The Fundamental Problem of Philosophy

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Chapter One

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In this postmodern era, Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of human existence oriented towards a science of Being or ontology gives an another Copernican revolution in the history of Philosophy. Heidegger is the only philosopher who reopened and responed the bankrupt metaphysical tradition. Heidegger, in fact, covers the fundamental question of philosophy i.e., being in its Being\(^1\). This is the fundamental question of philosophy. This is the only question which has moved the philosophers of the past to think. But according to Heidegger, this fundamental philosophical question is miserably forgotten today. Heidegger begins his chief work *Being and Time* with the charge that Being has been forgotten in the philosophical world today, which seems itself progressive in metaphysical thinking.

Heidegger does not mean that the problem of Being was completly forgotten. It reminded always as a problem. The history of traditional metaphysics has not carried on a radical reflection upon its own grounds. It has not understood its metaphysics precisely as metaphysics, but metaphysical thinking has taken a worng turn. It has lost its way. Heidegger found it necessary to dig deeper and blow traditional metaphysics. He has come to the very bottom, to the very ground of all metaphysical thinking. His philosophical speculation is solely to mediate on the meaning of
Being which lies at the foundation of all metaphysical thinking and which metaphysics never really investigates, or rather which metaphysics since the time of Plato continually forgets. Infact, metaphysics was born precisely when Being is forgotten, namely, with Plato".2

Heidegger claims that the history of philosophy is a history in which Being has been forgotten. Heidegger has insisted that it is only in recognising the ontological difference between Being and beings that the "truth of Being" can be attained. The Scholastic Philosophy particularly St.Thomas Acquins maintains that metaphysics of esse3 of the primacy with being (ens). For Heidegger, the scholastic distinction between essence and existence lies, therefore, in the oblivion of Being. Heidegger says that the distinction between Being and beings supersedes the distinction between essence and existence.

1.1. THE CRITIQUE OF SCHOLASTIC THEORY OF BEING

Heidegger maintained that the fundamental problem of philosophy is the problem of Being. The 1927 Lectures are devoted to a discussion of four main "thesis" that have been put forward concerning Being.
1. Kant's thesis is that Being is not a real predicate.

2. The Scholastic thesis says Being is composed of essence and existence (for example Acquinas)

3. The third thesis of modern ontology that Being divides into res cogitans (a thinking self) and res extensa (Physical thing).

4. The last is the thesis of logicians that Being is the copula.

Kant's thesis is related to that of the scholastical. Both Kant and Acquinas give ontological arguments regarding Being. Neither Philosopher can real Being be attained by knowing the definition. Both requires a judgement in order to attain real being, even the Being of God. Both Philosophers held that God's essence includs existence. Kant's ontology thus in an extension of medieval ontology.

When we turn to Kant, we find that Kant's metaphysics becomes a science that "has to deal only with principles, and with the limits of their employment as determined by those principles". The question of the notion of being is brought by Kant only in connection with the so-called ontological argument for the existence of God. It is clear that Kant has forgotten the question
of being. Kant hardly uses the terms being or be. It has been eliminated along with the dogmatic metaphysics. For Kant, God as *ens realissimum* is the necessary condition for the possibility of any and all beings. What this means? Heidegger points out that Being can be identified with God, the highest Being, and the first cause much is the cause of itself (*causa prima or causa sui*). Heidegger holds that there can only be one Being as the ancient philosophers and they seen it. Heidegger tells us that any attempt to separate beings from the question of Being will end up in confusion.

The thesis of medieval ontology, which goes back to Aristotle. Being-what (*essentia*) and Being-present (*existentia*) belong to the structure of Being of the being. The medievalists argue that this particular ontological thesis does not go back to Aristotle or to any Greek Philosopher. The Greeks has no idea of creation and held to the eternity and necessity of the world. Heidegger does mention that Aristotle does not much to say about existence. Heidegger found the scholastic distinction between essence and existence in relation to his own ontological difference, essence and existence belong to the structure of Being of the being (*die Seinsverfassung eines Seienden*). Accordingly,
essence and existence belong on the "Being" side of the Being-being distinctions.

Heidegger begins his discussion by differentiating three different positions concerning essence and existence that have been historically taken by the scholastics. The scholastics agree that in God (ens a se) essence and existence are identical. Heidegger expounds his theory that essence and existence represent different aspects. It is truly different but not separable aspects of the self same concrete being (Heidegger's ontological difference). There is a distinction between Being which is to be met with only in Dasein's understanding of Being and begins. Being is not any existing, particular being and must never be confused with such. Being is rather than upon which beings are projected in order to be understand in their Being. Being must be understood before beings, even as general metaphysics precedes special metaphysics. Thus fundamental ontology - the enquiry into Dasein's understanding of Being-precedes the metaphysics which is to be built upon it and which will deal with particular existing beings. From Heidegger's phenomenological stand point, Acquinas's view represents more of a theory which attempts a conceptual interpretation of the idea of a created being.
In *The fundamental Problem of Phenomenology*, Heidegger states the origin of essence and existence in human productivity and making. Both essence and existence refer back to the idea of what is produced. Essence is the look which the thing to be produced. Existence is actually being brought forth. But the conceptual frame-work of producing and making leads back to Dasein’s own concrete Being-in-the-word. Dasein lives its everyday life within the horizon of a world of tools and instruments, of things which Dasein makes and uses, whether these things be actual products of his (for example farm tools) or that of which being already there. This conception of Being within which Dasein lives his daily life is what Heidegger calls “being ready to hand” (*Zuhandensein*) i.e., Being which is accessible to Dasein’s use.

Dasein itself, in its preontological understanding of Being supplies the horizon with which being can be conceived or made or used. Accordingly, Dasein itself supplies the horizon within which Being is interpreted in scholastic metaphysics, in which the Being of God is determined as the creator and the beings around us are determined as created. Thus the idea of essence and existence take their origin from the subjective existential sphere.
In Heidegger view, ancient ontology was tailor made to the needs of medieval Christian Philosophy and theology.

Even though the concepts of ancient ontology were modified by the medievals, the scholastics still remained within the fundamental understanding of Being which existed in antiquity. They made new assertions about beings, the demiurge and prime mover were replaced by a creator God, the psyche' of Plato and Aristotle became the medieval Anima, the bearer of immortal life. But what Being itself meant derived from antiquity, that which being made according to a pattern.

Heidegger’s interpretation must indeed appear most provocative to the medievalists. For Heidegger, the notion of esse is but an extension of Greek ontology which leaves and untouched the basic framework of Greek ontology. Heidegger raises the question of the relationship of this distinction to his own ontological difference. He approaches this problem by criticizing the applicability of these categories to Dasein. Dasein, he says, does not answer to the question of what is it, but to the question who is it. It is inappropriate to speak of the whatness or quiddity of Dasein. Nor is Dasein’s existence more existentia, having-be-brought-forth. On the contrary, Dasein is the thrown and factual being whose Being is an issue for itself.
In place of essentia one must speak of Dasein’s being. Dasein is always ‘I myself’, whether in the mode of being faithfully to itself or not. In place of extentia one must speak of Dasein’s facticity. Essence and existence are categories of things and fit under a more general distinction between how a thing is and that it is.

In Being and Time, Heidegger shows that the essence of Dasein lies in its “existence”. But he puts the word essence to differentiate it from the traditional idea, and he uses “Existenz”. In the Kierkegaardian (philosopher) sense, which is sharply differentiated from existentia. Here he uses the language of the tradition to say something quite untraditional. “How and that” constitute the basic articulation of Being. This distinction is itself differentiated according to the various kinds or regions of beings to be considered.

The categories of essence and existence have a two-fold. In the first place, they are the categories of things. They do not apply to man. Nor do they apply to God, who is not a thing either. These are categories which have been drawn from the sphere of Dasein’s everyday Being-in-the-world and from the sphere of its commerce with things. They befit neither man nor God. Hence one gets no closer to the Being of God or men when one settles
the question of whether essence and existence are the same or different in each. For one's understanding of the Being of each is radically defective. According to Heidegger, man alone exists in the very concrete sense that he alone can "think of Being." The tree, the rock, God is, says Heidegger, but does not exist if we understand by existence the capacity of man to stand outside himself, to make himself ecstatically open to the radiance of Being.

Scholasticism would have conceptualized the ontological difference. It would have recognized the radical difference between Being and being, that Being is never a being and it can never be confined within a single kind of Being. But instead the scholastics contented themselves with the understanding of Being which had been passed down to them from antiquity. The criticism which Heidegger has in mind when he says that the scholastic distinction remained on one side of the ontological difference.

It is not possible to give Heidegger's interpretation of the scholastic doctrine of essence and existence without including an account of the later Heidegger's treatement. The destruction of the history of metaphysics was his aim and he used the method of hermeneutical phenomenology—the subject (Dasein) as the explanatory basis for what Being means—has been overcome in
favour of a thinking in terms of the history and mission of Being. Heidegger says: But this destruction, like phenomenology and all hermeneutical-transcendental question, has not yet been thought in terms of the history of Being.

In 1927 Heidegger traces the distinction between essence and existence, back to Plato and Aristotle. The difference is this. For the later Heidegger the original essence of Being is expressed in the Greek words *aletheia* and *physis*, i.e., Being is the process of emerging into presence and abiding there. It is the process of self-showing by which the being shows itself from itself. Rather than being the light projected by Dasein's understanding of Being, it is the light of Being itself in which beings are made visible to Dasein. This original essence of Being is found in its pristine form in the Pre-Socratics. Plato and Aristotle are the first figures in the history of metaphysics, and that means they are already fallen out of the experience of Being. But Being so close to the Pre-Socratics. They have retained something of the power and meaning of their original experience.

To give a historical perspective to our endeavour of understanding Being, we begin with a reflection on how Being was discussed in ancient western tradition beginning with Heraclitus and Parmenides. Concerning Being, holds Heidegger, Parmenides and
Heraclitus have similar views\textsuperscript{12}. For Parmenides, the question of Being is concrete rather than abstract. His thinking seems to be that he wants to insist that the act of thinking is one with the act of Being. He never separate Being from thinking or identified one with the other. Parmenides says “thinking and being are supposed to be the same\textsuperscript{13}.”

For Plato, Being is the presence which abides (\textit{ousia})\textsuperscript{14} not in individual beings but in the \textit{eidos},\textsuperscript{15} which is the true and abiding look of a thing. Essence (\textit{eidos}) is prior to individual things (existence). Aristotle with this distinction between \textit{ousia} in the primary and secondary sense reverses this order. For Aristotle, Being is the presence which abides in the form of the singular individual. Thus Plato and Aristotle opened the distinction between essence and existence, and in so doing inaugurate the history of metaphysics. In both case Being is determined as \textit{ousia}.

So far we find the distinction between essence and existence and it leads to a failure to attain Being itself. In fact, Heidegger considers the scholastics to have determined Being in terms of the categories of a particular kind of being. They attain not to Being but to the beingness of beings and scholasticism arises from the forgottenness of Being. That is the central claim of Heidegger’s critique.
Heidegger finds that the West has forgotten Being because it has forgotten what it means to be a ground. The west has ceased its metaphysical thinking by forgetting that the task at hand is not the substitution of one metaphysics for another, but rather to find the way back to authentic metaphysical thinking. And this way back to the ground of all metaphysical thinking is a path which for Heidegger leads ultimately to Dasein. Heidegger's belief is that only when all beings are held up for questioning, not merely some beings, be possible to understand Being. It is impossible to understand Being without a prior analytic of Dasein's ontological structure. Basically, metaphysics is the attempt to explain all beings by dividing beings into what founds and what is founded. Basically, the attempt to account for the Being of some beings through the agency of a privileged particular entity, which then is fittingly called Being. Therefore, a being is said to be a being, in so far as it is the effect or product of that single being. Heidegger says God is chosen as that part of Being which is said to serve as the cause of the other part of Being.

Heidegger's contention is that the history of western thought has been simply the history of the various proposals for the privileged particular being which, as founding all others, is designated as Being itself in no need of ground. For Heidegger,
it is the time to stop substituting one metaphysics for another (i.e., one founding being for another). Metaphysics does not place that privileged being into question. The privileged being never enter into the something of why is there something rather then nothing? Heidegger says that one who holds to such a faith can in a way particular in the asking of our question, but he can not really question without ceasing to be a believer and taking all the consequences of such a step .... From the standpoint of faith, our question is foolishness.

Heidegger’s way of thinking of metaphysics has led to three major blunders committed by the West:

1. Forgetfulness of what it means to be a thing
2. What it means to work and
3. What it means to give an account.

First the West has forgotten the Latin word *res* originally meant that which is of concern to men, something which confronted men and was an issue for men. According to Heidegger, the Latin *res* designates that which concerns men in one way or another. To concern men, that is, the essence, the reality. He further says that *res* came to mean something entirely different. It meant something which could stand independently of human
interest and concern, something which, when once produced or made, would have its reality precisely in the light of its ability to exist in itself, outside and beyond human concerns and projects. To be a thing became to be something independent, existing as an in-itself, not related to human consciousness in many way.

The general outline of Heidegger's criticism of the traditional understanding of metaphysics becomes a bit clear. A thing be regarded as essentially related to man's concerns. A thing draws its thinghood from being a concern to men. Work is the process by which a thing is put into presence, is brought from concealment into presence. To Heidegger it seems obvious enough that the west has forgotten what it means to be a thing, how it is that a thing comes to be a thing and how to understand the nature of the recounting of how that thing came to be.

The entitative metaphysics takes for its basic thesis the division of beings, explaining one group of beings by another group or by one particular being, never really giving an account on ground for beings in their entirely. The question of the totality remaining unasked. It is elsewhere encountered in the traditional understanding of the relationship.
(a) of Being to Becoming
(b) of Being to Appearing
(c) of Being to thinking
(d) of Being of Value.

In each case Being seems to be regarded as somehow behind and causative of what becomes, what appears, what is thought and what is held in esteem. But never is Being which becomes, which appears, which is thought or which is held in esteem. Rather it is always Being which produces or effects such things as do become, appear, become thought, become esteemed, but without in and real way being intimate to the very becoming, appearing, thought, becoming esteemed. But to Heidegger, each of these modalities obviously serve to reveal the very truth of Being itself.

1.2. THE TRUTH OF BEING

In our experience with beings, Being manifests itself in a certain way, namely, as the Being of beings. This Being of beings is not something posited by consciousness as the unseen cause of what does appear before us. Being exercises itself as Being simply by being this dispensing, this unwilling of beings, which, of course, seeks to remain veiled. Heideggers remarks that the ground
of all at once beings forth and posits in a substantial way the
objectivity of the object, and through that same act relates the
object to its very objectivity, i.e., the being in question to its
Being. The Being of beings, the very thinghood of things is not
beyond beings or things, causing them to become, to appear, to be
thought or to be esteemed. Nor can Being or thinghood be
something which can be accounted for an appeal to the efficacy
of a particular being. Rather the Being of beings, thinghood of
things is the representative activity of subjectivity (the immanence
of subjectivity) by which a thing is raised from mere representa-
tion of it together with its thinghood, i.e., with the reason for its
being a thing.

Heidegger maintains that Plato, as well as the entire
metaphysical tradition which followed him, got no further than
this. Heidegger says only Paramenides’ famous passage “That which
is, is; and that which is not, is not and can never be.” The very
Being of every being, the thinghood of everything, as the coming
out into the open of all things which are concerns to men, has
been forgotten. And because the West also has forgotten what it
means to be being, it has forgotten what is to ground, hence
forgetting Being. The West also has forgotten the essence of a
thing, the reality of the real, this is the very coming into the open
of a thing. The metaphysical tradition of the West has neglected
to recognise the fact.

The fundamental question of metaphysics has not been
asked since Plato and Being has never been viewed as logos\textsuperscript{20}. Heidegger repeatedly remarks that every being, even the \textit{causa prima}, is ruled by the principle of sufficient reason. The domain
of the validity of the principle of sufficient reason embraces
every particular being. Heidegger states that: Man’s Dasein can
only relate to what is by projecting into Nothing. Going beyond
what-is is of the essence of Dasein....... But this going beyond is
metaphysics; and in metaphysics philosophy comes to itself and
sets out on its explicit tasks. Philosophy is only set in motion by
leaping with all its being as only it can, into the ground-possibili-
ties of being as a whole. For this leap the following things are of
crucial importance; first, leaving room for what-is into Nothing,
that is to say, freeing oneself from the idols we all have and to
which we are to go cringing; lastly, lettering this suspense range
it will, so that it may continually swing back again to the ground
question of metaphysics, which is wrested from Nothing itself.
Why is there any Being at all-why not far father Nothing\textsuperscript{21}.
Heidegger says our inquiry into nothing will lead us to metaphysics, the sort of inquiry which goes metatrans, beyound-what-is as such. Metaphysics is an inquiry over and above what-is, with a view to winning it back again as such and in totality, for our understanding. In short neither classical metaphysics nor Christian dogma had the least idea of what nothing really means.

Heidegger is necessarily on the horns of a dilemma in regard to the history and historicity of Being. Either Being is radically different and distinct from beings, in which case Being can be nothig other than the old Platonic real which is impossibly vague, abstract and lacks content and historical becoming of Being. The history of Being can be seen as utterly dependent on the history of beings. Heideger admitted that the history of Being must be seen in terms of the history of beings. That is, his concern with Being would be replaced by concrete attention to beings. Heidegger has recourse to the ordinary history of nations, persons and their relation to beings in order to give concreteness and definiteness to his ontological history.

The history of Western metaphysics, according to Heideger, is centuries-old oblivion of Being, the shadow of which reaches all the way from Anaximander to Nietzsche. If Heidegger himself
claims to have recalled Being itself, Being in its truth, Western metaphysics has contented itself with various counterfeits for Being. Either with generic categorizations of beings in general or with a causal first-being which causes other beings. Heidegger finds various counterfeits of Being. Being as unity in Plato, as ousia in Aristotle and as essence in modern Rationalism and Idealism. He criticises the oblivion of Being as lies in essentialism.

The main themes of Hedegger is that the interpretation of metaphysics as an oblivision of Being. Metaphysics, he says in his well known commentary on Descartes' view that the root of the tree of philosophy. Then Heidegger asks, is the nourishing ground of these roots? Metaphysics apprehends through the light of Being, but Being itself remains hidden from it. In its place metaphysics proffers various counterfeits: In whatever manner beings are interpreted—whether as spirit, after the fashion of spiritualism, or as matter and force, after the fashion of materialism; or as becoming and life, or idea, will substabce, subject or energies; or as the eternal recurrence of the same events—every to time beings are beings appear in the light of Being. When metaphysics gives answers to its questions concerning beings as such, metaphysics spooks out of the unnoticed revealedness of Being. The truth of Being may thus be called the
ground in which metaphysics, as the root of the tree of philosophy, is kept and from which its is nourished.

The history of metaphysics is the history of the various historical configurations which Being brings about within beings while all the primordial events by means of which this configuration occurs. The primordial light by means of which this kind of clearing is made, remains out of sight. Metaphysics therefore occurs in and as an oblivion of Being. It does not recall or think on Being. In so far as metaphysics always represents only being as beings does not recall Being itself. Heidegger's thought which comes to pass as the attempt to retrieve those forgotten origins.

Metaphysics gives, and seems to confirm, the appearance that it asks and answers the question concerning Being. In fact, metaphysics never answer the question concerning the truth of Being, for it never asks this question. Metaphysics does not ask this question because it thinks of Being only by representation being as beings. It means, all beings as a whole, although it speaks of Being. It refers to Being and means being as beings. From its beinging to its completion, the propositions of metaphysics have been strangely involved in a persistent confusion of beings and Being.
Failing to attain Being itself and persisting in confusion, metaphysics settles its accounts with beings, and this in either of two ways. First, it may replace Being itself with beings in general characterizations of Being drawn from particular groups of beings (life, matter, will, idea, etc.), which Heidegger calls the beingness of beings. This is called ‘ontology’. Or else it settles for an account of other beings in terms of a first being-cause of beings, an *ens rellissimum*, and this is called theology. Hence metaphysics leads to ontotheology.

We formulated Heidegger’s position in terms of the distinction between Being and beings, a distinction which in the early works were known as the ontological difference. In fact, Heidegger’s thought matured, this difference becomes considerably more complex and subtly nuanced. In *Identity and Difference*, Heidegger provides an excellent development of his later understanding of the difference in his interpretation of metaphysics in the ontological nature of metaphysics. Heidegger’s intention is on moving back to their unspoken origin. If we are able to carry out the step back. Heidegger says, we will enter into a confrontation with the very source from which a thinker’s thought arises. The step back is a movement form what the thinker explicitly thought
to what is unthought in his thinking. What is unthought is precisely what is to-be-thought, for it is that which has fallen into oblivion.

Now Heidegger develops the step back by means of two different differences, or two levels of difference. To begin with, there is the straightforward difference, the ontological difference between Being and beings. Heidegger, in *Identity and Difference*, says, "the difference (*Differenz*) of being and Being is the area within which metaphysics, Western thinking in the totality of its essence, can be what it is". This difference is metaphysics. It sets forth the conceptual framework within which metaphysical reflection occurs.

To do metaphysics, whether it be Heglian or Thomistic, is to establish an ontological difference between Being and beings to understand beings with a certain horizon of Being. All metaphysics is possible only as distinction between Being and beings. But the task of thought is to step back. That means the step back is a step back out of the difference (*Differenz*) between Being and beings into that which makes the difference possible, to what is differing in the difference, to the difference as such, The step back moves from the native acceptance of the difference into thinking the origin of the difference.
1.3. ONTOTHEOLOGICAL METAPHYSICS

The word logic is the Greek logos which was translated by the Romans as ratio. As such, Hegel's logic seeks a ground of beings, the most general ground (ontology) and the highest ground (theology). All metaphysics, not just Hegel's move within an understanding of Being as ground and of being as grounded. It thinks the difference between Being and beings in terms of ground and grounded. The onto-theo-logical nature of metaphysics, therefore, rests on a particular conception of the difference between Being and beings.

Heidegger articulates the difference within metaphysics operates as two-fold process. In the first place, Being, as the Being of beings, gives itself up to beings, comes to pass in and as beings, discloses and reveals itself, unconceals itself in beings, "Being comes to presence (West) here in the mode of a going-over beings". Being goes over or comes over into beings. Being is the very process of coming over. Being on the other hand do not merely wait there, on the other side as it were, for the coming of Being, as if beings somehow pre-exist the coming of Being. Rather beings themselves appear only in and through this coming-over. "Being goes over into, comes unconsentingly over,
that which arrives as something unconcealed, only through such a coming-over”26.

Thus the coming over of Being into being is at the same time the coming in, the coming-on-the-scence of beings. Beings come on the scence, arrive in appearance, only in the coming over of Being. The two processes are not only correlate, they are at bottom one, the coming-over of Being into beings is the coming-on of beings in Being. Just as the coming over of Being is revelatory, so the arrival (coming-on-the-scene) of beings is concealing. For by the coming over Being reveals itself in and thorough beings, and by the coming on the beings itself reamins concealed.

This two fold process is called by Heidegger scission between Being and beings or in the Stambaugh tarnslation, the differentiating. Heidegger calls the aus-tragen, is the literal German translation of the Latin de-ferre, dif-ferrens, to carry or bear outside of or away from. Thus we will call the aus-targ the differing in the difference between Being and beings, that which makes the difference between them, that which open up the difference, holding them apart while sending them one another in the appropriate manner, so that Being revealingly conceals itself in
beings. The differenting is thus the revealing concealing difference.

There is radical step back, from the different which belongs to metaphysics. Metaphysics thinks beings in their Being. It thinks the difference between Being and beings. It understands beings in terms of same idea of Being. But it never thinks the origin of this difference, that which makes the difference, that which opens it up as the particular kind of difference which it is.

In terms of Hegel’s metaphysics, this means that his thought possible because being gives itself only in the light cleared for Hegel’s thinking. To understand a particular metaphysical system is to understand how the difference between Being and beings has been cleared and opened up in that thinker, and in that epoch. It is to understand. “...the respective interpretation of beings as such”28. The character of metaphysics is determined by the character of its understanding of the difference. The difference is the hidden source, which has long been forgotten, form which the epochs of metaphysics take their origin. The only thing that now matters for our task is an insight into a possibility of thinking of the difference as the differing (Austrag) so as to clarify to what extent the onto-theo-logical constitution of metaphysics has its essential origin in the differing (Austrag) which beings the
history of metaphysics, govern all of its epochs, and yet remains everywhere concealed as the differring \((\text{Austrag})\), and thus forgotten in an oblivion which even escapes itself\(^9\).

The distinction between Being and beings belongs to metaphysics, but the differring \((\text{Austrag})\) which makes this metaphysics difference possible. It is not so much an oblivion of Being as an oblivion of the difference. In the case of Hegel, the difference between Being and beings, which is the difference between ground and grounded. The differring \((\text{Austrag})\) holds Being and beings apart, but it also holds them together. So that while Being grounds beings, beings in turn ground Being. Thus, original \textit{logos}, which was sent itself to the early Greeks as the gathering of what unifies gives itself to onto-theo-logic as the unity of the most general and as the unity deriving from the highest being. The onto-theo-logical nature of metaphysics originates out of an understanding of Being as the ground of being, and of being - i.e, the highest being, God-grounding other beings.

It is clear that metaphysics cannot itself comprehend what has been said here about metaphysics, for we have entered the region from which metaphysics, has itself originated. With the account of Heidegger's \textit{Austrag}, or differing, we find ourselves
face with the full force of Heidegger’s *Austrag* or differing is historical structure, that it is at once a process of clearing and of historical dispensation, and there by a process which makes the western historical tradition possible. The differing is a lighting process, a clearing process, a process of opening up what in *Being and Time* and in phenomenology generally would be called the horizon within which metaphysics takes place. Heidegger continues that the way in which it clears itself. But this way is dispensational, an error epochal stamping, which is for us only if we release it into the having been which is proper to it\(^3\).

For Heidegger, Being is the very light within which things are manifest, within which the real and ideal, the mental and extra-mental, both cause and effect, are themselves manifest. It is in what Heidegger calls the clearing that the Greek experience of *einai* and *on*, and the medieval experience of *esse* and *ens*, and the modern experience of ground and grounded, takes place. The unconcealment (*aletheia*) is the primal origin, the ordinary source of light, from out of which whatever is in way illuminated. The oblivion of Being of which Heidegger speaks means that the Being of metaphysics, even of the metaphysics of *esse*, is a gift of an historical sending an issue of original differing and as such the outcome of a more primordial origin which remains essentially
unknown for and in oblivion in metaphysics. Here we seen Heidegger’s sweeping interpretation of the history of metaphysics as an oblivion of Being.

The term onto-theology first turns up in Kant and means theology based on the ontological proof for the existence of God. Heidegger uses the term ontotheology in a wider sense to signify the basic construction of western metaphysics until Hegel, which is, as the science of being, simultaneously a science of God as the cause of all beings different from Him. Even though Heidegger’s critique of western metaphysics and his thesis concerning its “forgetfulness of Being” does not do justice to the history of metaphysics, the characteristic of western metaphysics as ontotheology may be irrefutable - at least since Aristotle’s metaphysics.

Heidegger’s thinking of Being is not a move away from metaphysics. Admittedly after the turn, Heidegger does reject concepts such as metaphysics and philosophy, but thinking should not simply be identified with philosophy. Heidegger seeks to overcome onto-theological metaphysics in a new thinking. Therefore his statements about the end of metaphysics are for more nuanced than is often assumed. Heidegger is not of the opinion that metaphysics is at the end at all. Heidegger’s thinking
about Being seeks to save metaphysics in its essence. Therefore Heidegger's thesis about the end of metaphysics is not incompatible with his earlier claim that philosophy ultimately cannot do without its genuine optics-metaphysics. If one does not restrict the notions of metaphysics and philosophy to the western tradition of thinking until Hegel - and there seem to be no reason why such a restriction is obligatory - then one can apprehend Heidegger's thinking of Being itself as a crucial contribution to a changed metaphysical form of thinking.

According to Heidegger, the difference is the difference between the Dasein of man and all beings whose beingness is mere existence in the sense of being-available. Heidegger's Dasein and the "I" of Kant's transcendental apperception are not simply the same. But both describe a being that in its Being is substantially different from the Being of the things within the world. The Being of the ontological difference is not something being-like, it is, but not in the way a being is. Being is beyond all beings. Similarly, the being of the ontological difference is not the Being of God. Heidegger says explicity: Being is not God because Being is in essence finite. The Being of the ontological difference is the prevailing difference in Being itself, within which the being-understanding Dasein. So Being that with which all philoso-
phy must begin according to Hegel—amounts to a quite simply unavailable ground that is presupposed in all thinking, even in speculative thinking.31

Because Being itself is finite according to its very essence, Being and nothingness belong together. Therefore one can ask: why are there beings at all, and not rather nothingness? The primeval ground of everything must lie beyond the Being of the ontological difference, and that means beyond time.32 Yet, such a ground, it is to be understood as the nameless abyss of Being. This is the real reason why "the onto-theological character of metaphysics has become questionable for thinking".33 Heidegger's philosophy is not a philosophy against God. Admittedly, this thinking stands before a decision on theism; Yet this is not because of any indifferent attitude, but rather out of for the limits that have been set upon thinking. Hence it is understandable that Heidegger prefers "to keep silence about God in the realm of thinking".34

Heidegger's thinking about Being claims rather to think in that dimension within which alone we today can ask meaningfully about God. Only from the truth of Being can the essence of the holy be thought. Only from the essence of the holy can the essence of divinity can we think and speak about what the word God is to signify. After the end of onto-theology, the question
about God can be no longer be pursued on old paths. We must
achieve a new understanding of what is brought up in the question
of God. Thus according to Heidegger, we have to return to the
genuine "matter of thinking, whose revealedness remains a
mystery."35.

Even though ontotheology has become questionable for
thinking, there remains for thought the very task that, according
to Plato, is the purpose of philosophy is a sea-journey in search
of ground and leads to the absolute the origin of everything.
Admittedly, Heidegger's thinking about Being includes the thought
of the absolute in the thought of the abyss-line ground of Being.
Heidegger's critique of the modern philosophy of subjectivity
leads him in his later thinking to dissolve human subjectivity in
the truth of that very Being that has been returned to its
finitude. But the identity in which Being and thinking belong together is not
without the subjectivity of man. Therefore this subjectivity must
be made as clear as possible through the metaphysical rising above.

Beyond the philosophy of Being lies the back into the
forgotten origins of the difference of which philosophy makes use.
The oblivion of Being, as we said above, is in the end. It is not
an oblivion of Being but an oblivion of that which gives Being, of
the difference which opens up the way in which Being and
beings are given in a particular epoch. Heidegger’s Being must always be understand in terms of Phainomenon and aletheia. Heidegger’s hermeneutic of esse, a rethinking of it which disentangles it from the objectivistic treatment it receives in St. Thomas’s scholasticism. What Heidegger himself has said that aletheia gives the clue to the unthought meaning of esse.

1.4. THE FORGETFULNESS OF BEING

Heidegger criticized the scholastics from the standpoint of a transcendental-hermeneutical phenomenology. A naive objectivism which failed to recognize the genetic origin of its ideas in Dasein’s own Being-in-the-world. But later Heidegger dropped the criticism and shift to a new standpoint, viz., that of Being as altheia. So we discuss three questions below.

(1) The early Heidegger’s phenomenology of essence and existence

(2) Secondly, Heidegger’s notion that principles of essence and existence belong within the framework of a metaphysics. Heidegger in the early period making is the transcendental horizon upon which beings are projected by medieval Dasein. In the later period making is the face with Being turns to medieval man.
Thirdly, Heidegger's charge that the doctrine of essence and existence represents a term of the oblivion of Being.

According to Heidegger, scholastic theory is naive, because it believes an objective being-in-itself whereas in fact every objective structure is a projection of subjective life. Heidegger's and Husserl's genetic phenomenology denies the whole idea of objective being-in-itself and so of realism or scholastic, or scientific. Being for Heidegger is always Being as it enters into Dasein's understanding of Being. There is Being, Heidegger says, only insofar as it is understood by Dasein. Being is always thought in terms of a horizon which is projected by Dasein. In Being and Time, Heidegger builds up the meaning of Being of being is time, that is, Being is projected upon time in as much as temporality constitutes the Being of Dasein.

The theory allows us to believe that we attain being-in-itself, even if such being is only imperfectly grasped. But it is only because the genetic origins of such being-in-itself have forgotten, in Heidegger's view. Thomas Acquinas makes use of Heidegger's idea of a preontological understanding of Being which Dasein always already possesses. The task of metaphysics is to make this implicit understanding of Being explicit.
Heidegger has maintained that scholastic metaphysics takes place within the horizon of making, that it does not grasp Being as such but Being within the determinate horizon of a particular region of beings, the things which are to be made. Heidegger calls onto-theo-logic, a demonstrative science (logic) of being as such (ontology) which has recourse to God as the cause of beings (theology). It is occupied in giving an account of the relationship between beings instead of savoring and unfolding its original insight into the simple act of being itself.

Acquinas has developed an ontology of truth which reposes in the unveiling of every being (*ens*) in its Being. No thinker of the past has been more clearly aware of the ontological difference than Thomas Acquinas. Nobody has clearly distinguished between being (*ens*) and being (*esse*), or interpreted being more consistently in the light of being. Plato and Plotinus think Being not as Being but as the one, Aristotle as substance (*ousia*), Augustine as eternity, and so on with Descartes, Kant and positivism. Each of these metaphysical systems calls essentialism an attempt to reduce Being to same whatness, some particular kind of Being.

We now turn to Heidegger’s treatment of the Greek words *physis* and *altheia*, around which his whole understanding of
Being turns. *Physis* for Heidegger refers to Being. Being as an emergent power, as an active upsurge into being. For Heidegger, Being is inseparable from truth not propositional truth, but a manifestness proper to Being itself. It is here that the phenomenological (both early and later Heidegger) character of Heidegger's work must be accord its due. In his early writings Heidegger instead Being is to be met with only in Dasein's understanding of Being in which the meaning of Being is constituted. Being is that in reference to which beings must be understood in order to manifest as beings.

In the later work Heidegger retains this relatedness between Being and Dasein's understanding, but now he reverses the direction of the relationship. In *Being and Time*, the being is projected in terms of a certain understanding of Being. being is unconcealment because it is what is uncovered in and through Dasein's disclosive activity. But in the later works Being rises up and discloses itself to Dasein, addresses Dasein, reveals itself, the task of Dasein is not to project Being but to realise it, to let it be. Thus Being is truth for Heidegger, i.e. a process of emerging (*physis*) into presence unconcealment (*aletheia)*.

For Heidegger, the conception of Being and truth is a victim of the naivete of Being-in-itself, Being prior to its revela-
tion to Dasein. It is naivete which forgets that Being is always and already something understood by Dasein. We now are in a position to understand why Heidegger charges the scholastics with the forgetfulness of Being. He means that Being has ceased to mean that which shows itself, that which emerges into manifestness. Being as pure self showing passes over into Being as caused and uncaused.

Heidegger's approach is radically different. He speaks from within Being, out of the experience of Being. His words are not propositions or assertions about Being but the words in which Being itself is given birth in language. Heidegger's whole approach is to listen, to hear, to be touched by Being. Heidegger's approach was at the outset phenomenological. From Heidegger's standpoint Being is truth, from Acquina's truth is a predicate of Being.

The questions of being fascinated Heidegger throughout his long philosophic life. What is the meaning of being? Ontology is the main concern throughout his life. The phrase meaning of being on careful examination seems to vague philosophers and nonphilosophers alike. Many wonder what kind of question this is. The meaning, refer to all beings such as rocks, trees, colours, sounds, dreams etc. Heidegger made it clear that there is a meaningful concept of the being of all beings- a conception that
underlies all our understanding of reality. He says this conception has been the aim of all metaphysical thinking, even if it was not always properly understood.

It is not possible to trace the meaning of this question fully. Heidegger says the Greek philosophy is the most serious omission in the history of western philosophy concerning being. The problem of the meaning of being is the guiding star of his philosophical thought, started to concern him while he was still a high school student.

The Greek language favoured the development of ontology, the science of being, as Aristotle called metaphysics. Even in prephilosophical Greek it was common to refer to being, to what there is both in the sense of things and in the sense of what we would call states of affairs. The fact that there is a clear linguistic distinction between beings and the abstraction being, Ousia (the natural being).

It is Aristotle’s doctrine of the categories of being that Heidegger refers to when he presents his view of the historical development of Western thought that ended in complete forgetfulness of the question of being. To understand Heidegger’s reaction to this tradition that made the conception of substance its main focus, we have to take a closer look at Aristotle’s theory.
Aristotle distinguishes as many meanings of being as there are categories of entities. There is the primary category of substance, designating natural things that exist in their own right. Aristotle remained a metaphysical realist who discovered the natural structure of reality. This structure is based on the primacy of substances, naturally existing independent entities that form the building blocks of Aristotle's universe. To be, Heidegger means either to be a substance or to be attributes of a substance. Aristotle says the being of a substance, a quality, a quantity, or other attributes and has no unified sense of being. The conception of being determined the future of development of metaphysics not only in later antiquity but from Middle age to the Modern age. Substance remained the central term in traditional ontology.

Heidegger finds his own way to overcome the traditional metaphysics found in Aristotle and that continued to exert its influence even over Kantian and Post-Kantian philosophy. Heidegger criticised the psychologism of that time. He firmly believed that the meaning can not lie in the empirical observation at the actual psychological processes that constitute our thoughts. His reflection on the psychological philosopher's explanation (Husserlian phenomenology - intentionality of acts of consciousness) forced Heidegger to reflect more on the connection between
he act of thinking in contradiction to the meaning of the thought. Heidegger was moving forward a characterization of being that is different from the one generated in the Aristotelian naturalist ontology. The “division of being” into the realm of the physical, psychic, metaphysical, and logical makes no claims to being comprehensive. Heidegger is clearly still far from seeing any way to provide for the possibility of a united meaning of being. According to Heidegger, there the being of reason and the being of nature cannot by any simple correspondence theory of truth in the sense that our thoughts could be mirror of reality. Heidegger’s own holistic conception of human existence as Dasein, that is, as being-in-a-world, or of care as the meaning of our existence.

Heidegger found a clue for the question of the meaning of being in a new way and that he found it necessary to invent an original philosophical language in order to prevent any confusion of his new approach. Heidegger who never publish anything before he produced the monumental work Being and Time. Husserl’s phenomenology clearly formed the background of Heidegger’s critique of psychologism. Husserl’s Logical Investigations helped him to solve the problem of being.

Husserl’s practice of the phenomenological method guided him and helped him in Being and Time: Husserl’s phenomenol-
ogy adopted Brentano's conception of the intentionality. All mental acts give objects (contents) or different types of acts of consciousness. Every objects is to be interpreted as its grasped by an act of comprehension in consciousness. It may be something thought of, wished out, imagined, seen, heard or known. If we want to understand the nature of all phenomena, we have to work out the precise way in which consciousness intends its objects. Husserl is characterized as a transcendental subjectivist because, held the view that it is the subject that provides the conditions of all determinations of the objects of experience and thought.

Heidegger's initial project, in Being and Time, was designed to reawaken the question, what is the sense of the Being (sein) of beings (seiends)? He called it a fundamental ontology required a "recapitulation and destruction"\(^{38}\) of the history of the ontology. Metaphysics was not only a traditional branch of philosophy for Heidegger but also he used to express man's relationship to what is as "metaphysical". In so far as man relates to beings, he represents being to himself with reference to the fact that it is, what and how it is, how might be and ought to be; in short he represents being with reference to its being. This re-presentation is thinking.
In whatever manner man may represent beings as such to himself. He represents them in view of their Being. Because of this man always goes beyond beings and crosses over to Being. In Greek beyond is meta. Hence man’s every relationship to beings as such is metaphysical\textsuperscript{39}.

Heidegger sought to overcome traditional metaphysics in the name of a fundamental ontology which finds its roots in an older metaphysics—that of the Pre-Socratic Philosophers. His endeavour is to reawaken the lost sense of Being and to recall traditional metaphysics from its obliviousness to its own origins that is the thought of Being. Heidegger says that traditional categorical treatment of Being failed to articulate clearly what is meant for a thing to be in general. According to (early) Heidegger, it is the traditional defects. He argued that the criteria which sustained approach to Being was indefinable and not simply adequate but are themselves the result of an inadequate account of Being, via, the narrow sense of metaphysics.
1. This question is taken from Aristotle which has been the guiding question of the Western Philosophical tradition and has motivated the thinking of Heidgger.


3. Latin word which means being, the present participle of esse, "to be". In St.Thomas Acquinas' theology, the ultimate ens refers to God in whom essence and existence are identical.

4. Res Cogitans is a Latin word means "a thinking thing", "a thinking being" or a "thinking self". Descartes used it as a phrase to signify "thinking substance" in contradistinction to Res Extensa, means "a material thing" or a "material being".


6. For Kant, God as ens realissium is the material condition for all the possibility of any and all beings. He identified God as the highest being and the first cause of itself and, thus, God is said to be an absolute and necessary being.


9. Here Heidegger does not identify God with Being but locates him within the sphere of beings. Heidegger does not mean that God is an *individum*. He means that Being of God is always approached from some prior understanding of Being which lays down the basic framework in terms of which we determine God's Being.


14. *Ousia*, Greek word which means “essence”, the “inner essential nature of a thing” or “the true being of a thing”.

15. For Plato, the word idea was *eidos*, translated as idea or form, sometimes as constitutive nature or essence.


17. The word *res* means a thing, that is essence and not apperence. Heidegger says they forgot the real meaning of ontology.


20. The principle and methods used to explain phenomenon in a particular discipline i.e., the study of Being.


25. *Ibid.*, P.64


29. *Ibid.*, P.68
30. Ibid., P.67


32. Ibid., P.19


34. Ibid., P.55


37. Ibid., P.47


39. Ibid., P.447