Heidegger's Transcendental Ontology: A Philosophical Reflection on \textit{Dasein} (Being) and Human Existentiality

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Abstract  
Classical Greek ontology (metaphysics) maintains a rigid view of Being as the only reality there is. It further regards man basically as an object with a fixed nature that is susceptible to scientific investigation. Though these thoughts dominated the ancient Greeks' orientation just as it is doing to the contemporary European and American worlds, Heidegger strongly objects these misconceptions by purging them from his metaphysics. He argues that the confusion about Being is eminent due to the neglect of man as the necessary being. This paper therefore, is an assessment of Heidegger's attempt to free man from the freeze of traditional metaphysics. It espouses Heidegger's radicalization of the human being's intrinsic potentials and capabilities to further advance the self and knowledge as a conscious being that necessarily exists. \textit{Dasein} or man is primarily, a self-making or meaning-making being and not a foreclosed entity. \textbf{Key Words:} Transcendental, Ontology, \textit{Dasein}, Being, Human and Existentiality

Introduction  
The position by Parmenides that there can be nothing else besides Being i.e. Being is the only thing there is (Taran, 190), as contained in his poem On Nature launched a very significant landmark in ancient Greek thought. But it is not just the ancient Greeks that became entangled in this Parmenidean thinking. Indeed, the whole of contemporary Western scholarship, civilization and worldview at large, are all premised on this Parmenidean metaphysical view. Parmenides is acclaimed to be the father of metaphysics in the history of Western philosophy due to his pioneering quest to unravel the nature of Being. Now, what is Being? Sequel to approaching this perennial question, the paper shall consider the nature and meaning of metaphysics as field of study preoccupied with the study of Being.  
The term metaphysics is an invention of Andronicus of Rhodes who edited the manuscripts of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy or physics. He derived the term from the Greek words “ta meta ta physika biblia” meaning the books which came after the
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physics. Subsequently, the books became known as The Metaphysics while its subject-matter was referred to as metaphysics (Wolff, 373 - 374). Thus, etymologically metaphysics means going beyond or transcending sensual perception. It deals with things that transcend physics or things of nature. That is why Aristotle submits that: ‘metaphysics is first philosophy; it is a study of being qua being. It is the science that investigates the first principles and causes. It studies God as the highest being; a being that is both unchanging and independently existing (theology)’ (Munitz, 42 - 43). Metaphysics as a branch of philosophy and indeed philosophy itself is not tied down strictly to the Aristotelian conception. Indeed, metaphysics is not a straight-jacketed, narrow and restricted discipline or field of gnoseology. It is an encompassing discipline embracing issues of broad scope and significance with telling implications on virtually every aspect of philosophy. It is in this respect that metaphysics is engrossed with fundamental questions such as: Why is there something instead of nothing? What sorts of things exists? What is reality? What is Being? Is there an ultimate Being? What are the categories of classifying things? Are objects of knowledge real or ideas in the mind? Who is man? Is he a moral or immoral being? Does he have a soul? If he has, does the soul outlive him? Has the soul pre-existed? Is the soul made up of matter or spirit? Is man free or determined? How does man know his environment or know anything at all? What is space and time? Can a thing exist out of space and time? Is there void? What is mind? What is the relationship between mind and body? Is the mind the brain and vice versa? Who is God? Does God exist? Is God the ultimate creator? Is God omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscience and infinite? Is God benevolent? What about the universe; is it created or it evolved together with everything in it? Is the universe eternal or terminal? What is death? Why should there be death? Is death the final bus stop for entities? Is death an evil? What is evil? Etc. These few questions and very many more are considered in metaphysics and philosophy in general.

Specifically, the questions relating to the being or existence of entities and Being itself are dealt with under a sub-area of metaphysics known as ontology. Cosmogony considers issues or theories that bother on the origin and the universal principles or laws regarding the universe i.e., whether it was created or it evolved. Through cosmology, matters referring to the structure or nature and purpose of the universe and existence are examined. Broadly, the questions posed above also engage the attention of epistemologists and moral philosophers especially as regards how man makes metaphysical knowledge claims about what he discusses and what he claims to know (be it those directly relating to gnoseology or morality). But by and large, metaphysics is in a way, a theory of knowledge which is preoccupied with an aspect of reality of knowledge. It is largely on the account of the preceding understanding of metaphysics that it is regarded as the core or fundamental area of philosophy and knowledge at large. And given the background of the above fundamental questions, the subject-matter of metaphysics is as physical and practical as any other discipline. It is therefore, erroneous to conceive metaphysics simply as a discipline that holds sway in abstract concepts. Nevertheless, it is founded upon that which conceals
itself from empirical observation. It is based on this thinking that Alexus Meinong conceives metaphysics as; 'dealing with everything thinkable, whether or not it actually exists, whether reasonable or absurd: it is concerned with the totality of the objects of knowledge' (Bunge, 3). In what appears to be an all embracive definition, Alfred North Whitehead defines metaphysics as; 'the endeavour to frame a coherent, logically necessary, system of generating ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted' (36). This conception of metaphysics reiterates the point that all disciplines at the level of ideas are metaphysical. They commence with some basic axioms or suppositions which may not be verifiable. In this wise, the entirety of the human quest for knowledge is reducible to metaphysics. This view granted, even science in its pure sense (and even pseudo-sciences) is metaphysical in character. Besides, the vocation to debunk or extinguish metaphysics as a discipline that it is nonsensical also terminates in metaphysics. Metaphysics is thus an inevitable enterprise in man's quest to know the really real and what is certain.

In view of this understanding, it is therefore, unambiguous how Parmenides employs the concept of Being as a logically necessary system of generating ideas to which particular human experience (in this case, ontology) can be interpreted. By this idea of Being, Parmenides is saying that 'all that exists is Being'. That is, non-Being does not exist. It is impossible for it to be or exist. Non-Being can neither be known nor be thought of. It is only what exists that can be known. What is not cannot be known nor can it be said. That which can be known or said is the only thing that exists and that is Being. On this view as such, Parmenides differs from the Sceptics only in degree. He contends that it is only one thing that can be known - Being. Parmenides further states that; 'that which exists, whatever it may be is ungenerated and imperishable, homogenous and continuous, unmovable and unchangeable, complete and therefore, the only thing there is' (Taran, 192). To Parmenidean metaphysics therefore, non-Being is inconceivable since thinking must be about what necessarily exists. Consequently, the question of Being became a very beautiful bride freely attracting metaphysical enquiries from thinkers in order to contribute to the understanding of its meaning.

However, right from the time of the inception or advent of Being in the pre-Socratic era of Greek thought to the era of Frederick Nietzsche in the history of Western philosophy in the late 19th century, it has always been conceived as necessary and continuous. From this perspective, Being is regarded as the only thing that exists outside of which there is nothing else. In other words, the traditional conception presents Being as a thing that has revealed or manifested all its attributes and aspects and thus conceals nothing to cognition. Thus, it is the only reality and indeed, it is homogeneous. In this wise, there are no hidden or uncovered aspects of this reality to be made manifest.

Martin Heidegger in a reaction to this disposition points out that from its beginning to its completion; the propositions of metaphysics have been strangely involved in a persistent confusion of beings and Being (211c). William James appears to share this
thinking when he says; the question of being is the darkest in all philosophy, all of us are beggars here, no one school can speak disdainfully of another or give superior airs (46). Be that as it may, it is the characterization of Being that makes it meaningful or otherwise. Characteristically, the Parmenidean Being implies that it is the only one and absolute Being; infinite, constant and indivisible thing that exists. In this wise, there can never be any Being besides or outside it. This, to the thinking of Parmenides, is because it is not possible to think about what does not exist. By this contention Parmenides is arguing that man or the human mind lacks the capacity to transcend its physical and immediate state that is, to reflect on its latent but dormant capacities or powers lying within him/it to generate meanings in his/its existence as an independent and existing entity. Obviously this is a calculated attempt by Parmenides to gag or muzzle human thought. If there is Being, then, necessarily the mind can think of non-Being as its opposite. Thus, according to Jim Unah whenever we think, even if what we think is about nothing, we unwittingly turn it into something (31b). It therefore means nothing is something.

**Being and Pure Being: An Overview**

Now back to the earlier question. But firstly, what are beings? (Plural). And secondly, what is Being or pure Being or Being itself? Rather than go straight into defining what is being (singular) it is safer to begin with a description. What informed this thinking is not far-fetched. Tomas Alvira, et al posit that in order to define being, one needs a more general concept within which being can be included; however, no such concept exists, simply because being encompasses all reality (7). Descriptively therefore, being could be taken as something which exists in reality or is conceived in reality. In other words, to say 'being is', is to imply “that which is”, “that which exists” or “that which is real” and even that which is thought of. As a derivation from the verb “to be” which refers to the act of being (esse) in Latin, it means that which exists as a being must have an essence or quidity which distinguishes it from other beings. For instance, man, dog, book, car, etc are all beings and yet, each of these beings has its own essence. It should be noted that implicit in the idea of being are two fundamental compositions: a subject and a predicate. For instance, a 'dog is barking' is a proposition that has a subject and a predicate made meaningful by the verb 'is' as its copula. The subject here is 'dog' while is 'barking' is the predicate which is at the same time an act. The act amounts to the quidity of the dog. However, the dual components are intrinsic and thus, constitute the fundamental unity of the being of a dog. The mere reference to being (ens) also implies the act of being (esse). This is because being refers to a thing that necessarily exists in reality and has quidity. The essences constitute a distinction between existing beings. Essences are the necessary features that make a particular being or entity what it is or the attributes a particular being lacks that clearly distinguishes it from the other being(s). For instance, the quidity of a dog is to bark while that of a sheep is to bleat. But additionally, they all have other essences other than the ones mentioned.
Now, what does it mean by Being or 'pure Being' or 'Being itself' in the words of Parmenides? The honest confession here, first of all, is that Being is a very hard nut to crack. It is thus, no wonder that a lot of 'mystification' trails the concept of Being or pure Being right from its inception in the history of Western philosophy. As earlier stated, Being as such is investigated by a special branch of metaphysics known as ontology. In other words, ontology is the study of Being, the ultimate Reality. Ontology is the custodian of knowledge about Being which is made manifest in the process of investigating it. Sidney Hook writing on the validity of ontology in the sphere of Being, says it is a systematic discipline which rests upon the contention that it gives knowledge about something or everything which is not communicated by any particular science or all of the sciences (147). Ontology therefore, is regarded as the sole authority that reveals Being as being. Its approach to the issue of the analyses of Being is both rational and phenomenal. Thus, the pre-occupation of ontology with Being is an epistemological exercise. It aims at clearly stating the true or authentic meaning of Being. It is important to note that other disciplines treat aspects or appearances of being relating to being (ens) and not Being itself – the whole of being. The search for the really real or true being in specific entities like 'idea', 'matter' and 'from' or 'will', 'subjectivity', 'minds' and 'God', etc informed the background to the problem of Being. However, Unah says; all these are beings or aspects of Being (8b). He stresses that;

the practice of magnifying an aspect of reality as the totality of reality, the practice of expanding and insisting that it is the whole of being or being itself is what has created confusion in the house of Being. An aspect of Being is a fragment of being or moment of Being, not the whole of Being. The disciplines which treat aspects of Being are dealing with beings and not Being itself (8-9b).

However, this pre-occupation with beings has been misconstrued as dealing with Being in itself or pure Being. 'Being qua being' as postulated by Aristotle has a very clear distinction. It is rather what is means for what is, to be (Unah, 6b). It thus means that it is different from what is or being (ens) or what exist. Being is a process which makes it possible for something to be. It is not an entity (being) with quidity as one would have a man or a dog. The problem with Being, is, as Hook observes, is generated by illogical fission of so many other characteristics in the treatises of ontology … because it has been surreptitiously endowed with the properties of mind (149). Indeed, this has been the classical metaphysical (mis)conception of Being by Parmenides. In its features, it manifests as one and the only absolute Being; infinite, constant and indivisible thing that exists or there is. In this wise, there can never be any Being beside or outside it. This, to the thinking of Parmenides is because it is not possible to conceive what does not exist. Differently put, Being manifests itself in totality as such there is nothing left hidden which could be exposed or revealed. Whatever is, if at all there is anything else, cannot be known save
Being that is already known. Surely, there are series of implications from this rather rigid and inelastic conception of Being as a thing with quidity. Firstly and unavoidably, the traditional ontological conception of Being does not regard Being as the truth of cognition and that propositions regarding being or reality could be understood in the derivative sense. Secondly, the denial of change or becoming that is, the position that Being is and non-being is not, undermines the possibility of non-Being becoming Being. This view runs contrary to man's insatiable quest for knowledge. Man's thoughts cannot be caged except if one wants to deliberately shield his/her thoughts. In other words, the human mind has the elastic capability to develop fresh ideas different from what has been previously known. That is to say, it is possible for the human mind to uncover new realities or entities which is usually a process of phenomenological philosophy. Thirdly and more so, the objection to 'becoming' or 'change' basically provokes a multiplicity of not only beings antagonistic of one another but indeed, destructive of other principles or systems before it. The classical Western metaphysical studies of Being have brought about dogmatism, fixism and the freezing of human thoughts. In a reaction to this attitude, Unah observes that it has instituted a culture of contests and conquests which engenders the attitude of dominance, impositionalism and imperialism (9b). It is this same hegemonic attitude or the attitude of superiority by the West and America that informs the preaching of the phenomenon of globalization and its tacit imposition on nations around the world particularly Africa. It is this same very thinking that ostracized humanity from the people of Africa which led to the introduction of colonialism and the so-called civilization missions in Africa. It is exactly from these lenses that the Arab world and non-Europeans are being perceived by countries of the Northern Hemisphere. Thus, largely influenced by the foregoing classical metaphysical thinking, thought is rigidly structured or streamlined in a particular pattern such that anything that does not conforms with or gives cognizance to the existing system is denied recognition or acceptability as being objective. Rather, such is simply referred to as a subjective thought. A good example here would be the indigenous African philosophy which was denied existence by Western scholars and standard until logically superior writings by Afrocentric scholars laid the 'great debate' to rest lately.

Suffice it to say that though the quest for Being did not impede the tempo of the search for certainty in knowledge, it however crystallized into what Unah describes as vengeanceful metaphysical system (9b). As a matter of emphasis, it is the temperament of Being is and non-Being is not, which held sway in the ancient Greek that still finds expression in the modern European and American thought and the quest for knowledge despite the eclipse on the enquiry into the meaning of Being. Other philosophical exigencies especially the robust story of science and technology has overtaken the pursuit of enquiries about Being. However, this is not to say that Being has been abandoned in its entirety. Indeed, it was the classical Parmenidean thesis on Being that set the tone for Heidegger's critique of traditional metaphysics in the 20th century.
Heidegger's *Dasein*, the Human Mind and Its Potentials

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) even though not of the anti-metaphysical movement, made no pretences about his disenchantment with traditional metaphysics (ontology) and thus carried the tag of its critic. However, he falls short of being classified among the group that advocates for the total annihilation of metaphysics as was initiated by a British empiricist philosopher, David Hume and subsequently championed by the logical positivists. Heidegger opines that the problem of Being could be better articulated and presented. He says the traditional or classical approach to the problem of beings as Being which isolates man from being examined as a Being preoccupied with being is unrewarding (89c). Heidegger argues that the neglect of the human being that desires to know being turns out to be the obstacle to the meaning of Being. In other words, the preoccupation of traditional ontology is with the beings of beings, that is, beings broadly and not the Being of Being in which case is a concern with a particular being (89c). As a result, Heidegger sets out to reconstruct, revive and revision the problem of Being in order to give it a proper background to investigate its meaning. He made a clarion call directing the attention of thinkers of the contemporary era to rejuvenate the enquiry about Being as initiated by Parmenides. Heidegger declares in book - Being and Time:

Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'Being'. Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise a new the question of the meaning of being. But we are nowadays even more perplexed at our inability to understand the expression 'Being'. Not at all, so first of all, we must re-awaken an understanding for the meaning of the question. Our aim is to work out the question of the meaning of Being and to do so concretely (1b).

No doubt, Heidegger in his critique of classical metaphysics nurses a very tall ambition and he did everything within his intellectual capability to work out the meaning of Being. Categorically, Heidegger admits that there is no such thing as an empty word; at most a word is worn out, though still filled with meaning. The name “being” retains its appellative force (79a). However, he falls short of advancing the meaning of Being so concretely. Rather, Heidegger articulates several meanings from his interpretation of Being. He says the “Being” uttered in “is” means: Really present, permanently there, takes place, come from, belongs to, is made of, stays, succumbs to stands, has entered upon, and has appeared (91a). He defends the multifarious submissions, arguing that it remains difficult perhaps impossible to pick out a common meaning as a universal generic concept since Being is not an entity. The point to note is that unlike the conception elsewhere, Heideggerian Being is not an empty abstraction, it only lacks specificity hence the varied meanings. However, in a summation of these entries, William Barret maintains that Being in Heidegger is something in which all of us are immersed up to our necks, and indeed our heads... Being is the most concrete and closest of presences; literally the concern of every
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man (190). To this Unah adds that Being is the element, the process, the enveloping background, the soil on which we move, live and have being. Man is therefore related to Being as one is related to a vivifying absence (63a). And this, Unah stresses, constitutes the proper understanding of Being and consequently, the authentic orientation of Being. In other words, man is unconsciously in Being as a process with the possibility or potentials of discovering meanings and values. Man as such in this new context as advanced by Heidegger is understood as a multidimensional being that is bound to continually create and recreate the self. Man is not static as it is advanced in the traditional Greek ontology – 'being is and non-being is not'.

Now, clearly from this background therefore, the task of this essay is to examine and evaluate Heidegger's deconstruction of the ancient metaphysics (ontology) in order to restore some measure of human dignity to man as a being that has the capability and capacity of employing his thinking mind to advance knowledge and meaning. The following questions and other related ones shall constitute the basis of this essay. How was Heidegger able to attain the re-awakening of the understanding of the meaning of the question of Being? What makes his approach to the fundamental question about Being different? How much has his approach advanced the quest for Being?

Heidegger's Understanding of Being (Dasein)

Apart from a few attempts like the maxims: “man know thy self”, inscribed on the entrance of the temple of Apollo, (the Oracle of Delphin intended to define the relationship of man's self-knowledge to the gods), Socrates employed this in the sense of 'self-examination' while Protagoras saw this as 'man being the measure…'. Beside these passing mention of man, man in the ancient Greek thought was least adopted as a subject of investigation. Describing this consequential abandonment of man, Unah says:

The Greeks preferred to focus, primarily and mainly on nature, on the external world of objective reality. The result has been enthronement of a tradition … that callously forgets what it is means to be, in such a way that man has a total misrelation of himself to himself, of himself to others and of himself to things (143b).

It is precisely this relegation of man in the scheme of Being that Heidegger saw as a snag in the pursuit of the subject-matter of Being. Thus, he adopts this scenario as a point of departure from the static traditional or classical metaphysics. Patently, this marked a significant landmark regarding the enquiry about 'Being'. As Nicholas Berdyaev rightly observes:

Curiously enough, when men stopped philosophizing about themselves, they stopped talking metaphysics, too. Thought became more real than reality, systems and categories than things. Man… lost the power of
knowing real being… lost access to reality and (was) reduced to studying knowledge. One cannot arrive at being – one can only start with it (Harper, 12).

Accordingly, to overcome the thinking which turned ontology into an academic classification and branch of the philosophical system, Heidegger insists that the way out of the problem of Being is to examine the being that makes enquiry about Being. Consequently he maintains that if the question about Being is to be explicitly formulated and carried through in such a manner as to be completely transparent to itself, then … we must first give a proper explication of an entity (Dasein), with regards to its Being (26-27b). By insisting on demystifying Dasein as a Being that is conscious of its existence, Heidegger distinguishes himself in the ontological approach to the question of Being. He is obviously different from the classical conception which conceived Being as an entity. More so, the conception of Dasein (man) apart from its self-consciousness is a self-projecting Being that is aware of its presence or being-in-the world. Now, what is Dasein?

Dasein, an everyday German word, means 'existence'. However, in its technical application by Heidegger, it designates 'human reality', 'human being' or, 'human existence'. Broken down into two parts: 'Da' and Sein' means 'there' and 'being', respectively. Literally translated to English, it means “being-there”, “there being” or “to-be-there”. Being or Dasein as 'human being' as such is uniquely presented in Heidegger as having three priorities.

(1) Ontical priority: Dasein is an entity whose Being has the determinate character of existence.

(2) Ontological priority: Dasein is in itself 'ontological'. That is, its existence is necessary and primordial. Again, it is aware (conscious) of its existence as well as the understanding that there is a Being of all entities different from its own.

(3) Ontico-Ontological priority: It is a condition for the possibility of other ontologies (34b).

Conclusively, Heidegger avers that since the interpretation of the meaning of Being is the issue in question, Dasein beyond the primary entity to be interrogated, is an entity which comports itself in its Being towards the question of Being (35b). He stresses this saying that the question of Being is nothing other than the radicalization of the essential tendency-of-Being which belongs to Dasein itself – the pre-ontological understanding of Being (35b). Essentially, what Heidegger is able to disclose from the three priorities or the features of Dasein is that Dasein is a Being which understands itself in its being-there. It is a conscious Being that is conscious of its consciousness. Being conscious of its Being, it is also conscious or aware of its existence (Existenz) and thus, always comports itself. Dasein never overlooks the consciousness of its existence, to be, or being-there. It remains aware of the-self's possibilities. The Being Dasein is a being with other beings in its environment. Dasein is a meaning-making and conscious Being and it is a necessity because it exists. To
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Heidegger, for instance, God is but he does not exist, mountains are but they do not exist, trees are but they do not exist, etc because they are of a fixed nature (89a). *Dasein* or man lacks any fixed nature. It is like what Battista Mondin would say: an impossible possibility. *Dasein* is simply a Being with a reservoir of possibilities till he/it submits to death which is a facticity of its being. It/he simply exists and it is the only existence, it/he therefore lacks a permanent definition. It/he has the potency to transcend its prevailing state. Consequently, he/it can invoke or bring forth new meanings and ideas that can transform or revolutionize the entire world. Such marks the real being of *Dasein*.

**Human Existentiality**

Heidegger relegates the anthropological conception of man to the background. He undermines the classical anthropological conception on the basis that it failed to provide the true meaning of man. He maintains that unlike traditional ontology which studies Being in general, ontology of man or metaphysics of man, philosophy of man is concerned with the totality of all that it takes to exist as a human being. This thinking as such, embraces very broad features or characteristics of human existence. Human existence in Heidegger accordingly, could be seen as fleeting or likened to a mirage. When one thinks he/she has grasped human reality or existence, one only finds out it has been illusory. Why this is so is because man is a being 'condemned' to permanent self-determination and self-transformation, etc. Based on this, Heidegger argues that it is rather an exercise in futility to try to define man based on a fixed nature or essence. As far as he is concerned, such an endeavour will only amount to a total misrepresentation of the true mode of human being. Man is basically an insatiable being. At every point in time he is trying to redefine the self. He is a bunch of limitless possibilities to be actualized until death. Thus, man generically cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand as a thing or object that is already a saturated product to be subsequently subjected to empirical observation and manipulations. According to Heidegger, it is only through existence that *Dasein* determines its/his character as a self-projecting being, a transcending being and existentiality, it/he knows or becomes aware that Being in a world is something that belongs essentially (33b). In other words, *Dasein* could be seen as a Being advancing towards man such that it can reveal itself. Thus, *Dasein* unlike the things that are, is conscious of its environment or historical existence (presence to the world) that is, being-in-the world and being-with-others and very importantly, *Dasein* as a Being without a static or fixed essence. To put it conversely, it/he is a dynamic entity.

What is implied in the human existence of *Dasein* is that, it is a bundle of limitless or infinite aspirations and possibilities to create and recreate meanings. Thus, man can project into or transcend “a there” which is beyond the “here” to disclose or unravel hidden reality. Man or *Dasein* has the reflective power or capacity to transcend his 'lived-world' (what is) to the world-to-be-lived' (what ought to be) as a meaning-making being. By the way, the mental capacity and possibility to transcend the phenomena into the noumena,
makes it obviously a futile exercise to begin to annihilate metaphysics. However, what is important to note here is that unlike the classical Greek ontological conception of man which is ultimately narrow, Heidegger enlarges the scope of Dasein. Heidegger's Dasein (man) or human being (though he earlier de-emphasized the static anthropological conception of man) is subjected to three basic ontological truths: facticity, fallenness and existentiality. In other words, these ontological truths are 'givens'. They confer potentialities and possibilities and at the same time the limiting capacity of man for self-fulfillment or actualization. Now, what precisely are these ontological truths or 'factual givens'?

(1) FACTICITY: Facticity to Heidegger and generally under the existentialists' philosophy is a reality that man is not consulted to make a choice whether to be given birth to or not, whether to be male or female, black or white, tall or short, Idoma or Tiv, intelligent or indolent, Muslim or Christian, Palestinian or Jew, etc. Man is simply 'thrown into existence in the world among people and things'. Earlier, it has been noted that man is a fountain of possibilities however; these potentials are limited by man's facticity. For instance, man's future projections are finite as they are limited by the facticity of death. Other limitations include ill health and inevitable natural disasters which are unforeseen or even when foreseen man stands helpless before them. To live a life that is authentic, Heidegger advises that since man is limited by the conditions of human existence which are the already givens, man is better off when he accepts that existence is always factical (230b). That is, man has to accept the fact that he has no choice but to live with certain situations as they are instead of being overwhelmed with anxiety on how to change them. However, man is not to allow his existence to be overtaken by the 'factual givens'. Man must consciously embark on measures to subdue human facticity and dominate them for his own good. For instance, the facticity of the brevity of human life does not prevent one from making future projections or transcending his immediate environment to come out with breath-taking inventions for the advancement of humanity. Anyone with such potentials who refuses to employ them to better the lot of mankind is regarded by his action as an act of “bad faith”. Man in spite of his finitude cannot refuse to create meanings and values which constitute the sum total of history. The history of man's past is very important because his present and later undertakings depend on it.

(2) FALLENNESS: Intertwined with the facticity of human existence is the fallenness of humanity. Man has the tendency in him to be overwhelmed by the phenomenon of death, and other natural occurrences and even individual limitations such as his size, the hue or the skin colour, height and sex, etc. Having enveloped himself in these and many other givens, these factual givens very often dominate the consciousness of man thereby causing his disillusionment. Thus, man becomes fallen when he freely surrenders to the facticity of human existence. By such giving-up, man gets carried away to the extent that he accepts his
'factual givens', as an excuse for his prevailing situation. This disposition makes man to consider himself a foreclosed entity, a closed chapter without anything else to contribute to human history. Being so attuned to the daily distractions, man becomes largely influenced by them and subconsciously, undermines his potentials to advance to a superior mode of being. The point Heidegger is making is that it is futile to begin to get so engrossed in anxiety over things or situations one cannot change or improve. If, for instance, I covet the office of the Vice Chancellor of my institution (now, year 2016) without attaining the professorial cadre and more so, as the serving Vice Chancellor is yet to complete his term of five years, is an indication that I must be living in a world of fantasy. This is precisely what Heidegger refers to as inauthenticity of man. This mind-set of desiring to be what may not be possible in a particular situation at a particular time is expressed in man's fallenness (219-224b). It is of importance for man to live above inauthenticity to live a genuine life. It is by such a life style that he attains the superior mode of existence. Where distractions and fantasies rule an individual's life, such a fellow lives perpetually an inauthentic existence or life.

(3) EXISTENTIALITY: Clearly, this is the most fundamental dynamic trait of human reality. Yes, Dasein (man) is enveloped by the facticity of his existence which constitutes a brute fact of his history and prevailing concrete situation. Again, in his fallenness, man is preoccupied with inauthentic existence very often manifested in the distractions of everyday life. However, in spite of these ontological challenges, Heidegger vehemently states by his conception of 'Da Sein', that man has intrinsic and inherent capability to overthrow the conditions of his facticity and fallenness. By existentiality, Heidegger maintains that it represents man's “possibility” and “necessity” to become whatever he may want to be (32b). It could also be seen as the inherent capacity in man to be what he is not and to transform his limitations (facticity) to actualities or possibilities within a spatio-temporal reality.

Existentiality more so, confers on man, the power to continuously transcend his immediate state or situation by way of proffering solutions and answers to challenges. Existentiality as such is a dynamic concept and full of praxis in human situation. It constantly serves as a reminder that the human mind has the potency for creativity of any kind in spite of its temporality dictated by time and space. Indeed, as an ontological attribute of Dasein, existentiality remains the strongest asset and resource. It could be likened to man's armoury and power house in which he relies on for self-defense to continue to exist in a bid to continue to give life a meaning, self-fulfillment and actualization. Existentiality, unlike facticity and fallness which express man's finitude, it is concerned with the future of man and his goals which are attainable through the possibilities inherent in him. Unah, writing on Heidegger's philosophy, maintains that Heidegger regards human existence as an inexhaustible reservoir of meanings (57a). By a careful and critical reflection using his mental faculties, man is able to uncover his latent
and unexplored powers which he exploits in making meaning for himself and the rest of mankind generally.

Conclusion

The paper demonstrated that by Heidegger's critique of classical metaphysics, he was able to show that the attribution of essences to Being which is not an entity, marked the curtain raiser concerning Being. By insisting on the interrogation of the being of man as a being that is conscious of itself and asks questions about being became a turning point concerning enquiries about being. This conception aimed at reawakening the consciousness of man to continue to manifest or reveal his true self. As an existential-phenomenologist, Heidegger remained unwavering in this task. His ontology, metaphysics and philosophy of man more than a description of human reality, is a critique which disclosed man's potentialities and possibilities and how the limitations in the way of man can be pulled down to attain these goals.

Again, contrary to the classical ontological conception of man as a being that has a fixed nature or essence, the paper appropriating Heideggerian liberal ontology disproved the Parmenidean thinking arguing that Dasein as a being driving towards self-actualization is devoid of a permanent or fixated nature. It showed that human being or human reality is an endless stream of untapped and unexploited possibilities waiting to be uncovered and made manifest. The paper maintained a very firm conviction that human existence like a virgin territory, consists of possibilities which man can discover. The potentials to realize the possibilities are borne out of man's existentiality. It is thus very commonsensical to conclude that Heideggerian accounts of Dasein, Being or man are much more practical, realistic and present man as an open possibility.
Works Cited