CHAPTER SIX

THE DELIBERATIONS IN RETROSPECT
6.1.0. Concluding Remarks

The dual motives that guided the deliberations in the preceding chapters are: first, to show that the explication of the meaning of Being is the core of Heidegger's thinking, and second, to examine how this project is being carried out successfully in the Heideggerian thought. These two objectives prepare the ground for considering the problem of Kehre, but it has been the underlying motive throughout the study to show that the problem, when viewed from a wider spectrum of Heidegger's thinking, is superfluous, or of little significance. The problem may not emerge at all if Heidegger is read in a particular way, and that is what is being attempted in this study.

It has been of great concern throughout not to restrict the evaluation of the Heideggerian themes within the limits of a particular text. However, it needs to be said that however, the aim is not to have a convenient mixing up of ideas and themes but to establish the logical
coherence in his thinking cutting across the limits of language and time.

In the introductory pages of *Being and Time* Heidegger lays down his mission and method to be carried out in future. He leaves not an iota of doubt regarding the goal to be realized, though the path is not clear to walk on. Heidegger's way of unravelling the programme of thought can be best explained by means of a technique applied in theatre arts. Imagine a situation where the chorus introduces the story of the drama before the actual drama takes place. Generally, we are led to conclude that, once the suspense vanishes, the audience lacks the interest in watching the play. But what awaits us is contrary to expectation. We witness a reorientation in the attentive audience from what is going to happen at the end to an appreciation of the gradual enactment of the story.

Same is the case even in life situations. Though everyone is anxious to know what lies ahead in future, once there is a relocation of concern, the attention falls on the question: what does it mean to be? The one who seriously asks this question confronts the fact that his priorities in life are being changed.
A similar situation arises when we try to understand the thought of Heidegger. The entire drama is unravelled in a nutshell before the reader. What comes henceforth is a meaningful conversation where thought leads the way. Naturally, the way turns out to be more important than the end to be achieved in significance, for there is a recurrence of the question: what does it mean to be? or what is the meaning of Being?

It is due to reason mentioned above that Chapter One gives a detailed account of Heidegger's conception of what philosophy is and what the role of a philosopher is. Though Heidegger was a professor of philosophy, he considered it to be his vocation to be a philosopher, and as evident from some of his letters, he valued in high esteem the inner truthfulness which a teacher of philosophy has to cultivate. Heidegger elevated philosophy from the level of an intellectual pastime, and gave it the euphoria of a prophetic mission. It was his firm conviction that the philosopher, while addressing himself to the present situation, has to transcend the present so that he can impart a knowledge that 'kindles and necessitates all enquiries, and thereby threatens all values'.
Heidegger never discarded as meaningless even those points of view that stood in opposition to his own. It was his view that contradictory principles are the two poles of the same problem from two angles. It is, therefore, a prerequisite to have a perpetual exposure to both rather than the elimination of the one in favour of the other for a free and fair atmosphere for the development of thought. A choice becomes good, an act becomes perfect, a question becomes genuine only when the possibility of its being is challenged and not obliterated. Heidegger's courage and conviction to make this to-and-fro movement was a blow to dualistic tendencies predominant in the western thought, and brought the polarities down to different points in the same stream of thought.

Heidegger's innovative way of doing philosophy was not free from criticism, but he was successful in overcoming those attacks because he had a sound footing in phenomenological method, and was convinced that the phenomenological insights with adequate modifications were promisive to carry out his programme of thought. Chapter Two explains in detail how the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger radicalized the phenomenological insights propounded by
Husserl. Heidegger took several steps both behind and beneath Husserl, though a few parallels are still obviously seen.

It was for the better prospects of his own hermeneutic phenomenology that Heidegger gradually moved away from the Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. The hermeneutic approach to the question of the meaning of Being leads Heidegger to the 'there' (Da), where Being (Sein) manifests itself viz. Dasein. Consequently, before addressing the central theme of fundamental ontology, viz. Being, we are to consider the domain of the manifestation of Being. Dasein enjoys a privileged position because Being is 'an issue' for it in a way that it is not for other entities. It is to be noted that Heidegger's study or phenomenological account is about Dasein and not about human being or human nature. Being and Time, is not a treatise on philosophical anthropology, but it prepares the ground for the proper formulation of the question of the meaning of Being. The later works of Heidegger's presupposes the Dasein analysis given in Being and Time, and therefore, it is wrong to say that it is an existentialist text. It is possible to claim that there are certain anthropological
implications, but his task is essentially ontological in that the human being is a means of access, not the final goal. Heidegger's programme can be formulated in a nutshell as follows: Being is the realm or region in which there is a path — in this case Dasein — that leads to the goal, which is the meaning of Being. We travel from Being to Dasein in order to grasp Being more comprehensively.

Dasein is the link between beings and Being, the ontological place which is capable of transmitting the illumination of beings, Dasein's own illumination, and the illumination of Being. Dasein and Being, accordingly, are interdependent: without Being, illumination could not exist, yet without Dasein, illumination could not be transmitted. And since later Heidegger relentlessly reinforces the equation between truth as concealment and unconcealment of Being, his contention that "truth is only insofar as and as long as Dasein is" substantiates this relationship between Dasein and Being. Heidegger, in fact, places crossed lines over Being (-being) to emphasize illustratively that neither Dasein nor Being can stand alone.

Heidegger makes it clear that Being is not God or a world-ground or anything particular. Being is closer to
us than any particular thing or person. It is disclosed along with beings, but it itself is not a being; it is sheer illumination. Another essential characteristic feature of Being, closely associated with its power of illumination, is transcendence. The hiddenness or concealment constitutes the disclosure of Being as transcendence, as different from particular disclosures. What Heidegger is trying to convey is something significant. Though Being is the struggle between lightness and darkness, between presence and non-presence, Heidegger is saying that the reference is not to any particular entity. Though Being is the 'clearing' in which all things are disclosed and is present in their presence, it needs to be said that Being is different from all its specific disclosures.

The primary relation, therefore, is concerned with Dasein and Being, and not with particular entities. Dasein's relation to Being is not derived through practical engagements with essents; on the contrary, Dasein is engaged in Being prior to any action. When Dasein thinks and intends, it acts in the presence of Being. It means that the various relations of Dasein presuppose the presence of Being, which in turn is the illumination of all that exist.
Being is the region where all things happen and at the same time not defined by any set of occurrences. It transcends all particular occurrences, including the occurrence of man's conceptions.

It is in this context that Heidegger speaks about 'waiting' for the occurrence. Waiting is to exist anticipatively without intending or objectively conceiving it, but to let it occur as it is. The transcendence of Being is a mystery. It is not fully amenable to conceptualization, though it is openness. It is closest to us, yet farthest. It is the ground of all that is, but it is also abysmal. Therefore, the human being should attend to Being. "Dasein is the shepherd of Being." Mystery, thus, appears to be the most adequate term for describing Being, though it reveals itself continuously.

The development of Heidegger's thinking after *Being and Time* has led many to speak of a turn (Kehre) in his philosophy. It is quite misleading to speak of this turn as a break or shift in his thinking. We are justified in ascribing a swift development in his thinking more in terms of method than content. A close look at Heidegger's works reveals the fact that it is something Heidegger
himself anticipated in *Being and Time*: the move from the perspective of the human being to that of Being. The writings that come after *Being and Time* are more concerned with the history of Being, which takes the form of a thorough and intensive analysis of the history of philosophy from pre-Socratic period to Nietzsche in contemporary times. These writings show how the pre-Socratic philosophers experienced Being and how Being manifested itself to them. The earliest Greek thinkers had a unique relationship to Being; and Heidegger explores this relation by undertaking an etymological exploration of some Greek terms such as *physis*, *logos*, and *aletheia*. In Chapter Four these notions are discussed in detail with a view to unravel the intricacies of Heidegger's notion of Being.

The pre-Socratic philosophers experienced Being as *physis*, that is, as what arises out of itself and becomes unconcealed. Unconcealment is the privative form of concealment. It is wrested out of concealment which is equiprimordial with it. These two aspects of Being are always together, and can never be without one another. Although truth does not depend on Dasein for its 'reality',
truth is insofar as Dasein exists. Heidegger denies the notion of eternal truths, because Dasein is not eternal.

Heidegger's thinking becomes more strange to an ordinary person in the later writings because there is a gradual move beyond the limits of logic. Heidegger is convinced of the limits of reason and therefore not hesitant to go beyond the laws of thought laid down in the traditional logic and followed by everyone since Aristotle. Heidegger comments on it by saying that what remains closed to logic forever is always much closer to man than anything that can be comprehended by means of logic. It is due to the primordial relation that exists between man and Being. As a result, man has to preserve this kind of truth at any cost. This determination in the face of truth is a kind of sacrificial, thankful response to that which has given man his nature and it demands sacrifice and renunciation. Thinking, thus, demands indirectly to dedicate oneself to the preservation of the dignity of Being.

The above elucidation brings to our notice that the way from forgetfulness of Being to authentic relation with Being may be swift or slow, because it is more of a response that we make to the call of Being. It is a serious
lapse on the part of many Heideggerian scholars not to heed to this aspect of Heidegger's thought. This study, therefore, gives prime importance to develop the Heideggerian response to the problem of Kehre, which may do justice to Heidegger's own conception of what philosophy is.

The deliberations that are hitherto undertaken point to the fact that Heidegger's thinking underwent certain developments that are quite suitable to his programme of thought. His thought had a shape and direction that cannot be left unnoticed. What remains an open question is whether this change is a degeneration to be deplored or a purification or development to be lauded. It is Heidegger's view that the most difficult thing in philosophy consists not in being immersed in exceptionally profound thoughts, but rather lies concealed in the step backward that permits thought to enter into an experimental questioning and to let drop the accustomed opinions of philosophy.