9 Heidegger and Environmental Ethics

Although Heidegger never explicitly discusses any form of ethic, he is far from being an unfamiliar name in the literature of environmental ethics.¹ Heidegger himself strongly refutes ethics as a discipline, and naturally, incorporating Heidegger’s philosophy into any kind of ethics inevitably induces an enduring debate. To precisely address this, Nancy (2002)² presents the threefold difficulties that arise while discussing Heidegger’s take on ethics. Nancy argues, if morality is being conceptualized as “a body of principles and aims for conduct, fixed by authority or by choice, whether collective or individual”³, then there is no morality in Heidegger’s thinking, even though, it is quite possible to shed light on “what puts action in the position of having to choose norms or values”⁴, with the help of Heidegger’s philosophy. According to Nancy, the task of philosophy is not to provide norms or values, but to inquire what makes any action as such possible. Hence, he proposes to differentiate ethics from morality and tries to inquire how philosophy sees itself as ethics in the era of Heidegger. On that line, Heidegger’s inquiry to explore ‘Being’ can be marked as delineating what Heidegger envisions as “original ethics”⁵. As his phenomenology provides the opportunity to carry out a reflective evaluation of our actions and worldly engagements, Heidegger among all phenomenologists, becomes the prominent figure whose philosophy carries significant imports for environmental ethics. Zimmerman (1983)⁶ rightly denotes Heidegger as the first theoretician in the ecological struggle and argues that Heidegger’s thoughts and theories give rise to the radical environmentalism at large. It offers, as he sees, the necessary philosophical underpinnings on which often environmental ethics is based upon. In this context, this review will be an attempt to capture why environmental ethics extensively borrows philosophical constructs from Heidegger, and how that in turn provides the necessary theoretical bedrocks of various forms of ethics towards the environment and other beings, to foster. The rest of this chapter will be structured around themes denoting each of Heidegger’s concepts that are widely referred in this discipline.

³Ibid., 66.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
i. Being-in-the-world

Being-in-the-world, I see, is the most referred concept of the early Heidegger in environmental ethics. This concept is primarily incorporated into environmental ethics to denote human beings’ connection with nature. By critiquing Descartes conception of the world and the subject, Heidegger argues that human beings are not the bare subject without any world and do not see the world-as-an-objects. Humanity is never being a subject that has a presence over and above the world, rather “it constituted by relation in the world” as the basic state of Dasein or of the human existence is being-in-the-world. Deluca (2005) also extends the point by elaborating how being-in-the-world is always grounded on the earth, and this establishes the idea that the world emerges from the earth. In the context of broader and deeper encountering of nature, Note (2009) describes that the way of being-in-the-world provides us the necessary referential framework and horizon for comprehending nature. She emphasizes that human beings are continuously involved in the process of de-distancing and in that process, the world appears to us as a nearness and aroundness. Although we relentlessly relate to the world in our everydayness, it is hard to realize the presence of this everydayness as it tends to conceal itself. This de-distancing can only be grasped at that moment when “nature ‘strikes’ us” and we realize our situatedness and embedded existence in the world. This realization according to her, does also induce us to appreciate a modified self-understanding, a modified understanding of the world as being inherently connected, and also a modified understanding of our place in the world as situatedness in separatedness. Hatab (2000) emphasizes the pre-reflective engagements of human beings as he delves into the question how to be ethical, rather than whether to be ethical or not, and demonstrates the way Heidegger discloses the structure of our engagements with other beings and how an individual relates to other entities as being-in-the-world. Dasein’s thrownness provides a space that allows for an ethical engagement. The very finite dwelling and the temporal structure of being-in-the world on one hand illuminates ethics itself as a human potential or as a possibility, on the other, it demonstrates what becoming ethical entails. Hatab further argues that being-in-the-world provides a pre-reflective account of our

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8Ibid., 74.
9Ibid., 67–87.
11Ibid., 287.
engagement that is already shaped by our thrownness in an ethical world. This pre-reflective account in a way is the best way to explore how values and norms function in the human existence.

Furthermore, Grange underlines one of the main hindrances in understanding the deeper meaning of the environment is our categorization of feeling. As per him, Heidegger’s way of taking account of feeling is extremely important to grasp the deeper meaning of the environment. He demonstrates, in Being and Time, with the help of the notion of being-in-the-world, Heidegger establishes a new meaning of human nature. The structure of the human existence leads human beings to care for their own Being. This inevitable care comes from three *prior* structures of the human existence, which precede all human actions. As he comprehends, mood stands as one of these *a priori* structures and thus does not merely indicate subjective affairs rather it is the felt sense of our interaction with the environment. As per Heidegger, human beings are a relational being and feeling or mood describes the way we are bound to each other—intricately shaping our relationship to other beings. Felt relation to other beings is an *a priori* state, it is always-already acting in terms of building any relationship. It is important to take into account as it indicates the quality of our relationships with the environment. Mood also presents a unity of the world and provides the scope for an authentic engagement with the world. For this reason, Grange emphasizes the importance of feeling in providing an engaged understanding of the environment. This authentic acknowledgement of feeling can also lead us to an environmentally sound way of living as well as enable us to experience the felt intimacy with the environment that eventually could illuminate the unity of the world. This is quite a unique, but an important analysis of Heidegger’s philosophical thought that succinctly delineates its implications for understanding the human—environment relationship.

Hence, in the literature, being-in-the-world is primarily being seen as the basic structure of human beings’ relationships with other beings. Moreover, scholars put forth that this way of engagement provides a scope to ethically relate to nature, as this pre-reflective engagement gets intricately shaped by our thrownness in an ethical world.

**ii. Heidegger’s Critique of Technology in Environmental Ethics**

Heidegger’s take on technology and modernity is widely referred in environmental ethics for demarcating the cause of the environmental crisis. In this context, Heidegger demonstrates that

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14Ibid., 361.
the etymological root of the word technology can be traced to the Greek word, technē. Technē is a form of poiēsis or presencing\textsuperscript{15}, which brings forth things into existence. Hence, etymologically, it is completely the opposite of self-concealing. However, according to Heidegger, this relation between technē and poiēsis is not actually retained by the modern technology. Precisely, due to this mismatch, Heidegger in his technological critique argues that modern technology translates everything as standing reserve—mere resources. This is being termed as ‘enframing’ in Heidegger’s lexicon. He says this enframing leads us towards a mode of revelation where everything in the world is perceived as ‘standing reserve’ and even that includes human beings as well. This crux of Heidegger’s critique of technology is extensively adopted in the discipline of environmental ethics.\textsuperscript{16} However, here it is necessary to highlight that Heidegger cannot be considered as an outright anti-technologist, indeed, his approach is directed towards problematizing the very essence of modern technology as enframing. Radical schools of environmental ethics claim that Heidegger’s diagnosis of the problem with modern technology aptly captures the cause of the current environmental devaluation. As per these schools, Heidegger’s philosophy rightly points out that the essence of technology or enframing drastically alters human beings’ relations to the world.\textsuperscript{17} Owing to that, in the modern era, we are prone to see everything just as resources for technological intervention, which results a lack of care and affection towards the environment.

Zimmerman\textsuperscript{18}, in his earlier works, clearly denotes two reasons due to which Heidegger’s account gets incorporated into the deep ecology movement. Firstly, on the basis of the analysis of ‘history of being’ in Western metaphysics, Heidegger succinctly depicts that the Western understanding of the being of entities gradually is degenerated and this induces a distancing between the Western society and the environment. Secondly, this technological era is the final stage of the history of being where enframing conceals the ontological depth of the world as well as its spiritual meaning. This ultimate nihilism eventually obstructs any kind of presencing of things except being mere raw materials. No doubt this kind of perspective brings


forth boredom and terror in the world as indicated by Zimmerman. To overcome this nihilism, Heidegger calls for doing nothing or 'letting things be'. Howe (1993)\(^{19}\) echoes Zimmerman and identifies that Heidegger’s analysis of technological nihilism on one hand, articulates the problem of anthropocentric thinking and, on the other, offers us a novel perspective to understand the “interrelatedness between man and the natural environment”.\(^{20}\) Furthermore, Zimmerman points out that the contemporary developmental activities leave several negative externalities on the environment, though the negative effects on the environment due to technological nihilism do not get addressed as such.\(^{21}\) As per him, this negligence is historically ingrained in the Western societies through the very characteristic of suppressing the negative effects instead of resolving. As a ray of hope, he elaborates, deep ecology again borrows from Heidegger to claim that further evolution of human consciousness could lead us to a stage where we can transcend this technological nihilism and ‘let things be’ in their own accord. With that maturity of consciousness, we would be able to experience an awe of nature that could lead us to maintain a harmonious relationship with other beings.

iii. ‘Let beings be’: A Famous Call for Deep Ecological Movement

Zimmerman (1993) underlines that deep ecology at first establishes the importance of Heidegger’s critique of technological nihilism and subsequently, upholds the call for ‘let things be’\(^{22}\) to overcome the current environmental crisis. Howe (1993)\(^{23}\) precisely analyzes Heidegger’s philosophical contribution to deep ecology and demonstrates, Heidegger’s ontological understanding of ‘things’ has a significant ethical implication for deep ecology. Heidegger asks for an alternative ontological understanding of things, where things are not to be perceived as objects to be known or quantified so that these do not get controlled and dominated in the hands of human beings. Moreover, things are not equivalent to our everyday objects, either. By an etymological analysis of the German equivalent of ‘thing’, he concludes ‘thing’ originally means gathering. Motivated by this understanding of a thing, Heidegger states “a thing reveals itself as a particular gathering of the elements of the world”.\(^{24}\) This indicates


\(^{20}\) Ibid., 94


\(^{22}\) In this literature, letting be has been used either as ‘let things be’ or ‘let beings be’.

\(^{23}\) Howe. “Heidegger’s Discussion of “The Thing”.”

the holistic view about things which Heidegger promotes to guide us for revealing things within the nexus of the ‘fourfold’. Instead of approaching things just like mere everyday objects of our interests, he calls for ‘let beings be’ to allow the space to manifest them in their own accord. This phrase has become a famous call in the deep ecology movement. The concept of let beings be indeed urges for a total non-interference to the realm of things. It is a call for letting the beings be alone. According to Nancy (2002), ‘letting be’ actually does not indicate a passivity, indeed it is the ‘essence of action’ as he puts forth “… it is a case of allowing Being to be/to act the sense that it is/desires’. Hence, in environmental ethics, the primary objective of this call, as Howe points out, is to retain the possibility of acknowledging things in their own accord. This helps to transcend the dominating calculative thinking of the human mind which is prone to carry out a reduction of things as resources.

Let beings be becomes a revolutionary call in deep ecology, as it unveils the unique interconnectedness of things within the world without human interference. Things present themselves in the process of ‘gathering in’ and that process subsequently reveals the interconnectedness of things in the environment. As Howe identifies, the utility of a thing for human beings is only one of its aspect, however, the true essence of things is:

…that which gathers-up and comes-together, creating a presence of the fourfold unity of earth, sky, gods, and men. The thing manifests the harmonious interplay of the fourfold in the world. This true revelation of the essence of things is the primary insight that deep ecology borrows from Heidegger. As already indicated, according to this school, the current technological reduction of things to mere resources, is the main cause of the environmental crisis. To combat this crisis, there is a need to change the perspective towards things, by realizing the interdependence of the environment and human beings as well as the interconnections among all entities in the environment. Deep ecology also highlights Heidegger’s notion of the fourfold in this regard and advocates that revealing the essence of things in the fourfold can change our perspective towards these and can create an eternal bonding that would help us in transcending the environmental crisis.

Furthermore, the inception of wilderness movement can be considered as a pragmatic response to implement the call of let things be; keeping the nature untouched by human beings

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26Ibid., 69
27Howe, “Heidegger’s Discussion of “The Thing””, 94.
29Howe, “Heidegger’s Discussion of “The Thing””, 95
and experiencing the holistic existence of nature, are the main mottos of this movement. It actually argues for the complete freedom of nature from human domination. Heidegger’s philosophy actually acts as the theoretical backbone of this movement because he defines wilderness, as the form of clearing where one could experience the unconcealment of truth. It is the way to understand the poetic truth.\textsuperscript{30} According to the secondary literature on Heidegger’s thinking, wilderness is the original form of self-presencing and self-concealing, and thus, he calls for preservation of environment to uphold the scope of this self-presencing and self-concealing. Here, preservation indicates towards an authentic dwelling, as Dunn (2009) points out, “characteristics of dwelling are saving, receiving, awaiting and initiating”.\textsuperscript{31} Dunn further explains that mortals or human beings dwell on earth to preserve the fourfold. This preservation requires exploring the essence of things. Thus, dwelling reveals the truth of beings by explicating their presence in the nexus of the fourfold. This philosophical insight of dwelling clearly establishes that the objective of authentic dwelling is to save the earth from the technological mode of revelation of nature and to alternatively reveal it in the fourfold. The distancing from the true revelation of things in the fourfold, induced by the technological revelation, is being termed as ‘homelessness’ by Heidegger. Mugerauer (2008)\textsuperscript{32} demonstrates that the discontentment with homelessness guides Heidegger to establish the notion of ‘homecoming’ throughout his oeuvre. According to him, Heidegger reads home as synonymous to the earth and urges to safeguard it from the domination of technology. In this manner, the wilderness movement illustrates a way of homecoming and for delineating that, this movement borrows concepts like poetic dwelling and fourfold, from the later Heidegger’s lexicon.

iv. Heidegger’s Critique of Western Metaphysics and the Notion of Nature

Beyond the epistemological and metaphysical explanation, Foltz (1984)\textsuperscript{33} focuses on a post-metaphysical analysis of the environmental crisis. Foltz’s attempt can be considered as one of the pioneer ones in this context. He argues that the contemporary notion of the environmental crisis is being dominated by the discourse of natural sciences and the ways to overcome the crisis also get delineated by scientists and conservationists. Foltz actually questions the current


\textsuperscript{32}Robert Mugerauer, \textit{Heidegger and Homecoming: The Leitmotif in the Later Writings} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{33}Foltz, “On Heidegger”.
way of dealing with the environmental crisis and argues that instead of treating this crisis as a problem of the environment itself, we need to see it as a problem of relation and strive for a post-metaphysical analysis of the environment. In this context, Foltz strongly upholds Heidegger’s philosophical insights and argues that as Heidegger sees technology is an obvious outcome of the Western thought, the current environmental crisis is also an inevitable upshot of the metaphysical conception of environment promoted by the natural sciences. Foltz demonstrates that Heidegger’s primary project is to transcend the metaphysical approach towards things. He highlights that Heidegger’s analysis of the Western metaphysics illuminates the core attributes that constitute an entity. Moreover, in this understanding, he points, the very essence of entities is based on a metaphysical presumption. As per him, Heidegger’s project of tracing the ‘history of being’ on one hand shows “being also inclines toward self-withholding and that presence itself can only be understood in its interplay with absence and hiddenness”\(^\text{34}\).

On the other hand, it delineates how from the ancient Greek tradition to the modern era, the pivotal issue that has driven the inquiry of metaphysics is the question ‘what is being?’. According to Heidegger, the technological era is the end of this metaphysical tradition as technology converts the presence of all entities to constant availability as standing reserve. Foltz further demonstrates that the way technological nihilism is an outcome of the Western metaphysical tradition, the historical trajectory of comprehending the concept of nature also gets influenced by the same. The attribute of the Western tradition that suppresses the negative effect of the modern era, subsequently, wanes the self-withholding and hidden attributes of nature. According to Foltz, Heidegger’s key philosophical insights for rejuvenating these two attributes to comprehend an alternative understanding of nature, are readily incorporated in the radical ecological movements, particularly, his call for restoring the self-emerging and self-concealing nature.\(^\text{35}\)

To respond to this call, anti-scientific and anti-modernist views can be found prevailing in this entire discourse.

Inspired by Foltz, Storey (2015)\(^\text{36}\) invokes a different perspective by incorporating Dreyfus’s analysis of Heidegger. He inquires the question of alterity and describes Heidegger’s works in that context. According to him, the metaphysical understanding of nature fails to

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\(^{34}\)Ibid., 326.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., 334.

https://www.academia.edu/1816650/Heidegger_and_Integral_Ecology_Toward_an_Intelligible_Cosmos_forthcoming_in_an_anthology_on_Integral_philosophy_.

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acknowledge the ontological gap between being and beings, and human and animals. He probes, if we shred this metaphysical understanding of nature, then what kind of altered view we would arrive at. Storey captures two kinds of manifestation of nature in the work of early Heidegger. The first sense of nature is environing or productive nature as termed by Foltz, whereas, the same is marked as available/unavailable by Dreyfus. The second sense of nature is ‘objective nature’ or as being called the occurrent nature by Dreyfus. Storey also argues that over time, the later Heidegger’s philosophy has slowly tilted towards an ecocentric view from an anthropocentric one. Whereas Heidegger’s early philosophy was completely based on the existential structure of Dasein, his later philosophy, as Storey’s reads, underlines the very impossibility of analyzing the primordial nature as it cannot be grasped in the phenomenological world. Storey explains it thus:

His later works especially attempt to convey a more poetic experience of nature in its alterity—rather than in the instrumental or scientific senses it has for us. They signal a turn away from the exploitative regime of modern technology, which is driven by the “will to will,” the desire to master and control nature; as such, Heidegger calls us to overcome the posture of willing, and adopt a standpoint of letting-be.38

In this essay, Storey also raises his concern regarding the poetic views of nature. He accentuates the need to discover some sort of connection between these three aspects of nature: exploring the sense of nature as cosmos, transcending the dualistic view of the world of appearance as a subjective view, and the world of reality that stands alone as an objective truth without any subjective interpretation. In this context, Storey promotes an exploration of nature in a meaningful way without getting caught in the poetic realm. He also attempts to establish that interpretation and meaning are not human categories which get generally imposed onto nature. Instead, he claims, if one can transcend this anthropocentric worldview, it will be possible to reveal that interpretation is “an irreducible aspect of all natural entities ‘being-in-the-world’”.

It can be concluded that by pointing out the limitation of the Western metaphysical construct of nature, scholars have opened up ways to reinterpret nature beyond that construct. This also re-conceptualizes the notion of environmental crisis to problematize the current approach of addressing it, and shows us the alternative ways to move forward. No doubt, the

39Ibid., n_page
sheer possibility of reinterpreting nature could offer new leads to think about nature and thus could eventually alter the relationship between human and nature to an ethically righteous form.

v. The Earth and the Fourfold: A Mysterious Notion of Environment

As widely interpreted in the secondary literature, Heidegger tries to denote a hiddenness and self-withdrawal attribute of nature through the concept of ‘earth’. Earth is that hidden entity which gives rise to the world and cannot be grasped in its entirety. This notion—indicating a hidden entity and the self-withdrawing nature of ‘being’ in the poetic realm—promotes a romanticized and valorized notion of nature in Heidegger philosophy. Influenced by this, the conception of nature in this discipline often gets interpreted as pointing to this hiddenness—an unfathomable reality. Moreover, Heidegger’s concept of ‘releasement towards things’ urges for accepting things with their hiddenness and mysterious elements, akin to that environmental philosophers borrow this to promote releasement towards nature. Releasement ensures an openness towards a hiddenness and mystery, which would enable one to be receptive enough for acknowledging the ungraspable mysterious attribute of nature. This acknowledgement is actually appreciated to strengthen us in resisting the technological mastery over nature. As against the technological mode of revelation, releasement towards things asks for an exploration of things within their fourfold nexus. This echoes with Howe (1993)\(^4\)\(^0\), where he repeatedly highlights Heidegger’s notion of things and argues that an authentic dwelling in the world preserves natural integrity and reveals things in the interconnection of earth, sky, mortal and divinity. In this regard, Holland (1999)\(^4\)\(^1\) reinforces Heidegger concept of a thing as well as the entire project of Heidegger, in the light of his reading of Aristotle. Here, she clearly mentions that both Idealists error and Empiricists error are the two extreme ways of thinking about things. The existence of a thing, according to Holland, on one hand, neither gets defined by us, nor can we limit or exhaust it by our understanding as against the idealist would think. On the other hand, a thing does not always denote a raw givenness of sensory experience as empiricists would conceptualize. Indeed, she claims the existence of a thing entirely depends on Dasein. By transcending the mere raw-givenness, Dasein can only experience and name an entity as such.\(^4\)\(^2\) In this context, she particularly underlines the fact that Heidegger never romanticizes about nature, indeed, his main objective is not at all about nature—it is about the essence and Being

\(^4\)\(^0\)Howe, “Heidegger’s Discussion of “The Thing””, 93-7.


\(^4\)\(^2\)Ibid., 415.
of beings. His explanation of Being of beings eventually provides a “complex and subtle grounding for a possible approach to ecological thought”.43

Grange (1985)44 from a very different perspective, juxtaposes Spinoza’s and Heidegger’s philosophy to delineate ways in which both of these could offer important insights into environmental ethics. Especially on the basis of Heidegger’s phenomenology, he tries to find out the ultimate ground or the source of reality and its manifestations, and argues these are particularly required to know nature. He explores the source of unity of reality through the concept of the fourfold. Grange believes that this concept can reveal an alternative foundation for understanding the environment. He argues, this actually reveals the togetherness of the world, as its four dimensions on one hand have an autonomous presence, on the other, “their preservation depends upon their penetration by the others”.45 Thus, each of the dimensions of the fourfold, as depicted by Heidegger, is independent and at the same time, is also interconnected with each other in a simple relationship. Grange reads, this articulation is a way to bring back our focus onto the relationship, from the individual components. It also shows the simplicity of the unity of things and the impossibility of replicating this unity by human beings, indeed, we can only experience it. He further investigates to understand the source of this unity and describes that Heidegger, throughout his lifetime, endeavors to capture this inexplicable understanding in different manners. As per him, this source is the event of appropriation as it illuminates the region where the meaning of being could emerge. In this event, we get to realize the relationship between things. Owing to this, dwelling gets priority in Heidegger’s philosophy as through dwelling only we can create and uphold a relationship with things in nature. The importance of this relationship as explained by Grange is:

These relations can either foreclose the expression of Being or disclose its depth and reach. Shutting down our intimate bonds with nature means pretending to be the whole. Such action results in the fragmentation of our environment.46

In the same vein, Swanton (2010)47 summarizes the connection between the human existential structure as being-in-the-world and dwelling. Being-in-the-world is the first step to make the world intelligible and as well as it is the way, we can truly be open to the world. This very first step helps us to go further and recognize that being open to the world in a certain way

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43Ibid., 417.
44Grange, “Being, Feeling and Environment”.
46Ibid., 360.
through dwelling closes other ways, and thus the world withdraws. With this realization, our very own way of making sense of the world ensures that we remain open to the mystery of the world. *Dasein*’s way of exploring the world, as the one being appropriated in the conceptualization of dwelling, safeguards that objects become things as it comes into view in the nexus of the fourfold. In this manner, dwelling offers us something to care for. Finally, the place of dwelling becomes near to us for which we would be empathetic of and caring for, and I see, a place-based ethic could emerge from this as well. In this regard, one can refer Malpas (2006)\(^{48}\) to see the way Heidegger’s philosophy could craft out an ethic towards the land we dwell on.

Furthermore, Thomson (2004)\(^{49}\) strongly argues that it is extremely important to pay attention to the later Heidegger’s crucial notion of ‘being as such’, and its import for other concepts of his later thought. Inspired by Heidegger’s idea, in transcendental ethical realism, Thomson argues that ontologically the very nihilistic worldview creates an abyss in our relation with the environment. The nihilism arises from the continuous devaluation that induces us to see the world as a unity of potential resources, or as Heidegger terms it as standing reserve. Theologically, as per Nietzschean metaphysics, there is no supreme realm to provide the meaning of the environment, and thus, there is a sense of void in that meaning. In this context, Thomson argues that without acknowledging the notion of being as such, it is implausible to comprehend later Heidegger’s project, entirely. According to Thomson, through the notion of being as such, Heidegger strives to transcend the metaphysics of ontotheology. To avoid the ambiguous existence of being throughout the Western philosophical tradition, Heidegger, as per Thomson, reinforces the notion of being as such to claim that metaphysics as an ontotheology is completely ignorant of this very fundamental notion. Transcendental ethical realism, a stream of ecophenomenology, opens up, as Thomson argues, a transcendental realm beyond facts or values, which provides us the understanding of being as such as a transcendental source of meaning. As being as such is an inexhaustible source from where everything emerges, it actually indicates the phenomenological presencing of nature. He asserts that as Heidegger does not clearly explain the notion of being as such, it is only possible to understand it in the context of his other concepts. According to Thomson, the later Heidegger’s concept of fourfold and dwelling are the phenomenological way of grasping being as such, and his call for releasement


towards things also indicates releasement towards being as such.\textsuperscript{50} The fourfold on one hand, demonstrates the phenomenological presencing of things, on the other, dwelling refers to the presencing of things beyond the metaphysical understanding. Through dwelling only, it is possible to attain the experience that can help us to transcend the metaphysical understanding of things as dwelling allows to “be at ‘home’ with ‘being as such’”.\textsuperscript{51} Instead of a conventional understanding of things, this transformative encountering could reveal things in the nexus of the fourfold. Hence, as per him, any solutions to environmental problems would be pragmatically ineffective without altering the metaphysical understanding of things guided by the Nietzschean ontotheology. And any shift towards that is attainable, only by acknowledging being as such, as the transcendental source of meaning.

To conclude, it can be said that for transcending the dominating epistemological and metaphysical revelation of nature, environmental ethics relies on later Heidegger’s suggestive comportments and often prone to subscribe to an inexplicable and mysterious articulation of it. With this understanding, environmental ethics urge for a patient waiting for an event of appropriation when we would come to realize the transcendental source.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{vi. Conclusion}

This brief review of literature clearly demonstrates that Heidegger’s philosophy with its multiple interpretations are being widely referred in the literature of environmental ethics. Drawing directly from Heidegger, this broadly argues that the critique of technology, the concept of the fourfold, earth, authentic dwelling, and homelessness together generate a strong ecocentric perspective. However, I argue, the literature tends to concentrate primarily on the later Heidegger’s works over the early Heidegger’s phenomenological exploration of human \textit{Dasein} as ‘being-in-the-world; even the little that is incorporated mostly focuses on signifying the importance of situatedness and eventually, ends up with promoting either an authentic dwelling or a pre-reflective mode of ethical engagement. Moreover, later Heidegger’s thinking often interpreted as geared towards transcending the human subjectivity to attain a transcendental realm.

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 400.
On the contrary to this conventional way of incorporating Heidegger’s philosophical concepts, Zimmerman (2003)\textsuperscript{53} illuminates a completely new dimension of Heidegger’s philosophy and its implications for environmental ethics. Borrowing from Sheehan’s interpretation, Zimmerman argues that the technological nihilism does not induce the nihilism I—the obliviousness of the clearing itself. Instead Zimmerman argues, this technological revelation of beings is possible at all because of the human existential structure as the clearing provides the realm of intelligibility where things can at all be encountered meaningfully.\textsuperscript{54} Drawing from Sheehan’s reading of Heidegger, Zimmerman further accentuates that the human existence has an enormous potential to disclose nature in its possibilities, beyond being mere raw materials. This very unique characteristic of the human existence as demonstrated by Heidegger, assign Dasein an extraordinary place inside Ereignis—the clearing. Owing to the Ereignis, the human existence is always-already operating to uphold the realm of meaningfulness. Taking this explanation into account, Zimmerman claims that the post-technological revelation of beings in the nexus of fourfold, that Heidegger envisages for, though readily captures environmentalists’ attention as leading towards a less-dominating way of dwelling, neither have any ground for justification nor does it really commensurate with Heidegger’s own ontology.\textsuperscript{55} Thus, Zimmerman opposes the later Heidegger’s attempt to mythologize ‘being’, and he vouches for that ‘being as such’ is nothing but the clearing. Moreover, Zimmerman emphasizes that our reading of Heidegger must also incorporate a Panentheism which will lead to maintain a balance between God like power of human beings to disclose and to providing the ground for being (meaningfulness) to emerge, and at the same time, restrain oneself from getting into any kind of superiority complex leading to retaining any oppressing attitude towards the being of things. He attempts to craft out an ethic with the help of respect and compassion, and strongly believes that ecophenomenology should include this very form of ethic that incorporates Panentheism, as this can completely re-orient our relationship with the environment.

Zimmerman’s (2003) endeavor, borrowing from Sheehan’s interpretation, clearly indicates the way hermeneutic phenomenology of the early Heidegger could illuminate a new avenue to interpret his later works. Hence, I conclude, although there is a vast range of scholarly


\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., 88

works applying Heidegger’s philosophy in environmental ethics, there exists a prominent gap in terms of holistically incorporating Heidegger’s philosophy in the discipline, for creating a pragmatic environmental ethos based on true phenomenological exploration. Taking this as a point of departure, in the following chapters, I will make an attempt to explore Thomas Sheehan’s interpretations of Heidegger’s phenomenology in depth. Through the lens of Sheehan’s interpretation, I will revisit some of the most widely referred concepts of Heidegger philosophy in environmental ethics. As Sheehan’s interpretation takes account of Heidegger’s work as a continuous one and try to re-read Heidegger’s project entirely from a phenomenological point of view, I see, Sheehan’s interpretation has a potential to transcend this early and later Heidegger’s division and thus, could offer a new approach to evaluate Heidegger’s import for environmental ethics.