CHAPTER TWO

THE MISSION: THE QUESTION OF THE MEANING OF BEING
2.1.0. Heidegger's Path of Thinking

Heidegger's thought, to use an analogy, is a path, more like a forest path. The path takes a definite direction, though the way ahead is not absolutely clear. The goal of philosophy, according to Heidegger, is not to furnish a comprehensive picture of the path, but to walk along with him and thus not to be a disinterested spectator. The thinker is the one who traverses the path like a traveller, and from this point of view Heidegger considers his own thought to be under way.

Heidegger is a thinker of one thought. To enkindle the question of Being remains the sole objective of his thought. He never aims at a complete comprehension of Being, by making experiments with different ways that are opening up in the field of thought. He considers his own thinking to be only one among the many possible ways. He sought a way that is capable of casting light on the fundamental question of ontology, and he feels that this is the way one must go. There is no guarantee that the way
one chooses is the correct one. It can be known only in the process of passing through it. "Whether this is the only way or even the right one at all, can be decided only after one has gone along it," says Heidegger. All the books, essays, and lectures of Heidegger can be viewed only from this basic contention; in all, the goal is set to illuminate Being. Since the question of the meaning of Being is not enkindled, Heidegger remarks that "the foregoing investigation is on the way."

The existential analytic of Dasein in *Being and Time* is only a particular stage in the development of Heidegger's thought. Therefore, he acknowledges the fact that the question of the meaning of Being lacks an answer in the ordinary sense. Moreover, the question itself is obscure and without a clear direction. The preliminary task, therefore, is to "work out an adequate way of formulating it." Consequently, the project of *Being and Time* is considered, sometimes as a way station on the road to the explication of Being.

The way chosen and pursued in *Being and Time*, says Heidegger, is only one among the various ways we are free to choose in the realm of Being. The existential analytic of
Dasein is "only the point of departure for the ontological problematic" that lies ahead awaiting to be illumined. The primary duty of the seeker is not to find out "a way" which can shed light on the fundamental question of ontology. One must tread this path, once it is selected, and there is no question of looking back. According to Heidegger "whether this is the only way or even the right one at all, can be decided only after one has gone along it."

The analogy of the way had a lasting impression on Heidegger such that he prefers to characterize his thought as a way or a path. In his view:

The lasting element in thinking is the way. And ways of thinking hold within them that mysterious quality that we can walk them forward and backward, and that indeed only the way back will lead us forward.

The path which Heidegger speaks of is not a well-laid road, definite to take one to the destination. It is a forest path to be unravelled with great effort and pain. It is more like the construction of a road where "the builders must at times return to construction sites they left behind, or go back even further."
2.1.1. The Role of a Philosopher

Every questioning "that takes place at a given period of time is a privileged happening or an event." For, there is a reciprocal and indispensable relation between thought and time. Thought eventuates in time and generates history. In other words, the force of the thought makes history. Therefore, a thinker is encapsulated by the requirements of time and is bound to respond to it. It amounts to saying that the world of a philosopher is not the familiar and the ordinary. He has got a specific role to play in the changing situations.

The role of a philosopher can be best expressed by borrowing a few words from Nietzsche. According to him, "a philosopher is a man who never ceases to experience, see, hear, suspect, hope and dream extraordinary things...." A philosopher never claims the possession of truth. On the contrary, he constantly strives for it. Hence, the views of a dogmatist is anathema to a philosopher. The dogmatist promulgates the truth and, therefore, remains far off from the genuine concerns of philosophy.

The reflections of a philosopher may remain obscure and strange, for his thoughts remain far ahead of
the present. It can, therefore, be said that every philosophical question is necessarily untimely. Every question thrusts open a number of possibilities and at the same time establishes a link between the past and the present. The futuristic orientation of philosophical reflections can be explained in two of its aspects. First, it connects the present with the past, or that which has initially been there. Hence, philosophy, says Heidgger "always remains a knowledge which not only cannot be adjusted to a given epoch but on the contrary imposes its measure upon its epoch." If philosophy is projected far advance of its time, it can never be considered as a weakness but rather it actually depicts its essential nature. Second, philosophy may not bring about sweeping changes at the present moment. However, the absence of an immediate effect does not affect the value of philosophy. If philosophy brings about an immediate response and, therefore, becomes fashionable, it can be concluded that it has been misinterpreted and misused for ephemeral and extraneous purposes.

Every questioning is fundamentally a leap from the confines of the verbal formula in which it has been first
formulated. Therefore, if a given epoch is incapable of recognizing the force of a philosophical question, there is every chance for the question to lose its rank and vanish forever. The task of the philosopher is to take every question to its logical end, being unprejudiced regarding the goal to be achieved.

Viewed from the above perspective, it is inappropriate to expect an immediate echo for any philosophical enterprise. In other words, the cash value of a philosophical enquiry can never be estimated in terms of the results it makes in the present. If philosophy brings about revolutionary changes, there is a chance to cease to be philosophy and may deteriorate to the level of a fashionable trend. It refers to the fact that, like every other discipline, philosophy too has a distinct goal to be accomplished and a means suited to it. Philosophy cannot be taught or learned like any other discipline. Imparting the profound ideas of the great thinkers of the past may do more harm than boon, because it generates an array of misinterpretations. Academicians are greatly responsible for it. At the most what academicians can contribute is to impart certain techniques of philosophizing. Usefulness
can be a good criterion in applied sciences, but not in philosophy.

The above deliberations may discourage an aspirant of profound thoughts. "It is the very nature of philosophy never to make things easier but only more difficult." The consolation that philosophy can provide is strange and awesome. However, what appears to be useless can still be a force; it can intimately be bound up with a nation's historical development and can even anticipate it.

There are certain requisites that can never be met within the domain of philosophy. Such unwarranted claims may help only to deteriorate the value of philosophy. One prominent demand is that philosophy must provide a cultural and historical foundation so that its people can build up their life and culture on a sound footing. Here, a requisition is made which is beyond the capacity of philosophy to accomplish. It is inept to expect historical change geared up by philosophy for two basic reasons. First, philosophy had always been and still remains as the concern of a few. Second, the transformation it brings about, if any, may take its own distinctive ways to manifest
and, at times, may go well beyond the time one cherishes it to occur.

Another inappropriate demand from philosophy is to hold the view that it is entrusted with the objective of providing us with a systematic view of what is. This, it is suggested, will relieve the scientists from reflecting over the premises, basic concepts and principles which constitute their theoretical foundation. Moreover, it makes the task of a scientist easier and accelerates the advancement. But philosophy can never make the job easier but only difficult for reasons inherent to it. In brief, the formation of a world-view falls outside the purview of philosophy.

From the above elucidation we get a glimpse of the function of philosophy and the role of a philosopher in it. \(23\) Heidegger summarizes what philosophy is thus:

\[\text{[It is]} \text{ a thinking that breaks the paths and opens the perspectives of the knowledge that sets the norms and hierarchies, of the knowledge in which and by which a people fulfills itself historically and culturally, the knowledge that kindles and necessitates all inquiries and thereby threatens all values.}\]
There is nothing to cause astonishment if philosophy issues forth a theory-practice problem. In the same way there is nothing to cause bewilderment if it remains constant without making any forward strides at all. It exhibits only the various possibilities that lie within the world of philosophy. In its essential nature philosophy may remain constant to think the same.

2.1.2. The Proper Theme of Philosophy

The proper theme of philosophy is to provide a theoretical and conceptual interpretation of Being (Sein), which involves a proper understanding of the structure of Being and its possibilities. This cannot be viewed as an arbitrary stand taken by Heidegger, for the whole history of philosophy in the east and the west had been more or less an attempt to explicate the meaning of Being primordially and profoundly. When Being and Time begins with a reference to The Sophist of Plato, we are reminded of the fact that the question of Being was the single and the most important concern even in ancient times and we are called to participate in this battle of the giants.

The reference to the history behind, especially to the Greek thought, serves an important purpose. Positively,
it implies that Being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy. Negatively, it suggests that philosophy is not a science of essents (Seiendes) but of Being (Sein). The Greek expression for the study of Being is ontology. Philosophy, therefore, is ontological in its very nature. Since Being is the proper theme of philosophy, an elucidation of Being must be the starting point of any philosophical enquiry worth the name.

2.1.3. The Structure of the Question of Being

Heidegger formulates the question of the meaning of Being in different forms. Taking a few words from Leibnitz, it can be rendered as "Why are there essents rather than nothing?" In an informal rendering it will be "What is Being?" If paraphrazed in common parlance, it takes the form of "What does it mean to be?" In all these formulations of the question we find the basic quest of Heidegger, viz. to "raise anew the question of the meaning of Being."

Heidegger's enquiry is directed to the meaning of Being. Here, meaning refers to that process by which we raise the pre-ontological understanding of Being to the
existential level. It prepares the ground for the intelligibility of Being. Being of the entities, according to Heidegger, demands a distinctive approach "so that Being becomes intelligible in advance as that which it is - and on that which it is already in every entity." When entities within the world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein, in other words, when they have come to be understood, we say that they have meaning. However, there is no attempt to analyse thematically what is understood. The emphasis is on the constituting, projective activity of understanding. Meaning is neither a property of entities encountered in the world nor of propositions per se.

One way of unravelling the meaning of Being is to analyse the question itself in its various dimensions. Every question or enquiry, when examined thoroughly, reveals three constituent elements in it. They are: (i) 'that which is asked about', (ii) 'that which is interrogated' and (iii) 'that which is to be found out by the asking'. In the present question, what is asked about is Being. What is interrogated is beings. That which is to be found out is the meaning of Being. These three components in the
question give a clue to the understanding of the thought of Heidegger.

The traditional form of definition cannot communicate anything with regard to Being, for Being cannot be brought under a genus. "Being cannot be derived from higher concepts by definition, nor can it be presented through lower ones." Again, Being is not a concept, having universal characteristics, because, "the universality of Being 'transcends' any universality of genus." Furthermore, Being is not an entity. It means that 'to be' (Sein), the meaning of that which is enquired about, can never be a thing or an entity. For, the question is not directed to any particular thing. In short, the question of the meaning of Being, which is 'ontological' in nature cannot be answered satisfactorily in an 'ontical' procedure.

It is a fact that Being is "that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood." At the same time "Being is always the Being of an entity." From the above assertions, it follows that Being is related to being and at the same time Being can never be a being. "The Being of
entities 'is' not itself an entity." There is an essential connection as well as an important difference between Being and beings. Due to the essential connection any enquiry into Being necessarily involves an enquiry into beings, but not vice-versa. An enquiry into beings directed towards its Being can alone yield the result which Heidegger intends. All other enquiries are partial and limited to the realm of the most general characteristics of beings. The essential difference is not a product of human intellect or created by somebody, but it is already there. This is the basic reason for which Heidegger calls this as 'ontological difference'. Moreover, it is to be noted that 'Being' which is discussed here is not an abstract concept. Being is the most concrete of all notions. For, we have started our enquiry not from any supramental awareness, but from the pre-ontological awareness or understanding of Being.

2.2.0. The Phenomenological Insights of Husserl

It was Franz Brentano (1838-1917) who, in contemporary times, initiated a new way of understanding experience. He held the view that there is a crucial difference between psychical and physical phenomena. The differentiating element, holds Brentano, is the principle of
intentionality. The characteristic feature of a psychic phenomenon is that it always stands in relation to an object. This transitive nature or intentional reference to an object is a fundamental nature of consciousness.

This insight of Brentano was sufficient enough to begin a new way of looking at the subject-object relationship which is problematic to any form of enquiry. He laid emphasis on two important aspects of experience, viz. the relation as directedness and the content of experience. All relations are centered around the content of experience. Husserl develops his theory of intentionality from the theory of intentionality developed by Brentano. According to Brentano, 'intentional' is not an adjective for 'direction toward an object', but it is a characteristic feature of the content of consciousness. It means that the principle of intentionality not only refers to the directedness towards an object, but it also signifies various modes of being of an object immanent to consciousness. Brentano views experience not merely as a product of sense perception, but he admits ideal intuitions as its constitutive element as well.
It was Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* (1874) that brought him to the wider spectrum of philosophy. In 1884, Husserl came under the direct apprenticeship of Brentano and the next two years were of intense reading in the areas of logic, philosophy of science, and philosophical psychology. Later in 1886, respecting the interest of Brentano, he became the assistant of Carl Stumpf, who at that time was working on descriptive psychology. Husserl completed his *Habilitationsschrift* in 1891 under the direction of Carl Stumpf and published the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*.

Husserl's road to philosophy was from mathematics by way of logic. He was convinced of the absolutely indubitable foundations of mathematical knowledge, and the *a priori* certainty of mathematical truth. But some of the new developments in the field of Euclidean Geometry in the theory of sets and groups had such far reaching effects that they really shook the foundations of mathematical knowledge and the laws of logic. In his search for certainty, Husserl naturally turned to J.S. Mill who held the view that the laws of logic are the laws of thought. The truth character of these laws of thought are guaranteed by the very nature
of the human mind. The truths of logic are the empirical generalization and they depict the very functioning of the human mind. This view, which is known as psychologism, can be seen in the Philosophy of Arithmetic. Frege challenged this position and raised the issue again for a better solution. If logical truths are empirical generalizations, Frege argued, then it is difficult to establish the truth of it, for it is not amenable to empirical investigations. Husserl gradually liberated himself from psychologism and held the view that logical truths are a priori in nature, and that they are established by intuition (Anschauung). Instead of empirical investigation, what is required is to examine the ideas involved or more precisely the relationship between the ideas that are involved. In the final analysis, it is intuition that guarantees truth. Though intuition plays an important role in the phenomenological description it is difficult to say what exactly intuition is all about. We are sure what it aims at and what distinctive role we expect it to perform. The goal of philosophy is to go back to what is given in intuition, which is self-evidently true. "Whatever presents itself in 'intuition' in primordial form... is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be." Phenomenological
enquiry, thus, leads to the phenomenon unadulterated by prejudices, beliefs, and for that matter free from the clutches of any kind of theoretical constructs. It looks for a 'seeing' as it is given, undaunted and unperturbed by any concept that tradition has accumulated over the years. The pristine purity of the phenomenon necessarily demands a new way of looking at it, and intuition plays an important role to this effect.

2.2.1. Philosophy as an Eidetic Science

Philosophy, for Husserl, is an eidetic science because it undertakes an enquiry into the essence of ideas.

It belongs to the meaning of everything contingent that it should have some essential being and therewith an Eidos to be apprehended in all its purity.

But what is the nature of these ideas? The ideas, says Husserl, are a priori, in nature. The human mind is composed of ideas which are universal in nature and are related in logically determinable ways. Moreover, he assumes that the human mind has a common structure, and it is due to this feature that human rationality and
communication are possible. These ideas are inherent in the human mind, and is foundational for any scientific enquiry. Philosophy, therefore, can be considered as the queen of all sciences, insofar as it makes an enquiry into the a priori essences of ideas. The essences of ideas are the starting point of any branch of knowledge.

Brentano's doctrine of intentionality is more close to psychology. However, Husserl transformed it into a metaphysical principle. Husserl found that this doctrine is a suitable device to give a firm footing to his own theory of ideas already formulated. In his words:

> Intentionality is the wonderful property of consciousness, to which all metaphysical enigmas and riddles of theoretical reason lead us eventually back: perceiving is the perceiving of something, may be a thing; judging, the judging of a certain matter; valuation, the valuing of a value; wish, the wish for the content wished, and so on.

It means that intentionality reveals not only the existence of one's own consciousness, but also gives an apodictic knowledge about one's own intentional objects. The failure of Descartes was that he did not take the analysis to that limit.
The Cartesian evidence - the evidence of the proposition *ego cogito, ergo sum* - remained barren because Descartes neglected ... to direct his attention to the fact that the ego can explicate himself *ad infinitum* and systematically, by means of transcendental experience, and therefore, lies ready as a possible field of work.

The Husserlian enquiry was philosophical and he found that the content of consciousness is nothing other than ideas. Since it is already established that the fundamental structure of human rationality is universal, it is possible to arrive at apodictic and universal truths by investigating one's own ideas. So, the goal of philosophy, according to Husserl, is to go back to what is given in intuition, which is self-evidently true. From this perspective it can be said that philosophy is logically prior to all the enquiries of empirical sciences. For, my awareness of my own consciousness is given directly and indubitably to myself. It is on the basis of this that all other truths are affirmed.

Husserl found this model quite satisfactory to establish the relationship between phenomena and ideas. Husserl conceives ideas as the organizing principle of all phenomena, and the result is a meaningful phenomena, which
we are able to recognize. Phenomena, which remain as a meaningless amalgam is synthesized and organized by ideas into the unity of an intentional object. The intentional object, therefore, is the particular manifestation of an idea as the meaning of a unified set of phenomena. In short, in recognizing an object, consciousness actively synthesizes the phenomena and gives them meaning in accordance with an idea.

2.2.2. Phenomenological Reduction

The Husserlian project of reduction is based on the firm conviction that there is an indubitable ground to start our philosophizing, which is prior to all beliefs, interpretations, and presuppositions. The main objective of reduction is to take us back to the origin or source of knowledge which we have lost sight of.

Reduction, says Husserl, is to purify the phenomenon from all factual ingredients. It is to eliminate all personal variations. It is to trace back the phenomenon to its source, i.e. the transcendental ego. It is to isolate the field or the domain of consciousness. It is to uncover the data which constitute the world or to disclose the ways in which the world is constituted.
There are three distinguishable stages that characterize the procedure of phenomenological reduction, viz. existential reduction, psychological reduction, and transcendental reduction.

Existential reduction operates on a particular level where we are not concerned with the existence or non-existence of the objective phenomena. Neither do we assert nor do we deny existence. Here we are suspending or putting into brackets existence and non-existence, but not rejecting them. Two objectives are met at this level. First, we are able to concentrate all our attention on the essential features of the phenomena rather than their existential features. In other words, we are true to the spirit of phenomenology as an eidetic science. Second, all the presuppositions of natural science are held in suspension.

At the level of psychological reduction, again, two objectives are met. First, a rigorous effort is made to eliminate psychologism. Holding on to psychologism is equal to holding on to a kind of naturalistic standpoint. Husserl wants to eliminate naturalistic standpoint which has got presuppositions. Second, in terms of psychological reduction, Husserl wants to get rid of beliefs with regard
to object. It is to be noted that belief is always personal. Phenomenology which aims at elimination of personal variations can never uphold such a standpoint.

In the sphere of transcendental reduction, we are not reducing any elements as the term reduction indicates. On the contrary, it refers to the assigning of meaning to the pure datum that remains after the existential and psychological reductions by the transcendental ego. Thus, through reduction, we not only arrive at the transcendental ego, but also at the pure datum.

2.3.0. Heidegger's Conception of Phenomenology

The thoughts of Oswald Kulpe (1862–1965) had a great impact on the young Heidegger, who was literally struggling hard to systematize his ideas. Kulpe literally triggered the thoughts of Heidegger into a new direction. Kulpe, though a proponent of empirical psychology, was equally interested in philosophy. It was mainly his attack on the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena or appearance and reality that brought Heidegger close to Kulpe. Kulpe held the view that the real is given only with that which appears and that it is futile to seek something
hidden beneath the given. Kulpe's attack on the two-world theory was a consolation to Heidegger, but he was critical of the view that the real is only the physical appearance.

Heidegger's collaboration with Husserl was significant and decisive throughout his life. Heidegger's apprenticeship under Husserl was enriching. Heidegger found that the phenomenological insights of Husserl are well-suited to carry out his enquiry into the meaning of Being. Heidegger thereafter showed a great interest in Husserl's thought and listened to his lectures. Heidegger was greatly influenced by Husserl's style of teaching that took place in the form of a step-by-step training in phenomenological seeing, which at the same time demanded that one relinquished the untested use of philosophical knowledge. However, Heidegger's own teaching had its unique features. When Husserl concentrated fully on thematic explorations making use of the spontaneous thoughts, Heidegger was getting more and more absorbed in the study of the text and the technique of interpretation. Heidegger's interest in textual exegesis was the beginning of a line of thought that led to hermeneutic phenomenology.
The lecture course Heidegger gave at the University of Marburg in the summer of 1927 and later published as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1975) clearly shows what necessiated the move towards hermeneutic phenomenology. Many questions which remained problematic and unexplored in *Being and Time* find clarification in this work. Heidegger categorically asserts that Being is the proper and sole theme of philosophy. Philosophy is ontological in a wide sense because it shows the possibility and necessity of the absolute science of Being. For Heidegger, "Philosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structure and its possibilities." But Being is always Being of beings and, therefore, our starting point must be some particular being. The investigation is to make accessible the phenomenon of Being which is present in every being. The journey from a leadenly apprehended Being to a clear explication of Being is not an easy task, because Being does not become accessible like a being. The enquiry always moves back and forth between Being and beings. Phenomenology gives positive guidance towards this end.
The above analysis clearly indicates that Being of beings is to be revealed by means of phenomenological enquiry. Phenomenology speaks of letting be seen that which shows itself from itself. Heidegger says that it can be nothing other than Being. Now, we have to find a way to proceed making use of phenomenological method and enabling the 'phenomenon' to show itself. An etymological analysis of phenomenology may help us to overcome some of the hurdles on the way.

It is well-known that the profundity of Greek thought had an extraordinary spell on Heidegger. The radically different meaning assigned to phenomenology, to a great extent, is derived from the Greek vision of reality. Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology must be seen in proximity with the Greek etymological elements in it. For Heidegger, phenomenology is not just a Greek-based word; rather it denotes a Greek way of thinking. In a wider sense, phenomenology can be viewed as the science of phenomena, for which phainomenon and logos are the main components. But these two terms, according to Heidegger, carry much more meaning than what is generally ascribed to them.
2.3.1. The Phenomenon

Phainomenon is derived from the verb phainesthai, which means "that which shows itself" or that which manifests itself. It reveals the manner in which it is. Phenomenon, as the showing-itself-in-itself, signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered. Moreover, the stem pha which is akin to the Greek phos, signifies light or that which is bright. Phenomenon, therefore, is that which can be brought to the light of the day. In Heidegger's words:

Phenomena are the totality of what lies in the light of the day or can be brought to the light—what the Greeks sometimes identified simply with ta onta (entities).

A thing can show itself in innumerable ways. As a result we have a couple of words signifying various aspects such as semblance, appearance, mere apperance, and so on. Heidegger differentiates phenomenon from all these derivative forms of manifestation. He cautions that phenomenon should never be construed as a secondary form of referring or as a symptom referring to a more primary phenomenon. Heidegger observes:
The bewildering multiplicity of phenomena designated by the words 'phenomena', 'semblance', 'appearance', 'mere appearance' cannot be disentangled unless the concept of the phenomenon is understood from the beginning as that which shows itself in itself.

Sometimes the phenomenon may show itself as something which in itself it is not. This type of showing itself, we may designate as semblance (der Schein) or seeming (Scheinen). When we speak of semblance, it has to be noted, there is an indirect reference to phenomenon. The positive and primordial signification alone is called phenomenon, whereas semblance is a privative modification and it signifies nothing other than something which in actuality it is not. It means that phenomenon and semblance are structurally interconnected, and the former remains as the primordial source of meaning for the latter.

Appearing is an announcing-itself (Sichmelden) in or through something that shows it. It announces something that does not show itself in itself. Appearance, thus, is different from both phenomenon and semblance in the sense that it is a 'not-showing-itself'. It is never a showing-itself in the sense of the phenomenon, even though, appearing becomes possible only by reason of a showing-
itself of something. But this showing-itself which helps to make possible the appearing is not the appearing itself. This can be explained by means of an example. When one is talking about 'symptoms' of a disease, one has in mind certain occurrences on the body, which show themselves, and which in showing themselves indicate something which does not show itself. In short, we can say appearing is not-showing-itself. Moreover, appearance is always appearance of something. It is always given in a referential context.

Appearance... means a reference-relationship which is in an entity itself, and which is such that what does the referring (or announcing) can fulfill its possible function only if it shows itself in itself and is thus a phenomenon.

From the analysis given above, it becomes clear that phenomenon in its primordial signification means "the showing-itself-in-itself" and both semblance and appearance are grounded upon phenomenon. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of two explorations. The first, based on the Greek etymology, draws the conclusion that the more positive and primordial understanding of the manifest is that which shows itself as it is. The second, based on logical or semantical elucidation, demonstrates the fact that the
different ways of showing such as indications, presentations, symptoms, symbols, mere appearance, and so on presuppose for their sense the manifest as that which shows itself as it is.

2.3.2. The Logos

The primordial signification of logos is closely related to phenomenon, viewed from the etymological meaning of apophainesthai. Apo means 'open to sight' or 'let something be seen'. What logos opens to sight is phenomenon, or that which shows itself (phainesthai). Logos has to be taken in its root meaning of deloun which means to make manifest. Heidegger never uses the term logos in the sense of 'reason' or 'ground', but suggests the speaking function which makes possible reason and ground. The function of logos, therefore, is to make manifest that which the discourse is about or that on which the discourse turns. The manifestation can be true or false. The true manifestation is called discourse where something is permitted to be seen as that something which it is in itself. Logos is not a power given to language by the user, but it is given to the user by the language. This goes against our customary way of understanding language, where
we impose our categories on the phenomenon. This conception alone is suitable for the idea of going back to things themselves. A false manifestation is called deception and it takes place when something is permitted to be seen as something which it is not in itself.

2.3.3. A Radical Approach to Phenomenology

On the basis of the elucidation of the two notions - phenomenon and logos - Heidegger formulates his conception of phenomenology as "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself." The definition given by Heidegger makes it clear that his aim is to go back to the phenomenon itself. Heidegger's conception of what a phenomenon is radically differs from Husserl's. Though the motto "to the things themselves" (Zu den Sachen Selbst) remains the same for both, Heidegger takes a departure from the Husserlian conception of phenomenology on several grounds. This will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Husserl conceives phenomenology as the philosophy, whereas for Heidegger it is a method suitable to carry out his ontological inquiry. Heidegger says:
The expression phenomenology signifies primarily a methodological concept. It does not characterize the substantial what of objects of philosophical research but the how of this research.

But like Husserl, Heidegger is determined to achieve rigorousness in philosophical analysis devoid of any presuppositions.

The heading phenomenology expresses a maxim which can be formulated as 'to the things themselves'—in opposition to all free-floating constructions and accidental findings, in opposition to taking over concepts which only seem to have been proven, to the pseudo-questions which often parade as 'problems' for generations.

Heidegger subscribes to Husserl's view that a radical approach is inevitable in all philosophical enterprises.