

heidegger's notion of dwelling and ecological democracy

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Abstract

One of the dominant areas of discourse that attempts to respond to the environmental problem that beset this generation is referred to as ecological democracy. This was popularized by the political theorist, John Dryzek. The strategy attempts to address structural challenges in dealing with the environmental challenges. While this is a welcome development, environmental philosophy should not move away from the discourse on the value of human existence and its relation with the broader environmental reality. This fundamental understanding of human existence is elaborately discussed by Martin Heidegger in his notion of dwelling. I will contend in his paper that this notion of dwelling can serve as important precondition of any attempt to understand the notion of ecological democracy.

Keywords

Heidegger, dwelling, ecological democracy, environmental crisis



Introduction

The wanton destruction of natural habitats, the extinction of some species, the thinning of the ozone layer, the warming of the earth due to climate change which experts would attribute to the excessive use of fossil fuels are only a few of the destructive activities that affects nature and that threaten our natural environment. The more recent problem of global warming which threatens the entire human species is the most alarming given the magnitude of the catastrophe that it is expected to bring. It is amidst this environmental crisis that the call on us as a human race to reflect on this situation has generated a degree of urgency.

This is the impetus that has moved various disciplines to reflect further on the issue. It has not escaped even political philosophy as illustrated by the democratic theorist, John Dryzek who would contend that the response to the problem mentioned is so far limited within the scope that includes lifestyle change or consciousness raising. He refers to this as green consciousness. The changing of our consciousness from the anthropological perspective to the more eco-centric perspective is for Dryzek insufficient given that we are working within political structures where state policies have wider reach and provides solution at a massive scale rendering it more effective as compared to the strategy of simply raising consciousness. This is the reason why Dryzek's response include what he refers to as ecological democracy which includes strategies on how to influence the broader discourse that may include structural changes and legislation of various policies.

A central part in Dryzek's claim includes a grounding on the necessity of communicating with the natural world which several eco-centrist philosophers would also adhere to. The need for this communication is rendered essential amidst this ecological crisis. Dryzek's notion of communication is also supported by James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis¹ which presents nature as having an identity, a value, an agency of its own. This idea of nature as having agency within the context of ecological democracy, however, raises some questions. Questions like what is the role of human beings in this notion of ecological democracy and is there a particular view with regard to hierarchy of values arise. Can we really do away with humans and can we veer away from consciousness raising and focus only on structural changes in the political sphere?

Given these questions, it is important to be able spell out the intricacies and complexities of an ecological model of democracy. However, even within this framework of ecological democracy, the centrality of the role of humans cannot be disregarded. Thus, while the direction is towards structural change, the primordial importance of

¹ See James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, 4th edition (New York: Oxford, 2000).

human beings cannot be set aside. This primordial understanding of the role of human beings in ecological democracy can be a precondition for any understanding of ecological democracy. The role of humans in this ecological democracy has to be thoroughly developed.

It is within this context that this paper will contend that an ecological model of democracy needs to be anchored not on the exclusively eco-centrist tendency which leads to the exclusion of human agency, but must be anchored on a particular primordial understanding of human existence and human consciousness. This particular notion of understanding is very well elaborated and explored in Martin Heidegger's notion of dwelling. Thus, I further contend that Heidegger's notion of dwelling provides a strong foundation for what can be argued as ecological democracy and an environmental philosophy. His notion of dwelling involves a re-understanding of our role as human beings in this complex environmental reality and does not assume any complete and systematic notion of ecological democracy. This paper, therefore, will not provide a clearly defined ecological democracy but only sketches or outline of a precondition based on Heidegger's criticism of modern science and modern technology as well as his understanding of dwelling to be able to provide better condition for ecological democracy to develop.

To elaborate the claim, I will proceed in four parts. First, I will elaborate on ecological democracy as argued by John Dryzek. What will be presented already shows certain parallelism with Heidegger's insight. Second, I will show further Heidegger's reflections on the limitations of modern science and modern technology and how these limits have served as basis for understanding the current environmental crisis. Third, I will expound on Heidegger's notion of dwelling as important in an understanding of an environmental philosophy. Finally, I will show how this notion of dwelling can serve as an important precondition that sets the necessary condition towards an ecological model of democracy.

Ecological Democracy and the Limits of Liberal Democracy

The idea of ecological democracy as a response to environmental crisis is championed by John Dryzek when he contends that the widely embraced political set-up which is liberal democracy is laden with various forms of anthropocentrism that is not respectful of various forms of rationality. Taking off from Habermas' idea of communicative rationality. Dryzek contends that Habermas' deliberative democracy provides a fitting framework to challenge liberalism with its aggregative strategy that cannot account for alternative voices. This deliberative democracy if freed from its anthropocentrism can be an effective foundation for ecological democracy.

The problem of aggregation should be emphasized since it is characteristic of liberal democracy. Following the thoughts of Freya Mathews, Dryzek² considers liberal democracy as giving primacy to human interest in its sense of valuing. Human interest, then, is the primary value in liberal democracy. This preference is often aggregated to serve the purpose of policy making and other forms of decision making. While various liberal thinkers disagree on this idea of aggregation, they all agree on the necessity of preference aggregation.³ This idea of aggregation creates two unavoidable implications. First, the idea of a self-contained community follows. This means that liberal democracy works only within a closed self-governing system with clearly defined boundaries and has a tendency to include other groups and other voices. Second and closely linked to the first, it creates hard and fast boundaries. This is characteristic again of a liberal democratic society which limits its operations to certain self-governing communities and provides a hard and fast boundary i.e. the public and the private. In the case of this current study and as presented by Dryzek, the clearly defined boundaries is "between the human and non-human world."⁴

As a challenge to this aggregative tendency of liberal democracy, then, Dryzek proposes Habermasian deliberative model that transcend the limits of its anthropocentrism. In restating Habermas' understanding of modern rationality, Dryzek showed that Habermas proposed two forms of rationality namely, instrumental rationality which is goal oriented and communicative rationality which is geared towards unconstrained dialogue.⁵ The first is what can characterize liberal democracy and its aggregative strategy while the second is what can serve as foundation for deliberative democracy which concerns establishing uncoerced dialogue. Although Dryzek argued that Habermas has an instrumental reading of nature, he does not discount the possibility that communicative rationality if extended to consider the natural environment can accommodate communication with the non-human world. Thus, extended beyond the Habermasian reading, deliberative democracy can take into consideration various rationalities which is anchored on communicative rationality to include the non-human voice. By extending the idea of rationality to the non-human world, then, Dryzek is able to re-interpret communicative rationality to be open to dialogue with the non-human voice located in the natural world.⁶ The idea of communicative rationality, then, serves as foundation for Dryzek's version of deliberative democracy. This kind of democracy as

² John Dryzek, "Political and Ecological Communication," in *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Political Reader*, ed. John Dryzek & David Schlosberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 584-596; 588.

³ *Ibid.*, 591.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 591-592.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 589.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 590.

compared to the liberal democracy is not based on preference aggregation and does not provide a clearly defined divide between the human and non-human world. It is a democracy that provides unconstrained dialogue "between the human and non-human world."

This kind of democracy founded on communicative rationality is further developed by Dryzek by invoking the thought of James Lovelock who proposed that the earth or Gaia has its own agency, its own logic, its own rationality that cannot be limited to the scientific understanding nor the conventional political conception. The Gaia hypothesis of Lovelock is a result of his scientific research which reaches the conclusion that the earth has a life of its own. It is in other words self-regulating given its capacity to cope with the various effects brought about by human activity. The earth is not simply an inanimate object.⁷

Thus, when Dryzek asserts the idea that nature has its own agency he is challenging the nature of communication that is founded on subjectivity.⁸ What he is pointing here is not the typical notion of subjectivity that is egocentric but he is simply asserting the importance of agency in developing communicative structures. In other words, nature might not have any subjectivity but definitely it has an agency that is worth considering in dialogue. This moves the primordial understanding of communication as always based on subjectivity to agency. This conception of communication, then, leaves room for a non-human conception of rationality.

Dryzek contends further that given these findings of Lovelock, there is a need then to include in a concept of an ecological democracy giving value to nature and recognizing that it has an agency so that it can be a factor to the idea of deliberation. However, this kind of deliberation has to consider something beyond the liberal notion which provides a clear divide "between the human and the non-human world." It is a democracy that considers the need for alternative voices beyond the anthropocentric conception.

This kind of democracy, then, calls on greater sensitivity to the "signals emanating from nature"⁹ as Dryzek would refer to it, that means opening communication lines with nature that does not impose any instrumental value nor impose human interest as shown by various ways of "anthropomorphizing" behaviors in nature e.g. Darwinist social theorists, eco anarchist and even ecofeminists all of them would conceptualized nature in purely human terms and for human interest and simply based on human frame that

⁷ John Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 195-196.

⁸ Ibid., 590.

⁹ Dryzek, "Political and Ecological Communication," 590.

means that they serve the purpose of anthropologically defined projects. They are using nature to support their arguments.¹⁰

Thus, what is promoted is a possibility of a kind of system that respects local ecosystems because it is in these local ecosystems that boundaries of communities are looser as compared to the hard and fast boundary drawn by liberal democracy between the human and non-human world. Dryzek as well as other ecologist would refer to this as bioregionalism which supports the sustenance and self-sustainability of local communities that prevents them from falling into the demands of capitalistic globalization that requires volume production beyond the needs of communities.¹¹ This capitalistic globalization is one of the major cause for a lot of environmental problems.

A more important notion of this democracy, however, is the idea that we cannot do away with humans. This runs counter to various deep ecology philosophies which go to the extreme of eliminating the sphere of humans in this discourse and in the process also creates a clear divide "between human and non-human" and also pitting the human against the non-human. Dryzek for example refers to David Ehrenfield who would "rely on natural processes left well alone by humans."¹² This problem in environmental philosophy and also in environmental politics is divisive. That is why it is important to emphasize on the role of humans as important. Heidegger as will be shown later will also not veer away from this point.

Heidegger on the Limits of Science and Technology

The tendency to instrumentalize nature as shown in Dryzek's description of liberal democracy is in a way similar to the tendency of modern science and technology as described by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger also discussed how modern science and technology and even our contemporary language refers to nature in an objective way that limits how nature is able to show itself. Even in his early work, Heidegger (1996) have shown wariness on the scientific objectivizing tendency as presented in his idea of *Vorhandenheit* or understood also as present-at-hand. This tendency to instrumentalize or refer to objects as simply objects or as instruments or object of study is highly characteristic of Western metaphysics that Heidegger would refer to is guilty of the forgetfulness of being.¹³

In tracing the History of Western Metaphysics, Heidegger has shown that the notion of forgetfulness of being is manifested as early as in Descartes who has pioneered

¹⁰ Ibid., 587-588.

¹¹ Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth*, 235.

¹² Dryzek, "Political and Ecological Communication," 593.

¹³ Bruce Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature* (New York: Humanity Books, 1995), 63-83.

a kind of modern metaphysics. For Descartes, the proclamation of the cogito brings into the core the possibility of examining subjectivity devoid of certain contexts. This tendency to uproot objects from their contexts is contradictory to what Heidegger would consider as alternative to present-at-hand which is ready-to-hand. Ready-to-hand means the use of objects or instruments not in a theoretical way but in an immersed and practical way.¹⁴ It is a way of dealing with *things* particularly characteristic of those who are involved in it. An example is the relationship of the carpenter with the tool whose years of experience in using a hammer has brought various practical insight of what a hammer really is. This is opposed to a scientist or academician who can theorize all about the hammer but fail to account for the actual use of the hammer in practical contexts.

This problem in modern science is characterized in Heideggerian writing as interpreted by Foltz (1995). It appears as if modern science has made use of mathematics as a framework in its methodology. The idea of mathematics here uses the Greek notion of *ta mathematica* which means that everything can be known in advance. This idea of being able to know things in advance is what was utilized by modern science to be able to have a sense of control – to be able for example to predict phenomena. That is why modern science is considered as the theory of the actual. This is so since it presents things devoid of their mystery, devoid of any form of hiddenness.¹⁵

This runs contrary to the way the Greeks would represent reality. In the Greek context for example, the idea of *physis* understood as nature is also understood as nature revealing itself. This revealing involves a kind of unfolding and uncovering. It can also mean as “self-emergence.”¹⁶ Yet the moment we emphasize the unfolding or unconcealment, we also emphasize its other side that is the concealment part. Thus, it is clear in emphasizing this that nature should be able to reveal itself and not be forced out even if some aspects of it remain hidden. In fact, a more fundamental word used by the Greeks is *aletheia* or truth. This notion of truth is understood as truth revealing itself. It was only during the Roman period where it becomes *veritas*.¹⁷ (Heidegger 1977, 11-12, Foltz, 77). This is also true in the idea of *techne* which is a word to describe building or making as in the case of the craftsmen. Yet even this idea of building and making *aletheia* also becomes a kind of “bringing-forth”. This bringing-forth of the craftsman requires a kind of pondering and taking into context the reality of an object taken from the natural world before it can be properly used for a particular purpose (Heidegger 1977, 8 – 14). Yet, all

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 66.

¹⁶ Ibid., 77.

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), 11-12; see also Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth*, 77.

these meanings that is involve in understanding truth and nature has been eliminated in the understanding of modern science. Thus, in the context of our study the understanding of nature, then, has been robbed of its authenticity in the modern scientific sense since what is revealed is forcefully revealed based on purely human criterion. This is because of modern science's tendency towards a more calculative form of thinking.

What Heidegger further deplors is when this calculative and controlling form of thinking is harnessed further and is paralleled to modern technology. The way Heidegger describes modern technology in "The Question Concerning Technology" and "Memorial Address" is how technology has been harnessed to develop a different kind of revealing. As opposed to inviting, to nurturing and to developing found in the Greek thinking, revealing is based on provoking and challenging. The word used by Heidegger is *Ge-stell* which is often translated as Enframing which is also equivalent to forcing out. Heidegger uses here an image of the earth as one big oilfield. This means that the way human technology has developed in this modern age, it has extracted from the earth and has forced nature to reveal its secret. It is a revealing that is a constant process of unlocking, of transforming and of harnessing departing from the notion of the sensitivity to the kind of revealing found in *phusis*, *aletheia*, and *techne*.

This kind of forcing nature to reveal its secret as what modern technology is undertaking now challenges nature to its very core. It also invites a different way of unconcealing from nature that is now associated with calamities and disasters which scientists would attribute to climate change bringing out phenomena like super-typhoons and extended droughts. These are only a few ways of nature revealing itself the moment it was being forced out.

Despite this alarming ways of asking nature to reveal itself, Heidegger, however, finds hope in the authentic meaning of technology and the way man should approach technology. In "The Question Concerning Technology" and "Memorial Address," Heidegger calls for a meditative thinking that allows us to recognize what technology really is. Heidegger contends here that the idea of technology is not limited to the notion of modern technology. For us to be able to bring out the essence of technology, what is needed from us is the constant need for questioning because it is in questioning that we are able to appreciate technology not in the context of *Ge-stell* but in the context of the poetic, of art. Thus, Heidegger brings us to thinking that is poetic thinking which is also a way to describe how we dwell and inhabit the earth.

Heidegger's Notion of Dwelling

Amidst all these problems and concerns that beset modern science and technology, Heidegger proposes a rethinking of our relation with the world. This relation is consistent with his notion of everydayness which is manifested as early as *Being and*

Time.¹⁸ The idea of ready-to-hand manifest the idea that the ontological importance of things lies in their use in everyday sense. It does not rely on complex theoretical reality. Thus, the object ceases to be simply an object but something which has a close relation with the user in the same way as the hammer is to the carpenter as opposed to that of the scientist.

The notion of everydayness is further developed in Heidegger's notion of dwelling where he affirmed the primordial sense of human existence. It is dwelling that can give a primordial character to human existence.¹⁹ Dwelling is not just any other activity but it is the basic and fundamental activity of man. It is in dwelling where man has close proximity to nature – to the natural world. The typical example here is the farmer whose close relation with the land and the milieu where he is situated enables him to appreciate the necessity of the rain as internally related with his entire activity of farming. The rain is not something that is predicted through scientific and technological inquiries but comes through involvement with the entire process of farming that involves the land, the wind, the air, the sky.

This close proximity with the land is contrary to what is happening with technology now. It appears as if today modern technology is built without connectedness with the land. There is a sense of distance despite the geographical proximity that people experience. What is manifested is an experience without rootedness. Modern technology builds in such a way that aside from forcing nature to reveal its secret, it has also shown objective distance and in the process does not manifest any familiarity with the environment that one belongs to. There is no sense of what can be referred to as a home.²⁰

Heidegger elaborates on this by invoking the situation evident after the war when people were displaced. They were sent away from their home, from their sense of rootedness. Being estranged in a different land develops the lack of familiarity which further manifest their lack of nearness, of sense of belongingness. The sense of home is lost because the sense of familiarity within the milieu that one lives is no longer there. What is experienced is sense of strangeness.

In developing further this notion of dwelling, Heidegger shows how this dwelling also includes a kind of building. He shows us that building is inherent to dwelling. It is only in dwelling that we are able to properly build. It is only when we have a sense of familiarity

¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996).

¹⁹ See Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Alfred Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001), 141-159. See also the essays "Poetically Man Dwells" (211-227) and "The Thing" (163-180).

²⁰ See Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth*, 84-108.

with the milieu of the environment that we are able to build properly. In having a sense of dwelling we also experience nearness. That means we are able to know the environment and the elements within that environment to be able to build properly.²¹ This is elaborated further by Heidegger when he discusses *things* because for him a thing is something that gathers.²² Thus, when Heidegger made reference to building, it is a kind of building that gathers. The example that Heidegger gives is the bridge that gathers together the whole horizon.²³ It gathers the two shores that it connects and also the entire stretch of land and all the entities within that stretch of land. It even unites the river with the land and even the people that belongs to the place. This example of building is contrary to modern technology typified by mining industries that extracts from the land and transforms the land to what it is no longer it is. This kind of building can lead the land to become barren.

Furthermore, Heidegger's understanding of building is a gathering because it is what houses man. It does not lead man to be estranged from the earth or nature. This is an important emphasis since we have to consider also that building as related to dwelling explains further that real meaning of *techne* that is in building it lets beings appear. It lets it appear by nurturing it. Again the play of concealment and unconcealment is worth repeating here. That means that *techne* in the Greek sense involves a kind of building that allows nature to reveal itself not by controlling it but by inviting it, by nurturing it, by liberating it. Thus, in this sense dwelling here is understood as staying, remaining, conserving, gathering and liberating since it is only in staying or remaining that one becomes rooted. It is only in being rooted that one is able to appreciate things as they are and in the process one is able to conserve, gather and liberate it.

What can capture the notion of dwelling, building and the understanding of the thing is nearness. That means that dwelling that includes building requires nearness to things. This further means that dwelling and building requires the importance of a close relationship, that we are not estranged. This is parallel to the claim of Foltz that we indeed need to be able to inhabit the earth.²⁴ It is not simply living but really inhabiting. This means having close involvement with nature. This thought is echoed by what is popularly attributed to Chief Seattle when he proclaims that man belongs to the earth. "The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth."²⁵

This primordial relationship is further elaborated in Heidegger's presentation of the fourfold and the relationship of the fourfold – the earth and the sky, the mortalities

²¹ See Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking."

²² See Heidegger, "The Thing."

²³ Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 150-156.

²⁴ Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth*, 116-145.

²⁵ Chief Seattle is the Chief of the Suquamish Indians in the early 1900. The famous words were taken from his famous letter to the American government even if this claim is highly contested. <<http://www.barefootsworld.net/seattle.html>>

and the divinities.²⁶ When we refer to dwelling, we refer to man is in between the earth and the sky. He is reaching for the sky yet is rooted in the earth. He exudes a capacity for being divine yet eventually he realizes his mortality. This shows that man is eventually mortal and despite his sense of exuberance he is eventually rooted in the earth. This also means that we are just a speck of dust in front of the broader divine reality. This recognition should also allow us to recognize the sense of boundary found between the earth and the sky and between mortals and divine even if deep sense of familiarity is existent.

In his reflection in "Words," Heidegger elaborated on this poetic dwelling as further elaborated by the poem from Stefan George which states that: "where word breaks off no thing maybe."²⁷ This very insightful reflection allowed Heidegger to develop an understanding that is very helpful in elaborating the notion of dwelling. Other than its capacity to elaborate on the proper relations among the fourfold, it is also a way of really spelling out the attitude of man with regards to words that can provide substantial insight on how we deal with reality and with the natural world.

When Heidegger made reference to words break off, it spells out our lack of control over language, that is we cannot manipulate language. Similar with technology, we seem to think that we can control it and use it to further control the earth. But the realization that Heidegger is inviting us is that words are not enough and that it is the words that control us instead. This is the reason why Heidegger proclaims that language is the house of being. Because of this, we have to be at home also with language. This proclamation means also that language in the poetic sense is able to capture the real relationship with reality. In reference to our discussion, it is a use of poetic language that makes us closer to reality of nature. It is in other words our sense of losing control that we are able to fully come to grasp the nature of reality as expressed in language and this expression is again not something that requires complex thinking. When Heidegger refers to meditative thinking, he does not mean something complex that requires rigorous academic training. Instead it is a thinking that allows us to come to grasp and return us to our primordial existence and realize again that where words breaks off no thing maybe. There is immensity in reality here. Words are not enough yet words are what allows us to be in touch with reality. This fundamental insight shows us our lack of control in dealing with reality and more importantly the natural environment. We are part of it and we are just a simple part of it. Relating with nature requires then a thinking that is a kind of surrendering.

²⁶ See Heidegger, "Poetically Man Dwells."

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, "Words," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 139-156; 141.

Dwelling and Ecological Democracy

The elaborate presentation of Heidegger's notion of dwelling brings us back to the initial goal of this study which is to show how this notion of dwelling provides an important precondition for ecological democracy. We have considered that what we have proposed is something that is beyond systematic thought and not an attempt to come up with a complete model of ecological democracy. Instead, as an attempt to provide a precondition, we have ensured that elements of this model of democracy is clearly defined as a way to provide sketches and direction and to fill important gaps. The most important aspect here that needs to be considered is ecological communication.

When Dryzek using the study of Lovelock made reference to ecological communication, he proceeded with the emphasis on listening to nature and being sensitive to signals emanating from the natural world. This emphasis actually is not different from what Heidegger asserts as the need for meditative thinking that allows us to get a primordial understanding of our relationship with nature. This is something that should help us survive the quagmire of modern technology. However, what provides a distinctive character in Heidegger's notion is that his idea of dwelling is not something that actually departs from the ordinariness and everydayness of our relating with. It is not something that is actually extraordinary. This is the reason why we emphasize its primordial character.

The problem only is that like what is being emphasized by Dryzek, Heidegger also contends that a lot in our human relation has forgotten this kind of existence, poetic dwelling. The advent of modern science and technology has brought with it a kind of relating that forces out. In this manner we as human beings fail to fully appreciate the more original idea of relating with that includes a kind of involvement. Thus communication in ecological democracy taking the insight of dwelling requires a kind of belongingness and not of objectification. A kind of deeper understanding of nature that was acquired by the farmer in his constant staying with the land typifies this kind of belonging and kind of communication needed.

Again, the limits here of the conceptualization of ecological democracy is the tendency to emphasize democracy over ecology. While Dryzek is aware of the need for an egalitarian treatment of nature, his emphasis is on democracy. This does not discount the fact ecological democracy understood this way might have a lot of impact on policy formulation but might miss the more primordial point that is the need to stay with nature. Any political structure, then, or any attempt towards representing nature must not be on the hands of politicians who are distant from the whole environmental milieu but we must rely on those who are really immersed, those who have inhabited the earth.

Heidegger's notion of dwelling also cautions us that while Lovelock's analysis is important in that it has gone beyond the conventional science, any attempt to construe

communication with nature through scientific terms might fall short or might fall victim to its own method. Ascribing agency to nature for example is rationally valid yet it can sound like it is presenting a complex reality that departs from the ordinariness of human existence. If misguided it can still fall within the domain of calculative thinking.

Yet this primordial existence need not be the ordinariness connected with what is promoted by modern technology which is limited to the explicit and can be geared towards control. Again, a return to the idea of poetic dwelling is very important here in that the emphasis on involvement with nature with the natural world allows it to have a proper understanding of how nature conceals and unconceals itself - how it is able to reveal itself by man's understanding of his place that he is not in control but he belongs to the earth, in the same way that he belongs to language. Furthermore, the deeper understanding of nature also means a better understanding of boundaries, not the boundaries explained in liberal democracy but the boundaries that helps respect nature in its capacity to conceal and unconceal rather than force it out. This is the boundary experienced by man in dealing with the fourfold.

Thus, what we have in Heidegger's understanding of dwelling is the idea that ecological democracy in harnessing further the idea of ecological communication must not forget the primordial existence of man. In this primordial existence, man belongs to the earth and is able to develop a kind of conserving and following the insights from Foltz can serve as foundation for an environmental ethics. In dwelling man is able to conserve but more importantly, he is able to develop a sense of communication that is only possible in belonging to the land. Without this precondition no authentic communication can be possible. In other words, just like Heidegger's reflection on language, what is needed for any ecological democracy is the need for man's recognition of his place and his relation with the natural world, that nature first reveals itself for man to be able to pursue something more. No amount of mathematics, science and technology can allow this secret and nature to be revealed unless nature allows it.

Conclusion

Our study has shown us that the problem of ecological destruction cannot be remedied by political structures alone but also by a more primordial understanding of human existence. This claim is developed by showing first that there is much to be learned from how ecological democracy can and should accommodate ecological communication that goes beyond the limits of liberal democracy and anthropocentric deliberative democracy. There is a significant potential for an ecological democracy to loosen the boundaries "between the human and the non-human world" for sensitivity to the voices in nature to be accommodated. Yet this sensitivity to nature has to transcend the limitations of a scientific approach developed by several eco-centric thinkers who

despises the role of humans. Their idea of value in nature totally eliminates human agency. This should not be the way forward. Instead, what we need is a further rethinking and questioning of our role in this broader reality that includes environmental reality.

We have affirmed this fundamental role of man through an elaboration of Heidegger's notion of dwelling which shows the intricacy yet the simplicity and ordinariness of how our lives should be lived in reference to our relationship with nature. It is a kind of relationship that is primordial because it brings us back to our roots. This sense of rootedness that also develops our capacity to nurture, to gather is important in being able to listen to nature to enhance ecological communication. It is by properly understanding our mortal place that we should be able to come to grasp this kind of dwelling. This is also where the hope lies in us humans facing the various environmental disasters that happened and is bound to happen.

We have also affirmed further that it is only in this kind of dwelling that an ecological model of democracy can be successful. If not founded on a better understanding of dwelling then ecological democracy which builds on ecological communication can be just any other democracy that fails to fully listen to the voices of the unheard.

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