CHAPTER FOUR

PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION OF BEING
4.1.0. The Early Greek Experience of Being

Being manifests itself in various ways. Its ramifications are complex and diverse. Moreover, it does not show itself as one pleases. The strange and uncanny ways of Being may dampen the spirit of the one who tries to unravel the mystery that shrouds Being. However, the early Greek experience of Being points to the fact that establishing a close relation with Being is not an impossibility. The primordial relation with Being nurtured by pre-Socratic philosophers remains as a key to the riddle of Being.

The pre-Socratic philosophers had an experiential relation with Being. For them Being was not merely the totality of all that exists or a conglomeration of essents. They viewed Being as constant presence (Anwesenheit) and it was conveyed through the term Ousia or more precisely as parousia. It was an authentic form of experience in the sense that they never felt the need to ask a proof for anything that existed. They were in an intimate bond with
Being. Moreover, they were astonished by the fact that all things "are". This attribute, viz. existence, which all things possess fascinated them. To elucidate the notion of Being, it is necessary for us to walk along the labyrinthine ways through which the Greeks have passed already before us.

4.1.1. The Dynamism of Greek Notions

A Greek word itself is a path. It is a path opening to the Greek world. The Greek notions are born out of an experiential relation with Being, and listening to the words one can definitely get into a clear stream of thought. It is the language which speaks primordially because the power and agency of a word lie within the word. These words are the products of dynamic articulation, and they are well-springs of meaning. Through the audible Greek word, we are directly in the presence of the thing itself, not first in the presence of a mere word-sign, which is usually the case. Heidegger's emphasis is more on the possibility of an experiential relation with Being rather than a definition of Being in the text-book fashion. His aim is not to give an answer to the question of Being, but to respond meaningfully to it. By response Heidegger means a dynamic
reciprocity, a vital echo or a 'responsion' in the liturgical sense of participatory engagement. Greek terms are endowed with this rare dynamism and Heidegger explores the maximum what they can manifest from their hidden context laden with tradition.

4.1.2. The Unthought in the Greek Tradition

The pre-Socratic thinkers experienced Being not as the totality of what is (ta ontai), but they had an awareness of the Being (einaï) of all that is. They enquired into the Being of entities, but not about the particular entities. Being (eon, on), therefore, revealed to them as constant presence (Anwesenheit). It has to be noted that the enquiry was primarily directed to the Being of entities, and not to Being as such. The early Greek thinkers failed to make explicit, says Heidegger, the sense of Being already implicit in their enquiry. It is this failure that finally led to the oblivion of Being and the later development of metaphysics which culminates in the thought of Nietzsche. Heidegger goes against this tradition which failed to understand the fundamental difference that exists between Being and beings.
4.1.3. The Re-awakening of Greek Experience

Heidegger elucidates the Greek experience of Being with great enthusiasm. There are two objectives behind it. First, he wants to traverse back to the original and profound experience which the Greeks had. Second, he wants to reawaken the lost meaning of Being by going beyond what the Greeks have experienced, precisely in the sense of making explicit the meaning of Being in a primordial way. In his conversation with the Japanese thinker Kuki, Heidegger points out that the task before us is "to think what the Greeks have thought in an even more Greek manner." But he immediately adds that the intention is not to understand the Greeks better than they have understood themselves. For, he holds the view that for a proper understanding of great thinking one has to consider it within the limits set for it by various conditions. It means that there is no chance for grasping the Greek experience in a more profound way than it had been for the Greeks. But it is, of course, possible for us "to pursue more originally what the Greeks have thought." This attempt to understand the Greek experience "in the source of its reality" refers to the fact that the procedure in view
is in its own way Greek and it at the same time is no longer Greek in respect of what it sees.

4.1.4. Logos

The Greek word *logos* carries an original meaning and also a derivative meaning. The primary meaning of *logos* reveals two aspects of the Being-process, viz. collecting and collectedness. *Logos*, therefore, refers to collecting collectedness where it functions as a primal gathering principle and at the same time which maintains a bond within itself so that what is gathered and brought together may not disperse haphazardly. According to Heidegger *logos* is "the original collecting collectedness which is in itself permanently dominant."

In the derivative sense *logos* means discourse or speech. This is only a variant of its original meaning as a gathering principle. The derivative meaning became prevalent only in the post-Socratic period. Thus, *logos* means word or discourse. The deterioration of meaning took place in the hands of Plato and Aristotle for the first time. *Logos*, which originally stands in no direct relation to language thus came to mean discourse and speaking.
4.1.4.1. Logos as the Gathering Principle

The Latin equivalent for *logos* is *legere*.; It carries the same meaning of the German word *lesen*. The expression *lesen* or *legere* means to arrange or gather things together in a systematic way. To get into this significant meaning some examples are helpful. The German expression *Ahren lesen* means to glean; *Holz lesen* means to gather wood; *Die Weinlese* means vintage. What is performed in all these cases is not a random association of particulars; on the contrary, they are collected under certain specifications and order. It is an act of picking up things in a selective way. The gleaning at the harvest season gathers fruits from the soil. The gathering of the vintage involves picking grapes from the vine. The process of picking and gleaning, of course, is followed by the bringing together the fruit.

The expression *legein* originally meant "to put one thing with another, to bring together, in short, to gather." *Legein* means to lay down and lay before. It also conveys the meaning of bringing together. Here a genuine question arises: What is that which lies in *legein* as laying? To lay means to bring to lie. It is an
arrangement of one thing beside another, and consequently they lay together. To this gathering belongs a collecting which brings together the things under a shelter. The gathering never permits particular things to lose their identity, but each one is marked off from the other within the sphere of collectedness.

Heidegger chooses the word *Sammlung* to mean collectedness. It opens up two aspects of the Being-process: collecting and collectedness. The process of gathering sets what is gathered appear as itself. It means that it is in the realm of gathering that both *logos* and that which the *logos* reveals appears. It is a misconception to hold that *logos* is the gathered or the collected out of already manifested elements. The gathering process is neither prior nor subsequent to that which appears "as a result of" this process.

As mentioned above, the gathering referred to here is not mere amassing of things. The gathering belongs to a collecting which has, as its end in view, a sheltering. What makes the gathering more than a random association is not 'something extra' added afterward. Preservation and safe keeping are two accompanying features of the gathering. The
sheltering comes first in the essential formation of the vintage, and never a succeeding phenomenon. Formulated in our interrogative form, one can ask: "What would become of a vintage (eine lese) which has not been gathered with an eye to the fundamental matter of its being sheltered?"

Sheltering necessarily accompanies the process of vintage. The gathering, when viewed from the perspective of sheltering, requires a selection (Anlese) at the very start of the vintage. The crops show themselves as to-be-selected (Erlesene) and the sorting takes place on the basis of it. This sorting or the fore-gathering (Vor-lese) plays an important role in the vintage. The fore-gathering, says Heidegger,

determines the selection, arranging everything involved in the bringing together, the bringing under shelter, and the accommodation of the vintage.

4.1.4.2. The Uncomprehension of Logos

Among the early Greek thinkers, Heraclitus stands prominent in explicating the meaning of logos. From the Fragments one can grasp three distinguishing features of logos. They are:

1. Permanence and endurance are the essential characteristics of the logos.
2. Logos is the togetherness in the essent, the togetherness of all essents that which gathers.

3. Everything that happens, i.e. that comes into being, stands there in accordance with the permanent togetherness, for logos is the dominant power.

However, commenting on the response we give to logos, Heraclitus remarks that we very often fail to comprehend logos. "In confronting the logos, men are uncomprehending (axynetoi)." We fail to bring together logos or that which is permanently together. The flow in the comprehension of logos created a havoc in the later development of philosophy. The negligence deprived us of the essential meaning of logos. Consequently, logos turned out to be speech or discourse. Reprehending our concern to logos, Heidegger says:

Men have hearing, they hear words, but in this hearing, they cannot 'heed,' i.e. follow what is not audiable like words, what is not a discourse, a speaking, but indeed the logos.

A casual hearing lacks the essential features of logos, viz. togetherness and collectedness. Unless we heed to logos, it may get scattered and diffused in the tide of what is commonly believed. Those who resort to live in the realm of hearsay or doxa, is being categorized by Heraclitus as
the uncomprehending (*axynetoι*). Their interests are purely ephemeral and for them hearing is listening to and assembling rumours. Comprehending or true hearing has nothing to do with ear and mouth, but it means "to follow the *logos* and what it is, namely the collectedness of the essent in itself."

What are the main factors that prevent us from a genuine comprehension of *logos*? Two reasons can be brought forward immediately. First, we hesitate to follow *logos* and we remain concerned with the events around us and get estranged from the essential nature of the phenomenon. Unless there is a deliberate attempt to reach out, breaking the barriers of the unprofound, it is impossible to be the followers (*Horige*) of *logos*. The one who refuses to follow *logos* is excluded from the milieu of *logos* from the very beginning, irrespective of the fact that he has heard with his ears or not yet heard. The proximity to *logos* consists precisely in our readiness to heed *logos* or listening to what is unheard of in words and discourse.

Another important factor that prevents us from a correct understanding of *logos* is opinionatedness (*Eigensinn*). It is a form of obstinacy that prevents one from
reaching out to what is gathered together in itself and be the followers of logos. The opinionated person prefers to remain within the frontiers of the world he created. His opinion is biased, and for him proper hearing is an impossibility. Also, he lives amidst essents, but remains unaware of Being. The lack of vision prevents him from being aware of the intrinsic unity that Being possesses. Being is xynon or collected presence. It is not a heap or cumulation of parts, but an original unity that brings together all that tends apart. Xynon is not a universal principle that has no bearing on parts. On the other hand, it collects all things together and holds them together. Here, the opinionated person marks himself off from others in a definite way. For the opinionated life and death, motion and rest are antagonistic principles which can never coexist. He fails to grasp the true meaning of logos as gathered togetherness where two opposing principles may coexist harmoniously. "The conflict of the opposites is a gathering rooted in togetherness, it is logos." Heidegger interprets Heraclitus' Fragment 53, to point out that logos and polemos (primordial strife) are the same.

If a 'primordial strife' is maintained within logos, it is a misconception to consider logos as a static
order. This misconception is evident when Aristotle speaks about the 'order' of necessary connections and when Hegel discusses an 'order' of the system of thought movement of subjectivity 'ordering itself to itself'. Logos itself assembles only to the extent that there is a strife or 'setting-apart' which is never brought to the elimination of conflict. The conflict is an intense mobility which always drives the other to the self-assertion of its essence. The strife maintained within logos must be kept in contention, for a genuine conflict takes place only as long as the strife prevails. A piece of work of art has unity only by virtue of a gathering that keeps the polemically emerging world in contention. When this strife comes to a standstill "world turns away, Being retreats from being."

4.1.5. Physis

The explication of logos as the gathering principle brings in only an aspect of Being. Another implication of logos emerges only when it is interpreted as the permeating power that unites the opposites and at the same time maintains the full sharpness of the tension prevailing between them. It means that logos and physis are closely associated with each other; they together contribute to shed light on our encounter with Being.
The Greek term 'physis' is derived from the root phuo, which means to emerge, to be powerful, of itself to come to stand and remain standing. It is a self-blossoming emergence as it happens in the case of a flower. It is an opening up, unfolding of, that which manifests itself in such unfolding and preserves and endures in it. In other words, it refers to the realm which emerges and lingers on. The term 'emergence', in the present context, does not refer to any quantitative increase; on the contrary, it is a process of uncovering which is familiar to all in their everyday life. Physis is the realm opened up or manifested in cases like the rolling of the sea, the growth of plants, the coming forth of man and animal from the womb.

4.1.5.1. The Creative Occurrence

Heidegger uses the German word 'Anwesen' (presenting) to translate the Greek term physis. The Greek eon also is translated as Anwesen. The justification for translating two Greek expressions into the same German word is to bring home the point that Being revealed itself as Physis to the early Greeks. Moreover, the translation of
physis into presenting is intended to express the 'creative' occurrence or the poiesis of physis. While using the term 'presenting', Heidegger has in mind the original sense of physis as creative occurrence. For the early Greeks, the occurrence of Being was not the prevailing of thought; on the contrary, it indicated the way in which the overpowering powers of nature prevail, like the domination of the burgeoning, nurturing, and towering earth.

If physis, is the realm of that which arises, then the accompanying phenomenon of uncovering or unconcealedness is nothing other than the manifestation of Being. The primal Greek experience of physis as emergence can be observed in everything that has secured a place in the Greek world. It means that physis encompasses all phenomena and in no way refers to a determinate region of manifestation in opposition to another; rather it is the realm of disclosedness of Being.

The Greek experience of physis was not born exclusively from the natural phenomena. The emergence was mainly due to a fundamental poetic and intellectual experience of Being. Therefore, the world opened up as well as the process of arising, of emerging from the hidden, is
referred to by physis. Simultaneously, it brings out explicitly the unity that prevails in between the process of unfolding and that which is unfolded in the process. This line of thought helped the early Greek thinkers to view the world of appearance in its fundamental unity.

4.1.5.2. The Struggle as the Essence of Physis

The unity of appearance that is pointed out above is not to be considered as a calm and simple one. There is an inner struggle underlying the multiplicity of appearances, competing to find a place in the world of appearance. The conflictual unity, therefore, gives rise to a primordial ambiguity, wherein we have both the process of coming into unconcealment and that which comes to be present in this process. The nature of the struggle or conflict, essential to physis, is to be seen in detail.

Heraclitus uses the term eris to name the struggle or conflict that constitutes the very essence of physis. The Heraclitean eris and the Heideggerian notion of origin are not static principles; rather they are live and dynamic. This struggle is not a strive that exists between two opposing principles. On the contrary, it is the struggle
itself that first lets that which is to come to exist. The struggle is originary and takes place prior to any occurrence divine or mundane. In other words, the struggle is not a conflict or war in the ordinary sense. It is not an assault on something already there. The contenders of the struggle comes into existence only through the original conflict. "It is this conflict that first projects and develops what had hither to been unheard of, unsaid and unthought."

Heraclitus conceives eris not as a split which may destroy unity and harmony, but that which causes things to separate themselves into opposites and at the same time united essentially in the realm of Being. It is the struggle that gives rise to position, order, and rank among essents. Thus, it is an event of the emergence of cleavages, intervals, and distances in Being. Heraclitus observes:

Conflict is for all (that is present) the creator that causes to emerge, but (also) for all the dominent preserver. For it makes some to appear as gods; others as men; it creates (shows) some as slaves, others as freemen.

This struggle is insurmountable. Any attempt in this regard is futile. For it belongs to the essence of the struggle to foil any attempt to surmount it. Moreover, the original struggle enjoys a priority, becuase the apparently
opposing principles come into existence only as the result of struggle and not before the struggle. This is a unique instance where the unity of logos and physis is exhibited openly. Logos as the principle of selective gathering and collecting lets opposites to remain as they are and at the same time holds them together within the realm of Being. The struggle remains as the locus of all that appears, and, needless to say, physis ever remains as the power behind it. Thus, logos provides a unified locus for all that appears and, therefore, we say logos and physis are essentially related.

"In the conflict a world comes into being." In this world rest and motion, life and death, are opened up in their original unity. The power accomplishes itself as a world bringing in differences among essents. Heraclitus, therefore, speaks of the Greek experience of Being where life and death are viewed from a perspective of unity and the latter as being inherent in the former ever since it came into existence. The phenomenon of death lies at the very core of life. "Everything that enters into life also begins to die, to go toward its death, and death is at the same time life." The original meaning of logos emerges in

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such a conception of life. The same idea can be seen reflected in the Greek conception of art, where beauty is a product of restraint rather than that which reposes and relaxes. For them, art is the disclosure of the Being of the essent.

4.1.5.3. The Mystery of Physis

The harmony that prevails in Being is not generated by compromise or a mere avoidance of tension. The possible harmony in Being is a mystery. The intricacies of Being remains a mystery and therefore not accessible to ordinary mortals. But the mystery of Being is gradually unravelled by poets, thinkers, and statesman who are engaged in an incessant effort to create new things. The work of art places a barrier in the world of chaos and the world thus opened up is being captured by their work. It is in these works the elemental power, the physis, first comes to stand, and whereby an essent becomes an essent. The eris does a double function: first, the conflict gives rise to essents and second, the conflict preserves the essent in its state of existence.

In the absence of this conflict the essent will not be an essent. The essents may degenerate into the
status of a datum. The datum is something already given with its natural limits. Moreover, the essent is deprived of the world generally associated with it. The essent from which the world has been taken away can be called an object. The overall consequences of the emergence of such a situation is so drastic that

the original emergence and standing of energies, the phainesthai, or appearance in the great sense of epiphany, becomes a visibility of things that are already there and can be pointed out.

4.1.6. Aletheia

The explication of logos and physis led Heidegger to certain valid conclusions which contributed positively to the development of his thought. The primordial ambiguity of physis bestowed a unique insight to Heidegger. The Heraclitean statement, "Physis likes to hide," (physis Kryptesthai philei) accelerated the line of thought of Heidegger and convinced him that there is a mystery circumscribing the manifestation of Being. The original ambiguity which Heraclitus refers to in the context of physis has much in common with the Heideggerian understanding of origin as a circular struggle of
concealment and unconcealment. The disclosure is never total; and there is an element of concealment in each and every instance of unconcealment. There is a primordial tendency to hide and never to open up fully. This phenomenon of partial disclosure is discussed in the context of the Greek notion of aletheia.

4.1.6.1. The Event of Unconcealment

The most incisive and the revolutionary moment in the development of human race, according to Heidegger, is the asking of the question. What is all that is? The question provoked the minds of thinkers and it resulted in the releasing of all that exists from their concealment. In a special sense history and civilization began with it. Till then all things including human beings were embedded in a long-lasting mystery. The question served as a tool to release them from the initial and long-lasting state of concealment that shrouded the things from unconcealment (aletheia).

Being is not a mere presence; it is the interplay of absence and presence, of concealedness and unconcealedness. The Greek term 'aletheia' refers to the
process of coming forth from hiddenness. Being, therefore, can be viewed as an occurrence. It is an occurrence where events enter into unconcealedness (aletheia). It further gives the meaning that essents are brought to light from hiddenness because the aletheiac-process preserves a unique and essential relation with physis and, as mentioned earlier, that which is brought to light belongs essentially to physis.

An adequate reference to the profound meaning implied in the notion of aletheia can be found in the Fragments of Parmenides. But here aletheia is describing the Greek epoch of presence as unconcealment. In this sense which is phenomenal, the meaning is restricted to the unconcealment prior to any objectification.

Heidegger uses the term 'aletheia' in a radical sense. It is no more a Greek word and the experience is not what the Greeks had. For Heidegger aletheia is the granting of the epochs of presence including that of the early Greek epoch. Aletheia is not a quality of the Greek experience; rather it is the granting of every epoch of presence. It is to show this significant meaning of granting that the term aletheia is some times hyphanated.
By this the nominal unity of the term is broken up, and it helps to take away the association with a particular epoch and its language.

Heidegger considers the 'realm of darkness' and the 'domain of light' as belonging to the occurrence of Being. There is a continuing strife between these two realms and every occurrence of presence is delivered from this original strife. The strife makes every occurrence creative and makes the process dynamic. Since truth occurs in unconcealedness, untruth also belongs to original truth, that is to say, to the disclosure of Dasein. It means that concealment is not a privation, but only deprives aletheia from disclosure. The unconcealment of any particular being necessarily presupposes concealment, which remains as a ground for things to emerge.

4.1.6.2. Truth as Disclosedness

Two works of Heidegger are of primary importance to understand his notion of truth. The Section 44 of Being and Time discusses the notion of Dasein, disclosedness, and truth and shows that disclosedness is essentially related to Dasein. Heidegger's lecture "On the Essence of Truth" is an
advancement of this earlier conception of truth, and the Greek term *aletheia* as a synonym of truth comes into the forefront.

Truth, as traditionally understood, consists in the conformity between judgement and that which is judged. However, in the province of truth one does speak about logical truth and ontological truth, even though the ultimate reference is to the same. Both, in essence, presume that the measure of truth is the conformity between the intellect and the thing. In the former case, the intellect conforms to the thing and in the latter the thing conforms to the intellect. Heidegger accepts the validity of the correspondence theory of truth, despite its innumerable difficulties, but goes a little deep pointing out that the conformity about which we speak is possible only in the primordial disclosedness of Being. Thus, for Heidegger the traditional view of truth as *adequatio* is not sufficient.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger makes a query, by raising the question, "When does truth become a phenomenon in the making of epistemic claims?" He answers it by saying that it happens when an epistemic claim is shown to be true.
It implies that the correspondence about which philosophers speak can be clearly understood only in the wake of the verification of our epistemic claims. However, Heidegger says that verification can be understood in a way other than that of the correspondence between a mental representation and the object given to perception. Here, he draws our attention to the fact that the statement which is given for verification does not speak anything about the mental substitute for the external object. What is given for verification is only a statement about the object. The object as such is never brought to the foreground. Verification is concerned with a statement which speaks about an object which is already given and is presenting itself on its own right. The statement, in short, is derivative in character. To be more precise, perception presents only the object which the perceiver had already in mind and in a subsequent statement he is able to speak about the conformity to this object which is already present in its own right. It becomes evident here that verification as such can never bring forth an object which it lacked previously. This leads Heidegger to conclude that verification is possible only if the statement refers to an already revealed phenomenon. Truth lies not in the
conformity, but in the uncovering of an entity as it really is. In other words, Being is primarity in truth. Entities are true only in a secondary fashion.

What does it mean to say that truth is Being-uncovering, or to bring forth what is hidden? Truth as uncovering can be understood in two different senses. First, to make a statement, the entity which is referred to in the statement must be uncovered. The very possibility of verification arises only within such a context. In the second sense the notion of Being-uncovering can be understood only as verified statements are eligible to be viewed as uncovering and thus to be true.

4.1.6.3. Truth and the Open Region

In Being and Time Heidegger remarks:

Being true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Dasein. What makes this very uncovering possible must necessarily be called true, in a still more primordial sense.

Here, the uncovering refers to the entity in the absence of which there is no possibility for making a statement. This uncovering is referred to as "a mode of Being of Dasein". For, it is Dasein that is the witness to this manifestation
of truth, which is fundamental, and thus forms the ground of all further investigation and assertion.

However, Heidegger noticed at the same time a third element that always remained unnoticed and unexplored in addition to Dasein and the given. This element is the open region which is necessary for the possibility of knowing something by Dasein. This open region, viz. Being, prepares the ground for the object to be known. If this is conceded, says Heidegger, the essence of truth must be this condition which is primordial or more original than any assertion. In other words, Heidegger's interest is not in the truth of assertions, but in that which makes possible our assertions true. Taking a clue from the fact that our assertions have got an intelligible referent, Heidegger points out that it refers to the previous intelligibility of them, even before we make truth claims. There needs to be an origional disclosure in the absence of which no assertion is possible. Thus, all assertions, whether they are true or false, refer to a world of things already disclosed.

Since the correctness or truth of the statement thus becomes possible only in the openness of Being, it is
conceived as the essence of truth. Here, essence is understood as the ground for the possibility of what is initially and generally admitted as known. Therefore, in "On the Essence of Truth", Heidegger writes thus:

> A statement is invested with its correctness by the openness of comportment, for only through the latter can what is opened up really become the standard for the presentative correspondence.

However, truth as unconcealedness is not quite alien to western thought. In the early Greek period, especially in the pre-Socratic period, this open region was conceived as 

\[ \text{ta aletheia} \]

which means disclosedness or unconcealedness. There are certain reasons for Heidegger to give emphasis to the notion of truth in his later writings. The reason is explicitly stated in "On the Essence of Truth" where he says that, in the history of western philosophy, we experienced truth only as "what is present" which is named as 'a being' and never went beyond it, and hence the open region where Being discloses itself, was never taken into the forefront. Moreover, the openness of Being is generally considered as given like an ordinary perceptible object and its intelligibility being constituted by our reason or \text{lumen naturale}. It is Heidegger's aim to bring
to notice that intelligibility presupposes an openness and it is precisely this openness which serves as the source of meaning for all our experience.

4.2.0. Back to the Ground of Metaphysics

The western metaphysical tradition begins in the early Greek period. The intellectual awe resulting from the radiance of the vision of Being can be explicitly seen in the thoughts of philosophers belonging to this period. They were seized by the marvel of Being which expressed itself as Physis, logos, and aletheia.

The state of affairs, however, radically changed in the post-Socratic period. Thinking which was attuned to Being gave way to philosophy in the sense that representational thinking got mastery over Being. Analytic rational approach took its lead in the western mind on account of which Being fell into oblivion and essents became primary. As a result, the question to be dealt with is no more the truth of Being, but being qua being; and this trend, from the Heideggerian point of view, continued till Nietzsche.
4.2.1. The Forgetfulness of Being

The inauguration of the representational thinking was formalized in the thoughts of Plato. Being, which had been experienced by the Greek forerunners as *aletheia* has been transformed into idea. Reason (*ratio*) emerged as the defining principle and a basic category. It resulted in considering Being as an idea (*eidos*) in the Platonic thought or as *energia* in the Aristotelian philosophy. Plato found a secure place for Being of essents in the world of ideas, where Being was transformed into the status of an ideal essence. Aristotle, in a similar line, transformed Being to the most universal, self-evident, and indeterminate concept.

This forgetfulness of Being continued its march through the middle ages to the modern period and reached its culmination in the writings of Nietzsche. The meaning of Being underwent a serious erosion in the thoughts of the representatives of these traditions. Being is now viewed as the most universal and empty of all concepts. The question of the meaning of Being, therefore, appeared as superfluous, and this led to its complete neglect. What the early Greek thinkers experienced as hidden and mysterious is
manifested in complete clarity and self-evidence. Thus, the oblivion or the foregetfulness of Being is the result of the emergence of representational thinking.

4.2.2. The Destruction of the History of Ontology

The question about the sense of Being must be revised again because it is unthought in the metaphysical thinking. It must be raised again from the essential grounds in which it is rooted. This is the task of ontology from the Heideggerian point of view. The question of the meaning of Being enjoys 'ontological priority' only in this significant sense. Ontology is not viewed in the traditional sense, it is a new name for the question of the truth of Being. Ontology aims at an a priori condition for the possibility of all sciences which investigate a being as such-and-such and therefore moves within an understanding of Being.

The fundamental ontology of Heidegger goes a step ahead when the question of Being aims at the condition for the possibility of the ontologies which precede and ground the ontical sciences. Therefore, if ontology as the question about the Being of beings does not question the
ground upon which it stands, it no more can be designated as 'fundamental'; on the contrary, it may remain 'naive and opaque', and may reverse its ownmost intentions.

Heidegger's ontology is fundamental for it asks the question of the meaning or the truth of Being. But Heidegger has got some reservations in the use of the term ontology, because it is a traditional doctrine which asks being as the most universal concept. Ontology thus became a branch of philosophy which developed the traditional doctrine of essents into a particular discipline. Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and others are inheritors of this tradition and, according to Heidegger, they failed to ask the primordial question of the meaning of Being.

Heidegger uses the term ontology in the broadest sense possible without reference to the traditional ontological directions and tendencies. In this sense ontology signifies the endeavour to make Being manifest itself, and to do so by way of the question, "How does it stand with Being?" However, Heidegger prefers to do away with the terms 'ontology' and 'ontological' because its significant meaning is already eroded.
The destruction of the history of ontology becomes a necessity, for it rests on the forgetfulness of the sense of Being or Being as truth. It is Heidegger's mission to reawaken the quest after the meaning of Being. The meaning of Being, which has fallen into oblivion, must be brought back to the centre of attention. The need to destroy the accomplishments of ontology for a clearer vision of Being, therefore, occupies the central concern of Heidegger's thought. Metaphysicians often assert that they are investigating the nature of Being. But the final outcome always falls short of the goal. Consequently, till now the confusion prevailed in the distinction between Das Sein and Das Seiendes.

Though Heidegger categorically asserts the need for a fundamental ontology which can bring back the radical comprehension of Being, it does not mean that the entire previous history of ontology is false and to be rejected totally. His aim is to eradicate the fundamental deficiency crept into it, and thereby to reawaken the quest for the sense of Being or to put differently, to interrogate Being as truth-process.
Heidegger's contention that the history of western metaphysics has been a record of the forgetfulness of Being should not be taken as a case of intellectual arrogance. Heidegger resorts to the view that forgetfulness is caused not by a failure of intelligence on the part of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel or Kant. Nor was it an oversight from the point of these great thinkers to think of Being in its difference. It is the strong contention of Heidegger that the cause for the forgetfulness of Being must be sought first of all in the very essence of Being itself, which reveals itself and at the same time conceals itself. Hence, forgetfulness has to be ascribed to Being-history itself as an event.

The Greek origin of Being was great, for it revealed itself in overpowering richness. "Its beginning is in fact the greatest thing of all." The later happening is only a flattening that results from mere spreading out or its inability to retain the beginning. It is ultimately due to the fact that in its revelation Being conceals itself. Being as aletheia is simultaneous revelation and concealment. The authentic thought in which Being is grasped is a happening of Being. Here, Being reveals itself to thought which is expressed in language.
It is the destiny of metaphysics, in one sense, that its own ground must elude it. It is again due to the very nature of truth as aletheia. If Being is an emergence into unconcealment and a withdrawal into concealment, the very conception of thought must begin with a forgetfulness of Being. It amounts to saying that, even in the pre-Socratic period, Being is not comprehended in its full richness and profundity.

Heidegger's main concern is not to find out the reason for forgetfulness of Being, but the reasons for the failure to grasp the difference between Being and beings. The central theme of Heidegger's thought is to bring to light the ontological difference and thereby the primordial experience once remained proximal. For Heidegger it is a task which demands effort:

By taking the question of Being as our clue, we are to destroy the traditional context of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experience in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being.

What is attempted here, in short, is to glimpse into what is concealed and remains covered in the conceptual freezing of metaphysics. The foregoing elucidation of the Heideggerian
thoughts are primarily intended to show that his concern is solely directed to the hermeneutical process by which Being can be brought to light. Moreover, it shows that Being and Time in the soil out of which the later thoughts are germinated and grown in shape. The next chapter provides a clear account of the problem of Kehre from two different perspectives and shows that thinking is not the manipulation of what has already been brought into disclosure, but as disclosing what has hitherto been concealed.