysical understanding of the notions like creation from out of nothing or God as first cause, etc. Truely speaking, it is necessary to overcome metaphysics and abandon the metaphysical conception of God. In short, in his later philosophy, Heidegger discussess the absence of God. God, he tells us, has withdrawn from the contemporary Western world. Again, in Identify and Difference, Heidegger writes about the task of stepping back from the traditional ways of thinking of philosophy. For, the Western languages are languages of metaphysical thinking. He again holds that theology is a statement made by representational thinking about God. The theologians believe that God has been necessary to metaphysics because God is the very foundation of existence, the first cause as causa sui, and the ground on which all other existence rests. Hence, metaphysics is ontotheological.

The implications of Heidegger's search for Being are manifold and complex. The attempt to recall Being from its oblivion constitutes, for him, not only a change in the direction of metaphysics, but an actual over coming of metaphysics. This overcoming of metaphysics would result in a radical reversal of history of metaphysics and a change in the understanding of human nature itself. Heidegger's aim is the destruction of the
history of ontology. Destruction does not mean here the anihilation of something worthless and it also does not mean an anti-metaphysical attitude. Destruction involves the removal of the hardened insensitivity into which traditional metaphysics has fallen. The concept of universality, indefinability and self-evidence are inadequate precisely because they are concepts and postulates of reason. They should be removed from the soil in which metaphysics is born, in which they constitute an unwarranted extension of categorical thinking. This sort of rationalism is a kind of subjectivism which began with Plato and lasted until Nietzsche.

However, the philosophy of Heidegger consists of a peculiar set of challenges for all thinkers of today. His writings contain fundamental challenges for major metaphysical traditions in Western Philosophy. He is welcomed and seen as freeing religion from metaphysics. Heidegger meant that the overcoming of ontotheology is a philosophical activity. The overcoming of metaphysics is not meant for rejecting God for the transvaluation of values (Nietzsche). Heidegger holds that metaphysicians need to recognize the difference between Being and beings. However, they constitute ontotheology by raising being to the highest level.

What is it which is the most worthy of thought? The ontotheological character of metaphysics makes it questionable as
the object of thinking. Ontotheology has arisen not because of atheism but from the experience of thinking of metaphysics, logic and theology. Heidegger's rejection of the ontotheological tradition poses a major challenge to contemporary theology. However, his own position is not so established and secure and no one can suggest that an absolutely clear and consistent alternative has been provided by Heidegger to what he considers to be the negative characteristic of ontotheology.

*In Being and Time,* Heidegger had written about the relation of Dasein to ready to hand and present at hand. In that treatment Heidegger shows that he is not an idealist or a pragmatist for whom subjectivity or will is the ground of Being. By using the expression unconcealing he presents to us the process of revealing of Being. The history of Being is the history of the process of unconcealment. Heidegger speaks of the groundless ground of Being. He writes that one can see how human beings (Dasein) are related to Being. Dasein and Being belong together because Dasein has essentially a relationship of responding to the call of Being. For, it is Dasein who is open to Being, lets Being arrive at presence. The event of unconcealing of Being to Dasein is the necessary condition for the existence of man. But man conceals the source of existence and there by
conceals his own nature and nature of objects. Hence, a mode of thinking needs to be discovered that reveals what metaphysics conceals.

Heidegger holds that it is possible to use the language of Being to characterise the mode of thinking, after metaphysics has been overcome. He adds that the modern thinkers would today rather remain silent on god. For the ontotheological character of metaphysics has become questionable for thinking. The terminology of metaphysics gives us a set of vocabulary which reveals that thinking on Being is totally different from essential thinking on Being. The essential thinking includes the overcoming of metaphysics. In other words, it is dropping that language which gives primacy to beings. Heidegger claims that if we treat unconcealment as the essence of truth and the truth of Being, then we recognise the ontotheological difference between Being and beings. To maintain the ontotheological difference between Being and beings, heidegger followed the method of poetry of Holderlin in his philosophy. Holderlin writes of heaven, earth, gods and mortals as the four aspects of the world of unconcealment in which we dwell and wherein we think essentially. In his later phase, Heidegger used these four symbols to express his characterisation of essential
thinking. We are within these symbols and the world is constituted by them.

The thesis entitled, *A study on Heidegger's thinking and Hermeneutical Phenomenology* falls into the following chapters and we explore some of Heidegger's reflections on thinking.

The first chapter examines the fundamental problem of Being before Heidegger, the question of Being and his critique of the scholastic theory of Being.

The second chapter gives an account of the background of Heidegger's thinking in Parmenides and Heraclitus, and overcoming of metaphysics.

The third chapter is typically on Heideggerian kind of thinking, Being, language and also includes Rorty's critique on Heidegger.

The fourth chapter entitled, *Heidegger's Hermeneutical Phenomenology* is devoted to Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics and hermeneutical turn.

And finally dissertation draws out the conclusion deriving from this study.