A Thesis

Entitled

Foundations of Deep Ecology: Daoism and Heideggerian Phenomenology

By

Joel Van Zanten

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The Master of Arts in Philosophy

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University of Toledo

August 2009
An Abstract of

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This thesis explores two facets of the ancient Daoist world view and Heideggerian phenomenology. It then explores the relationship of these facets to Deep Ecology. The facets in question are: (a) a way of looking at the world without thematic lenses and (b) the ethical and normative content that comes from that perspective. Deep Ecology assumes a re-examination of the relationship between humans and the non-human world while situating itself within a normative framework. This thesis argues the facets of Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology are constitutive of a proper foundation for Deep Ecology, i.e. they provide the basis for the re-examination and detail a normative framework.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor, Charles V. Blatz, for all the help and supervision he has provided me with thesis and with my general philosophical development. His approach to philosophy and teaching has informed my professional development and for that I cannot offer enough thanks. I would also like to thank Benjamin S. Pryor for his assistance and guidance throughout my graduate studies and philosophical growth. I also thank John Sarnecki for his willingness to join my committee with little notice and for hours of enlightening conversation. I am greatly indebted to the Department of Philosophy at the University of Toledo; each member of the faculty has challenged me in delightful ways. I owe much to the faculty of Hanover College for their encouragement and intellectual support and thank them dearly for it. Finally, I owe much to Nina Pryor, for her patience, support and conversation through many late nights and cups of coffee. Without her this thesis would never have come into being.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 – Introduction

The intent of this thesis is to explore the relationship between humans and their natural ecological environment. An abundance of research shows that natural ecologies are facing drastic pressure. \(^1\) The earth is heating up, species are becoming extinct and resources are disappearing. Movies like *An Inconvenient Truth* (which reflects the weight of scientific judgment on growing climate change) are gaining popularity. \(^2\)

Politicians are bringing attention to environmental issues such as climate change and energy consumption. The idea that the environment is in danger is no longer the sole domain of small groups of activists and conservationists.

With this public attention has come a variety of methods and ways to change human practice in order to help with the problem. For example, the end of *An Inconvenient Truth* provides a list of practices that individuals can adopt to cut their consumption of energy. Lists like these encourage a variety of easy practices, e.g. using energy efficient light bulbs or using public transportation and adopting practices like

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\(^1\) For example, you can look at the collected works of Bill McKibben, especially, *The End of Nature*, (Random House, 1989) and Hernan, Robert and McKibben, Bill, *Vulnerable on this Earth: Environmental Disasters of the Twentieth Century*, (Five Ties Publishing, 2006).

\(^2\) Guggenheim, Davis (Dir.) *An Inconvenient Truth*, with Al Gore, (Paramount Classics, 2006).
these would cut carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming. In the background of this list is one crucial element of the relationship between humans and their ecological environment; the actions of the former have a serious impact on the latter. My intent in this thesis is not to argue that the actions of humans impact the environment; I take this claim as foundational. Instead I explore some of the factors and conditions that are constitutive of the way humans come to this relationship. In this thesis I will explore these factors and conditions from the perspective of both ancient Daoist philosophy and Heideggerian phenomenology. This exploration necessarily leads me into a project that is inherently, deeply ecological. That is, it involves re-evaluating the relationship between humans and the natural world. Through a re-evaluation of this sort, it becomes clear that humans ought to adjust their actions to change their impact on the natural ecology.

This thesis consists of three primary chapters, two through four. Chapters two and three articulate the relevant Daoist and Heideggerian factors and considerations. Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology both reveal a pair of ideas. First, both articulate a way to understand the world primordially (pre-thematically). Second, both reveal insight into normative considerations of how humans should act, given the primordial understanding. These are both general insights, not merely applicable to the relationship between humans and their environment. Each chapter concludes with a brief look at how the position in question relates to ecological thinking independently of deeply ecological concerns.

Chapter four concerns Deep Ecology, as understand by Arne Naess in 1972. This chapter is designed to do two separate things. First, it is meant to demonstrate two
constitutive elements of Deep Ecology: that deep ecology consists of a re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and the non-human world and that Deep Ecology comes preloaded with a normative framework. The second part of this chapter is to put forward the argument that Daoist and Heideggerian phenomenology are the right sorts of foundations for something deeply ecological. I consider this claim a modest one. A more thorough going analysis of Deep Ecology would go further and argue that these Daoist and Heideggerian foundations, or anything similar, entail other Heideggerian and Daoist conclusions concerning metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. I suspect that these other conclusions may be at odds with particular Deep Ecologies in the literature. For issues of size and scope, the thesis follows the modest claim, but I suggest at this juncture this other claim in order to highlight concerns for future thought.

This thesis comes to the conclusion that Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology add to our growing awareness of the ecological situation. These two ways of thinking do, in the final analysis, support the ideas of the current social consciousness, i.e. they would endorse the list of practices given in the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. However, it seems clear to me that basing these ideas on Daoism or Heideggerian phenomenology would involve changing the motivations of individuals adopting these practices. In short, the general motivation of the environmentally conscious today seems to be to consume less and conserve more because there is an environmental crisis. The Daoist or Heideggerian framework shows that the motivation to consume less and conserve more, when stemming from a pre-thematic approach to the world, has an ethical rather than instrumental implication. When one acts
authentically as a human, these sorts of practices carry normative or categorical force – they become the right thing to do.

1.2 – Terminology

Before forwarding this argument, I feel it is necessary to discuss some issues concerning terminology. First, ‘Deep Ecology’ is a tricky thing to pin down. It began as a descriptive distinction used by Arne Naess in 1972 and evolved into a platform or political position with eight claims. Adding to the confusion this later platform is meant to be sufficiently general to allow space for different specific ecologies. Given this, I follow the following constraints on my language use: When discussing the distinction between deep and shallow or when discussing the general conception coming from that distinction, I use ‘deeply ecological’ or Deep Ecology. When referencing worked out ecologies that consider themselves deep, I term them Deep Ecologies. Finally, I term the later Deep Ecology as articulated in a generalized platform, the ‘Deep Ecology Movement.’

The second terminological ambiguity I have is in the use of the terms ‘primordial’ and ‘pre-thematic.’ I use these terms rather loosely, and I want to explain my constraints and motivations for this usage. When I discuss a ‘pre-thematic’ way of conceptualizing the world, my intent is not to aim for a ‘purely non-thematic’ way of conceptualizing the world. I readily admit that people have biological, cultural, and personal heuristics and narratives that cannot be stripped from their comprehension. My intention is to discuss a way of understanding the world free of the cultural and social heuristics that are able to be stripped from individual comprehension. I leave the

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3 The development of this term is made clear in George Session’s preface to Deep Ecology for the 21st Century, (Shambhala Publications, 1995).
line between what can and what cannot be stripped intentionally ambiguous. This thesis is sufficiently general to be amendable to a range of ways for drawing this line. I understand the term primordial to carry the connotation and denotation of the origin of something. Given this idea of original, I use the word as a descriptor of things when they come pre-thematically.

1.3 – Intention

Finally, I feel it necessary to state a personal goal I have for this thesis and my motivation to write it. I think providing the reader with this personal goal is useful for evaluating the success of the work with regards to the author’s intentions, and also to show the lens or spin that the author puts on the writing. I encourage the reader to go beyond the author’s intentions and lens and evaluate the text as is, but that does not change the importance of having those intentions laid bare. My motivation for this project came from reading the literature on Deep Ecology and seeing poor or incomplete appropriations of Daoism and Heidegger. Because I did not have the inclination to write a critique of this literature; I chose instead to investigate the possibility of Daoism and Heidegger as a foundation for deeply ecological thinking. I think this investigation provides a foundation for a further critique of individual Deep Ecologies.

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4 Two examples of this literature are, Foltz, Bruce, *Inhabiting the Earth*, (Prometheus Books, 1995); and Capra, Fritjof, *The Tao of Physics*, (Shambhala Publishers, 1991).
Chapter 2: Daoism and the Ethical or “Wandering at Ease”

2.1 Introduction

Daoism is one of the two foundations for the rest of the work of this thesis, the other is Heideggerian phenomenology. This chapter explores two related insights that Daoism offers this project, one insight is ethical and the other insight is pre-thematic. The emphasis of my discussion in this chapter is on the ethical component. However, this ethical component rests on a pre-thematic conception of the world. This is one reason that I call the ethical insight provided in Daoism – etiquette. For the Daoist, ethics come primordially, i.e. ethics come before laws and principles police behavior. This primordial etiquette is predicated on an understanding the world in a pre-thematic way.

I take as a starting point of inquiry into Daoism the Lao-Zhuang convention. Philosophical Daoism is rooted primarily in two texts, the Daodejing (or Laozi) and the Zhuangzhi (thus, Lao-Zhuang). While other syncretic texts are often illuminating; these other texts also carry with them conflict and doubt concerning their integrity in the ancient tradition, and for this reason they will be left aside.\(^5\) The Lao-Zhuang texts are often noted for having passages that seem to be in conflict, but this conflict is resolved

\(^5\) Some notable syncretic texts that I am leaving aside are the Huainanzi, Liezi and Yuandao.
by noting that the texts were written for different purposes and under different circumstances. The *Daodejing* is a text that focuses on a social outlook, while the *Zhuangzhi* is a text that focuses on an individual or personal outlook. Differences or discrepancies between the texts, “tends to be one of emphasis rather than substance.” I believe both texts are essential for understanding what Daoism offers an ethical position concerning the environment. This being said, both texts together provide a general individual ethical attitude along with a particular individual ethical attitude.

I begin by explicating a core ethical understanding of Daoism from the *Daodejing*. Then I expand upon that core understanding by looking at certain passages of the *Zhuangzhi*. Afterwards I provide the basis for a pre-thematic view of the world which predicates the ethical insight. Finally, I engage the question of how Daoism relates to nature, concluding this section with remarks on how the ‘greenness’ and environmental sensitivity of Daoism.

2.2 – Ethics and Daoism

While looking at the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzhi (Lao-Zhuang)* texts, the focus on the ethical is overwhelming. I use the word ‘ethical’ hesitantly, because there is something different going on in the Chinese texts than is often seen in Western philosophical literature. If we define ethics (loosely) as the process of placing normative judgments upon actions or as a discussion of what one ought to do; neither definition is readily applicable to the *Lao-Zhuang* texts. First, the texts often speak in paradoxes and at times are even contradictory when it comes to what one ought to do.

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7 It seems worth noting, that much of ancient Chinese writing is based around ethics. As Yang Fengbin says in the introduction to the Library of Chinese Classics reprint of *The Analects*:

If we take it that the various forms of Western Culture lay stress on the seeking for truth, we may say, the various forms of Chinese culture lay stress on the seeking for goodness.
Second, it seems the texts, when critical of actions, are critical in vague and general terms, not in specific maxims or principles. I do not think it is impossible to approach these texts with standard ethics in mind; however I do think that this approach to the Daoist texts is unfaithful to the texts themselves. A faithful interpretation does not come from an approach geared towards discovering ethical principles or rules; but rather through an approach that has to do with what I call etiquette. This section will provide arguments that both define etiquette and draw support for such an understanding of Daoist ethical attitudes.

2.2.1 – Etiquette, Generally Speaking

It is worth asking the initial question, why use the word etiquette? There are a variety of words or phrases that provide a descriptive alternatives to ‘ethics’ when advocating a sense of proper conduct from a Daoist perspective.\(^8\) I choose the word etiquette because it seems to have two different but related meanings. The first meaning is best exemplified by table etiquette. For example: work outside to inside with your table setting; fold your napkin on your lap; and for the love of God do not use your water glass for wine. Table etiquette has a set of (more or less) uniform rules that are known by the individual before they enter the relevant context. This set of rules is used to judge another person’s behavior in that context. By referring to them we are able to say that action X is polite, and action Y is rude. Under this first meaning etiquette might be defined as: prescribed codes of conduct for particular situations. Behind these prescriptions lies the simple goal of showing ‘goodness’ or ‘neighborliness’ towards the situation, the hosts, guests, etc… These ritualized mannerisms are in the service of

\(^8\) Enduring disposition and personal comportment both come to mind.
‘being good.’ I suggest that this interpretation of conduct is completely consonant with the relationship between the Confucian concepts, *li* (rite) and *ren* (benevolence):

Judging from the relationship of benevolence and rite, the former is the root, the latter the branch; the former is the ins, the latter the outs; the former is the content, the latter the form. Benevolence is the ultimate aim, rite is a kind of binding force and norms and system which guarantee the achievement of the purpose.  

This first way of looking at etiquette, and Confucian thinking, are both prescriptive. The aim of the prescription is the cultivation of politeness or goodness.

The second way of looking at etiquette is best exemplified by either ‘bathroom etiquette’ or ‘smoker etiquette.’ There are clearly things that you do, or do not do, in a public restroom. Generally speaking you go about your business; you are hygienic and respectful of the people around you. Yet these are not prescribed rules. Similarly, when smokers are with non smokers, there are clearly practices that they do, or do not, engage in. A smoker might notice the direction of the wind, and reposition him or herself before lighting up. Also, a conscientious smoker might refrain from lighting up at the patio table when non smokers are eating. Again, these are not prescribed rules, but they are loosely uniform ways of ‘being good.’ With these practices people are able to label some actions more ‘awkward’ or ‘rude’ and others more ‘polite’ or ‘appropriate.’ One benefit of this sort of etiquette is that there are more gradations of what is acceptable, based on changing circumstances, situations, etc… It is to this sort of etiquette that I will show Daoism relates. But it is important to notice both forms of etiquette as having as their goal, a sort of proper conduct or goodness. In this second

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sense the generally accepted actions are more fluid and indeterminate. However they are still actions aimed at targeting a certain kind of politeness or goodness.

Both forms of etiquette, I argue, involve the individual acting in situations with an eye towards being polite and proper or ‘good.’ Etiquette asks a person to fit in harmoniously with others. While the second type of etiquette is more fluid by nature, there is still flexibility in table etiquette, e.g. when teaching children one is often prepared to forgive small slights in favor of a more important lesson. In this way I think both forms of etiquette admit for a sense of growth and progress towards seamless fitting in. Thus I define etiquette as habitual proper conduct: an attitude or disposition that allows a person to encounter their world in a way that does not coerce or impose upon others. Etiquette is what allows people to ‘fit in’ and when that etiquette is guided towards being good; people will fit in properly.

2.2.2 – Why etiquette not ethics?

First and foremost, it seems that all Chinese philosophy during this period of antiquity is involved with discussing the best way for the individual to go about his or her actions. They are doing ‘ethics’ after a fashion. Yet by invoking this word ‘ethic’ we bring into the discussion a sense of tradition and history that carries the weight of our current western understanding. My desire is to not include this tradition or history in the current discussion. This exclusion may not be necessary, but I would rather err on the side of caution and later argue that etiquette is ethics if appropriate. One part of the history and tradition of ethical discourse I find most dischordant with Chinese

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10 I don’t intend here to imply that the history and tradition of western ethical discourse is somehow wrong or damaging. I’m merely bracketing it from the discussion of this thesis.
11 When pairing this with Heidegger in the next chapter, it will become even clearer why this tradition needs to be interrupted and set aside for the purposes of this thesis.
philosophy is the rigidity of most standards for judging. Western ethics typically involve a rigid scale, i.e. Aristotle offers three judgment values, Pardonable, Blameworthy and Praiseworthy.\textsuperscript{12} Other scales are more steeped in morality and might simply involve the judgments ‘good’ and ‘evil.’\textsuperscript{13} This is counter to what is found in Daoist \textit{wu}-forms: which allow and encourage a sliding scale with multiple gradations of value-judgments. For my purposes here I want to emphasize that the value-judgments we use in situations of etiquette are quite fluid. I might comment that a person is ‘inappropriate’ or ‘awkward’ – terms that allow for scales of value without immediately invoking a rigid system of value.

There is another facet of ‘ethics’ that I find missing from the history and tradition of the west. Western ethics tend to overlook the idea that there is a necessary connection between one’s actions and one’s being. We can read deontological and consequentialist ethics without requiring a holistic approach towards the individual’s identity, including their past behavior and possible cultivation and growth into becoming a better agent.\textsuperscript{14} If it is right to do action X, then one should do it, regardless of past background. Chinese ‘ethics’, either Confucian or Daoist, point towards a greater cultivation of goodness that is intrinsic to ethical consideration.

Another reason why I like the use of the word etiquette is that it is a felicitous way of showing a connection between the Daoist and the Confucian approaches to philosophy. In this way, etiquette is more in line with the spirit of the axial period that

\textsuperscript{12} In fact, Aristotle might provide one of the more flexible sets of value-judgments.
\textsuperscript{13} Say, in a Divine Command theory of normativity.
\textsuperscript{14} It seems that there is motivation to make more holistic accounts of standard ethical systems which often appeal to a robust concept of virtue, see for example, Hurka, Thomas, \textit{Virtue, Vice and Value} (Oxford University Press, 2001). However, virtue ethics also have a problem with encouraging moral cultivation, as argued by Robert Johnson, “Virtue and Right,” \textit{Ethics}, Vol. 113 (2003): pp 810-834.
these traditions originate in. It is important to note that etiquette has a connotation towards the cultivation of a better person, both in the narrower (Confucian) sense as well as the looser (Daoist) sense. It is my belief that these different approaches aren’t meant to be in total contrast. The *Lao-Zhuang* texts should not be read polemically against Confucianism; both philosophical backgrounds have at their heart the cultivation of a better person. There are clearly contentions and disagreements, but it seems better to see these differences as those between bickering siblings, rather than as enemies. One might say, the *telos* for each is the same (the cultivation of goodness) but they have different methods of bringing about this goal. Etiquette captures this mutual goal, and allows for the two different sides of Chinese thought to be displayed.

Lastly, in the ordinary usage of either type of etiquette, the word reflects a set of guidelines that are not mandated by a static social construct. Society is necessary to understand these bounds, but there is not an institution or authority on what these guidelines are. The authority in one situation may fail to be an authority in another situation. This is because etiquette is primordial with respect to thematized ways of carving up the world. To explain what I mean by this pre-thematization, I will look at two examples: education and legal institutions. The educational thematic might involve understanding oneself as an educator. Etiquette is at play when following prescribed guidelines of academic standards for plagiarism. As an educator, one can enforce these guidelines with a courtesy that respects differences between academic disciplines regarding citations. This might involve explaining what proper citation involves in the particular course explicitly, in order to avoid confusion. The educator is moving beyond the thematized guidelines to rely on a pre-thematized sense of fairness. The
explicit or thematized guidelines must be interpreted through some pre-thematized lens. Or take the example of a legal institution. There are multiple ways that that one could enforce a law regarding peaceful protest. One enforcer could very articulately explain what is legally acceptable in those cases, and what is not. Another enforcer could very aggressively move against protesters without clearly articulating what the protester is doing that violates the law. This clear and articulate explication of the law is not demanded by the law, but reflects a different way of conducting behavior. Again there is a thematized guideline that is interpreted via the pre-thematic disposition of the agent. This pre-thematized disposition is exactly what etiquette encompasses. For these reasons, I choose to approach this thesis through etiquette rather than ‘ethics.’

2.2.3 – Etiquette and Ethical Focus in the Daoist Texts

The *Daodejing* is a political treatise that describes the ideal human example and the way that individuals should conduct the affairs of state. Properly speaking, it is a manual for how the proper ruler should act. The goal of this section is to focus on how the proper individual should act in general. As such, the ‘core principles’ that the proper ruler would abide by (*wuwei*, *wuzhi* etc.) are what I am focusing on; rather than the specific particular circumstances mentioned in the text (such as education, war, etc…). However, these ‘core principles’ are not laid out and defined systematically in the *Daodejing*. In fact, it might be wrong to think of these concepts as principles at all. Ames and Hall explain:

> What the Daodejing has to offer, on the other hand, is much simpler. It encourages the cultivation of a disposition that is captured in what we have chosen to call its wu-forms.”¹⁵

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Ames and Hall are identifying the moral dimension of the *Daodejing*, and I shall follow their convention of fixing Daoist moral codes in the *wu*-forms. This approach finds support in chapter 38 of the *Daodejing* which ends with the line, “It is for this reason that persons of consequence: set store by the substance rather than the veneer and by the fruit rather than the flower”\(^{16}\). The fruit of a rule of moral conduct would not be the specific rule, but rather the intention behind the rule. Those individuals who are acting most properly are focused on the cultivation of good acts, not the rules that guide those actions. Thus, the *wu*-forms are not principles as-such, but rather describe a way of being in the world that helps cultivate an intuitive goodness. In short, following the *wu*-forms will help transform the person into a better person in all aspects of his or her life.

2.2.4 – *Wuwei*

Given that my intent is to show that the Daoist texts invoke a sense of etiquette, I shall do so through a look at *wuwei* specifically, as an example of a *wu*-formed word. This discussion of *wuwei* concludes the focus on the ethical element of Daoism. Daoists ethical content rests on a notion of interacting in the world pre-thematically, and I will develop this understanding through two other *wu*-formed words: *wuyu* and *wuzhi*.

One particular *wu*-form that will serve as the primary focus is *wuwei*. This word comes up in over forty of the eighty-one chapters of the *Daodejing*. It is also notably almost absent from the *Zhuangzhi*, with just a handful of occurrences.\(^{17}\) However, before discussing *wuwei* we should explore the notion of *wu* on its own and look at how

\(^{16}\) My translations, unless specified, are from Ames, Roger and Hall David, *Daodejing, “Making Life Significant”: A Philosophical Translation*, (Ballantine Books, 2003). Citations will be in the form, *Daodejing, Chapter #*; e.g. *Daodejing, Chapter 38*.

\(^{17}\) To the best of my knowledge, there are only three occurrences of the word in the inner chapters.
it is used as a prefix. *Wu* is a negation and might be understood as ‘no’ or
‘nothingness.’ Yet, the connotation of the suffix does not entirely deny the root. The
early form of the word *wu* showed the pictogram of a person dancing.\(^\text{18}\) This pictogram
is understood to invoke an image of a medium dancing between the seen and unseen
world. The suggestion is that that *wu* refers to something existing, but not seen. Liu
Xiaogan advocates that:

\[
\text{“being as non-being” is close to Laozi’s thought, namely, restraining some}
\text{human actions. Thus, } wuwei \text{ could be rendered as “action as non-action.”}\(^\text{19}\)
\]

The concept *wu* then is understood as this restraint, not a full denial of the root word.
Understanding *wu* in this sense will help avoid misrepresenting *wuwei* as a passive
concept.

To ground my analysis of *wuwei*, I will look at four different articles and
synthesize their work: To begin, I will lean on Alan Fox who offers a strong look at the
notion of *wuwei* as “fitting-in” from the Zhuangzhi; Graham Parkes qualifies Fox’s
point by pointing out that *wuwei* is best understood as a skill one must develop and
cultivate over time; Earle Coleman makes use of *wuwei* in order to talk about the
intuitive nature of acting properly; and finally Liu Xiaogan who when looking at the
application of *wuwei* in reference to environmental issues, describes what *wuwei* in
action looks like. All of these individuals describe the concept of *wuwei* in
complimentary ways. I take these complimentary accounts as a good introduction to the
concept of *wuwei*.

Philosophy”, *Daoism and Ecology*, (Harvard University Press, 2001) This is found in footnote 6.
Hereafter cited as Xiaogan, page #.
\(^\text{19}\) Xiaogan, page 317
Alan Fox starts off his analysis of *wuwei* by reference to the story of Cook Ding in chapter 3 of the *Zhuangzhi*, and I shall use that as a backdrop when talking of the other theorists as well. Through this look at *wuwei*, we should be able to see the cultivation of a habitual disposition, etiquette, which creates an actively tranquil or harmonious immersion into the daily world.

The first step is to understand the root of *wuwei*, the word *wei*. The word *wei* is the noun form of a verb, to act. For this reason the noun retains the active connotation of the verb. The word *wuwei* is thus necessarily an active word, involved in referencing the completion of actions. This is shown in chapter 48 of the Daodejing: “One does things noncoercively (*wuwei*) and yet nothing goes undone.”20 This quick definition of *wei* helps shape the discussion that follows.

Alan Fox advocates for a notion of *wuwei* as a reflective code of conduct.21 Fox argues that the while *Zhuangzhi* resists formulaic thinking it should not be interpreted as relativistic. The variability of the situation is what Fox thinks provides the slippage here, but “even though there is no single right or wrong ethical stances in general, there are ones that are more right and more wrong given particular situational constraints.”22 To explain this he starts with the backdrop the story of Cook Ding in the *Zhuangzhi*. My abbreviated version of the story, from chapter 3 of the *Zhuangzhi* is as follows:

Cook Ding was butchering an ox for Lord Wenhui. Wenhui noticed that Cook Ding cut in perfect rhythm with little effort. When asked about this, Ding responds, “what I care about is Dao, which goes beyond all skill…perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings and follow things as they are…A good cook changes his knife….”

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20 *Daodejing*, Chapter 48
22 Fox, page 61
once a year – because he cuts. A mediocre cook changes his knife once a month – because he hacks. I have had this knife for nineteen years.” Hearing this, Wenhui remarks, “I have heard the words of Cook Ding and learned how to care for lire.”

The parable is meant to show, according to Fox, “that true mastery and skill, in life as well as in cooking, involve a knack, not a formula”24. Ding is not butchering via the proper rules of ox cutting (this would be the way of the good cook) rather Ding has a knack for butchering that has taken time to accumulate.25 Fox goes on to state that:

This formulaic, rule-based approach to experience will often confront situations for which the rule is not exactly appropriate, and consequently dysfunction and conflict or ‘friction’ will result from trying to jam the square peg into the round hole. On the other hand, ‘finding the fit’ or ‘fitting in’ requires the ability to adapt and change with the circumstances…26

Fox understands wuwei to be fitting in to one’s circumstances and surroundings, rather than forcing the situation into a set pattern of rules or formulas. To put it lightly, one must go with the flow.

While Fox is working from the Zhuangzi, his conception of wuwei is consonant with the notion of wuwei that occurs in the Daodejing. For example, chapter 2 states “sages keep to service that does not entail coercion (wuwei).”27 Wuwei is a non-coercive or non-forceful action in this account. Like Cook Ding, the sages do not force, but rather act intuitively. For another example, in chapter 18 and chapter 19 the author invites the reader to embrace a natural ‘fitting-in’, “display a genuineness like raw silk and embrace a simplicity like unworked wood.”28 These actions of displaying or embracing are conceived of as submitting to wuwei, non-coercive action. This is

23 This abbreviated version follows the translation of David Hinton (Counterpoint Press, 1997), p. 39-40
24 Fox, page 61
25 Compare this understanding of butchering with Chapter 28 of the Daodejing that references great tailoring without cutting.
26 Fox, page 62
27 Daodejing, chapter 2
28 Daodejing, chapter 18
illustrated by the story of Cook Ding, where his actions are natural and simple. I offer these examples to show that the story of Cook Ding is consonant with the notion of *wuwei* that stems from the Daodejing.

Graham Parkes, while focused on a relationship between Daoism and Heidegger in reference to technology, discusses the concept of *wuwei* in a telling way. While his focus is not on Daoist ethical life as such, he makes one point that is worth repeating. Parkes writes:

> The quietist reading of Daoism also tends to understand *wuwei* as something easy, a simple “going with the flow,” rather than as the result of the prolonged practice required for overcoming the unnaturalness instilled by the socialization process. The good Daoist is often represented as a consummate practitioner of some physical technique or skill. After sufficient practice, one’s activity contributes to and enhances the spontaneous self-unfolding (*ziran*)…

Parkes takes away and qualifies the easy connotation of *wuwei* as merely going with the flow. Instead of merely going with the flow we have to make explicit that in order for *wuwei* to encourage behavior leaning towards goodness (spontaneous self-unfolding or *ziran*) it is something that must be practiced. Ding our ox butcher has been butchering for years and says that it took time for him to develop his skill, “When I first began cutting up oxen, I could see nothing but the ox. After three years, I could see more than the ox. And now, I meet the ox in spirit.” The cultivation of *wuwei* is not something that will occur immediately, but will happen over time, as one better learns to act in situations. Parkes helps make explicit this element of *wuwei*, namely that it requires practice.

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30 Parkes, page 39
Earle Coleman, while attempting to connect Daoist and Stoic aesthetics, stumbles upon an interesting look at \textit{wuwei}. Coleman’s paper explores, among other things, the way \textit{wuwei} deals with action, writing, “with \textit{wu-wei} there is action, but one acts intuitively rather than rationally”. This juxtaposition between what Coleman calls intuition and rationality is what interests me. Coleman develops a distinction between \textit{wuwei} as intuition, and non-\textit{wuwei} as rationality. It becomes evident that what Coleman means by ‘rationality’ is to add something cognitive or thematic to the circumstances one finds his or herself in. Coleman uses a Daoist story about two painters in a contest over who can paint the best snake as illustration:

The artist, who finished first, then proceeded to paint feet on his snake. Predictably, the artist lost, because it was unnatural to add feet; it violated the principle of \textit{wu-wei}.

This story is only meant to illustrate that the addition of the feet is what is unnatural. According to Coleman the \textit{addition} of a rationalizing process is the issue with actions. He describes inaction as, “acting without calculation… without striving or conscious will.” This gives light to what Coleman means by acting rationally. Our action should not involve excessive calculating, planning, decision making. The Dao is \textit{spontaneous} and to function in \textit{wuwei} is to engage in that spontaneity.

Coleman’s explanation is easy to connect to traditional examples of \textit{wuwei} in the \textit{Lao-Zhuang} texts. When chapter 19 of the \textit{Daodejing} implores us to, “ervince the plainness of undyed silk/embrace the simplicity of the unhewn log” we see a classic

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32 Coleman, page 389
33 Coleman, page 389.
34 Coleman, page 389.
example of *wuwei*. The value of the unhewn log or the undyed silk is in its lack of addition. One dyes silk, and in doing so, adds something to the nature of the material. One cuts wood, and in doing so, adds something to the shape of the wood. One could also think of Ding the ox butcher. Ding is able to butcher without sharpening his blade, because he is in harmony with what needs cutting and how it is best cut. He sees the Ox as a whole, and barely works at all to find the proper joints and tendons to cut. The illustration exemplifies *wuwei*, acting through non-action. In particular, Ding does not add anything to the ox (by constructing an image of this cut of meat or that cut of meat) but rather cuts the meat as it is naturally. Coleman offers an insight of intuitive action, as an essential characteristic of *wuwei*.

Liu Xiaogan attempts to show how *wuwei* would be helpful in dealing with environmental crisis, and in doing so leans on a conception of *wuwei* as etiquette. Xiaogan wants to apply *wuwei* in a general way towards two specific environmental problems. One is the burning of peat bogs in Indonesia and the other is the harm to Inuit life in the arctic caused by Greenpeace’s success in creating bans on baby seal fur. Xiaogan defines *wuwei*, “the theory of *wuwei* prefers a natural, gradual, and moderate style of conduct and opposes movement exercised intensively, coercively, dramatically, and on a large scale.” Xiaogan notes that what went wrong in the case of Indonesia was not that fire was used to clear forests; small communities have used slash and burn techniques for centuries. Instead, the government and industrial farms used

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35 This translation is from Mair, Victor H. *Tao Te Ching*, (Bantam Publishing, 1990).
36 Xiaogan, page 315
37 Xiaogan, page 317
“large-scale and intensified movements” in the name of economic development and the “manner of these movements is in opposition to the spirit of wuwei.”

In reference to the Inuit way of life, Xiaogan notes that Greenpeace “used a confrontational approach to environmental issues…Greenpeace played with photographic techniques, practiced confrontational activities, and pursued dramatic effect.” The techniques involved showing brutal images over the mass media, in rapid succession (without seeing the natural character of seal hunting) which Greenpeace phrased as ‘mind bombs.’ They took the seal hunting out of context in order to show the worst portions of it. Importantly, Xiaogan notes, they do so in the pursuit of dramatic effect. To create drama, is to create a disruption. To create a dramatic effect is to tug at another person, to impose a way of looking at the world onto them. Xiaogan writes that proper environmental preservation involves, “prudent behavior and action, namely, wuwei.” As Xiogan says, wuwei will look gradual, moderate, localized and prudent.

Etiquette, as defined above, is habitual proper conduct: an attitude or disposition that allows a person to encounter his or her world in a way that does not coerce or impose upon others. The insight that we gather from Fox, is that wuwei involves the ability to fit in with ones surroundings, rather than to try and mold the surroundings to what one is familiar with. Wuwei means fitting in to the world, rather than trying to force the world to fit in with us. This is easily understandable in light of etiquette. Cook Ding is able to adapt to the changing circumstances of the ox he needs to butcher and ‘fit in.’ His attitude of seeing the whole, rather than the parts is what allows him to

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38 Xiaogan, page 318
39 Xiaogan, pages 319-320
40 Ibid. p. 324
41 Talk of moderation can be supported in a variety of places, seeing Alan Fox and Earle Coleman cited above for possibilities.
be so skillful. Parkes reminds us that this ‘going with the flow’ requires time to
develop, learn and actualize. *Wuwei* is not something one simply does, but rather an
attitude that is cultivated. Etiquette is also cultivated through repeated social
circumstances and involvement. Our cook again exemplifies this need to learn and
grow via practice. Coleman adds to this a notion of intuitively feeling these
surroundings, rather than calculating the differences and rationally deducing a way of
fitting in. Ding is not thinking about the cuts in order to guide his knife, instead he is
letting the circumstances guide him. Xiaogan shows how this understanding of *wuwei*
(as etiquette) can be applied negatively to showcase the problems of some
environmental actions. All of these seem to fit into the second way of understanding
etiquette, the etiquette that comes up naturally for the smoker or for individuals in a
public restroom. It seems that rather than talking about *wuwei* as an ethical maxim;
*wuwei* needs to be understood in terms of etiquette.

2.3 – Pre-Thematization: ‘Objectivity’ *Wuyu* and *Wuzhi*

It is not on the basis of *wuwei* alone that I understand Daoist ethical attitudes as
etiquette. *Wuyu* and *wuzhi*, the other *wu*-forms repeated often in the *Daodejing* reflect
a similar understanding of appropriate action and conduct. While *wuwei* is a primarily
‘ethical’ *wu*-form; *wuyu* and *wuzhi* are slightly different. Both provide a background to
understanding and living out the etiquette that comes from *wuwei*. This background
will be explicated in what follows. This explication will provide more information
concerning the focal point of this meditation, the ethical insight Daoism provides, by
providing an analysis of the way Daoism advocates for a pre-thematic understanding.
As *wuyu* and *wuzhi* are shown to involve a particularly Daoist notion of objectivity, it
will become clear that this notion of objectivity is not dependent on any particular social construction or theory. It is primordial to all ways of understanding the world, independent of any particular social theory.

*Wuyu* is often translated as ‘objectless desire.’ However, it is probably best understood as ‘deference.’ In order to understand that *wuyu* entails we must explore the Daoist notion of objectivity. *Wuzhi*, similarly, rests on this understanding of objectivity. *Wuzhi* could be translated as ‘no-knowledge.’ However, *wuzhi* entails a rejection of a particular type of knowledge, namely a codified or systematic knowledge. Ames and Hall describe what types of knowledge should be absent or missing, “the kind of knowledge that is dependent upon ontological presence: that is, the assumption that there is some unchanging reality behind appearance.”

This belief in the absence of an unchanging ontological presence is further clarified by a detailed explanation of Daoist objectivity.

2.3.1 – ‘Objectivity’

In order to describe this notion of objectivity from a Daoist perspective, I’d like to look at “The Tao and the Field: exploring an analogy” by Robert G. Henricks. Henricks stumbles upon a great analogy despite trying to use it to show something likely incorrect. The field is a great way to understand Daoist metaphysics; Henricks errs in understanding the field as static. Henricks begins his exploration with the first chapter of the *Daodejing*:

> The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao, the name that can be named is not the eternal name.

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42 Ames and Hall, page 40
He notes that this wording allows for a double meaning. On the one hand the author of the *Daoedjing* is noting that anything said about ‘a dao’ will not reference the eternal or constant ‘Dao.’ Yet, Henricks notes, “he seems to confirm, in this backwards way, that there is some such reality.”

Henricks then describes how this suggests, like most mystic literature, that there is a transcendent eternal reality that somehow falls short of our description. He then looks at a field of wildflowers in order to describe this eternal reality, analogously. Henricks states:

> Were we to go to an untended field in the midst of winter, we might see no form of life whatsoever. There would be nothing but a still, silent void with nothing for the senses to grasp. Did we not know better, we would presumably conclude that there was no relationship whatsoever between this inert mass and the variety of forms, sounds, and smells which we know as summer life.

Henricks describes the analogy of this field with the development of an eternal, constant *Dao* that gives rise to the world. To defend this he cites further textual evidence in the first chapter of the *Daodejing*, “The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth.”

Where Henricks goes wrong is in his interpretation of the first chapter. I take the author of the *Daodejing*, not to be confirming some unchanging reality, but rather to show that the constantly changing reality is all that we have. The field of wildflowers is a perfect example of this, for we recognize that the field was never a constant inert form. Instead we can watch the field change throughout all its myriad ways.

> The first chapter shows precisely that there is not an eternal, unchanging reality.

Take two different translations, “Tao called Tao is not Tao” or “Way-making (dao) that

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44 Henricks, page 2
45 Henricks, page 8
46 Henricks, page 2
can be put into words is not really way-making.” These translations are without the article “the” that is found in older translations. Without that article it is easier to avoid assuming an eternal unchanging reality from the first chapter. One might imagine a translation of the first line like this, ‘If the ideas in this book are codified, then they might not reflect the intent of this book.’ This rejection of a codification or systematizing comes precisely because a code or a system is fixed, and the world is not fixed.

There is more support for this sort of relationship between the objective world and the experience of the individuals within it. The beginning of chapter 2 states:

As soon as everyone in the world knows that the beautiful are beautiful, There is already great ugliness. As soon as everyone knows the able, there is ineptness. Determinacy and indeterminacy give rise to each other, difficult and easy complement each other, long and short set each other off, high and low complete each other, refined notes and raw sounds harmonize with each other, And before and after lend sequence to each other – this is really how it all works. 48

This passage is showing a play of opposites; beauty complements ugly, ability complements disability, etc… This reflects the position that change is constant, the pairs work together to create meaning. Noticing the final words, some emphasis should be placed on ‘this is really how it all works.’ This is showing the practical element of this vocabulary and reflecting its power to explain reality. Ames and Hall say that these distinctions are, “not ontological categories at all, but are rather conventional distinctions that have explanatory force in giving an account of how things hang together.” 49

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47 The first translation is from Stephen Addis and Stanley Lombardo; the second is from Ames and Hall. Both of these translations are based on copies of the text coming after the Mawangdui archeological find in 1973 and the Guodian archaeological find in 1993.
48 Daodejing, chapter 2
49 Ames and Hall, page 81
appearance in metaphysics. The intent of this passage is to deny this type of understanding that comes from the language of appearance and reality. Chapter 2, by first affirming that there is a process of changing circumstances, and then stating that the language used is practical, shies away from this language being used with regards to a fixed transcendent reality. The reality is that these things come together and are mutually dependent, as shown through our practical experience. As Ames and Hall say, the world hangs together.

If the world is not fixed, but is constantly changing and if the elements that constitute this world are hanging together; what could we say about an objective reality? The Daoist is a realist; the world is what we see around us. There are clearly qualifications to this type of realism, primarily having to do with the use of language. To discuss the problems that arise out of language would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Granting that this realism would be uniquely qualified on Daoist terms, it is still fair to assert that the Daoist takes the world as it is. Daoism asserts that people share their experiences of objects and things in the world and that these things really exist. What Daoism takes issue with is the idea that the objects that constitute the world are fixed, static elements. The objective world of Daoism may be called objectless, insofar as nothing is fixed and static:

Sages envision a world of changing events that they can, for whatever reason, choose to freeze momentarily into a distinct pattern of discrimination, but that they recognize, when they see clearly, as being beyond such distinctions.\(^\text{50}\)

The sage can work with the explanatory power of words that seem to invoke distinct objects, but they recognize that this is only for the power of explanation. This is not the way things really are. Thus we might call the objective world of Daoism to be full of

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\(^{50}\) Ames and Hall, page 43
infinite objects, since all things encountered in one’s life are radically unique. This background will inform our discussion of wuyu (objectless desire) and wuzhi (no-knowledge). I will first discuss wuyu or ‘objectless desire’; and then address wuzhi or ‘no-knowledge.’

2.3.2 – Wuyu: ‘Objectless-Desire’

One way of understanding Daoist metaphysics is that the world does not have objects. Taking this conception with the idea of wuyu; we have a picture of wuyu as a sort of deferential desire, deferential to whatever the circumstances happen to hold. The final line in chapter 46 of the Daodejing states, “contentment that derives from knowing when to be content is eternal contentment” or “knowing that enough is enough is enough is always, enough.”

We see that Daoism advocates for having desire in appropriate way. It is not that one lacks a desire for contentment, but rather one knows how to not ask for too much and in turn finds contentment. Deference is not the deference to any particular desire; but deferential to the state of the world at the moment in time. Wuyu, understood as deference, allows for agents to act in a non-coercive fashion (wuwei) given the constantly changing and adapting circumstances. The agent does not need to force a particular set of circumstances in order to act in the necessary way.

Another element of wuyu is shown in what is commonly understood as human desire or the instrumental desire for some object. Daoism sees that human desire that is motivated for a single object is often motivated to put some control or possession on to object. This would limit the experience of the world and thereby limit the exercise of wuwei, “A self that is consumed by objects of desire narrows, truncates, and obfuscates

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51 The translations are Addis and Lombardo and Ames and Hall, respectively.
Wuyu then presupposes an “objectless” world and encourages people to live in a way that is deferential to the changing circumstances and does not seek to control or possess the individual objects of desire.

2.3.3 – Wuzhi: ‘no-knowledge’

Moving on to wuzhi, there are three facets of this wu-form that are worth highlighting. First, it intends to show a rejection of institutionalized (static) forms of knowledge and knowing. Second, it encourages us to accept the world on its own terms. Lastly, it focuses learning onto individual experiences and encourages individuals to take part in that learning. Starting with chapter 20:

Cut off learning and there will be nothing more to worry about. How much difference is there really between a polite “yes” and an emphatic “no!”? How much difference is there between what is deemed beautiful and ugly?...So indefinite! Does this humbuggery ever come to an end!...the common lot all have their purposes while I alone am a dull-witted yokel. My needs alone are different from other people, cherishing my mother’s milk.53

The first statement tells us to cut off the established learning. Established learning shows how to answer questions of beauty or right and wrong. Yet this learning also causes worry and stress over subscribing to the right side of these conventional distinctions. Established learning says something is always right or wrong, without taking into account individual circumstances. The world is always changing, and so this established wisdom might change the beauty/ugly judgment as well. This is easily born out in daily experience, as elements of 1980s fashion are coming back and haunt currently, whereas 10 years ago they would have remained outdated. The distinction of beauty/ugly is not constant and therefore cannot be established. The distinctions that learning creates, “assenting and rejecting, deeming beautiful and otherwise…are at best

52 Ames and Hall, page 44
53 Daodejing, chapter 20
The author is like the baby nourished by its mothers milk, the author gains unmediated experience and learning. This is the first facet of wuzhi: institutionalized learning fails to take into account the changing world of experience and therefore must be rejected.

Institutionalized learning fails to account for change because it assumes there is some ontological significance behind things. The Daoist view is that there is an objectless world without a transcendent unchanging reality. Thus things only have the ontological significance that is born out through experience. Institutionalized learning would systematize objects, classifying them, and putting them into a hierarchy. Chapter 52 of the Daodejing shows us that objects present themselves to humans for knowledge and experience:

Taking into account the way things reveal themselves, if you go back again and rely upon your acuity, you will stay clear of all calamities. This is what is called according with common sense.

The Daodejing implores us to act with common sense, which means that we understand the objects of our experience as they present themselves. Rather than looking at an animal and studying it, classifying it with a taxonomical chart, we let that animal be that animal. The idea is that by watching the squirrel go about its business you will learn more than by labeling it a four legged mammal. The world presents itself for learning instead of being represented by learning.

The presentation of the world, by itself, for understanding leads precisely into the final facet of wuzhi: that personal experience should serve as a guide for interpretation of the world. This is not meant to say that people must experience the

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54 Daodejing, chapter 20
55 Ames and Hall, p. 158
widest range of possible experiences, but rather that people need to make the most out of their experiences. This is exemplified in chapter 47 of the *Daodejing*:

Without going out-of-doors, one may know all under heaven; without peering through windows, one may know the Way of heaven. The farther one goes, the less one knows. For this reason, the sage knows without journeying, understands without looking, accomplishes without acting.\(^5^6\)

The text explains that whatever needs to be learned, can be learned locally. What is it that needs to be learned? What needs to be learned is how to behave, act, and create meaning for oneself. The idea is that provided an agent makes the most out of her experiences, she will learn all that is necessary. As the scope of the text involves cultivating goodness, the entailment is that the agent will learn all that she needs concerning cultivating goodness.

In the passage quoted above, “way of heaven” is used as the translation of the word “dao.” Ames and Hall have taken to translating this word differently, as way-making, rather than with the standard “way.” They argue for their translation in part by saying that the different translation tries:

> to capture the defining purpose of the text stated above: bringing into focus and sustaining a productive disposition that allows for the fullest appreciation of those specific things and events that constitute one’s field of experience.\(^5^7\)

This is precisely why the agent can learn everything without having to travel far; what she needs to learn is how to behave in order to constitute her experience. *Wuwei* is the model for action, *wuyu* the model for desire, and *wuzhi* is the kind of knowledge we gain. All three help show a way of being-in-the-world that encourages a profound etiquette. ‘Objectless-desire’ and ‘no-knowledge’ provide the necessary foundation for

\(^{56}\) Mair, p. 15  
\(^{57}\) Ames and Hall, p. 13
wuwei. By recognizing and conceptualizing the world through wuyu and wuzhi one is able to live out the etiquette of wuwei.

2.4 – Daoism and the Environment

Now that there is an understanding of Daoist ethical thought, the question turns towards what Ecological position can be pulled from the Lao-Zhuang texts. There are some individuals who argue that Daoism and other forms of eastern wisdom contain the knowledge that can fill in a missing piece of western thought; the missing piece that has helped shape the environmental crisis we live in. This is most likely an error. Daoism should not be seen as containing a magical kernel of wisdom that can show westerners how to stop the environmental crisis. Instead, Daoism provides a kernel of wisdom that helps humans interact with their world more seamlessly, thereby emphasizing more laudable actions in general; which can secondarily be applied to the environment.

To begin with, this environmental crisis is often linked with the industrialization of modern society. As such, many individuals begin to idealize a pre-industrial world or way of life.\(^{58}\) I agree partially with Paul Goldin, who notes that:

The fact that the most visible environmental problems today can be traced to the habits of our post-industrial society does not mean that pre-industrial humans had a more profound comprehension of ecology or a more laudable attitude toward nature. On the contrary, the historical record suggests that populations of the past did not do more damage to the environment only because they were technologically incapable of it.\(^ {59}\)

While I cannot speak to the environmental practices of pre-industrial society, I can say that it is clear humans have an impact on their environment and the greater the technological capacity, the greater the impact. Thus it would be incorrect to idealize the

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\(^{58}\) See Wendell Berry or Harlan Hubbard, for examples.

\(^{59}\) Goldin, Paul “Why Daoism is not Environmentalism”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Vol. 32: No. 1 (2005), page 77
pre-industrial peoples as having a greater awareness of environmental issues simply because they did not have the power to destroy their world. Goldin asserts that pre-industrial peoples (such as Native Americans) were clearly shaping and changing their environment (by burning down undergrowth to chase out animals) in very drastic ways (thereby creating the great plains of the central United States). Golden argues that this example shows a lack of environmental sensitivity, but I take issue with any argument of this type. If we are to look at a standard preservationist outlook, the changing of the forests into plains would be seen as a destruction of habitat for particular species and therefore ecologically damaging. Daoism does not agree with this. The ever-changing worldview and dynamic world would allow for the destruction of species to create new life and provide space for new species. Chapter 18 of the Zhuangzhi ends with:

The yangxi grass lives with the bamboo that no longer sprouts, which gives birth to an insect by the name of qingning, which in turns gives birth to the leopard, and which again in turn gives birth to the horse, which again in turn gives birth to the man. The man, in his turn, reverts to the microorganism. Everything in the world comes out of a microorganism and goes back to it.\textsuperscript{60}

The author is not trying to explain how an actual horse gives birth to an actual human, but rather to show that there is continuity from microorganisms into humans. This continuity might be argued to reflect a kind of evolution, but based on the earlier text I take it to reflect an understanding of a food chain. This type of thinking, while shown here with regards to diet, is also true of ecosystems. Both lean on the understanding of a world of constant change. All this shows is that Daoism does not support the preservation that we often see as a “green” idea.

\textsuperscript{60} This translation is from Arthur Waley, (Trans.) Library of Chinese Classics: The Zhuangzhi, (Hunan People’s Publishing and Foreign language Press, 1999).
The evidence that Daoism does not reflect a preservationist attitude can similarly show that Daoism fails to reflect conservationist attitude. The lack of an objective world necessitates the lack of an objective “nature” that needs to be preserved or conserved. The Daoist does not see the world as made of static resources, so what point would there be in trying to preserve or conserve them?

It is clear that Daoist literature does not reflect a worldview that necessarily advocates for the same ideas that we have in modern society about being ecologically sensitive. Daoism does not necessarily contain ‘green’ ideas about how to deal with greenhouse gas emissions. Nor does it necessarily advocate for a conservation of energy. Nor does it necessarily demand a minimum of resource use. Nor does it necessarily advocate the magical 3 R’s (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). What Daoism does do is reflect a different way of looking at objects, and a different way of interacting with the world. This is not a ‘green’ position; but it is also not an ‘un-green’ position. Daoism advocates for an etiquette that allows an individual to more harmoniously interact with the world. Later, I will show how this etiquette reflects a way of interacting with the natural world that can help address many of the environmental challenges facing the world today.
Chapter 3: Heidegger, Lebenswelt, and “primordial ethics”

3.1 – Introduction

Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological approach will provide another way of understanding the world in a pre-thematically. This pre-thematization also provides a foundation for an ethical outlook. Thus Heideggerian phenomenology shows a separate but similar starting point from the understanding Daoism offers in the Lao-Zhuang texts. Before diving into this Heideggerian phenomenology, a few interpretative suppositions will be detailed. After the interpretive remarks, this chapter will move towards a look at Heidegger’s phenomenological method, Dasein, and Dasein’s relationship with the pre-thematized world or Lebenswelt. Third, the thesis evaluates Heidegger’s later thinking with regards to conduct and action within the Lebenswelt. Lastly, I will address how this ethical outlook can be brought to bare on environmental concerns. This chapter will conclude in a similar fashion compared to the Daoism chapter. I.e. this chapter will conclude that people primordially interact with their world in a pre-thematic way. This pre-thematic way involves etiquette. While this etiquette does not necessitate an Al Gore-esque green outlook, neither does it rule against one. Heidegger’s work also leads toward a set of conclusions that are not the same as the
Daoist set. Heidegger’s work begins to set more limitations on the relationship between humans and nature. Heidegger’s work is less involved with etiquette and more involved with the pre-thematic foundation for etiquette. In this way, while the Daoist meditation focused on the ethical contributions, this Heideggerian meditation will focus on the pre-thematic contributions.

3.2 – Initial suppositions and interpretative remarks

Before diving into Heidegger’s work, there are some initial suppositions and interpretative remarks worth confronting. The first is how to deal with the complaint that Heidegger does not, and or is unable to provide ethical or moral philosophical content. The second is how to understand the distinction between the early work of Heidegger (notably in *Being and Time*) and the later work of Heidegger. The third is the use of the word ‘etiquette’ to understand Heideggerian ethical insight. Fourth is the use of the term ‘*Lebenswelt*’ to talk about a pre-thematic world. In this section I will address each of these in turn.

3.2.1 – “Lack of Moral Thinking”

To begin, how should one deal with Heidegger’s supposed lack of moral thinking? The supposition that Heidegger has nothing to offer moral philosophy usually stems from Heidegger’s Nazi affiliation. However I find this supposition and worry only minimally compelling. In this space I offer two methods that can deflect the force of this worry. First, I would like to point out that Heidegger is far from the first philosopher to have suspect moral practices. In fact, very few individuals in the history

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61 Heidegger, Martin, *Sein und Zeit* translated as *Being and Time*, Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (Blackwell Publishing, 1962). Hereafter I will cite this text as B&T, page #. I reserve the right to refer to *Being and Time* as B&T in the body of the text.

62 While I think there is a more complex and compelling way of discussing Heidegger and National Socialism, I will refrain from dealing with that in detail.
of philosophy are without suspect moral practices on their hands. I see no reason why Heidegger should be held separate from the likes of Plato, Aristotle, Locke or Kant. Second, I will follow Jean-Luc Nancy in arguing that, “Only those who have read Heidegger blindly, or not at all, could think him a stranger to ethical preoccupations.”

It is true that Heidegger does not offer a systematic moral philosophy. It is also true that he does not offer specific rules for conduct or action. However, Heidegger’s intent is to interrupt these things and reopen questions of ethics; thus the lack of these is precisely the point. The lack of them does not come from an oversight or a lack of preoccupation with conduct and action; but rather from a philosophical perspective that aims at opening a gap in our prescriptive and normative rules.

3.2.2 – Die Kehre

How to deal with the connection between the early Heidegger and the later Heidegger is a more complicated matter. It is commonly accepted in Heideggerian scholarship that there is a point in the 1930s when Heidegger’s thinking undergoes a turn (die Kehre). The nature of this turn is highly debatable, but it commonly divides the early Heidegger of B&T from the later Heidegger after the fall of Nazi Germany. Because I begin with a look at B&T, and continue on to look at later essays such as: Building Dwelling Thinking, and The Question Concerning Technology, it would be an error to ignore the issue. However I do not have the time or space to clearly articulate an interpretation of the Kehre in Heidegger’s thinking. Instead I will address the issue in two ways. First, I suggest that the turn is not a turn of thought; but rather a refocusing of thought. Heidegger says in the Beiträge that his later work represents,

“passage from ontology to ontology.”⁶⁴ This should be understood as a change of orientation, but not a change of the fundamental project. Second, in order to ground this suggestion I will offer the work I do in this chapter as backing. If there is a common thread throughout the early and later Heidegger, then it is clearly one of ethical preoccupation.⁶⁵ The present chapter should be seen as the basis for this hermeneutical choice.

3.2.3 – Etiquette?

Next, to look at the Heideggerian insight it becomes plain that the reasons for using the word etiquette offered in the meditation on Daoism do not hold the same sort of force with regards to Heidegger. I feel as if there is another term that is better used, and I shall adjust my terminology as I discuss Heidegger. One reason for this is that I want to emphasize the shift in focus from ethics, which Daoism keeps central, to the pre-thematic, which Heidegger keeps central. Thus, whenever necessary, I will use the term primordial ethics.

3.2.4 – The Lebenswelt

Finally, I will use the word Lebenswelt synonymously with the descriptive phrase, ‘pre-thematic world.’ The German Lebenswelt is a poetic compound that discloses the content of the phrase ‘pre-thematic world.’ The word literally translates to Life-world; and this is precisely what is meant by a world that is pre-thematized, or prior to a specific thematization. I use the term thematization to mean an activity (or process of the brain) that interprets the world that we find ourselves living in. As noted

⁶⁴ Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936-1938). Translated as Contributions to Philosophy: (From Enowning) by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).
⁶⁵ This is also a claim found in Nancy, Jean-Luc “Heidegger’s Originary Ethics” Studies in Practical Philosophy, Vol 1: No 1 (1999): pp 12-35.
in chapter 1, I am not concerned with advocating for a pure non-thematized conception; I doubt a purely non-thematized conception is possible. Instead I am interested in Heidegger’s methodology as a way of stripping down some of the thematic constructions with which we interpret the world. For Heidegger, we are first thrown into the world and then we begin to make sense of it. This initial world we are thrown into world is the world before it is carved up and it is the world that is common to all people. The primordial world is lurking behind the thematized worlds, and is involved in the thematization of the worlds. For example, one way of thematizing the world might be to apply a lens of ‘historical analysis’ to our conception of the world. Under this thematization, the things in the world become objects of study for the historian to make judgments about them. Or perhaps the primordial world is focused in a different way and becomes a world of concepts for the study of philosophy. The Lebenswelt, or world of life, is behind all thematized worlds. The language of “Life-World” contains this facet, and as such I like the poetic construction.

3.3 – The Phenomenological Method

The actual starting point of this chapter is the way in which Heidegger understands phenomenology. Heidegger’s understanding of phenomenology comes from Husserl but involves an important twist. Husserl understood phenomenology as a method that allows an individual to experience the world itself. Heidegger explains what he means by phenomenology in the Introduction to B&T:

The expression ‘phenomenology’ signifies primarily a methodological conception. This expression does not characterize the what of the object of philosophical research as a subject-matter, but rather the how of that research. The more genuinely a methodological concept is worked out and the more comprehensively it determines the principles on which a science is to be conducted, all the more primordially it is rooted in the way we come to terms
with the things themselves, and the farther is it removed from what we call “technical devices”, though there are many such devices even in the theoretical disciplines.66

In this passage Heidegger is following Husserl by accepting partially the maxim of “to the things themselves” but adding to this maxim another important dimension, that of being primordial. The first sentence is clear, for Heidegger phenomenology is a method of conducting research. Secondly, this method is applicable to a variety of disciplines; i.e. ethical understanding, fundamental ontology, or epistemology. These (or other) subject areas of research are what Heidegger has in mind when referencing ’sciences.’67

This method of investigation is capable of fully articulating the principles for that particular discipline because it is in tune with the things themselves.

Overall, Heidegger wants a general method that is applicable to any area of inquiry. A general method allows Heidegger to investigate a general way of being, one that is without the lens of a specific discipline. The phenomenological method is precisely what allows Heidegger to investigate being *qua* being.

Given that Heidegger’s project in B&T is to develop an understanding of being, phenomenology provides the best articulation of the general principle of being.

Phenomenology is “being rooted in the way we come to terms with the things themselves, and the farther is it removed from what we call ‘technical devices’”.68

What is important is that it involves approaching the world primordially, or before the individual begins to understand the world through any lens. This is the element that Heidegger adds to a Husserlian understanding. In this way we have an understanding of

66 B&T, page 50
67 The word that is typically translated as “science” in German is *Wissenschaft* which has a general connotation of scholarly discipline or scholarship. A particular *Wissenschaft* would be a particular academic discipline.
68 B&T, page 50
Heideggerian phenomenology; it is a method that investigates the objects-in-themselves and therefore provides the foundation for doing any academic inquiry. This enterprise is primordial according to Heidegger, because the investigation comes prior to investigating the objects of research through the thematized lens of a particular discipline. This notion of primordiality is essential to the general framework. It allows us to have a foundation for all other investigations, including that of ethics. In this way, the role the *Lebenswelt* plays is as a foundation for ethics.

Phenomenology, on Heidegger’s view, is the best method for approaching a fundamental ontology (or an answer to the question of Being), but how does this relate to the pursuit of something ethical? Heidegger himself makes this connection, and I will show how it stems from division one, of part one of *Being and Time*.

In Section 3 of B&T, Heidegger makes it plain that all disciplines are dependent upon a conception of being. Heidegger sums this notion up by saying:

The question of Being aims therefore at ascertaining the *a priori* conditions not only for the possibility of the sciences which examine entities as entities of such and such a type, and in so doing, already operate with an understanding of Being, but also for the possibility of those ontologies themselves which are prior to the ontical sciences and which provide their foundations.69

Heidegger argues that the question of Being is foundational for the research of all disciplines. Ethics might be understood as the discipline of generating value-judgments on actions or human conduct. The domain of ethics is restricted, not every action is relevant to the generation of value-judgments. The human conduct that is relevant is the conduct that occurs between two ethically valuable entities. Ethics is in this sense ontical, it deals with beings but not with the general question of Being. Heidegger argues that this discipline (ethics) is already operating under a conception of ontology.

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69 B&T, page 31
Hence, a strong articulation of a conception of Being would be foundational for understanding an ontical research, such as ethics. Hence, phenomenology and the method Heidegger uses in B&T are constitutive foundations for looking at the ethical.

Fundamental ontology involves answering the question of Being. Heidegger determines that this question needs to be approached through Dasein. Dasein is a being where ‘Being’ is a question for it. Confused, don’t be. Dasein is some entity that, essentially, ponders what it means to exist. As far as I am aware, humans are the only creature to do this. We can therefore understand Dasein as a human being. Humans are therefore the creatures that are self-reflective and reflect on questions like ontology; humans are Dasein. Now, my inquiry in this thesis is to help illuminate a relationship between humans and a non-human environment. Fundamental ontology, as a research that focuses on human beings (Dasein) in turn provides insight concerning humans as they interact with the world. This interaction is ethical, it involves conduct that is between two relevant entities. I develop this connection between fundamental ontology and ethical insight through an evaluation of two primary concepts related to Dasein.

3.4 – The pre-thematic foundation – ‘Being and Time’

There are two concepts that concern this thesis (with regards to Dasein) and they are Being-in-the-World and Sörge. These two concepts are foundational elements of Dasein. Dasein is fundamentally and always, Being-in-the-World. Dasein is also always characterized by Sörge. I will draw out the meaning of these concepts through an explication of B&T. This explication will highlight other concepts for Heidegger,

70 Even if other creatures are capable of this sort of self-reflection, there would not be a problem with the analysis for my thesis. Heidegger is focused on human life; and the question at play for deep ecology is how humans interact with the world. Thus, Heidegger’s analysis of human life is appropriate for the purposes deep ecology needs.
including readiness presence-to-hand (vorhanden and zuhanden, respectively), possibility (möglichkeit), mood, and understanding (verstehen).

3.4.1 – Being-in-the-world

First and foremost, Dasein is always fundamentally in the world. This is the first point that needs to be established to develop fundamental ontology, and therefore the first for my purpose. Heidegger’s first set of conclusions from his phenomenological investigation are:

Being-in-the-world, according to our Interpretation hitherto, amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment.\footnote{B&T, page 107}

This is a very dense statement. To begin unpacking this statement notice that to be in the world, is to have a non-thematic circumspective absorption. Heidegger understands ‘non-thematic’ as prior to an abstract/theoretical structure or theme that is applied to the interpretation of the objects in one’s view. This is what I have been calling pre-thematic and referenced by talking about a lack of a particular lens.

Another element to notice is that the things in the world that are ready-to-hand (vorhanden) are what Heidegger refers to by ‘equipment.’ Equipment certainly includes hammers, pens or other standard tools. However, the category of equipment can also include anything that is in the world. What makes it equipment, rather than something else, is the use that Dasein has for the object. Human agents can make anything instrumental, simply by its ability to fulfill the need. Looking around a classroom there are many objects that can, perfectly or imperfectly, be used as a tool for learning…the objects referenced do not necessarily have to be designed for this purpose. Things can also be present-to-hand (zuhanden). Present-to-hand things are
simply those things are present in the world. If Dasein were to find an instrumentality in something present-to-hand, it would be brought into practical focus and become something ready-to-hand. Being-in-the-world refers to looking at objects and ascribing to them a purpose or use, understanding things as ready-to-hand or merely present-to-hand. This happens because Dasein understands the things in the world with regards to Sörge, which will be detailed later.72

Another element of Being-in-the-world is spatiality. Dasein is distinctly spatial, and this understanding needs to be unfolded. Heidegger begins this discussion with the following summary of spatiality concerning the present-to-hand and the world:

Dasein is essentially not a Being-present-at-hand; and its “spatiality” cannot signify anything like occurrence at a position in ‘world-space’, nor can it signify Being-ready-to-hand at some place…Dasein, however, is ‘in’ the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity…it/s spatiality shows the characters of de-severance and directionality.73

Dasein is a Being for which Being is a question to it, it is not merely present-at-hand or ready-to-hand in its spatiality. If Dasein were merely one of these, then its spatiality would involve a physical position at a definite time with regards to other entities. If Dasein’s spatiality were merely with regards to a position at a certain time with regards to the world, then that spatiality would exclude Sörge (concern) and context. Yet, Dasein’s world is one of context with regards to how Dasein understands other things in its world. To allow for this Heidegger introduces the technical terms de-severance and directionality.

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72 The German word Sörge comes up earlier in B&T, section 18, but is fully articulated later in B&T, sections 41 and 42. All of B&T has interwoven and related concepts, and I have chosen to keep the format aligned to how Heidegger sets out B&T.
73 B&T, page 138
De-severance is a component of Dasein’s spatiality that begins to show a direct connection with a foundation for an ethical understanding within the pre-thematic Lebenswelt. De-severance is how Dasein is able to take something that is remote and far, and bring it into focus. According to Heidegger, “Proximally and for the most part, de-severing is a circumspective bringing-close – bringing something close by, in the sense of procuring it, putting it in readiness, having it to hand.”\textsuperscript{74} Dasein ends up alongside something through de-severance, not by changing the actual distances, but by taking a distant thing in the world and making it an object of use. Heidegger emphasizes that de-severance is an essential element of Dasein, “De-severance, however, is an existentiale”\textsuperscript{75}. It reflects how Dasein, through its spatiality, is able to focus on things and make them objects of Sörge.

Directionality for Heidegger encompasses the element of Dasein’s spatiality that deals with orientation in the pre-thematic world. Here Heidegger implicitly references a world before a thematized structure. Heidegger remarks that:

Out of this directionality arise the fixed directions of right and left. Dasein constantly takes these directions along with it, just as it does it de-severances. Dasein’s spatialization in its ‘bodily nature’ is likewise marked out in accordance with these directions.\textsuperscript{76}

Heidegger’s point is that Dasein always understands its directionality with regards to left and right. These remain constant from the subjective perspective of the person, but are clearly not objectively constant with regards to the world itself. These primordial ways of understanding the direction of objects come before any thematic assertions such as compass directions or latitude/longitude coordinates. Both de-severance and

\textsuperscript{74} B&T, page 140
\textsuperscript{75} B&T, page 139. The existentiales of Dasein are those things that are essentially constitutive of Dasein.
\textsuperscript{76} B&T, page 143
directionality allow for the particular, subjective circumstances to come into the forefront. This attunement with the context or circumstances comes out as a part of the primordial (pre-thematic) notion of spatiality for Dasein.

While this explication of Being-in-the-world is far from exhaustive, it suffices for my purpose. I have shown that Being-in-the-world means being interrelated with things that are understood as ready-to-hand or present-to-hand. Being-in-the-world involves a notion of spatiality that focuses Dasein in a pre-thematic space constituted by a de-severance (that brings things into focus) and a directionality (that guides Dasein’s orientation). Dasein is always involved in its world, and the world and the objects in the world are the objects of Sörge. As Heidegger says, “for the most part Dasein is fascinated with its world. Dasein is thus absorbed in the world”77 I leave the discussion of Being-in-the-world to these two primary points, and agree with Heidegger that human beings (Dasein) are fascinated with their world.

3.4.2 - Sörge

The final element of B&T that needs to be understood is Sörge, the notion of concern and care that is essentially a part of Dasein. This element will draw out the primary foundations for the later Heideggerian prescriptive or normative content, the idea of authentic and inauthentic being. In order to discuss this, we will have to look at the existentiales of mood and of verstehen (understanding).

Before beginning a look at Sörge itself, we should take a quick look at what the words authentic and inauthentic mean for Heidegger. These are value laden terms, but not with a moral connotation. Authentic refers to actualizing one’s being with the full responsibility that comes with it. Inauthentic refers to avoiding possibilities and hiding.

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77 B&T, page 149.
in the everydayness of being. The ‘value’ comes in the following way. Authentic being involves actualizing the possibilities that Sörge brings to our attention. The value is in actualizing new possibilities. Inauthentic being involves maintaining the current actuality while denying that there could be other possibilities. The value is in denying new possibilities. In this way, the terms have value-laden connotations without appeal to a moral good or evil.

To begin our analysis of Sörge, we should explicate carefully what this word is. Sörge is usually translated as care, but has the connotation of concern as well. The care Dasein has for something involves Dasein’s focus and desire for that thing. The role that Heidegger sees this term playing is quite clear, “the primordial Being of Dasein itself – namely, care.” How should we understand care as coming primordially (pre-thematically) as well as providing the basis for ethics? Heidegger understands that care leads to seeing possibilities (möglichkeit) which in turn lead to understanding (verstehen). I will draw out this structure of care to show how it is part of ‘primordial being.’ Then I will offer an understanding of how this leads to authentic and inauthentic ways of being. Heidegger writes, “Care, as a primordial structural totality, lies ‘before’ every factual ‘attitude’ and ‘situation’ of Dasein.” Call the factual attitudes and situations of Dasein, actualities of the world. Care is the primordial Being of Dasein that comes before actualities. In this way, care is related to possibility. Care amounts to the drive to see other possibilities for how the world could be. Care leads us to möglichkeit; it leads us to “being able to be,” other possibilities. It is through possibility that we are able to have any understanding (verstehen).

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78 B&T, page 169.
79 B&T, page 238.
Heidegger notes that there are two ways Dasein can understand itself, and therefore understand its possibilities. One is through ‘moods’; the other is through understanding (verstehen). Mood for Heidegger is any of the affects, emotions, feelings or other states of mind that Dasein can be in, “What we indicate ontologically by the term “state-of-mind” is ontically the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned.” Moods are ways of being-in-the-world, ways of giving the world meaning for us. Moods can be inauthentic and authentic. When a mood is inauthentic we find it hiding the possibilities that can come from changing our mood. For example, if I find myself in a situation where my mood is one of fear and anger I will understand and act in my world through a lens of fear and anger. Objectively, there are other possibilities for understanding the world. That is, there are ways of getting out of this mood and into another one, leading to different understanding and actions. If I dwell in my fear, and let it overcome me then I am acting inauthentically, while if I accept that there are other possibilities and begin to change my mood with regards to these other possibilities I am acting authentically. The other way Dasein understands itself is through verstehen. Verstehen has to do with the possibilities that care points out to us, and which moods might hide. To actualize verstehen is to recognize the possibilities that are available. This is the structure of Sörge.

All of this shows a care-structure for how Dasein acts in the world. It is based in possibilities and in actualizing those possibilities authentically. Dasein has these options, and to be authentic is to allow them to come to fruition. Our motivation to act authentically comes from Sörge, our care. I contend that, through B&T, I have shown how the foundations for an ethical system stem from understanding humans as being in

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80 B&T, page 172.
a Lebenswelt or primordial world. Part of being in the Lebenswelt is Sörge which provides the normative foundation for a primordial way of looking at ethics.

3.5 – Authenticity and the “Later Heidegger”

The later Heideggerian push towards ethics involves a way of articulating authentic and inauthentic modes of being. Authentic and inauthentic here are not necessarily moral terms. However, they do reflect something like what etiquette reflects for Daoism. Etiquette provides ‘more seamless fitting in’ and ‘authentic’ holds similar connotation. To be authentic is to fully actualize the possibilities in one’s being. Hence, authenticity allows a person to adapt to changing situations, to ‘it-in’. To be inauthentic is to hide from the possibilities of one’s being. This would hinder a seamless fitting-in, because it denies the possibilities of changing with respect to changing circumstances. What follows is a look at different modes of being with regards to the human beings (Dasein) and other things in the world. Some of these modes of being are authentic (poiēsis, dwelling) and others inauthentic (technological). As a side note, it is on these elements that most writers of Heidegger’s environmental concerns tend to focus.

Heidegger articulates three modes of being that I will present in this section. The point of this is to provide a cursory understanding of those modes of being in order to show that there is a strong inherent normative connotation for Heidegger. The three modes of being that I will define are: dwelling, technē, and ‘technological’. Before jumping into this explanation, I want to address the shift in Heidegger’s tone from B&T to the later essays that I draw from. As I noted in the preliminary remarks, Heidegger suggests that he shifts from ontology to ontology. This suggests that Heidegger is
shifting from the formal methodology and study of “Being” towards a focus on the actual beings which that study was concerned with. That is, Heidegger is now addressing what it means to live a human life. I maintain that there is a unified ethical preoccupation in Heidegger’s thought through die Kehre, for this reason I will keep the ethical in focus to keep the concepts linked together. Lastly, in the later work, Heidegger is interested in uncovering the ‘truth’ of the specific beings.

Phenomenology, as defined above, is the investigation to the things themselves; in this way, phenomenology allows those things to reveal their own truth or nature. In this section, I will use this language of revealing and uncovering in order to stay close to Heidegger’s text and thought.

3.5.1 – Technē and Technology

The first thing to note is that Heidegger separates and defines a distinction between technē and technology. This division will itself reflect two possible modes of being that exist in relationship with a human being to the world. Heidegger defines technē as:

Technē is a mode of alētheuein [revealing]. It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another. Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth, according to the terms of the four modes of occasioning…Thus what is decisive in technē does not at all lie in making and manipulating, nor in the using of means, but rather in the revealing mentioned before. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that technē is a bringing-forth. 

Heidegger uses the phrase, “bringing-forth” as a translation or allusion to the the Greek term poiēsis. Technology is a revealing; but is not the same kind of revealing that

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technē is. Technē is tied to poiēsis, whereas technology is not. Technology is not a revealing as bringing-forth, but rather a revealing as challenging:

the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of poiēsis. The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such.  

The essential difference between these two concepts, technē and technology is that technē is associated with poiēsis, while technology is associated with challenging. While the difference is important, it is also important to recognize a similarity between the two. Both technē and technology are ways of revealing or disclosing: of revealing the truth of beings. Thus the difference is not in the goal, but simply in revealing truth through a bringing-forth on the one hand, or else through a challenging on the other. I will explain this distinction in what follows.

To fully understand technē, it is important to understand the connotation that poiēsis for Heidegger. Poiēsis is understood by Heidegger as 'bringing-forth.' To understand what Heidegger means it is relevant to start where he starts, with Plato. Heidegger quotes Plato’s Symposium, "Every occasion for whatever passes beyond the nonpresent and goes forward into the presencing is poiēsis, bringing-forth." One aspect of this is seen in the revealing nature of craftsmanship, technē. Heidegger sketches this out:

It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us,…Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth."

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82 BW, page 320
83 I am quoting Heidegger at BW, page 317; the Symposium passage is 205b.
84 BW, page 319
The craftsperson who forges a chalice is bringing-forth the chalice from the raw material. It is *poiēsis* when it takes the mode of being of *technē*, the craftsperson takes her cue from the material. What she does not do is force the material into a particular shape. *Technē* is not the only form of *poiēsis*, another form is in *phusis* or *physis*; when the thing brings itself forth. Heidegger says:

*Physis*, also, the arising of something from out of itself is a bringing-forth, *poiēsis*. *Physis* is indeed *poiēsis* in the highest sense. For what presences by means of *physis* has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself. In contrast, what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g., the silver chalice, has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, not in itself, but in another.85

Thus, a being can be, it can exist, in the sense of *poiēsis*. It is one possible mode of being, and is related but distinct from the mode of being of *technē*. *Physis* is when *poiēsis* occurs out of the being-itself. *Technē* is when *poiēsis* is brought out by another.

The artist allows the being of the sculpture to reveal itself, in itself. But, the hunk of clay does not offer this disclosure; the artist brings it about through the mode of *technē*.

Another mode of being that Heidegger mentions is the mode of being that comes from technology. As noted above, technology involves a relationship of challenging, which places the individual and other beings in a relationship of conflict. Before explaining this relationship of challenging, it is important to be clear what is meant by the term technology. Heidegger does not use the term in the sense of a particular piece of equipment, but rather as a way of being. Objects like hammers, radar stations or sawmills (equipment) do not by themselves create this mode of being. Rather the essence of technology itself is instrumental. Thus what Heidegger means by a technological mode of being is an instrumental mode of being. Instrumentalism

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85 BW, page 317
involves using things for your purpose, not for the things purpose. In this way, Heidegger understands the essence of technology as revealing in the sense of challenging: of setting upon.

Heidegger mentions that the challenging is in the demand that nature supply energy that can be stored and used. When beings interact through this etiquette that comes from technology, the relationship of conflict between beings becomes one of user and resource. Heidegger notes this when speaking about farming:

The field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order appears differently than it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and maintain. The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field…But meanwhile even the cultivation of the field has come under the grip of another kind of setting-in-order, which sets upon nature. It sets upon it in the sense of challenging it. Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry.

His point in mentioning this is to contrast the two modes of revealing. The phrase 'take care of and maintain' refers to a poiēsis centered mode of being (dwelling) which will be discussed later in this section. Technology sets upon nature. It is the setting upon of nature that is important for a full grasp on the mode of being that comes from technology. This setting-upon results in a situation where, "everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering." Thus the challenging that occurs between the agent and the resource takes the form of the agent setting upon the resource. It is unlike the farmer who maintains and cares for her field; and instead like mechanized agriculture where the land and area (and workers) are treated instrumentally. Heidegger describes the outcome of this instrumentalism as standing-reserve: "the word 'standing-

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86 BW, page 320 (quoted earlier)
87 BW, page 320
88 BW, page 322
reserve'...designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the revealing that challenges.” Standing-reserve is the way things that are challenged exist. They have meaning forced upon them, rather than coming from a poiēsis. The relationship of challenging culminates in the idea of standing-reserve. Forcing a being into standing-reserve is a violation of the being that is forced. To treat a being as standing-reserve is to impose a meaning upon that being.

In and of itself, naming and forcing the natural world into standing-reserve is a violation. This violation is in the sense that it forces an inauthentic way of being upon something. A second violation occurs in the way this relationship with the world turns the agent into standing-reserve:

Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this revealing that orders happen. If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this.\(^{90}\)

Man, as the being that challenges, is in turn challenged. To interact with the world in this way is to reveal that the agent is also trapped. Heidegger uses the example of a forester who might act in a similar manner as his grandfather. Since humanity has taken to perceiving the world through the lens of the technological, the world has been turned into standing-reserve. The forester has become the standing-reserve of the industry that buys his woods and replants the trees. The forester, through the act of challenging the natural, is in turn challenged himself. Michael Zimmerman says this eloquently, "Once everything is understood exclusively as a stockpile of raw material [standing-reserve],

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\(^{89}\) BW, page 322  
\(^{90}\) BW, page 323
man can treat himself as raw material, too." Thus, this way of being that stems from
technology has inherent problems.

There is a distinction between technē and technology. On the one hand there is
the bringing forth through technē, and on the other there is the challenging that happens
in technology. Heidegger argues that this challenging is dangerous, and it is important
for us to recognize the results of relating to the world through the technological mode of
being. Heidegger argues that this mode of being is the result of modernism,
"Accordingly, man's ordering attitude and behavior display themselves first in the rise
of modern physics." Note that Heidegger (perhaps wrongfully) alludes to the modern
industrial movement as the outcome of modern physics. Thus we are set in this mode
of being as a result of our modern conception of ourselves and the world. There is a bit
of a circle here. We exist in a way that encourages the development of science and
thought that in turn, requires us to exist this way. This circle reveals danger both in
regards to the output of technology and also with regards to the truth of beings, as such.
Heidegger says concerning the danger that:

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal
machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already afflicted
man in his essence.

There are two parts to this danger. There is the problem that affects the humanity in its
essence, i.e. the problem that affects the agent qua being. There is the second problem,

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91 I feel it necessary to add that while Zimmerman does an eloquent job of describing technology, his
conclusions concerning it don't seem to reflect what I see to be Heidegger's ethical objectives. More
would need to be done to offer an adequate critique of Zimmerman's conclusions, but this unfortunately is
from page 219.
92 BW, page 326
93 BW, page 333
the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. I will first address the primary problem, and then move to the second practical threat.

The first problem that comes from a technological mode of being is developed because of *Gestellen* or ‘enframing.’ To enframe something is to place it within a particular lens, to see it in a particular way: to “frame” the situation. The danger that comes from enframing is that when an agent does this, she will only actualize one particular possibility. Heidegger notes that:

> where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Above all, enfra\[94\]ming conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance.

The danger of this way of being is that it restricts other ways of revealing a being. To put it another way, these modes of being are inauthentic, they restrict possibility. This is the danger that occurs to the agent *qua* being. The second type of problem are more practical in nature, i.e., they are the dangers associated with the output of technology. Heidegger may be thinking of the destructive power of machinery, but the technological mode of being can be seen in the root of all sorts of problems that exist in the environmental crisis. By interacting with the world through this mode of being, the agent is fostering a merely instrumental relationship with the nonhuman world, one that may be disastrous over the long run.

3.5.2 – Dwelling

While it is clear to that there is some good involved with *technē*, Heidegger makes it clear that this still falls short in certain circumstances. This brings us to the third mode of being, dwelling. Heidegger is fairly clear that crafts and skills should be

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94 BW, page 332
approached through the relationship of *technē*, not through the challenging of technology. Yet at the same time Heidegger makes the specific claim that:

The erecting of buildings would not be suitably defined *even if* we were to think of it in the sense of the original Greek *technē* as *solely* a letting-appear, which brings something made as something present, among the things that are already present. The essence of building is letting dwell.  

In this way, it seems that there is a mode of being that is more suitable for understanding some actions. This mode of being is dwelling, and for Heidegger dwelling is a primordial mode of being that can and should be encouraged. To conclude this discussion of possible modes of being, the notion of dwelling needs to be fleshed out.

For Heidegger, at least in terms of building, there is a better way of being than the one that is hinted at in the notion of *technē*, and that is dwelling. However Heidegger does not restrict dwelling to merely the building of homes. Instead, he defines dwelling as a mode of being for interacting with what Heidegger calls the fourfold: a term that refers to mortals, gods, the earth and the sky. Before delving into the fourfold, it is necessary to have some understanding of what dwelling is. First, Heidegger defines dwelling by saying, "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling." Thus the first point that Heidegger makes is that the notion of dwelling is is intrinsically tied up with the nature of being for a human. Heidegger continues to define dwelling saying:

…the old word *bauen*, which says that man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen*, however, *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.

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95 BW, page 361
96 BW, page 349
97 BW, page 349
Heidegger emphasizes that dwelling is rolled in with being, and introduces the further element of cherishment, protection and preservation. This is value-laden, suggesting that this way of being takes a uniquely normative turn. For this reason, it is important to note that this mode of being is taking an ethical turn.

Ethics are often seen as the principles or concepts that are guiding one in particular circumstances towards action. The ethical principles that Heidegger offers have another additional claim attached, they are primordial. These principles must occur from within the pre-thematic context, the *Lebenswelt*. Thus, I claim that the ethical principle of dwelling is a primordial form of ethics (similar to etiquette). By tying an ethical principle to an essential part of being, Heidegger is arguing that this particular sense of dwelling is primordial in all thematized worlds. Where the other modes of being are varied at particular times and places, this notion of dwelling is part of all contexts; Heidegger is offering a primordial way of being in the world, what I shall call a primordial ethic.

Moving back to dwelling, for Heidegger it involves some sense of protecting, sparing or caring for the fourfold. For Heidegger, there is a sense of *phusis* in the protection of dwelling. To dwell is to let beings stand in themselves, for themselves, as themselves. They are able to emerge and blossom in their own rights. There is no forced standing-reserve in dwelling, but rather protection and care. Heidegger does his best to explain this saying:

> To free actually means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence, when we return it specifically to its essential being, when we "free" it in the proper sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means

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98 *Phusis* is another way of transcribing *physis*. 

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to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence. The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing. \(^99\)

Thus caring for something is the lack of imposing upon it a view or idea. Rather we let the being stand for itself, as itself. Being a caregiver then is to be open to the other Beings. Of special importance here is the word positive. This is not a passive act of letting things be, but rather an active process that the agent engages in. Dwelling is itself active, it adds to the being that one dwells with. The images that Heidegger falls back on are cultivating the vine or tilling the soil. \(^100\) Both images are active actions. They do not reflect letting things grow on their own, but rather a careful addition to the natural world, namely the means by which one tills the soil or cultivates the vine. One can see how radically this is different from the approach given to us by technology, and even that it is different than *technē*.

The fourfold refer, generically, to the earth, sky, divinities and mortals. Yet, what these include and refer to is more complex than that, and the way by which humans dwell with these becomes important. Before discussing what these are, and how humans dwell in relation to them, it is important to note the inherent unity in the fourfold. Heidegger writes:

> But 'on the earth' already means 'under the sky.' Both of these also mean 'remaining before the divinities' and include a 'belonging to men's being with one another.' By a *primal* oneness the four – earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belong together in one. \(^101\)

Thus while I will address each of these elements individually, it is important to remember that these are always intricately connected. One cannot dwell in relation to

\(^{99}\) BW, page 351  
\(^{100}\) BW, page 349  
\(^{101}\) BW, page 351
one while failing to dwell in relation to the others. To be exist in the mode of dwelling, the agent will dwell with *all* of the fourfold. Heidegger further emphasizes, "When we say X, we are already thinking of the other three along with it, but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four."¹⁰² Clearly this unity is essential for Heidegger’s understanding of the fourfold.

Mortals are the part of the fourfold that is most easily recognized, as it refers to human beings. Heidegger notes that, "mortals *are* in the fourfold by *dwelling*. But the basic character of dwelling is safeguarding. Mortals dwell in the way they safeguard the fourfold."¹⁰³ Thus the way we can understand the fourfold is to understand the way mortals themselves are a part of the fourfold. Before doing that though, it is important to mention the way in which mortals dwell. They dwell insofar as they "initiate their own essential being – their being capable of death as death."¹⁰⁴ Being-towards-death is another fundamental element of Dasein. It refers to living under the awareness of eventual death, in the awareness of mortality. With this and other fundamental traits of Dasein (Being-in-the-World, Mood, *verstehen*, etc…) in mind; mortals begin to dwell with the rest of the fourfold.

Dealing first with the earth, Heidegger sees dwelling with earth as essentially caring-for the natural world. He defines the earth as, "the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal."¹⁰⁵ It seems as if the category of earth includes anything that is typically included in the ecosystem. Heidegger explains the way humans dwell with earth:

¹⁰² **BW**, page 351
¹⁰³ **BW**, page 352
¹⁰⁴ **BW**, page 352
¹⁰⁵ **BW**, page 351
Mortals dwell in that they save the earth...to save properly means to set something free into its own essence. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it.\footnote{BW, page 352}

This resonates with what has been said about dwelling already. Saving the earth is not treating it as standing-reserve, but rather allows the earth to stand for itself. I will now turn to the final elements of the fourfold: the sky and divinities.

Heidegger defines the sky as the natural passages of weather and time. He defines divinities as the representation of god. He speaks of sky in reference to, "the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather."\footnote{HW, page 351} Humans dwell with the sky according to Heidegger by receiving, "the sky as sky."\footnote{BW, page 352} It seems clear that Heidegger thinks that humans need to embrace the natural occurrences in the world. This fits with the pre-thematic context that dwelling encompasses. The natural occurrences in the world are independent of thematization. Gravity, rain and time happen to everyone: poet, preacher or politician. Rather than fight the natural order humans ought to accept it pre-thematically. A practical illustration might help illuminate this point. Imagine someone who is having problems sleeping. The technological mode of being might involve prescribing pills and sleeping aids. While a person who dwells might try to mimic the natural rhythm and adjust sleeping time to when the sun is hidden. The divinities can be understood similarly to the sky. Heidegger notes that mortals should dwell, "in that they await the divinities as
divinities." Rather than inventing celebrity or status and worshipping it, humanity should accept gods as gods.

In the discussion of the fourfold Heidegger does not address how humans dwell with other humans. Remembering that the original goal of this meditation is to argue how Heidegger offers the foundations for an ethical system, this is a serious missing link. Despite this missing link, the move to think that Heidegger is developing an environmental ethic is fairly common. I tend to think there is a tidy solution to the problem. Recall that Heidegger is referencing humanity through the construction called Dasein. Dasein is the being for which being is a question to it. I mentioned above that humans fit this category, however this does not entail that humans cannot also fit other categories. The category of earth includes animal and plant life, it seems fair to conclude that it should include human animal life as well. Part of dwelling then is the basis of primordial ethics towards the self, as well as others. It is not limited to an environmental ethic, but is rather properly part of an ethical structure, as such. To sum up, dwelling is primordial ethic of actively caring for others by allowing them to stand in themselves, for themselves. It is the opening up of *phasis*.

It seems relevant to emphasis that the mode of being that stems from the Greek notion of *technē* does not hold with it all the connotations of dwelling. Dwelling in turn does not directly deal with the way a person might craft a tool or sculpt a statute. There is the primordial ethic of dwelling (which deals with the individual's relationship to the entire world) and *technē* (which deals with the relationship of a craftsman or laborer and

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109 BW, page 352
110 Two examples of this move to develop an environmental ethic from Heidegger are: Foltz, Bruce, *Inhabiting the Earth: Environmental Ethics and the Metaphysics of Nature*, (Humanities Press, 1995) and Young, Julian, *Heidegger’s Later Philosophy*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
there is a connection between the two, as both draw on the concepts of letting beings stand in themselves and emerge on their own. Yet, there is simply a sense of protection in dwelling that does not seem to be a necessary part of technē.

3.6 – Heidegger and Ecology

Does anything in the earlier or later Heidegger strike us as necessarily “green”? Similar to the conclusions I set out in the meditation on Daoism, I want to argue that Heidegger is not in either of these situations aligned with a necessarily green stance. There are definite pathways to argue for ecological positions from Heidegger; but at this point I am not emphasizing those pathways. I choose to do this for three reasons. First, individuals like Michael Zimmerman, have begun to move away from a Heideggerian environmentalism precisely because of Heidegger’s political affiliation. While I quickly dismissed this earlier, it is a point worth revisiting. Heidegger’s Nazi affiliation is not sufficient to deny that his thinking is ethical, but it might it be a problem when evaluating a Heideggerian environmentalism. Second, I choose to minimize the green-ness of Heidegger due to the increased emphasis of Heidegger’s critique of technology in arguments about Heidegger’s environmentalism. This technological mode of being is clearly relevant to a Heideggerian environmentalism, but so is dwelling. If someone were to create an environmentalism that focused on the negative arguments against technology, that environmentalism would run the risk of failing to provide a positive argument in its place. This is something that I find unattractive. Lastly, I choose to downplay Heidegger’s immediate impact on ecological concerns because this paper is not intended to develop an eco-phenomenology. There are individuals who are

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111 Notably in the text, Contesting the Earth’s Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity, (University of California Press, 1997)
developing eco-phenomenology, but my interest is elsewhere. By waiting to discuss the ecological impact of Heideggerian phenomenology until after that position has been appropriated as a deeply ecological perspective is to keep on focus. What I intend to draw from Heidegger is the notion of the *Lebenswelt*, and the ethical foundations that come from this pre-thematic way of understanding the world.
4.1 – Introduction

Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology both serve as examples of a deeply ecological point of view. In this way, they both provide a foundation for Deep Ecology. In order to show this, I will explicate a definition of deep ecology coming from the work of Arne Naess. This definition has two components. It involves a re-examination of the relationship between humanity and the nonhuman world. Deep ecology is also inherently ethical, i.e. deep ecology inherently involves an understanding of “ought” or normativity. I will explicate how both of these components apply to deep ecology. I am unable here to argue for a stronger claim concerning deep ecology, namely that this Daoist/Heideggerian framework entails other considerations that come at odds with many thinkers who align themselves with the Deep Ecology Movement. For the purposes set out in this thesis, my more humble conclusion should suffice. Deeply ecological thinking requires a re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and nonhumans and is inherently ethical. Heidegger and Daoism both provide the necessary pre-thematic framework to anchor this re-evaluation, in such a way that contains ethical
insight. Heideggerian phenomenology and Daoism could both provide a framework for a deeply ecological perspective.

4.2 – Deep (not Shallow) Ecology

Arne Naess wrote a paper published in 1973 called, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary.” In this paper the phrase Deep Ecology is first put into print when Naess describes a distinction between two ecological movements: deep ecology and shallow ecology. However, Naess did not intend to create a position in this paper, instead he merely distinguishes ecology movements into two groups. The point of the paper was to bring to light elements of deep ecology through the shallow/deep distinction. Naess defined Shallow Ecology as:

Fight against pollution and resource depletion. Central objective: the health and affluence of people in the developed countries.

By shallow ecology, Naess intends ecological movements that deal with how affluent people can use their resources in order to maintain their affluence over time. In this umbrella heading both conservationism and preservationism movements fit. Both involve protecting the environment with an eye towards the use affluent societies have for that environment. The Deep Ecological movements can then be defined as movements that want to search for answers to the environmental crisis of pollution and resource depletion without restricting possible solutions in order to help the health or affluence of people in developed countries. Two specifics can be drawn out of this. First and foremost, this paper shows Deep Ecology has its fundamental concern in something other than human well-being. Deep Ecology is not anthropocentric; it is

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113Naess, page 151
ecocentric. Second, Naess’ paper defines Deep Ecology in such a way that it questions and engages with human resource consumption and use. For Shallow Ecology, the status quo is meant to be preserved or conserved. In Deep Ecology, the status quo might be shaken, disturbed, or thrown away.

In the paper, Naess provides seven points that he recognizes as constitutive of deep ecologies. It is important to explicate the seven points that Naess lists in this paper, because they provide a core of markers to identify what is entailed by a deep ecology. I will start by listing them:

1. Rejection of the man-in-environment image in favor of the relational, total-field image.
3. Principles of diversity and of symbiosis.
4. Anti-class posture.
5. Fight against pollution and resource depletion.
6. Complexity, not complication.
7. Local autonomy and decentralization.

Naess articulates these seven points of a Deep Ecological movement to show a distinction between ecologies of a part and parcel to these seven, and those that are shallow. Thus, these seven points shouldn’t be held as tenets of the Deep Ecology movement, but rather as descriptions of ecologies that are deep.\footnote{That platform comes later in history.} As descriptions, they provide a way of identifying what is the core of a deep ecology. It is from these seven points that I deduce the primary idea that deep ecology is interested in re-evaluating the attitude humans have with the nonhuman world. It is also clear from these seven points that deep ecology is intrinsically normative. I will develop each point in turn.
4.2.1 – Re-evaluation of the relationship between Humans and Non-Human World

To show that deep ecology involves a re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and nonhumans, a look at the principles should suffice. For example, statements two, three and four all share an interest in changing the status quo of affluent cultures. Naess explicates statement 3 as having to do with adopting the maxim ‘live and let live’ over ‘either you or me.’ His contention is that the latter is part of a dominance that the affluent world imposes upon the rest of the world. The former would allow for cultural diversity. Another way of seeing how these statements contain the idea of a re-evaluation of the relationship between humanity and the rest of the world can be seen in the push for local autonomy. Naess writes, “The vulnerability of a form of life is roughly proportional to the weight of influences from afar, from outside the local region in which that form has obtained an ecological equilibrium.”115 It is the developed (affluent) nations which push free trade that would take away much local autonomy. Deep Ecology would seemingly argue against free trade in these ways, instead encouraging a shift in the way humans interact with their resources.

A concrete example of this change in relationship can be offered through the possession of inefficient personal transportation (IPT), e.g. most oil powered cars and trucks. IPT greatly contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases as well as consumes a resource, oil. This is a problem because of the impact on the environment through global warming and the scarcity of crude oil. A shallow ecological response might be to encourage people to convert IPTs into biodiesel or hybrid; effectively turning them into efficient personal transportation. This would reduce the rate of consumption of the

115 Naess, page 153.
oil and also create cleaner engines. At the same time this allows the average consumer to still have her own personal transportation. A deeply ecological response to the same issue might be to question the need to own personal transportation at all. Other forms of transportation are even kinder to the environment than efficient personal transportation. Instead of using personal transportation, perhaps humans should take public transportation. A biodiesel bus, for example, could eliminate the emissions caused by hundreds of cars for the price of one bus. The biodiesel bus also consumes less gas. However, deep ecology cannot stop at this sort of justification, because this fails to take into account a re-examination of the relationship between humanity and transportation. If deep ecology stopped here, it would simply be a deeper shallow ecology. While the deeper shallow ecologist is advocating for a different actual change, she relies on the same type of justification as the shallow ecological statement. Because of how Naess understands deep ecology, deep ecology requires deeper justification.

The overall idea that Arne Naess comes to in his 1973 paper through the seven points he lists is that deep ecology is a rethinking of the way humans comport themselves to the natural world. This means that the sorts of reasons that are acceptable in justifying changes need to incorporate this rethinking and re-evaluation. Deep ecology requires justification that leans on this process of rethinking and re-evaluation. Dealing with the problems of personal transportation, the deep ecologist has several related responses. She might support public transportation because it encourages people to live, work, and play in smaller localities. The deep ecologist might also suggest that personal transportation has more to do with social status, and that this social status can be obtained in other ways. The deep ecologist might go
further still and say that society has organized itself with a egocentric point of view, and
the supposed right to have a personal transportation is an extension egocentrism. For
these reasons (or others) the deep ecologist might strive to change the way humans use
and incorporate transportation as a whole.

Generally, deep ecology involves a radical change in the way humans
understand their relationship with the non-human world. It is opposed to shallow
responses that simply try to make the best of the current understanding of how humans
ought to interact with their world. Erazim Kohák states that Deep Ecology is, “ecology
which goes to the roots of the ecological crisis in human attitudes, especially in the
consumer orientation of Euroamerican civilization.” Kohák in this passage is in full
agreement with the notion of Deep Ecology that Naess describes. Deep ecology
concerns an attitude that humans have with the nonhuman world. Deep ecology seeks
the root of ecological crisis in these very attitudes. The shallow ecological movements
seek to solve the crisis in order to continue these attitudes; the deeply ecological
movements seek to address them.

A final way of articulating this same point can be seen in Fritjof Capra’s text,
*The Web of Life.* Capra’s work is focused on showing how a paradigm shift can and
should be applied towards our understanding of the attitude humans have with the

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116 Kohák, Erazim, *The Green Halo*, (Open Court Press, 2000), the citation is on page 108. Hereafter
cited as Kohák, page #.
117 Kohák’s consonance with the earlier view shouldn’t be surprising; the early view is a generalization of
a distinction. I am not suggesting here that Kohák’s view is in full accord with the worked out Deep
Ecology platform.
nonhuman world. Capra, rightly, considers his work to be deeply ecological. Capra provides another interpretation of the shallow/deep distinction Naess describes in 1973:

Shallow ecological is anthropocentric, or human-centered. It views humans as above or outside of nature, as the source of all value, and ascribes only instrumental, or “us,” value to nature. Deep ecology does not separate humans—from the natural environment. It sees the world not as a collection of isolated objects, but as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life.

Capra provides here another version of this same general insight: deep ecology differs from shallow ecology in the way it addresses the relationship humans have with the nonhuman world. For Capra, his focus on a paradigm shift guides his understanding on a change from isolated individuals towards interconnected systems. This is a deeply ecological point of view, and resonates with what has been said above. Deep Ecology is focused on reevaluating the attitudes that humans have with the nonhuman world. However, Deep Ecology is not unified on exactly how those attitudes need to be shifted or understood.

4.2.2 – The Normative facet of Deep Ecology

The other facet of Deep Ecology, both in general formulation and in its modern developments, is the ethical. Deep Ecology is essentially normative. First and foremost Naess understands it this way, “It should be fully appreciated that the significant tenets of the Deep Ecology movement are clearly and forcefully normative.” The normative emphasis shines through the seven points that Naess lists but is also reflected in the general attitudes underlying those tenets. Notice that all seven are value-laden.

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119 Paradigm shift is used here in the same way that Thomas Kuhn uses the phrase in, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions 3rd Ed., (University of Chicago Press, 1996).
120 Capra, page 7
121 Naess, page 154.
They encourage the values of diversity, local autonomy, and social and economic equality. These values reflect one normative aspect inherent in deep ecology. Deep ecology is also tied to ethical and practical reasoning because it begins to invoke a re-examination and shift of our values and actions. This might prompt changes in our understanding of normative ethics. By invoking a re-examination which includes an appeal to deeper justification, deep ecology will radically shift the practical reasoning that underlies moral reasoning. This, taken along with a shift in values, gives rise to a new ethic. Capra agrees with the assessment that Deep Ecology is inherently an ethical practice:

> The whole question of values is crucial to deep ecology; it is, in fact, its central defining characteristic. Whereas the old paradigm is based on anthropocentric (human-centered) values, deep ecology is grounded in ecocentric (earth-centered) values…When this deep ecological perception becomes part of our daily awareness, a radically new system of ethics emerges.122

I think Capra is fundamentally correct, deep ecology involves both rethinking the values that shape humans interaction with the nonhuman world and shifting what would count as proper justification for changes and actions. While Capra later develops and articulates a very clear environmental ethic and approach (Ecosophy T); his statements here illuminate the core of deep ecology.

Another way of articulating that deep ecology is inherently ethical is to look at the perspective of Erazim Kohák. Kohák argues that Naess’ deep ecology:

> …has to with the matter of strategies in ecological ethics: where out we seek the root of the ecological crisis, in human greed or in flawed technology? Where ought we seek a solution, in a less demanding humankind or a more demanding technology?123

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122 Capra, page 11
123 Kohák, page 109
Kohák interprets Naess as focusing on the former, the human aspect. Naess, on Kohák’s view here assumes a double-sided ethical component to Deep Ecology. First it has insight as to what the root of the problem is with regards to the environmental crisis. Second, it shows insight into how we out to address that crisis. Kohák assumes an ethical dimension to deeply ecological thinking. The focus on the values and attitudes that humans have towards the nonhuman world takes both a descriptive element and a prescriptive element.

A final point of interest to connect deep ecology is simply in the use of the descriptor ‘movement’ by Naess. Deep ecology is a theoretical set of principles concerning ecological and ecophilosophical concerns. Yet, this set of principles inspires people to act and to forms of activism. It is a political and social movement. This fact again shows an ethical dimension to deep ecology.

Deep Ecology, or deeply ecological thinking, is necessarily ethical. It involves both an appeal to new and different values and an appeal to a different sort of appropriate justification. The ethical component of deep ecology shows how the interaction of humans and the nonhuman world out to be adjusted in order to alleviate the problems of the current environmental crisis.

4.2.3 – What is Deep Ecology?

At this point, it is worth noting some historical elements about what comes to be understood as deep ecology, in the decades after the phrase was first coined. What I have said above is based on either based Naess’ 1973 paper, or on very general ideas of deep ecology. After Naess defines the shallow/deep distinction in 1973, Arne Naess and George Sessions compiled a platform of eight points that would serve as the basis
for the Deep Ecology Movement. The platform is general enough to include many different perspectives, but is unified in a particular way. I have alluded that further work should and could be done in order to show where Daoist/Heideggerian positions run at odds with the deep ecology. It is with regards to this specific platform that I predict a tension between the deeply ecological position of Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology and the more current work of Naess and other deep ecologists. For reasons of space and time I have chosen not to develop this point. I think it sufficient to carefully situate Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology in the realm that Deep Ecology, as articulated either by Naess in 1973 or in the general form, encompasses. It is with the specific interpretation of Deep Ecology as the Deep Ecology Platform mind that I choose to call Daoism and Heidegger deeply ecological, and not Deep Ecology.

Deeply ecological thought involves two constitutive elements. On the one hand, deep ecology requires a re-evaluation of the way humans interact with the nonhuman world. On the other hand, this re-evaluation opens the door for a new sort of ethical position. I will now turn to the implications and conclusions I have drawn; most notably that Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology provide the right sort of foundation for a proper deeply ecological viewpoint.

4.3 – Conclusions

Thus far I have argued that both Heideggerian phenomenology and Daoism provide two sorts of foundations. They each emphasize coming to a pre-thematic perspective on the world. For both of them, the pre-thematic perspective helps ground a particular way of approaching questions about which actions are laudable. I have separately argued that deep ecology is an environmental position characterized by two
things: the need for a re-examination of the relationship between humans and the nonhuman world, and an intrinsic ethical shift. The re-examination of deep ecology opens up the values and interactions humans have with the nonhuman world which gives rise to a change in normative priority and the justification used to defend actions.

In this last section, I will present an argument that claims that Heideggerian phenomenology and Daoism provide the right sort of foundation for deep ecology. The essence of this argument is that deep ecology is intrinsically ethical and requires the re-examination of values. Both Heidegger and Daoism have a consonant ethical approach with the values that are loaded into deep ecology. In this way, Heidegger and Daoism have one of the elements of deep ecology. Re-examining values in the degree that deep ecology calls for requires a pre-thematic look at the world. Since both Heidegger and Daoism offer this pre-thematic look, they provide the right sort of foundation for the re-examination that deep ecology requires. Thus, Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology provide the right sort of foundation for deep ecology. I will proceed by defending each of these points.

4.3.1 – Daoism and Heideggerian Phenomenology – Appropriately normative

In the discussion of deep ecology, I focused on the fact that deep ecology is essentially normative, rather than on the particular normative spin that deep ecology holds. I did this because deep ecologists differ on the specifics of those values. However, I think there is enough substance to what sorts of values deep ecology holds to suggest that both Daoism and Heidegger endorse similar values. The minimal (and underdeveloped) values that it is clear deep ecology endorses are the following: a) a holistic of eco-centric view, rather than a human centered view, b) a resistance to
relying on technology. Part of (a) is the idea that the nonhuman world is given ethical weight. I still think that a full explanation of either Daoism or Heidegger will show conflict with some forms of deep ecology; the point here is not to argue that either fully endorses any view of deep ecology. Rather, I am claiming that there is sufficient similarity to ground Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology as deeply ecological.

The etiquette that Daoism endorses is defined around fitting in harmoniously with the entire world. In this way, Daoism takes into consideration the value of the nonhuman world.\textsuperscript{124} It is also holistic; Daoism does not stay centered on a merely human perspective.\textsuperscript{125} Finally, Daoism recognizes that the changes should take place in humans, not in the tools or implements that people use.\textsuperscript{126} Even the paradigmatic example of Cook Ding involves the minimal values of deep ecology. While Cook Ding is a butcher, the etiquette Ding endorses provides a method of butchering this that does not come steeped in the problems of modern industrial society. Cook Ding is not cruel to the animal, or wasteful. His precise cutting provides the most efficient use of the meat of the ox. Etiquette in all circumstances provides this new attitude, one that is not dominating, but harmonious to the ever changing world.

The primordial ethic of Heidegger, found in dwelling, is also harmonious with the values of deep ecology. The egocentrism and technological consumption that deep ecology is at odds with reflect what Heidegger would call a technological mode of being. Caring and protecting (dwelling) for the fourfold (the nonhuman world) is holistic and involves changing the way the individual acts, rather than relying on

\textsuperscript{124} C.f. chapter 27 and 76
\textsuperscript{125} The Daodejing often references “the myriad things”; a placeholder of the idea of all beings. This is evident in chapters 32 34, 37.
\textsuperscript{126} C.f. chapter 31 and 77
technology to avoid problems. In essence, Heidegger joins the Deep Ecologists in a rejection of modernity.\textsuperscript{127} Dwelling is an authentic mode of being that does not consider the environment as standing-reserve. To put it another way, Heidegger does not endorse conserving the nonhuman world to be used instrumentally, or preserving it for human purposes. Heidegger’s ethical insight is clearly at home in deeply ecological thinking.

4.3.2 – Daoism and Heideggerian Phenomenology – Appropriately pre-thematic

Heideggerian phenomenology and Daoism are in sync with deep ecology from an ethical standpoint; the second component of my argument rests on the claim that a pre-thematic view of the world is a necessary condition for the re-examination of the relationship between humans and nonhumans that deep ecology is centered around. This claim needs some backing. There are two reasons for why the re-examination requires a pre-thematic foundation. First if there is any thematic interpretation already in place then any evaluation or examination will already be affected by the lens of that thematized understanding. By moving to something prior to a thematic world, the relationships can be seen in a fresh light. Second, I think it is fair to say that deep ecology is motivated to a radical change in the interaction between humans and nonhumans. The build up for our current context has involved many different thematic ways of viewing the world; religious traditions, academic disciplines, and political agendas are all to blame. Appealing to one or another is not going to be radical enough

\textsuperscript{127} Michael Zimmerman offers a strong argument for this in \textit{Contesting Earth’s Future}. 

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to constitute an authentic re-evaluation. For these reasons, a pre-thematic perspective is necessary.

I leave open at this point the question of how deeply pre-thematic deep ecology requires. While I have attempted to emphasize that the pre-thematic necessary is not ‘pure’; the details of this are still ambiguous. This has been intentional, by me, for two reasons. First, the idea of a re-examination of the relationship between humans and nonhumans is premised on a clear understanding of what that relationship currently is. In order to articulate how many thematic lenses must be taken away, I would need to have a clear idea of this relationship. I do not have a clear idea of what this relationship is; as such I cannot be any clearer on how ‘pure’ our pre-thematic understanding needs to be. Second, deep ecologies seem to advocate for fundamental shift. As such they require, for justification, a fundamental re-examination. I am not yet convinced that they can have as deep a re-examination as they would need for justificatory purposes. This problem for deep ecologies is beyond the scope of my work in this thesis and is not part of my weak claim. It would certainly occupy part of the arguments for the stronger claim – particular deep ecologies are not in sync with their required justificatory foundations.

Daoism offers a sufficiently pre-thematic perspective because of the concepts of wuyu and wuzhi. These two concepts, as shown in the first meditation, encourage understanding the world in a pre-thematic world. This creates the needed space for the sort of re-evaluation of the relationship between humans and nonhumans that deeply ecological thinking requires. It is important that there is not a simple shift from one thematic to another; and this is why Daoism fills the gap nicely. Wuyu and Wuzhi are
not simply a different way of understanding the world, a different thematic. Instead they presuppose nothing thematic to taint the lens.

Heidegger’s thought just as easily provides the sufficient pre-thematic foundation. The *Lebenswelt*, is precisely the pre-thematic world. Also, fundamental ontology and Heidegger’s development of Dasein provides the space for a re-evaluation. By situating the primordial nature of human agents within a pre-thematic world, Heidegger not only provides this space for a re-evaluation, but ensures that the evaluation will work with the sorts of agents that humans are. The analysis of Dasein sets up all of the background to move beyond the thematic world. Heidegger’s work therefore also provides the perfect foundations for a re-evaluation.

Thus, it seems clear to me that Heideggerian phenomenology and Daoism provide the proper sort of foundation for deeply ecological thinking. This is hardly an earth shattering claim; many deep ecologists already cleave to these perspectives. What I have done is provide a firm argument for *why* deep ecologists should cleave to these perspectives. A future project which develops the sorts of ethical insight that come from these perspectives could take different forms. One could argue negatively against the standard literature for failing to properly recognize and situation these perspective. One could also argue positively how *bauen* or the *wu*-forms provide the right path to lead out of the environmental crisis. I did neither for two reasons. First, I simply do not have the room in a thesis such as this to develop these points. Second, I am not sure that deep ecology will be successful in its goal of halting environmental destruction. However, I think this thesis shows that these perspectives are worth evaluating.

4.4 – Final Remarks / Epilogue
In the introduction to this thesis I opened a question about everyday practices that people could take to lessen their environmental impact. I stated that these perspectives will indeed endorse these actions while shifting the motivation for why those actions should be taken. Standard ecological movements suggest that we should protect and care for the environment because the environment has value to us. Daoism and Heideggerian phenomenology shifts this value. The reason we ought to care for the environment is because we are part of it, and the way we treat the environment is indicative of the way we treat ourselves. Existing in a technological mode of being does not only force the nonhuman world into standing-reserve; it also forces the agent into an inauthentic way of being as well. The agent who can actualize wuwei, and ‘fit in seamlessly’; is benefiting herself and the world by doing so; everyone gains from polite circumstances – everyone loses in awkward and rude situations. Humanity ought to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle; because the wasteful form of living in the world damages us and our environment independently of the major elements of the environmental crisis.

128 The infamous list I referenced at the end of An Inconvenient Truth.
5. Bibliography

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