

## INTRODUCTION

In the history of western philosophy, Metaphysics holds a central character. The study of metaphysics can clearly be seen in the writings of the philosophers from early Greek era to modern era. However, it is true that the thinkers often shares very different view concerning the nature of metaphysics. Philosophers have disagreed vastly about the nature of metaphysics. That's why it is not easy to say what metaphysics is. If someone looks into the works in metaphysics, he/ she may find quite different characterizations of the discipline. Philosophers have been doing metaphysics for more than 2000 years; and the results of their efforts have been accounts with a wide variety of subject matters and approaches. But the difficulty of identifying a unique subject matter for metaphysics is not easily traceable in the long history of the discipline. The word —metaphysics” is derived from a collective title of the fourteen books of Aristotle. Aristotle himself never called the treatise by the name; the name was given by the latter thinkers'. Aristotle called the treatise as “first philosophy’. Aristotle also tells us that it is the science that studies “being qua being’. Metaphysics as “the study of being qua being’ is a universal science, that considers all the objects that there are. Metaphysics examines

the properties that constitute the subject matter for the other sciences. In this thesis I do not use the term metaphysics in its traditional sense that metaphysics is the theory of what lies beyond nature, rather have done in the Aristotelian sense. In the long history of metaphysics, there are many opponents of metaphysics who question the possibility of metaphysics. Following Immanuel Kant we can say that –there was a time when metaphysics was called the queen of all the sciences, and if the will were taken for the deed, the exceeding importance of her subject matter might well have secured for her this title of honour. At present, it is the fashion to despise metaphysics. Many opponents of metaphysics have declared that the doctrine of metaphysics is false, since it contradicts our empirical knowledge. Others have believed it to be uncertain on the ground that it transcends the limits of human knowledge. Many anti-metaphysicians have declared that occupation with metaphysical questions is sterile. They think that there is no purpose of studying metaphysics. My main objective is to develop a critical view regarding the possibility of metaphysics as a discipline. In order to accomplish the said objective the thesis is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter of this thesis is concerned with the origin of metaphysics in which we shall try to analyze the notion of metaphysics from early Greek philosopher's point of view and mostly from Aristotelian point of view. The

early Greek philosophers or the pre-Socratic philosophers indeed did metaphysics. In their metaphysical discourse they have tried to explore the nature of first cause. Aristotle equates metaphysics with philosophy. For Aristotle, philosophy as a separate discipline is engaged in the search for the primary causes and principles of the common aspects of the world. For him, metaphysics was ‘first philosophy’. In his accounts of ‘first philosophy’, it is the study of causes of principles of ‘being qua being’. The question ‘what is being?’ is the foundation of Aristotelian definition of metaphysics. But it is true that in his writings we find different characterisations of the task of metaphysics. For Aristotle metaphysics is the theory of the highest being as well as theory of being as such.

In the second chapter of this thesis, we have tried to describe philosopher’s quest for a universal metaphysics. Philosophers who think that metaphysics is the essence of philosophy are never in agreement with each-other regarding any metaphysical theory. The rationalist like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz searched for a universal metaphysics which will be accepted for all but they failed in this project. The empiricist Hume tried to pave the path for true metaphysics but ended in scepticism.

The third chapter of this thesis deals with the question regarding the possibility of metaphysics from Kantian point of view. The usual interpretation of Kant is that he completely rejects metaphysics. If it is true then how could Kant writes the *Metaphysics of Morals* or the *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Sciences*, had he totally rejected metaphysics in every form. But through a careful reading one can see that Kant only rejects certain points of view and some of methods of metaphysics, like he rejects proofs for the existence of God oriented on mathematical methods. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant holds quite positive attitude regarding the nature of metaphysics as he announces that metaphysics is not possible as a science but as a natural disposition and hence we cannot ignore metaphysical questions. So, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant gives a great importance into the metaphysical problems.

Again in the fourth chapter of this thesis we deal with the problem regarding the possibility of metaphysics from logical positivist's point of view. The impossibility of metaphysics has also been shown by logical positivist. They gave primary importance on the principle of verification. For them, any proposition is meaningful if it is verifiable by sense perception. Metaphysical propositions are not verifiable through sense perception because this type of proposition deals with metaphysical entities which are beyond sense perception. So, metaphysics is meaningless.

In the fifth chapter of the thesis, we have tried to show that, in spite of all the efforts to demonstrate metaphysics as a meaningless, it continues to occupy much space in the minds of Philosophers. In this chapter we have tried to analysed the existentialist's view especially Heidegger's view concerning the nature of metaphysics. We have tried to show how metaphysics enjoys the central place in his philosophy. Heidegger did metaphysics in the name of exploring the nature of being. For Heidegger, ontology is the other name of metaphysics.

The sixth chapter consists of the main findings of the thesis. In this chapter we have re-examined the question \_whether metaphysic is dead or not?‘ In other words, it can be said that, \_whether the significance of metaphysics gets lost from the philosophical discourses?‘ As for now it can be said that if metaphysics deals with the conditions and questions which make human life more meaningful then its significance is never lost.