



# Phenomenological Reading of Dwelling; Explaining How Humans Find Dwelling in the World from Heidegger's Point of View

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## ABSTRACT

Phenomenological philosophy believes that dwelling is the main way of interaction with the world and most of the life-world changes take place through the dwelling. However, for contemporary man, dwelling has been reduced to a habitual thing and its quality has been forgotten. Major studies on dwelling have also considered it as only a human behavior in a set of other behaviors and have neglected how to dwell. That is why we are facing a Being Crisis. Martin Heidegger was one of the first thinkers to realize this dilemma and identified dwelling from an ontological perspective. In his view, human existence is based on dwelling. But since dwelling has become an ontic matter, human is not settled down, but is rather homeless. The objective of this study is to explain how human dwell in the world from Heidegger's view and to answer this question that what is the significant relationship between man and the world and how this relationship causes dwelling in the world? For this purpose, by using the method of descriptive/interpretive research and the technique of "library studies", we have first studied anthropology and cosmology and the relationship between man and the world and then the dwelling phenomenon. Based on research findings, in Heidegger's view, interaction with "things" in the environment transforms human's being-in-the-world into being-in-the-place and elevates the environment to the place. In order to dwell in the place human has to build. The building that corresponds to the essence of the place brings being-in-the-place to being-in-the-settling-place.

**Keywords:** Phenomenology, Dwelling, Place, Dasein, Life-World.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dwelling is the main form of human interaction with the environment and the most basic being-in-the-world; because we humans are all in common in settling and dwelling is a shared experience among us. As such, living has become a daily occurrence in our lives, and we all face different aspects of living on a daily basis. . Despite the fact that dwelling is the main form of human relationship with the life-world and a large part of the large-world changes have taken place through dwelling,

we are unaware of its importance. Major studies of dwelling have examined why and what it is, for instance, the social, cultural, economic, subsistence, and historical reasons of dwelling, but they have not considered the quality of dwelling as well as how humans find it. For this reason, today's housing is nothing but a shelter, and living has been reduced to a roof over your head and a few square meters of land under your feet [1]. Phenomenology is a way of thinking that enables us to see things that are actually in front of our eyes and yet somehow obscure to us.

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Things that we face according to habit and are often either neglected by us or have changed in the darkness and mysteries of all kinds of abstractions [2]. Martin Heidegger was the first thinker to introduce the concept of dwelling into the field of phenomenology. By examining the ontological nature, how it occurs, and its relation to the human life-world, he introduced dwelling as a phenomenon, and with a qualitative view of the place, he explained the realization of dwelling. According to Heidegger, human existence is based on dwelling [3]. Through dwelling, human determines his place in the world, under the sky and on earth, and is consequently freed from confusion and eventually finds place. Dwelling is a declaration of presence by human to the gods and other human beings. Human settles down by building in space. But not every building ends in dwelling. In this research, which has been done by descriptive/analytical method and relying on reliable and related sources and with the technique of library studies, we have examined and analyzed Heidegger's idea about the phenomenon of dwelling. To this end, we have studied Heidegger's own writings and also his commentators. The main question of this research is that, according to Heidegger, what is the significant relationship between man and the world and how this relationship causes dwelling in the world [4]? Furthermore, we are trying to answer these sub-questions as well: how does an environment become a place to live? What is the relationship between building and dwelling, and how does building lead to dwelling? To find the answer, Heidegger's teachings on the world (cosmology), human (anthropology), building, being, and dwelling have been studied in-depth, and we have finally arrived at a model of dwelling that transforms existence to presence and presence to settlement and upgrades the environment to place and place to settling place. The results of this study can be useful not only in explaining the views of the most important phenomenological philosopher, Martin Heidegger, on dwelling, but also since it has studied the way in which dwelling is realized as a phenomenon and has further considered its contradictory phenomenon, that is, homelessness, as a problem of contemporary human, can be the beginning of further research and by showing the problem can become the first step to provide a solution in future studies. Moreover, since many thinkers believe that phenomenology still exists in the

world and we are not yet in the world of post-phenomenology and post-ideology, the phenomenological understanding of place and dwelling can be a useful tool for criticizing architectural works.

### 1. Research Method

This article is inherently "fundamental" because it examines the basis of the phenomenon of dwelling in a different way from conventional affirmative methods. Based on this, the research approach of this article is phenomenology because basically any study in which various aspects of human-environment relationship have been examined through qualitative description and interpretation, even if not directly phenomenological, is implicitly phenomenological [2]. The phenomenological approach is basically a qualitative research method that has received less attention from researchers and, unlike quantitative [positive] methods, leads to a deeper understanding of the phenomena. In this research, data collection has been done based on reliable and related sources and by documentary method and library studies. Since phenomenology is a qualitative-descriptive method and is the knowledge that seeks to reveal the nature and essence of phenomena, we seek to obtain the essence of the phenomenon of dwelling and explain how it is realized from Heidegger's phenomenological perspective.

### 2. Literature Review

Heidegger has left no text about architecture because he believed that nowadays, architecture has become just an artwork. However, he was the first to introduce the concept of habitation into the field of phenomenology and by examining the ontological nature, how it occurs and its relation to the human life-world he introduced habitation as a phenomenon. In his article *Building Settling and Thinking*, written in 1951, Heidegger explains his views on dwelling and its relation to building, thought and human existence. He states that what plays a fundamental role in dwelling is protection and care. Protection occurs when we left something on its essence.

In his book *Heidegger's Hut (2011)*, Adam Sharr develops Heidegger's theories of dwelling. In his view, Human's way of being in the world is being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world means to be rooted, to be home and to live in the world with a clear conscience. ... "being-in" implicitly means

settling next to the things of the world and being attached to and absorbed in them, and finding their concern [3].

In his book *Place and placelessness* (1976), Edward Relph deals with the causes of placelessness and the crisis of homelessness from a phenomenological point of view. *Place and Placelessness* is the first book written about place and dwelling based on phenomenological knowledge.

Norwegian architect and theorist, Christian Norberg-Schultz is one of the most important phenomenologists who has studied the dwelling and dimensions of its formation. In his book *Architecture: Presence, language and place* (2009) he believes that the purely material and quantitative conception of dwelling has reduced settling today to a roof overhead and a few square meters of land underfoot. Therefore, swelling is nothing but a shelter and human dwelling or being in it is not realized.

Parvin Partovi, in his dissertation entitled *Phenomenology of Place: Principles and Methodology*, based on the views of Heidegger and Schultz, has studied the principles and concepts of the method of phenomenology and the dimensions and aspects of place in the human living environment. Partovi begins his dissertation by criticizing the pragmatic approach to place that stems from the idea of modernity, and considers the lack of a sense of place as one of the fundamental problems of modern urbanism, the result of which is a crisis of identity and forgetting the meaning of existence; Because human being always acquires his identity from the identity of the place where he lives. In his view, the tendency towards globalization has eliminated different ways of dwelling and created uniformity.

In her article *Learning from Heidegger*, Nayyer Tahoori examines two aspects of living in Heidegger's thought. In the first period of the philosopher's thought, which coincided with the writing of the book *Being and Time*, dwelling takes on an ontological aspect. Heidegger says that language is the home of existence. For the first time, this statement related the concept of home to language. In the second period of Heidegger's thought, dwelling takes on a poetic aspect, and Heidegger speaks of the poetic dwelling of human being in the company of Things and under the sky, on earth, and with gods and other human beings (mortals).

In his article *Explaining the Concept of Housing and Dwelling in the Phenomenological Approach and the Approach of Bio-cultural Paradigms*, Shahin Eelka has studied dwelling from a phenomenological point of view and the role of culture in its formation. According to this article, dwelling is a phenomenon that has a dual nature: 1. it is formed under the influence of culture and 2. it affects the culture. Home, as one of the basic components of social life, plays an essential role in human culture. But the author does not pay attention to the fact that from a phenomenological point of view, culture itself is a factor of evaluation and judgment about dwelling and therefore is an obstacle to achieving its nature. Therefore, in this article, the matter is that what the dwelling is and not how to dwell.

### 3. Phenomenology

Providing an accurate and comprehensive definition of Phenomenology is not only very difficult, but also absolutely far from cautious; Because the range of definitions provided of this new emerging twentieth-century phenomenon is so wide, varied, and sometimes contradictory. Therefore, any definition is practically incomplete or can be disaffirmed by other definitions [5]. However, as an initial definition, phenomenology may be considered as an intellectual movement which emerged in the early twentieth century with the philosophical views of Edmund Husserl, and soon after, thanks to the Martin Heidegger, became one of the greatest and most influential philosophical currents of its time and was discussed in many fields of knowledge [6].

### 4. Heidegger and Phenomenology

Heidegger was one of Edmund Husserl's best students and, following his teacher, he turned to phenomenology from the very beginning of his philosophical work and accepted many of Husserl's views [7], especially his famous manifesto "Towards the Things" [8]. Although Heidegger's fundamentalist phenomenology led him to *The Things* and he accepted Husserl's manifesto, but accepting this manifesto for Heidegger meant that "we must go to the objectivity of things" [9]. The emphasis here is on "object". Heidegger refused to accept the subjective aspect of cognition, that is, where Husserl mentions consciousness as the source and foundation of cognition. [10]?" For Heidegger,

phenomenology is a method of cognition in which the existence of a subject in front of an object is not necessary, because the dualistic approach to cognition merely hides and obscures the truth [11]. In his book *being and Time* (1927), he describes phenomenology as follows: "To allow what it reveals itself to be seen through itself, exactly to the same way and manner in which he presents himself through himself [12]." Heidegger emphasizes that phenomenology is not about WHAT needs to be studied, but it is about HOW we approach the object or thing we are studying. Phenomenology as a method or approach, by helping to reveal what is hidden, allows us to see that better. It can even be said that phenomenology is a way of trying to let things reveal themselves [11]. Heidegger never believed that phenomenology was a philosophical school. In the book *Fundamental Problems of Phenomenology*, he wrote: "There is no such thing as A phenomenology." He always said that phenomenology is not limited to the boundaries of a school, but more than anything and more importantly, it is a "phenomenological insight" and a "phenomenological view [12]".

### 5. Human being from Heidegger's point of view

Human being has been one of the key topics in Heidegger's philosophy in the early and late years of his thoughts. In order to free himself from all the metaphysical constraints of human cognition and the conceptions left over from the time of Aristotle, Heidegger, in the early years of his philosophical thoughts, replaced the common "Human" word with another word called "Dasein", which was not imbued with any metaphysical preconceptions [12]. Human as a Dasein, rejects all previous definitions of human being, such as the talking animal, the living animal, the willful animal, the working animal, as well as all metaphysical interpretations of human understanding. These definitions and interpretations have considered human in terms of its existence, but Dasein refers to the being of human [13]. Dasein is a being that is distinguished from other creatures by its relation to existence [14]. Therefore, in simple terms, this word means "human existence" [15]. Dasein is the being that each of us must say, "I am that being". Indeed every one of us is a giant (Fig. 1).

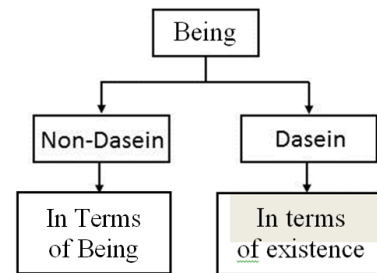


Figure 1. Dasein considers Human based on its existential aspect (Source: Authors).

Dasein, the most frequent word in *Being and time*, is an old German word consisting of two words "Da" and "Sein". The word Da in German means both "there" and "here". The word Sein also means "to be". So, the word Dasein itself literally means (t)here-being. (T)here-being means that human is a being who is neither "There" and merely spiritual nor "Here" and merely carnal, but it is in the conflict of these two states (Fig. 2) [16].



Figure 2. Dasein is neither spiritual nor carnal, but is located in a realm between these two worlds (Source: Authors).

### 6. The world from Heidegger's point of view

Contrary to the usual quantitative concepts and perceptions of the world, Heidegger believes that there is a higher concept of the world and following Husserl, he calls this unscientific world the "life-world" [17]. This world consists of objective phenomena including natural things - such as seasons, day and night, creatures, wood, rock, water, sun, moon, stars, clouds, etc., that shape its nature - and artificial things - such as cities, streets, buildings, tables, chairs, art objects, etc. - which are made by human and have meaning only in relation to him and for him. There are also intangible phenomena in the life-world; phenomena such as emotions, actions, behaviors, moral values, culture, customs, beliefs, etc. In addition, there are other human beings in

the life-world who also belong to this world (Fig. well as human beings - the life-world provides a framework for human life. David Simon believes that the life-world refers to the implicit and closed context, concept and rhythm of everyday life; everyday life that people naturally do not pay much attention to that [18]. The life-world includes both normal and abnormal life, and it includes both worldly and ordinary life and

3). By accepting all these phenomena together - as wonderful life. This life-world in which experiences take place is usually out of our sight and attention; because typically humans do not shape their experiences in this world consciously and publicly, but these experiences just simply occur and people do not take into account that how they happen [19].

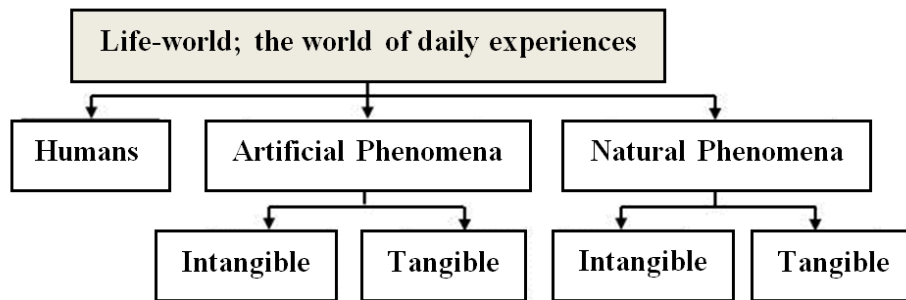


Figure 3. The life-world is the world of everyday experiences; Experiences which are formed from interaction with humans, natural and artificial/tangible and intangible phenomena (Source: Authors).

The world that Heidegger calls life-world is a "pre-given" world (Fig. 4); this means that it has existed before Dasein but did not have a "Worldbeingness". Basically, from Heidegger's point of view, without Dasein, the world, and more importantly, the existence, is meaningless and without Dasein, the world would be just a natural environment. Besides, the life-world is

pre-intellectual and free from rational judgments. That is, it is not what Dasein thinks. It is what Dasein lives in [2]. In the life-world, at every moment we are involved in living experiences of beings in different fields and on different horizons [20], without even thinking about these experiences

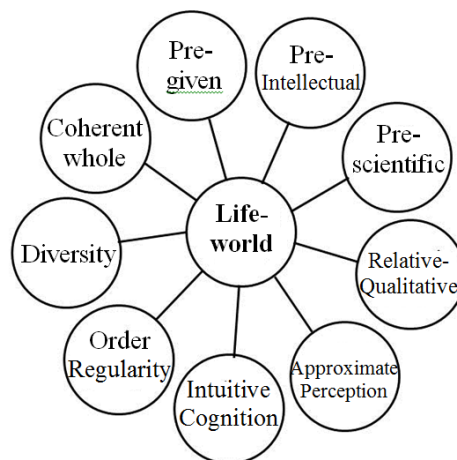


Figure 4. Characteristics of the life-world from Heidegger's point of view (Source: Authors).

## 7. The relation between Human and the world from Heidegger's point of view

Earlier it was said that the word Dasein means (t)here/here being. But where is this (t)here/here where Dasein is? For Heidegger, (t)here/here is the world or the life-world. In Heidegger's thought, the world is pre-given and presumed. It means that the world existed before Dasein and is also in the destiny of every Dasein. Therefore, being in the world is not conditional on Dasein's choice, and each Dasein has been thrown into this world and into different cultural, social, historical, economical, etc. situations in the context of his life in the world and the society in which he lives and he has no escape from this throwing and from this initial position. This throwing appears as his destiny. The word "thrown into" refers to all those aspects of Dasein's existence that he himself is not the cause of [21]. Therefore it can be said that the

world is Dasein's living environment in which it exists every day and every moment [22]. Since Dasein has been thrown into the world and its everyday environment, it is inherently world-dependent. Heidegger believes that there is a special relationship between the world and Dasein. He introduces this relationship with the phrase "being-in-the-world." Being-in-the-world is one of the necessities of Dasein's existence, and Dasein's existence is essentially from being-in-the-world. Real life means being in the world. Living is always living in the world. ... We can't separate being from the world [23] Therefore, Dasein's relationship with the world is a reciprocal one. The world exists if there is a Dasein, and on the other hand, the existence of Dasein is defined as the existence of the world. The world appears to Dasein only when he goes from his existence to the world (Fig. 5) [24].

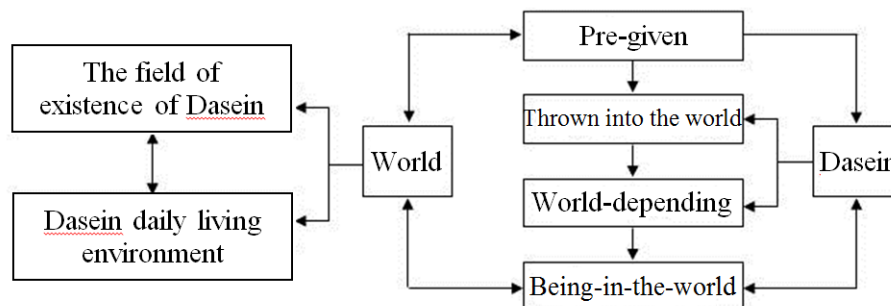


Figure 5. The relationship between Dasein and the world is reciprocal. World/Dasein only exists if Dasein/World exists (Source: Authors).

## 8. Dwelling from Heidegger's point of view

Phenomenology is basically a qualitative-descriptive knowledge in dealing with human lived experiences and it is a way of approaching phenomena, so that their essence or nature is revealed. Heidegger's phenomenology also describes phenomena such as dwelling and how they occur [25]. So the basis of our work here is to describe the conditions that lead to human settling. Heidegger was the first to introduce the concept of dwelling into the field of phenomenology and, by examining the ontological nature, how it occurs and its relation to the human's life-world, introduced dwelling as a phenomenon [26]. It was said that from his point of view, Dasein's way of interacting with the environment is of the being-in-the-world type. The most basic form of this interaction and the most basic kind of being-in-the-world is dwelling

because we all human beings settle in the world, and dwelling is a common experience among Daseins. Because of this commonality, dwelling is an objective phenomenon. From a phenomenological point of view and according to the issue of "intersubjectivity", what is common in human's mind inevitably becomes objective. In short, intersubjectivity is the system of two-way communication between my mind and the other as it exists in the world of everyday life [21]. Phenomenology, through these connections and commonalities between minds, frees itself from the straits of subjectivism and achieves objectivity; because, as a rule, commonalities of minds, due to their commonality, require objectivity within themselves [22]. Intersubjectivity, which means the common perception of a phenomenon, is derived from the fact that based on phenomenological knowledge



the essence of each phenomenon is unique. The essence of dwelling phenomenon is also single. This means that all Daseins have a common understanding of dwelling. It should be noted that this is the general aspect of the dwelling phenomenon, and although in the phenomenological perception the essence of every phenomenon is one, the manifestations of this essence are multiple. Dwelling has unique aspects among different Daseins in different cultures. In other words, dwelling has two aspects. First;

dwelling as "Being" that is the common aspect of dwelling. From Heidegger's point of view being has an ontological aspect. Since Dasein's way of existence is being-in-the-world, being is one among all Daseins. The second aspect of dwelling is its specific aspect; it means architectural settling or settling in a building, especially a home, which is realized through "building" (Fig. 6). Dasein's way of settling is unique, depending on the culture in which it is thrown.

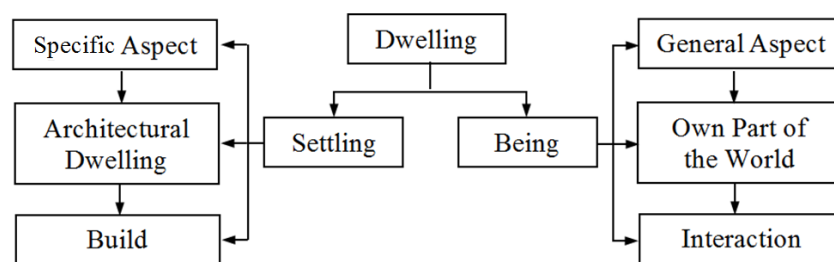


Figure 6. Two aspects of dwelling based on Heidegger's phenomenology (Source: Authors)

### 8-1. Being (general aspect of dwelling)

Dasein has been thrown into the world and the environment in which he lives. This throwing is the existential aspect of every Dasein and it is from this throwing that Dasein exists. But Dasein is never alone and is surrounded by non-Dasein beings (Things, in general), which are in the world but are not aware of their existence. In addition, there are other Daseins or egos in this world that are common to any Dasein. So Dasein's existence means "existence with others". In dealing with others, Dasein becomes "Dasein-with" and its being turns to "being-with". Dasein-with refers to "being among other Daseins" and conveys his general cognition of another existence in the world [15]. So, in general, Dasein is always interacting with non-Dasein beings as well as other Daseins, thus establishes relationships with them. Confrontation with relations that human has with the beings around him, determines his or her presence [24]. That is, through this confrontation, interaction, and relativity, human existence gets to present, because Dasein, when determining his relationship with other beings, defines his place in the world, makes the environment meaningful, and owns a large, open and abstract part of the world. In other words, every Dasein must own this world in order to be able to be in these coordinates, that is, the world. Being means own a world of things. By doing this, Dasein would be at

the center of its world (obviously not the physical center), consolidating its presence in the world and making the environment a familiar and meaningful place. Through presence, essence of the being, that is place, is revealed to Dasein. From now on, Dasein's being-in-the-world will be being-in-the-place.

According to Heidegger, everything, if we go to it in a way that reveals its essence (towards things), is able to establish human's being. In this case, Heidegger refers to a bridge built over a river and refers to the bridge's role in the realization of human's being. From Heidegger's point of view, the bridge gathers the land around the river as a landscape. Thus, the bridge represents a place [27]. This place is not available to the bridge in advance, but before the bridge is built, there are many places along the river that can be captured with something. In fact, due to the presence of the bridge, one of those places appears as a place. Therefore, it is not the case that the bridge comes to the place to be established in it, but the place appears due to the bridge itself [3]. So when the bridge is built, it turns the natural environment around the river into a place where Dasein can be present. By generalizing this view to the Things, it can be said that when human settled in time and time found a place in the world, the art of music was created. When human settled in color, painting was formed. Literature emerged as

human settled in the world. When human settled on the land, he created agriculture, and when human settled in space, architecture emerged.

### 8-2. The Settling (specific aspect of dwelling)

Architecture emerged when human settled in a place. This specific aspect of dwelling means to settle in an architectural building such as a city or home. Due to the interaction with things, the existence of Dasein turns to present and being-in-the-world is transformed into the being-in-the-place. In order to settling to take place, presence must turn to settlement so that Dasein can be physically located in a specific place. In order to be able to settle in a place, human must first build; to build means to add something artificial to the stature of the place. Heidegger left no text about architecture and always used the word architecture in a derogatory manner and preferred the word building to it because he believed that in the contemporary world, architecture is seen as a purely artistic work and not the building process of several thousand years. This kind of view deals only with the aesthetic, technical and engineering factors involved in the building and neglects the essence and truth of building which is the human settling. In an article entitled *Building Settling and Thinking*, written in 1951, he explains his views on dwelling and its relation to building, thought and human existence. As the title of that article shows, the philosopher refuses to place commas between these phrases to emphasize the unity and integrity of the three [28], cause he does not consider any of these concepts superior to the

other and believes that the realization of each is the realization of the other. In his article, Heidegger argues that developmental practices and terms in the present age mediate between "building" and "settling." In Heidegger's view, these words were once essentially inseparable - and in his view, they can be so again - and reconnect thinking [3]. By building in a place, place becomes settling place, and being-in-settling-place is formed. But not every construction ends in settlement. Building as settling is a building that is accompanied by protection and care of the place and respect for the will of the place; So that the residential place will be scored according to its inner talent and power. Heidegger's meaning of protection differs from the usual interpretation of this word. In his view, protection does not mean that we do not harm the protected. True protection is a positive thing, and it happens when we already left something to its own essence [3]. Thus, construction, along with the surrender of place to nature, leads to the actual settlement, which is one of Heidegger's ontological-existential designs. Therefore, building that left the place to its own essence, leads to the true settling and will be part of Heidegger's ontological-existential plans; this means that it is getting closer and closer to the Dasein's ontological qualities and ontological issues (Fig. 7). Dwelling is one of Dasein's daily phenomena; From Heidegger's point of view, this kind of everyday life does not mean neglecting the settling, rather, it is a sign that humans got used to the phenomenon of dwelling.

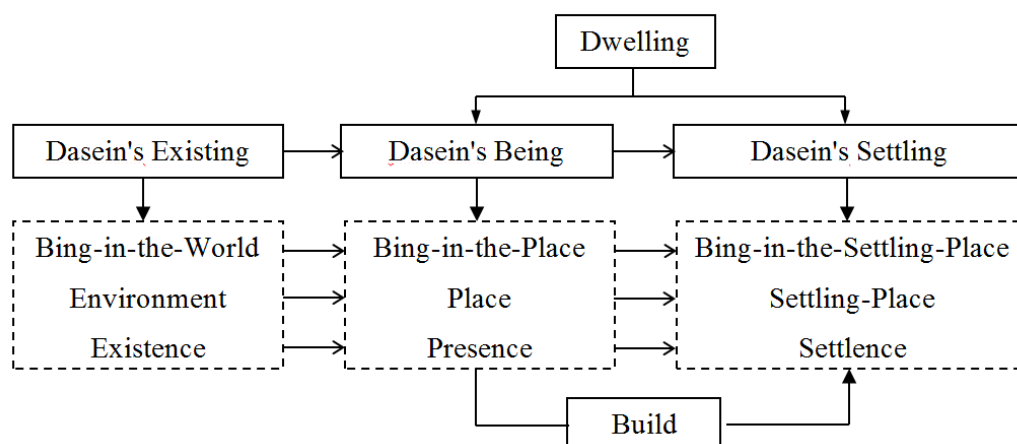


Figure 7. Due to the Building, Dasein is physically located in a specific place. Due to this Locating the presence of Dasein gets to Settlement, Human is settled and the place becomes Settling-place. Settlement causes Dasein to define his existential ratio with the God, world and other humans. (Source: Authors).



There is another aspect of building, and it is a building that lacks proper thinking, which is accompanied by interference and manipulation in the place, which leads to hiding and not revealing the nature of the place. What is achieved is placelessness that leads to homelessness.

Heidegger believes that human beings are only present in the place without inhabiting it [29]. Contemporary human dwelling has been reduced to an ontic-existential thing, and the truth of dwelling has been neglected and forgotten by habit and daily life (Fig. 8).

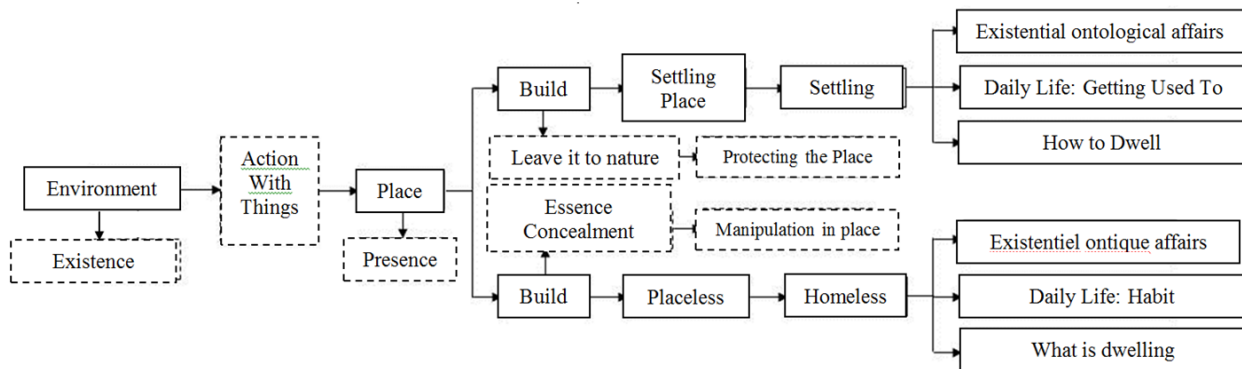


Figure 8. Expansion model or phenomenological reading of dwelling; Explaining how humans settle from Heidegger's point of view. Due to the action with things the place is built. But what makes a place a settling-place is building. Not every building leads to the settling. Building that considers the needs of place (everyday ontological affairs) forms a Dwelling. Building that neglects the essence of place and only considers ontic everyday habits forms homelessness.

## 9. Conclusion

The world, that is, somewhere between earth and the sky, is the realm of human dwelling. Human exists in this realm, stands, calms down, and works. Natural things and human artifacts that form the boundaries of this realm also stand, calm down and function. The world is pre-given; That is, it has existed before Dasein and is the destiny of each Dasein. Human is thrown into his life-world and has no escape from it, so his relationship with the world is of the being-in-the-world type, which is a sign of familiarity with and getting used to the world. The most basic form of being-in-the-world is dwelling, which is a common phenomenon among all human beings. According to what is used in Heidegger's words, the dwelling itself has two general and special aspects. The general aspect of dwelling, meaning to be, is formed by the presence of man in the environment. Presence is itself a conflict with the relations that human has with things and human beings in the life-world. This engagement and interaction elevate the environment to a familiar place and create being-in-the-place. Human achieves dwelling (the special aspect of dwelling) by building in place, which means adding something artificial to the stature of the life-world. Building, if accompanied with care for the place and respect for the will of the place, brings with it

a true dwelling. True dwelling is the ontological view which leads to the phenomenon of dwelling; It is the time when human beings love dwelling and enjoy it. Mankind today is in a crisis of homelessness. That is, it settles in the place, without occupying it. Homelessness does not mean a lack of housing, but it is a qualitative aspect that is caused by technicality-orientation of the world. Homelessness is the result of intervention in space due to the type of construction that hides the essence of space. Architecture as mass production, purely aesthetic view of building, neglect of qualities and dealing with the quantitative structures of the environment, technical approach to place with the aim of efficiency and usefulness, standardization and normalization are all manifestations of homelessness and thus forgetting the nature of dwelling. Heidegger's idea is that if we really want to understand our situation, or in other words, if we really want to understand reality, we must try to avoid imposing ourselves on it and instead give in to. True dwelling is achieved only when we leave place to its essence. The phenomenological reading of dwelling is like a model that transforms existence into presence and then to settling, the environment into a place and then to settling place, and being-in-the-world into being-in-the-place and being-in-settling-place.

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