

Dwelling as the Ontological Condition for Designing

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Abstract

In the essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger takes us from the ordinary and shallow interpretation of dwelling as inhabiting in a building to a more profound understanding of dwelling as *sparing and preserving*. Recognising dwelling as *sparing and preserving* emphasises the primacy of involvement and caring for the world we are existentially rooted in. The notions of dwelling and building provide a useful framework for understanding and critiquing design activity. The paper claims that dwelling is made possible through designing the world and at the same time dwelling is the ontological condition for designing. A Heideggerian understanding of dwelling requires deconstructing our taken for granted concepts and activities, such as, building, thing, place, etc. Heideggerian questioning shows us the way.

Keywords: Dwelling, Building, Design, Fourfold, Thing, Place, Space, Architecture, Ocularcentrism, Applied Heidegger

Introduction

Dwelling is an essential mode of human being-in-the-world. In the essay *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger takes us from the ordinary and shallow interpretation of dwelling as inhabiting in a building to a more profound understanding of dwelling as human making place in the world.⁴⁰ Heidegger makes it clear from the beginning of his text in which direction he wants to take his reader: “This venture in thought does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction; rather it traces building back into the domain

⁴⁰ Building, Dwelling, Thinking was a lecture given by Heidegger's on August 5, 1951, on the occasion of the second Darmstädter Gespräch. The chosen theme that year was “man and space.” The preamble read: “Building is a fundamental activity of man – Man builds, by joining spatial figures, thus shaping space – Building, he responds to the spirit of the age – Our age is the age of technology – The plight of our age is homelessness” (Harries, 2009, p.11-18 & Bartning, 1952).

to which everything that is belongs.”⁴¹ His interest is not to provide any architectural ideas about how to build but certain fundamental principles about building itself. He invites the readers into a new realm of thinking where things are no longer understood as everyday objects standing alone and world is no more collection of entities. A thing, rather, is a site for a gathering of the fourfold and the world is more than the planet earth.

The meaning of dwelling in this paper is presented as an immersion into ones living environment as well as the possibility of responsibly reaching beyond what is present. It becomes an activity of opening up places and thereby shaping and creating possibilities of *dasein* and other beings. Thus, the act of dwelling, the paper points out, is not an abstract endeavor, but has to be accomplished in our concrete relationship with things through the guardianship of the fourfold. Then, dwelling become imperative for being-in-the-world and a guideline for design.

Dwelling as Sparing and Preserving

Heidegger digs into the etymological origin of the word *dwelling* to bring out the true nature of dwelling. Comas in-between “Building Dwelling Thinking” are avoided with a purpose to stress the essential continuity of building, dwelling, and thinking. He goes to the roots of language and traces the etymological proximity of the words for *being*, *building*, and *dwelling*: *bauen* - to build, connects with *buon* - to dwell, and with *bin*, *bist*, the words for “be”.⁴² Heidegger writes, “the way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *buon*, dwelling. That is, to be a human being implies to be on the earth as a mortal, to do the *building* that belongs to dwelling.”⁴³ He sums up the relation between the two: “Building is really dwelling’, and ‘dwelling is

⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking”, in *Basic Writings*, ed. D.F. Krell, (London: Routledge, 1993), p.347.

⁴² Martin Heidegger, “Introduction” in *Poetry Language Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (Trans.), (NewYork: Harper Perennial, 2001), xiii-xiv & Heidegger, 1993, p.348-350.

⁴³ Heidegger, 1993, p.349.

the manner in which mortals are on the earth.”⁴⁴ Dwelling is the way humans are, how humans are on the earth. It is not taken as just one kind of activity that humans perform along with many other activities – just like “we practice a profession, we do business, we travel and find shelter on the way, now here, now there.”⁴⁵ Often building is taken as a house where we live in, though, certain buildings are not designed to live in, but to hang around or a transit place, like motels, parks, airports, malls, highways, workshops, companies, etc. In a fundamental sense, all these buildings are a place of dwelling, but Heidegger points out that human “inhabits them (these buildings) and yet does not dwell in them, if to dwell means solely to have our lodgings in them.”⁴⁶

The core of dwelling, Heidegger argues, is *sparing and preserving*. Sparing and preserving is caring for the world where we are *in*.⁴⁷ It is care-taking the *house* in which human beings dwell. In this *house*, human beings are not alone but in an inseparable company with the earth, sky, divinities and the other human beings which Heidegger calls the *fourfold*.⁴⁸ How are we to interpret the fourfold? If we take the four items in the fourfold in the ontic sense, then we will have to explain why they are chosen when there are better candidates than these. Heidegger, as Kockelmans points out, presented these four images in the ontological sense to emphasize the gathering nature of the things.⁴⁹ To be a mortal implies to be in a web of relationship within which mortal finds himself. Our various modes of existence within the fourfold is guided by a set of relationships which Heidegger name as divine. Young comments that divine is best expressed in our cultural heritage that provides the basis for a critical assessment of our

⁴⁴ Heidegger, 2001, p. 146.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, 1993, p. 349.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, 1993, p.348.

⁴⁷ Sparing and preserving is used in the sense of caring, let beings be, safeguarding, staying withthings. Refer Heidegger, 1993, pp.351-353.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, 1993, p. 351.

⁴⁹ Joseph J. Kockelmans, *On the Truth of Being: Reflections on Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 95.

practices. Awaiting the divinities is an existential feature of humans.⁵⁰ The self-concealing dimension of beings with their potentiality to express and relate in manifold ways is referred to as the earth. Sky and earth are read together in the *Origin of the Work of Art*. The disclosing of earth is always subjected to greater forces of nature which are brought under sky. His old farmhouse in the Black Forest, the bridge, the wine jug are some examples he cites to show how things gather the fourfold – how sky, earth and divinities brought together into oneness through the guardianship of mortals. Eco Philosophers interpret the caring of the fourfold as “concern for land, things, creatures, and people as they are and as they can become.”⁵¹ The fourfold is a necessary condition of our being and people interpret it differently as they try to concretize it. Every interpretation, however, points to the indivisible relation as the nature of beings.

Caring for has the meaning of being creative and freeing aspect of *dasein* which is opposed to the attitude of *Gestell*.⁵² Heidegger would call it somewhere else “lets beings be”.⁵³ In the everyday sense, *letting be* means to forgo something which was already planned. This has the negative sense of renouncing, indifference or neglect. *Let beings be* is used here not in the above sense but *to engage oneself with beings*. It is not even understood in the sense of mere “management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings”. “*To let beings be* means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself”.⁵⁴ *To let beings be* in the sense of sparing and preserving is dwelling. We let beings be by safeguarding the fourfold (*Geviert*) of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. Heidegger writes, “mortals are in the fourfold

⁵⁰ Heidegger, 2001, p.148 & Julian Young, *Heidegger's Later Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.96-97.

⁵¹ Michael F. Zimmerman, “Toward a Heideggerian Ethos for Radical Environmentalism.” *Environmental Ethics* 5, no.2 (1983): pp.99-131,149.

⁵² Young, 2002, p.64.

⁵³ Heidegger, 1993, p.125.

⁵⁴ Heidegger, 1993, p.125.

by dwelling. But the basic character of dwelling is safeguarding. Mortals dwell in the way they safeguard the fourfold in its essential unfolding”.⁵⁵ The act of safeguarding the fourfold is by saving the earth, receiving the sky, awaiting divinities, and initiating mortals.⁵⁶

If dwelling is the safeguarding of the fourfold, how do mortals make their dwelling? Heidegger says,

*Mortals would never be capable of it if dwelling were merely a staying on earth under the sky, before the divinities, among mortals. Rather, dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things.*⁵⁷

In Heidegger’s view, *staying with things* is accomplished when mortals “nurse and nurture the things that grow, and specially construct the things that do not grow” in an appropriate manner. Heidegger calls the nursing and nurturing of organic things and the construction of artificial things *building*.⁵⁸ In most of the essay, however, Heidegger limits his discussion on building with the construction of *bridge* as built thing and not as cultivating things.⁵⁹

So the act of dwelling, Heidegger insists, is not an abstract endeavor, but has to be accomplished in our concrete relationship with things through the guardianship of fourfold.

He writes, “staying with things is the only way in which the fourfold stay within the fourfold is accomplished at any time in simple unity.”⁶⁰ If building is the means by which mortals stay with things, a “staying” that is concomitant with the act of dwelling itself, then, dwelling and building are imperatives of Being-in-the-world. As Heidegger would

⁵⁵ Heidegger, 1993, p.352.

⁵⁶ Heidegger calls *ecstatic dwelling* as guardianship of Being (Heidegger, 1993, p.246) or human as “shepherd of Being” Heidegger, 1993, p.234, 245 & 353.

⁵⁷ Heidegger, 1993, p.353.

⁵⁸ Heidegger, 1993, p.353.

⁵⁹ Wendell Kisner points out that Heidegger’s later thinking considers that the distinction of natural and artificial things is not a guiding fact for any discussion on ontological of things.

⁶⁰ Heidegger, 1993, p.353.

say: “*Dwelling*, in as much as it keeps the fourfold in things is, as this keeping, a *building*.”⁶¹ In other words, Heidegger considers building is the way in which human beings dwell on earth as mortals. The real dwelling happens when we build things that would preserve the unity of the fourfold. Dwelling is accomplished only when the things we build creates places for the *presencing* the fourfold into things.

Dwelling Endangered

Heidegger thinks that our ability to build and dwell is endangered in the modern times due to a lack of *thinking*. By lack of thinking, what he meant is not having enough attention to the primordial nature of things as a site for gathering and too much preoccupied with things as quantifiable objects to be controlled and dominated. Heidegger questions the particular version of *building* and *dwelling* that has come about in modern times which ignore the ontological dimensions of both. In a world view that is dominated by *gestell*, building is reduced to mere engineering and construction. Building becomes an act of “calculation, technical production and assembly of *buildings*.”⁶² The problem of dwelling has been replaced by dwellings – “inhabitable, functional shelter.”⁶³ Modern times, Heidegger says, is the *plight of dwelling* by which he did not mean any housing shortage. In fact, “the proper plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars with their destruction,...The proper dwelling plight lies in this that mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling that they *must ever learn to dwell*.”⁶⁴ Heidegger seems to be suggesting that dwelling is much more than dwellings and the issue of dwelling is much closer to our being than any technical issue of housing problem.

So the real problem lies in the fact that human does not know how to

⁶¹ Heidegger, 1993, p.353.

⁶² Gunter Dittmar, “Architecture as Building and Dwelling: Design as Ontological Act,” *ArchitecturalTheory* /wolke/eng/Subjects/982/Dittmar/dittmar_t.html, retrieved on August 20, 2018.

⁶³ Dittmar, 1998.

⁶⁴ Heidegger, 1993, p. 363.

dwell, which is the existential core of our being-in-the-world. As a result, buildings are seen only as a place to inhabit while the real sense of building falls into oblivion. As Christine Kenline puts it “beings now only see buildings only as a place of arrival and departure.”⁶⁵ As against the commonsensical understanding, Heidegger argues that dwelling is more primordial than building: “we do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers.”⁶⁶ To think of building as a detached activity from dwelling is to miss the very essence of building itself because, he claims, building is already a dwelling, that is, to build is already to dwell. Design practices, when expressed in modern market-logic, precludes the possibility of seeing the dwelling as interconnected and poetic way of being in the world. *Poetic* is used here not in the sense of being romantic or “aimless imagining of whimsicalities and a flight of mere notions and fancies into the realm of the unreal,” but indicate a way of being in the world that allows things to appear in their real nature.⁶⁷ The question of building cannot be considered away from dwelling. Building does belong to dwelling, but dwelling can be made concrete only through building.

Thing as Gathering

Heidegger’s logic is that *we build because we are dwellers first of all*. Forgetting how to dwell has led to many crises in our times. For Heidegger to dwell means one becomes attentive to the presencing of Being, to dwell is to stay with things, to dwell is to preserve the connectedness of fourfold, to stand out of the sway of *Gestell* where entities are regarded as ‘standing reserve’ and nurture a new way of being connected.

As opposed to the customary understanding of building as a stable

⁶⁵ Christine Kenline, “Thinking about Dwelling in Building” (Thesis PHIL530/ D501 available at http://www.academia.edu/1835913/Thinking_About_Dwelling_In_Building), 8, retrieved on July 30, 2017.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, 1993, p. 350.

⁶⁷ Heidegger, 1993, p.197.

structure with a physical space building is experienced as a neighbourhood where there is a gathering of the fourfold.⁶⁸ He explains the notion of neighbourhood with the example of two farmsteads. Two isolated farmsteads, though separated by an hour's walk across the fields, can be the best of neighbours. At the same time two urban apartments, facing each other in a flat or across the street may not be neighbours. This is because nearness in the neighbourhood is not based on spatio-temporal parameters.⁶⁹ In modern times neighbour is the one who is physically spaced at the next door but totally unconcerned of what is happening around him or her. This spatial proximity does not call for a gathering of fourfold. An authentic dweller of the neighbourhood is open to the higher realities. A neighbourhood is the assemblage of the fourfold.⁷⁰

The meaning of building as it is evolving is not limited to a physical structure constructed on particular geographical space for the purpose of some function. Such an understanding would be too simplistic. A building instead, as Heidegger writes, is a site: “The bridge is a thing; it gathers the fourfold, but in such a way that it allows a site for the fourfold. When a thing assembles a site for gathering of the fourfold it becomes a building. This is very close to what Jeff Malpas speak of place in *Heidegger's Topology* that “place is that open, cleared, yet bounded region in which we find ourselves gathered together with other persons and things, and in which we are opened up to the world and the world to us.”⁷¹ The bridge here makes place by way of becoming a site for the fourfold to gather. In other words, place is opened up when the interconnectedness of a thing, in this case the bridge, is recognized. A

⁶⁸ Heidegger calls neighbourhood the ' mirror-play ' or ' ring dance ' of the fourfold to stress upon the interconnectedness of the world. The four members of the fourfold—earth, sky, divinities, mortals— mirror each other, each in its own way. They are not separable from one another, but at the same time each implicating the others, each of its elements is related to each of the others (Heidegger, 2001, p.177).

⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, “The Nature of Language,” in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p.103.

⁷⁰ Heidegger again find link between *bauen*, to build and cultivate with the archaic form of neighbour, “the *Nachgebauer*, the near-dweller, he who dwells nearby (Heidegger, 1993, p.349).

⁷¹ Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), p.221.

bridge brings about the neighbourhood of two banks of a river and the people who live on either sides. It assembles the land along the stream but also invisible spaces to which the bridge is connected. It assembles market, churches, towns, villages, fields, wagons, highways and people who live by them and thereby creates multiple relationships. Bridge in that way preserves the local peasantry practices of the village. A bridge in this case is an assemblage which allows *humans to dwell as mortals*.⁷²

The ancient meaning of thing is itself gathering or assembly.⁷³ A thing gains its identity in a location not by standing alone but by belonging together. In the essay, *The Principle of Identity* Heidegger questions the usual understanding of *identity* as founded in its self-identity. In contrast to the notion of identity as its autonomous self-sameness a Heideggerian reader is invited to rethink the identity of a thing based in “belonging together.”⁷⁴ “Belonging together” emphasis the relational aspect of a thing’s being and therefore its identity is expressed through difference. Relationality of a thing refers to the thing’s nature as that which gathers and as itself gathered. This way of understanding the identity of a thing is not static but dynamic, constantly being worked out through differentiation and relatedness. This understanding of identity is very close to the concept of fourfold as unitary gathering of earth, sky, mortals and divinities in *Building Dwelling Thinking*. Perhaps this notion of identity will also give us lead to the much celebrated notion of *place* in later Heidegger. Heidegger makes a point that it is not the place to be considered in terms of identity but the identity need to be rethought in terms of place. The rethinking expands our conventional notions of belonging, dwelling, building, etc. Place in

⁷² Heidegger, 2001, p.150 & Vincent Vycinas, *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p.249.

⁷³ Heidegger, 1993, p.353.

⁷⁴ Martin Heidegger, “The Principle of identity,” in *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 25 & 23-41 In this essay Heidegger deconstruct the traditional metaphysical understanding of the principle of identity, and then he offers radically different notion of identity where our relationship “belonging together” as the core of the identity of every being.

this new context is no more an isolated space measurable and detachable, but belonging to a 'location', where there is constant gathering and differentiation. As Jeff Malpas writes:

To dwell is to stand in such a relation of attentiveness and responsiveness, of listening and of questioning, and this means that the question of dwelling is never a question that is ever settled or finally resolved. To dwell is to remain in a state in which what it is to dwell – and what it is to dwell here, in this place – is a question constantly put anew.⁷⁵

We usually say that we belong to a place. It is in a way of affirming our own identity. One gains this identity by being constantly engaged at that place/s though our lives. The place here is not just a physical space with certain geographical location. The same applies to a thing. Belonging togetherness of a thing in a locality is not in terms of geographical nearness and distance. A church may be objectively far in space and time for a faithful who belongs to it, while there could be many other people living near to the church who still do not belong to the locality because they do not genuinely encounter the church in their living context. Similarly a milk supply kiosk could be closer to our geographical locality but still does not belong to the same locality if the accessibility to it is limited by a one way road. The constitution of a location is based on nearness that has come about because of movements, interplays which has very little to do with geographical nearness. Heidegger writes that neighbourhood does not first create nearness but nearness brings about neighbourhood.⁷⁶

If the essential nature of a thing is belonging together it has a lot of implication on how a thing is built. In the context of neighbourhood, to build a thing does not mean to cause that thing or imposing or forcing a change according to the blue print we have in mind but being opened to

⁷⁵ Jeff Malpas, "Rethinking Dwelling: Heidegger and the Question of Place," *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology* Newsletter 25, no. 1 (2014): pp.15-23.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, 1971, p.101.

the directions of the higher realities.⁷⁷ The job of a builder is ensuring this standing under direction. To *stand under the direction of the other* means each element in the fourfold mirror each other in its own way in the confluence of the four. Vincent Vycinas points out that it is a reciprocal reflection in which each of the four appropriates itself in its own essence and becomes bound with the rest in the confluence of their togetherness.⁷⁸ Heidegger would call this appropriating processes, that is, the interplay of the foursome, the world.⁷⁹ These fourfold do not refer to static things but the dynamic way which the world comes to presence through the gathering or interconnectedness of greater realities.

The mirror play of the foursome in which all the four become what they are in their togetherness, is the procedure of the *worlding* of the world. The world's *worlding* cannot be explained by everyday notion of cause. This is because we usually think and act as if the essential nature of a thing is *standing alone* forgetting the fact that every *thing* is to be grounded in and explained by one another. Heidegger uses the verb form of *thing* to present the unsettling nature of thing: “the thing things. Thinging gathers”.⁸⁰ *Thinging* refers to the gathering and assembling nature of a thing. It is not just one of the features of the thing but it is its very being. A thing comes into existence by being directed by the other rather than forcing its presence. In this sense *Thinging* is letting the fourfold sojourn, an appropriation of the world.⁸¹ In the essays “The Thing” and “Building Dwelling Thinking” Heidegger explores the examples of wine jug, bridge and Black Forest farm house, etc., to show how they become place for local gatherings.⁸² They gather Black Forest peasantry practices that set up local worlds.

⁷⁷ Vycinas, 1969, p.266.

⁷⁸ Vycinas, 1969, p.231.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, 2001, p.177.

⁸⁰ Heidegger, 2001, p.172.

⁸¹ Heidegger, 2001, p.172 & xvii & Vycinas, 1969, p.267.

⁸² Hubert L. Dreyfus and Charles Spinosa, “Highway bridges and feasts: Heidegger and Borgmann on how to affirm technology,” *Man and World* 30, (1997): p.166.

Thus, to consider dwelling as being secure under a roof is too narrow and simplistic and far away from Heideggerian sense of dwelling. Dwelling engages plurality of places and things. It just does not limit itself to a house or a bridge in literal sense. It could be a café or a park or industry, or a road or a car or a camp. They all can turn into a site becoming a location for dwelling where there could be multiplicity of activities-*rendezvous*, enjoyment and relaxation, earning, work, business. Dwelling in this case is an emergent property when there are interplay of places that has come about because of various engagement of humans giving significance to places.

Heidegger observes that to consider dwelling as a settled question is the plight of our times: “the real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortals ever search anew for the nature of dwelling that they must ever learn to dwell”.⁸³ Gunter Dittmar puts it rightly when he observes dwelling is an ever open question:

It is a question that poses itself anew for every time period, culture and society; that we all, individually and collectively, confront and have to solve within the understanding, opportunities and available means of our time: to discover and define an identity and a place for ourselves in the world; who we are, what we are, and where we belong within the larger order of our universe?⁸⁴

The sense of dwelling here is not taking refuge in some secure and comfortable residence in which questioning has somehow been brought to an end. Dwelling in the real sense is a constant questioning of one’s own identity, belongingness.

Dwelling as the Measure of Designing

Heidegger hardly mentions the term *design*, in any of his works but his essays open the ways for new thinking in design practices. The way

⁸³ Heidegger, 2001, p.161.

⁸⁴ Dittmar, 1998.

Heidegger probes into the nature of dwelling and building, tells us that it is basically an act of design. It is the broader interpretation of building as transformation that connects it with our being in the world. By nature every human being transforms objects of nature, names them, elaborates them, uses them, makes poems and mythologies about them, and brings them forth into the realm of known. Building activity, as Zavarikhin puts it, reinforces this transformational function of human where there is a continuous “creative energy exchange between man and place necessary for life”.⁸⁵ As against the general understanding, this paper tries to present design as fundamental to being human – a primordial capacity that makes us who we are. It is one of the ontological features of human, rather than just skills that we acquire from design schools. Appropriating *dwelling* and *building* perspective implies a shift in the approach of design from *form* to *process*.

Design is a concrete way of engaging in dwelling - a way of characterizing the relation between human beings and life-worlds. Human engages in the world by designing our life- world while our world in turn shapes our future possibilities.⁸⁶ In that process it assembles things, composes materials according to the needs of various projects, and synthesizes various parts into a coherent whole. However, understanding designing only as the making of a thing or, in worst case, as a decorative act is narrow and delimiting its ontological dimensions. The act of designing is occasioning the engagement of the fourfold and its guardianship - caring- for earth, sky, gods and mortals. In every act of designing, dwelling happens when the fourfold is cared for. Dwelling is made possible through designing the world and at the same time dwelling is the condition for designing, that is, dwelling is the criteria for how to design: “only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can

⁸⁵ Svetozar, Zavarikhin “Dwelling as one Expression of Existence.” *International Journal of Architectural Theory*, 2, (1998). (epub version)

⁸⁶ Anne-Marie Willis, “Ontological Designing,” *Design Philosophy Papers* 4, no.2 (2006): p.70
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/144871306X13966268131514>.

we build.”⁸⁷ The essential relation that exists among mortals, gods, sky, earth and the caring of the fourfold becomes a measure for the designer and shows the place of designer as one among other beings.

Reflection on the dwelling challenges the anthropocentric *design-view* and open up a new project of interrelationships that are sustainable and contribute to our future. Design, in this case, is not merely algorithmic process of solving functional and spatial problems based on design theories and aesthetic principles but is inherently a hermeneutical process of engaging the forces of fourfold and disclosing the things of the world. The reason that designer should be the ‘guardians’ of the fourfold lies not out of human interest for *eco habits* and *green world*, rather that is the way we are ontologically constituted;⁸⁸ thus it becomes normative for design practice. Humans are being-in-the-world and to be in the world is to care for the *house* we are in, to dwell.

Jeff Malpas in his reflection on place reemphasizes the existential character of dwelling:

we are not “in place” only when in the throes of wonder...dwelling is the mode of human being, so human being is essentially a being in place, just as it is also a being in the world. If the relation to place is an essential one, then it is not a relation that we can ever leave without also leaving our very humanity.⁸⁹

If for Heidegger *to be is to be in the world*, Malpas claims that *to be is to be in place*.⁹⁰ Design from a dwelling perspective is *caring for*, *letting beings be*, *staying with things* and this approach works against the Cartesian dichotomy of looking at the world as an extra thing to be cognised and manipulated. Heidegger identifies dwelling with these

⁸⁷ Heidegger, 2001, p.157.

⁸⁸ Julian points out that the merit of Heidegger is that he founds ethics and the attractive eco ideas in his philosophy of Being (Young, 2002, p.121).

⁸⁹ Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012), p. 63.

⁹⁰ Malpas, 2012, p.46.

meanings which are complimentary to each other. Recognising design as *staying with the things* emphasis the primacy of involvement and caring for the world we are existentially rooted. When design is treated as *staying with the things* design process is no longer a “disembodied relation with the world....In a dwelling perspective being is always being-in-the-world, a situated, embodied and contingent process of engagement with the environment.”⁹¹

Dwelling perspective offer an interconnected view of the world in which a thing is incomplete without the other. Ingold rightly remarks, “something [...] must be wrong somewhere, if the only way to understand our own creative involvement in the world is by taking ourselves out of it.”⁹² Identity of a thing is not found in at any one place in a system but it is diffused throughout the system. Each thing has the traces of all other things. They cannot be kept out even though they are not physically there because, as Heidegger says, being is not limited to presence alone. Rapport’s description about how aborigines and Europeans see the landscape of north-west Australia would substantiate it. When the Europeans saw the Australian landscape as uniform and featureless the aborigines of the land perceived the landscape with full of meaning and differences. The latter identified the differences in terms of physical details and in terms of symbolic and invisible landscape. In this invisible landscape mythological beings, tree, stains, hole, fissure, clouds, streams, rivers have significant meaning that make the empty land with full of noticeable differences to the aborigines.⁹³ It then clearly demonstrates that dwelling is not designed by physical and geological features alone. In *Origin of Work of Art* Heidegger points out a *great art* must invite the viewer to go

⁹¹ Pau Obrador-Pons, *Companion Encyclopaedia of Geography: From Local to Global*, s.v. “Dwelling: Home as Refuge” (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.957-968.

⁹² T. Ingold, “Building, Dwelling, Living: How Animals and People Make Themselves at Home in the World,” in Marilyn Strathern, *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.58.

⁹³ Amos Rapoport, “Australian Aborigines and the Definition of Place,” *Environmental Design: Research and Practice*, ed. W.J Mitchell Vol. 1 Proceedings of the 3rd EDRA Conference (Los Angeles, 1972): 3.3.1-3.3.14. Cited in Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, (London: Pion Ltd. 1976), 15.

beyond its materiality and even beyond a mere phenomenological recalling of a world, but the greatness lies in its ability to gather places.⁹⁴ An artwork is effective only when it is able to open up manifold relations that usually remain hidden behind the physicality of the work. Similarly, authentic dwelling happens only when designing is able to extend beyond its physical structure, when it gathers places.

Dwelling is not a one-off event but is constantly being made and remade and “in so doing creates unselfconsciously patterns and structures of significance through the building of towns, villages, and houses and the making of landscapes”.⁹⁵ Relph explains that “authentically made places arise when the physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual needs of a culture are adapted to particular sites, and this can happen unselfconsciously through vernacular practices, or self-consciously through thoughtful design...” The study of anthropologist like Malinowski and Levi-Strauss on Tobriand islanders demonstrate that how spatial structure and its design was often made unconsciously to correspond with their social beliefs and practices; the significance of the various spatial elements of the community is known to each member of the community belonging to a particular culture and they respond to them accordingly.⁹⁶ In *Architecture Without Architects* Bernard Rudofsky also points out the wisdom in ancient architectural designs goes beyond economic and aesthetic considerations, “for it touches the far tougher and increasingly troublesome problem of how to live and let live, how to keep peace with one's neighbors, both in the parochial and universal sense”.⁹⁷ Dwelling need not be a

⁹⁴ Heidegger, 1993, p.167 & Simon Glendinning, “Settled-there: Heidegger on the work of art as the cultivation of place,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology* 1, no.1 (2014): 20, available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/57626/>, retrieved on March 25, 2017.

⁹⁵ Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, (London: Pion Ltd. 1976), p.12.

⁹⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 132-133; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and their Magic: A Study of the Methods of Tilling the Soil and of Agricultural Rites in the Trobriand Islands* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1935), pp. 430- 434, Cited in Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁷ Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1965), Preface 7.

measure only for architectural design but it can be very well extended to any other form of design as well because dwelling is the ways of being in this world. It is an ontological act in the sense, to exist is always to dwell, to be in a place.⁹⁸ One dwells by building or designing the world and being designed by the world.

Dwelling in that sense is a way of seeing, looking at things through its attachments, connections, meaning and experience. When dwelling is seen as normative concept for every building then the success of designing lies in how new interconnected worlds are being disclosed in the act of designing. In contrast to the popular conception of associating design only with planning technical production and assembling materials, aestheticization and ergonomics, a Heideggerian stance looks at design as a discloser of world; it is that which creates invisible spaces and promotes engaged responsiveness with the world. Design leads to dwelling when every design act works towards *preserving the fourfold*. This is possible only if we recognise the relational character of things and entering into a dialogue with the world around us, shaping and organising the things of the world. The relationality, for Heidegger, points to the finitude of a thing. In the case of mortals this finitude is best expressed in the phrase *dasein is being-towards-death*.⁹⁹ Human can be truly what he is only when he confronts death as our ultimate ontological possibility. Death reminds him of his finitude and this awareness is further deepened in human's relation with the world. As Critchley observes, if our being is finite, then what it means to be human consists in grasping this finitude in human's way of being in this world.¹⁰⁰ In inauthentic existence, Heidegger writes, human forgets his

⁹⁸ Reena Patra, "A Comparative Study on *Vaastu Shastra* and Heidegger's 'Building, Dwelling and Thinking'," *Asian Philosophy: An International Journal of the Philosophical Traditions of the East* 16, no.3 (November 2006): 208-215. The paper attempts to find parallel between *Vaastu Shastra*, an ancient Indian theory of architecture, and Heidegger's *Dwelling*.

⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p.293-311.

¹⁰⁰ Simon Critchley, "Being and Time Part I: Why Heidegger Matters." *The Guardian International Edition* 8 June, 2009. Retrieved from, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/05/heidegger-philosophy>, retrieved on November 15, 2018.

finite nature, that all are beings-toward-the-death and thus poses himself as the master of the world. Heidegger calls such an attitude the characteristics of modern times where everything stand-in-reserve for human to be used. Such an approach, as Kalary points out, “robs the things of their relationality and reduces them to a status of mere replaceable pieces of a stockpile.”¹⁰¹ If at all there is a relation, that is guided by technological efficiency where the underlying rationale behind this efficiency is *maximum benefit out of minimum input*.

Dwelling as the gathering of the fourfold is a Heideggerian attempt to extend the notion of finitude to all beings of the world. Finitude is to be understood as a thing’s opening to the world beyond itself in the form of multitude of relations, its ability to *stand outside itself* (ecstatic). Being ecstatic is very foundational to human existence and the root of any kind of designerly act. The notion of fourfold extends this ecstatic character of *standing beyond itself* to things also. Kalary points out this: “to appear as thing is to be exposed to the other things as well as to the world as the beyond that facilitates this exposure. Everything that shares finite existence does so in its interrelatedness to everything else around it within the world that surrounds them”.¹⁰² No thing gains its identity by standing alone but everything is constituted by the other and receives its meaning because of the other. Simon Critchley rightly points out, “we are rather beings who are always already in the world, outside and alongside a world from which, for the most part, we do not distinguish ourselves”.¹⁰³ Gathering of the fourfold is brought about not through the wilful manipulation of the designer but the design object grants a “space into which earth and heaven, divinities and mortals are admitted”.¹⁰⁴ Great designs are those who factor in this nature of disclosure of beings and recognise that the primordial nature of a thing is that it exists in a

¹⁰¹ Thomas Kalary, “The Philosophical Foundations of the Encyclical *Laudato Si’* of Pope Francis,” *Jnanadeepa* 22, no. 1 (January-June 2018): 172.

¹⁰² Thomas Kalary, p.172.

¹⁰³ Critchley, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger, 2001, p.155.

multiplicity of relations. The conception of things as ecstatic, relational opens the way for a new phenomenological thinking of relationality in understanding design process.

Dwelling is always an unsettled question - a constant strive, so to the process of designing. It is always an unsettled question, an enquiry which is continuous and open-ended and therefore hermeneutic. A thing that is constructed is never fully complete but, as Gunter A. Dittmar points out, “if our dwelling - and, thus, architecture - is a continuing, open-ended question, then *design*, the process through which a work of architecture comes into being, is first and foremost *a discourse and a form of inquiry*.”¹⁰⁵ The subject matter of this design enquiry is not limited to technics, aesthetics, function, space management and ergonomics but a question of human’s way of being- in-the-world. The guidance for such an enquiry is available in Heidegger’s analytics of *dasein* supported by the analysis of ways of being of equipment, art and building. If so design is a way of engaging in a dialogue with the world. As Gunter Dittmar points out: “Through the shaping of the earth and organizing its material into a spatial and tectonic framework we engage the forces and phenomena of nature, reveal its order, and make this order part of our own. It is evident that building cannot be reduced to just “construction”, nor separated from the question of dwelling, and, thus, the process of design, without subverting both.”¹⁰⁶ That is why, Heidegger asks the question: what is the role of a mortal in the making of a thing? Mortals are not makers but one who stands at the service of the higher realities and help them to let the presence.

¹⁰⁵ Dittmar, 1998.

¹⁰⁶ Dittmar, 1998.

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