

Taoism and Transversal Geophilosophy

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Tao was born before Heaven and Earth, and yet you cannot say it has been there for long; it is earlier than the earliest time, and yet you cannot call it old. —Chuang Tzu

The universe is a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects. —Thomas Berry

We all stand only together, not only all men, but all things. —Henry G. Bugbee, Jr.

If we keep on speaking the same language together, we're going to reproduce the same history.
—Luce Irigaray

If you are silent and never speak, what will the next generation transmit?
—Han-Shan ("Cold Mountain")

Prologue

This is indeed an age of ecology in which the final struggle between life and death seems to be taking place. At the moment it appears that ecology, and ecology alone, will determine the fate of the earth and thus of humanity. There is sufficient reason why we should regard it as our "ultimate concern." Just before his death, Martin Heidegger came to conclude enigmatically if not resignedly that "only a god can save us now" (*nur noch ein gott kan nuns retten*).¹ His words are most befitting to today's ecological condition of humanity.

Over three decades ago, I addressed the weighty question of the "ecological crisis" to celebrate the coming of the First Earth Day in the United States.² Unfortunately, however, the ecological crisis has not abated a bit. Rather, it has precipitously worsened: there is no sign of it waning, as evidenced in global warming. Alarming, this earth, which is quintessential to the human condition, has become an inhospitable, ruinous, and deadly place for all earthlings. We are committing Gaia-cide. *Homo sapiens* has become *homo insapiens*. The ancient Hindu scriptural saying of *Bhagavad Gita* is telling in light of the dire predicament of the earthly condition today: *I am become death*. We have the forced option of *thinking the unthinkable*.

The *Tao* of Transversal Geophilosophy

What is geophilosophy? The ecological crisis, without doubt, signals human uprootedness or disembodiment from the earth as a “household” (*oikos*) whose “deed” is being taken away by nature’s mutiny or silent revolt. To overcome it, we are in dire need of inaugurating a geophilosophy grounded in fundamentals which, according to the French philosophers Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, “brings together all the elements within a single embrace,”³ since, in following the advice of Albert Einstein, not everything that counts can be counted. Michel Serres, another French philosopher, comes to the sudden realization that in time of the ecological crisis, collective humanity and the whole earth inseparably intersect: “global history enters nature, and global nature enters history: this is *something utterly new in philosophy*” (italics added).⁴ Although it may be something new in modern Western philosophy, the inseparability between humanity’s history and nature’s nature or between *Bewusstsein* and *Natursein*—to use Kah Kyung Cho’s terms⁵—is the inborn principium of Taoism. In his attempt to construct a geophilosophical paradigm, Guattari also raises a time-honored question:

The ecological crisis can be traced to a more general crisis of the social, political and existential. The problem involves a type of revolution of mentalities whereby they cease investing in a certain kind of development, based on a productivism that has lost all human finality. Thus the issue returns with insistence: how do we change mentalities, how do we reinvent social practices that would give back to humanity—if it ever had it—a sense of responsibility, not only for animal and vegetable species, likewise for incorporeal species such as music, the arts, cinema, the relation with time, love and compassion for others, the feeling of fusion at the heart of cosmos?⁶

In the grand narratives of Chuang Tzu, who considers *Tao* as “earlier than the earliest time” but not “old,” there is one perennial notion: “Heaven and earth are born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things [entire nature or earth] are one with me.”⁷ Indeed, *Tao* is the affirmation of the simultaneous presencing together of humanity and nature between heaven and earth.

The domination or conquest by humanity of nature is an idea highlighted by Western modernity in promoting the Promethean ideology of infinite progress. Modern civilization has tipped the balance between humanity and nature to the decisive advantage of the former over the latter. The backbone of this Promethean drive is technology which is by nature solely *utilitarian and thus anthropocentric*. Heidegger bemoaned the fact that the whole earth has become a gigantic gas station. Global warming is nothing but the result of rampant technology for the sake of the material well-being and convenience of humanity. In anthropocentrism all beings and things exist only for the sole benefit of rational beings called humans. We often query banally: “why do animals cross the roads we built to get killed” rather than “why do we build the roads where animals cross?”

As the patriarch of Enlightenment and Western modernity, Descartes built the “unshakable foundation” (*fundamentum inconcussum*) of modern humanism based on the *cogito* as epistemocratic Panopticon. French philosophers are “like landowners whose source of income is the *cogito*”—to borrow the expression of Deleuze and Guattari.⁸ Descartes privileged humanity

in the order of creation when he wrote of man's *mastery* and *possession* of mindless and soulless nature. In his absorbing and thoughtful work *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, Robert Pogue Harrison attempts to show that the aim of the Cartesian *cogito* is to cultivate the primeval *woodland* (or wasteland) into the new *timberyard* of humanity by *clearing methodically* a forest of errors. The forest, which lives in the "shadow" of civilization, is of course the metaphor or synecdoche for wild, pristine, and uncultivated nature. While building the rationalist foundation of Enlightenment thought, the anthropocentric *cogito* deforestates or defenestrates Artemisian nature. Harrison further shows that there is a necessary linkage between Cartesian rationalism and the "hyperhumanism" of the French "enlightened" encyclopedists which later gave birth in Germany to "forest mathematics" and the science of forestry (*Forstwissenschaft*). For the encyclopedists, the forester is "a [cultivated] man of economy" whose knowledge leads to "an enlightened public administration of woodlands." In the age of Enlightenment, according to Harrison, the forest ceased to exist as "useless" *habitat* but was "recreated" as "resource" and "commodity" for human use and profit making: it became completely subsumed under and reduced to "usefulness" (*utilité publique*).⁹

Although Descartes spoke of men as the "masters and possessors of nature," Francis Bacon is most accountable for generating the technological, cum utilitarian, industrial ethos of modernity. He is unquestionably the most eloquent and "enlightened" voice of Western modernity in the age of science, technology, and quantitative economy. He advocated the convergence of theory and practice, of knowledge and utility, and of knowing and making. Experiment is not only the essence of the natural sciences but also the way of discovering the (feminine) secrets of nature. By increasing knowledge through experiment, humanity is capable also of extending its dominion over "dumb" nature. Seeing the idea of utility as the end of knowledge, Bacon aimed to lay the foundation of "human utility and power" to "subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity"; and "dignity" of knowledge is maintained by "works of utility and power." In other words, experimentalism, the utility of knowledge, power over nature, and *philanthropia*, when combined together, become a paradigmatic attempt to replace the old "cult of books" by the new (experimental) "cult of nature" or the "inquisition of nature" which advances the "direct commerce of the mind with things" themselves. Bacon formulated the principles of *Herrschaftswissen* in which knowledge and power converge for the sake of utility, for the sake of utilizing nature for human benefits alone. He insisted on the meeting of human knowledge and power in one (i.e., *scientia et potential in idem coincident*) and discovered "in the womb of nature many secrets of excellent use." Speaking against the "degenerate learning" of the Scholastics, Bacon felt that they had "sharp and strong wits" and "abundance of leisure in the cells of monasteries and colleges" but they knew little history of nature or "no great quantity of matter," that is, their "cobwebs of learning" produced "no substance or profit."¹⁰

In an age of multiculturalism and globalization, transversality promotes that cross-cultural ex/change of ideas and values which goes beyond ethnocentrism in general and Eurocentrism in particular. Transversality is a conceptual rite of passage from Western hegemony to the pluralistic world of multiculturalism which is on its way to globalization. It allows border-crossings of all kinds. It facilitates border-crossings both between diverse cultures and academic disciplines. It means to be thoroughly intertextual. In a manner of speaking, it is a phoenix

rising from the ashes of Eurocentrism in the garb of universality: as the Martiniquan philosopher Edouard Glissant judiciously points out, “thinking about One is not thinking about All” or Many. By decentering or or deprovincializing Eurocentrism, it may be spelled “trans(uni)versality”; it intends to transgress and transfigure the Eurocentric metanarratives of universality.¹¹

In his second visit to Japan in search of the “aesthetics of existence,” the vintage Michel Foucault remarked in his dialogue with a Japanese priest: “The crisis of Western thought is identical to the end of imperialism . . . [I]t is the end of the era of Western philosophy. Thus, if philosophy of the future exists, it must be born outside of Europe or equally born in consequence of *meetings and impacts between Europe and non-Europe*” (italics added).¹² Long before Foucault, Martin Heidegger, who expressed his bewilderment that the Japanese tend to forget the beginning of their own thinking in their pursuit of the newest and latest trends in European thought, also spoke of “planetary thinking” (*planetarische Denken*) which must be built not by Europe or East Asia alone but an encounter between the two.¹³

Transversality is the term used in geometry which refers to the two diagonally connecting lines of any rectangle or parallelogram. As a term of connectivity, it makes “connections in the face of difference” in the environment in which everything is connected to everything else in the cosmos—that principle of which is called by the biologist Barry Commoner “the first law of ecology.”¹⁴ By rejecting all binary oppositions (e.g., Rudyard Kipling’s formulation of “East is East and West is West”), transversality is analogous to the symbolism embodied in the famous wooden statue of Buddha at a Zen temple in Kyoto, Japan, whose face marks the dawn of awakening (*satori*) or signals the beginning of a new regime of knowing and morals. From the crack of the *middle* of the old face in the Buddha’s statue, there emerges an interstitial, liminal face that signifies a new transformation. Since the new face emerges from the middle, it also symbolizes the arrival of Maitreya or Maitreyan *Middle Way* that rejects any bipolarization. In seeking convergences, transversality embraces and broadens the “in-between” for the sake of the “beyond.”

The Taoist Aesthetics of Nature

1. The Sacramental Topography of Interbeing. The Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh initiated the religious order of Interbeing (*Tiep Hien*) which signifies the notion that everything is related to everything else.¹⁵ In the cosmos nothing exists in isolation. In the language of the old Chinese *Book of Changes (I Ching)*, the phenomenon of Interbeing is called synchronicity. It may also be called the “first law” (*lex*) of geophilosophy. M. C. Escher’s lithograph *Verbum* (1942) sublimely depicts the geophilosophical continuum of Interbeing. In the beginning was the word (*verbum*), and the word was Interbeing or Relation.

Since no earthly element—including humans—exists in isolation, what transpired in one element affects all the others on earth. It is rather moving, I think, to recapture Václav Havel’s notion of human conscience as our responsibility for the natural order of things. As he watched dense brown smoke scattered across the sky from a huge smokestack of a hurriedly built factory, Havel

writes with a poetic flair: “Each time I saw it, I had an intense sense of something profoundly wrong, of humans soiling the heavens. If a medieval man were to see something like that suddenly on the horizon—say, while hunting—he would probably think it the work of the Devil and would fall on his knees and pray that he and his skin be saved.”¹⁶ Of course, Havel’s concern for the natural order of things is hitched to his ontological assumption that everything is “inter-being” with everything else in the cosmos. He refers to the synchronistic effect of lepidoptery or—to put it simply—the “butterfly effect” (of chaos theory): “a belief that everything in the world is so mysteriously and completely interconnected that a slight, seemingly insignificant wave of a butterfly’s wings in a single spot on this planet can unleash a typhoon thousands of miles away.”¹⁷

The Japanese philosopher, Watsuji Tetsuro, is an exemplary thinker who characterizes relational ontology as the distinguishing mark of East-Asian thought or Sinism, which generalizes over Confucianism, Taoism, or Ch’an (Zen) Buddhism. The phenomenon of Sinism is not confined to China alone but includes Korea and Japan where sinography is commonly shared as a linguistic diet. Watsuji authored the important work called *Fudo* (climate or “wind”/“land”) whose main theme is to relate the effects of the climate on human civilization. His *magnum opus Rinrigaku (Ethics)* begins with the Sinic idea of being human (*ningen*). There is something deeply Sinic about his philosophy. As a perceptive student and critique of Heidegger, Watsuji attends to the etymological details of the Chinese term: *ningen* is symbolized in two sinograms, that is, “human” (*nin* or *hito*, the pictogram of the human upright posture) and “betweenness” (*gen* or *aidagara*). Etymologically, to be human is to be necessarily relational or interhuman (*Mitmenschlich*).¹⁸

My formulation of Interbeing or relational ontology embodied in Sinism is primarily conceptual. However, I am delighted to discover and read the American cultural psychologist Richard E. Nisbett’s *The Geography of Thought* which provides the solid empirical evidence that unlike Westerners, East-Asians (Chinese, Japanese and Koreans alike) think and do things *relationally*. Nisbett digs into the geographical location of culture whose sedimentation reveals radical differences in human thinking and doing. He confesses that his empirical exploration led him to abandon old-fashioned universalism and turn into a pluralist.¹⁹

It is the French Japanologist Augustin Berque who intimates the relevance of Watsuji’s definition of being human as *ningen* to our environmental thinking (*fudo* as environmental *milieu*). Berque relates:

We can see that for Watsuji the human being is composed inseparably of an individual dimension and a social dimension: and the link—the ‘between-link’, *aida*—from one to the other goes well beyond Heidegger’s ‘being-with’ (*Mitsein*), which ceases with the individual’s death. For Watsuji death does not put an end to the social part of our existence (and, we might add, it even confirms it). Furthermore, he is the first to have clearly spelt out that this between-link is also the basis for our relationship with the environment, and that consequently the latter is no less a part of our being than the *aida* that connects us to others. Thus human existence is constituted by the dynamic of the relationship between an individual dimension and a socio-environmental dimension, a relationship

what Watsuji defines as the ‘structural moment of human existence’ (*ningen sonzai no kozo keiki*).²⁰

What Watsuji calls the “structural moment of human existence” (*sonzai*) is anchored in the body. The very root of *aidagara* (the space of “in-betweenness”) is an *intercorporeal* space. Intercorporeality inscribes what Pierre Bourdieu calls “the performative magic of the social” which partakes of “*le sens pratique*,” not of “disembodied reason.”²¹ The body is not just a material or physical object (*res extensa*), but a living subject which connects one human being with other humans and other things. In brief, intercorporeality belongs to the frontier of Interbeing. Watsuji speaks of “a carnal interconnection” which constitutes the first order of spatial “in-betweenness” (*aidagara*). Auguste Rodin’s *Cathedral* is an artistic/sculptural rendition of the sacrament of embodied human coexistence where the two right (rite) hands are coming softly—almost amorously—together in the shape of a towering cathedral.²² My body, according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, is never just a material object; rather, it is a medium or an organization. By way of my body, I have access to and visit the world. Only with and by my body, do I inhabit the world (*J’habite le monde*).²³

2. Definition of the Aesthetic (*aesthesis*). Sinism is the term which was coined by the American sinologist H. G. Creel to specify that cluster of characteristics which are peculiarly Chinese or the Chinese habitus of thinking and doing.²⁴ Despite its origin in China, however, it is not confined to China alone. It encompasses Korea and Japan as well—namely, the geographical region called East Asia where sinograms have been and are in use. The sinographic disposition is embodied and exemplified in Confucianism, Taoism, and the hybrid religion of Ch’an/Zen Buddhism in Korea and Japan as well as in China. It is manifestly this-worldly, practical, concrete, and particular rather than other-worldly, speculative, abstract, and general.²⁵ Sinism may be summed up in the twofold proposition: (1) where there is no social process, there is no reality, that is, reality is social process and (2) as the body is the material condition of our inter-being in the world, social reality is necessarily an embodied and intercorporeal phenomenon. To be social is first and foremost corporeal. The body makes us visible; without it, we are all invisible men and women. But for the body as “the inseparable dancing-partner of the mind,”²⁶ there would be no “performative magic of the social”—to use the expression of Pierre Bourdieu once more.

The aesthetic, according to Terry Eagleton, is not only “born as a discourse of the body” but also the body’s rebellion against the “tyranny of the theoretical” (*theoria*).²⁷ In short, the aesthetic is a carnal affair: it is kin-aesthetic. Norman O. Brown’s *Love’s Body* has a mystical touch of Taoism and Zen Buddhism.²⁸ It is strikingly Eastern. It resonates with the Eastern conception of silence, which gives birth to the magic of the body’s performances. Silence is appreciated in the East as a priceless jewel. This may be the reason why Asians are called “inscrutable.” Michel Foucault was rightly curious about silence, which defines Japanese Zen culture. It may be said that the East is to silence, what the West is to talk. When Susan Sontag was critical of the “pollution” of talk and talk (for example, there is now the medium of omnipresent cell phones) in favor of the “aesthetics of silence,” she might have unwittingly appreciated the Eastern culture of silence.²⁹ Be that as it may, silence is for Brown “the mother tongue.” It “speaks” eloquently.

As it “speaks,” its deed is performed in silence. As the (m)other tongue, silence has a double meaning: first, the genesis of language lies in silence and second, silence is the other of language or the other language. As a “virgin,” silence invaginates language. In the beginning was silence, not the word. Only when the word becomes flesh is there silence. “To recover the world of silence,” Brown sums up with brevity, “is to recover the human body.”³⁰

The body is an “earthword” as much as the earth is a “bodyword.” There is a Sinic saying that “the body and the land are not two” but one. In Sinism, the sage is one who regards heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one *body*. Eastern aesthetics is the aesthetics of nature, whereas Western aesthetics is the aesthetics of art. Oscar Wilde goes so far as to say that *nature imitates art* rather than the other way round. If the beauty of art lies in small details,³¹ the beauty of nature is embodied in small myriad things. Whether it is in nature, economics, art, or poetry, small is indeed beautiful,³² e.g., *bonsai* and *haiku* (as artforms). The Japanese have perfected the horticultural art of *bonsai*, which began in China. It is no accident that *haiku* poetry was invented in the land of Zen. By economizing words, *haiku*, which is meant to “enshrine words,” expresses the feeling of reverence for small creatures and things in nature, “the ten-thousand things,” in tune with the circulation of the seasons. If, as Kenneth Clark suggests, the nude (body) is not just a subject of art but an artform,³³ we can also say that nature is not just a subject of the aesthetic but the aesthetic in itself. Indeed, the *locus classicus* of Eastern aesthetics is the aesthetic of nature.

Humans *inhabit* the earth, and our bodies are its footholds. The deep sense of place comes only from this inhabitation. By way of *feng shui* (geomancy), which may be called an eco-aesthetics, the Chinese have developed the deep sense of inhabitation with nature, the land, the earth, and the cosmos. The tradition of *feng shui* since time immemorial makes the Chinese early ecologists. It is “a rosetta stone” of Chinese environmentalism. Because *feng shui* ultimately implies prosperity, good health, and good fortune, i.e., well-being, it applies to activities such as city or village planning, architectural designs, arranging the interiors of homes, weddings, funerals, and even chopping trees.

Feng shui is composed of two sinograms—“wind” (*feng*) and “water” (*shui*). Thus it means human attunement (*Befindlichkeit*) to the flow of nature symbolized by the two elements—“wind” and “water.” It does not matter whether it is a science, an art, a divination, an astrology, or a superstition. What really matters is the fact that *feng shui* is the Sinic way of harmonizing humans with their natural surroundings with care and reverence which result in their well-being. It is an aesthetic attempt to define human placement in the land. To think in terms of *feng shui* is to be thankful for the generosity of the earth. *Feng shui* reflects the original background of the Chinese agrarian society whose life was dependent on the fertility and fecundity of the earth where humans need to “harness” wind and “channel” water according to their natural vitality called *ch’i* or “vibes,” as it were. *Ch’i* is that invisible energy which interpenetrates humans and their surroundings. Because of the presence of *ch’i*, the body itself is kinaesthetic. Acupuncture may be said to be the natural way of “harnessing” and “channeling” the *ch’i* of humans themselves. In sum: *ch’i* is that vital, invisible energy or *élan vital* which permeates the ecological chain of Being (i.e., Interbeing).

Most importantly, the way of Taoism as a geophilosophy is synonymous with the way of *homo ecologicus*. As a holistic way of conceptualizing the cosmos, it is ecocentric.³⁴ It deflates rather than inflates or magnifies the importance of both the self and the human in conceptualizing the earth or cosmos. It is, in brief, neither egocentric nor anthropocentric.³⁵ According to the *Tao Te Ching*, there is a “circulation” of “four greatnesses” in the universe: the Human, Earth, Heaven, and Tao.³⁶ The most fundamental passage of Taoist geophilosophy is found in Chapter 25 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

There was a thing, a “gathering” chaos,
Which existed prior to heaven and earth.
.....
It might be called the mother of the world.
Its name is unknown,
I simply call it Tao.
If I were to exert myself to define it,
I might call it great.
.....
. . . Tao is great,
Heaven is great, earth is great, and man is great, too.
In the universe we have *four greatnesses, and man is but one*.
Man is in accordance with earth.
Earth is in accordance with heaven.
Heaven is in accordance with Tao.
Tao is in accordance with that which is (*tzujan*) (*italics added*).³⁷

These Taoist “four greatnesses” are in “confluence” or “reciprocal accord”—to use Heidegger’s phrase. They parallel Heidegger’s conception of *das Geviert* or the fourfold unity of sky, earth, gods, and mortals which cross through diagonally or “transversally” with Being/nature as their epicenter or *Urgrund* (the “pristine ground”). At the heart of the circulating wheel or the “transversality” of the four greatnesses lies “that which is” (*tzu-jan*), “being natural,” or “thusness” in the sense of “thisness” or “thatness” in depicting the singularity of a particular thing. As it is spelled with two sinograms, it has a twofold meaning. One is physical in that it refers to myriads of beings and things in nature or “ten-thousand things”—mountains, rivers, animals, trees, plants, and so on. The other, more importantly, is ontological. As “thusness,” it signifies the intrinsic and spontaneous (i.e., I would be willing to call it “aesthetic”) propensity of beings and things which may be called “*Natursein*.”¹ To emulate the expressions of Heidegger: as “world worlds” or “thing things,” “earth earthes,” *nature natures* (*shizenshugi* in Japanese). That is to say, “that which is” is wild/pristine, open, and free, and is an ontological description of myriad things *as they are*. Nature may be likened to the natural flow of a river without human intervention—say, to build dams for electricity—that meanders unconcernedly or purposelessly along the natural terrain of the landscape and to splitting of a bamboo with its natural grain without forcing it. Zen, too, emulates “that which is” *as it is*. The following well-known lines by a Zen master capture this insight:

When I began to study Zen, mountains were mountains; when I thought I understood Zen, mountains were not mountains; but when I came to full knowledge of Zen, mountains were again mountains. Source?

To describe “that which is” as it is in another way: it is quintessentially an embodiment of aesthetic quality.³⁸ The “Taoist body” is preeminently aesthetic. In contrast to the domineering and utilitarian *appropriation* (in motivation) of nature, it lets myriad things in nature be what they are, it *appreciates* them for what they are in promoting the “sacrament of coexistence” among all things. What “domination” and “utility” are to anthropocentrism (*Gestell*), “harmony” and “serenity” is to the aesthetics and ethics of Taoist geophilosophy (*Gelassenheit* or *wu-wei*). In a gem of the classic work *Zen in the Art of Archery*, Eugen Herrigel appreciates the “flow experience” of an archer as autotelic, that is, as containing an intrinsic rather than extrinsic value (telos) in and by itself.³⁹ As the telos of archery is autonomous and nothing else, there is no extraneous or utilitarian motives (e.g., to win an archery contest).

Taoist geophilosophy takes aesthetic delight in the splendor of nature as wild, simple, and small, that is, in the intrinsic beauty of nature that captures our reverential gaze and poetic imagination, whether in a young, soft bamboo shoot shooting straight up from the spring ground in the protective shade, a thin blade of grass, a butterfly with dancing wings, a restful dragonfly on a leaf in a calm pond, a spider’s web sparkling with dew in the early summer morning, a cricket singing in the autumn evening, a hummingbird suckling a flower with wings in invisible motion, or the majestic beauty of a soaring mountain capped with snow in winter. In this surrounding (*fudo*, as Watsuji calls it), the human is truly a “cosmion” in silent communion with nature as *subject*. There is indeed something “jouissanced,” if you will, as well as deeply healing and comforting in the aesthetic refrains of nature in the serene expression of the American ecofeminist Rachel Carson, the author of *Silent Spring*,⁴⁰ who writes in a Taoist *Stimmung*:

Those who dwell, as scientists or laymen, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Whatever the vexations or concerns of their personal lives, their thoughts can find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migrations of the birds, the ebb and flow of the tides, the folded bud ready for the spring. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, spring after the winter.⁴¹

Harmony is the soul of music. The tune of harmony is necessarily polyphonic. In a biotic community, both humans and myriad creatures as earth-dwellers sing together the “song of the Earth” in harmony. As a musical concept, harmony is a gathering of the differentiated many. It was the incomparable Nietzsche, who considered himself a “physician” of civilization, who called for music as aesthetic paradigm. For him, only music can give us “an idea of what is meant by the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon.” Only by way of music as aesthetic phenomenon are human existence and the world “eternally *justified*.”⁴² In ancient Greece the term *mousike* encompassed a family of the “performing arts” which included music, dance, drama, and (oral) poetry. Orpheus was, as we know, the legendary Thracian musician or singer who was able to make the whole world *dance in delight* (de/light).⁴³ The legend of Orpheus inspired Claudio Monteverdi, Christoph W. Gluck, Jacques Offenbach, Franz Liszt, and

Igor Stravinsky. Above all, Symphony No. 6, the Pastoral Symphony, of Beethoven—who said that “I love a tree more than a man”—is most telling. The Pastoral Symphony was meant to be Beethoven’s animated portrayal of nature and the life of the countryside: the fields, meadows, woods, and streams; a chorus of the nightingale, quail, cuckoo, and yellowhammer; a storm; a peasant’s festival (a village dance or fair); and a shepherds’ hymn of thanking at the passing of the storm. It was the poet Rainer Maria Rilke who wrote, in *Sonnets to Orpheus*, the following pithy line: singing is existence (*Gesang ist Dasein*). It is irresistible to insert here that Botticelli’s *Primavera* in its artistic content takes after the rhythmic modality of music and dance.⁴⁴

In the Sinic view, there is also an affinity between the aesthetic and the ethical: the beautiful and the good are synonymous. Since the seventeenth century this affinity has evoked the administration of many European minds and often created the image of the orient as the “paradise on earth.” As the aesthetic is the harmony between the human and nature, so is the good the harmony of interhuman relationships: not only is the ethical grounded in the aesthetic, but also harmony is the unifying theme of the aesthetic and the ethical. Harmony, therefore, is the governing principle not only of the aesthetic but also, unlike the persistent tradition of Western social and political thinking, of the social. It is no accident that humanity or benevolence (*jen*), which is the highest and most cosmopolitan Confucian virtue, is akin to music. Thus, the virtue ethics of Confucius, which is neither utilitarian nor deontological, is akin or analogous to the aesthetic, more specifically to music as a *performing art*.⁴⁵ By way of *jen*, humans (*ningen*) and their relationships become simultaneously “global,” i.e., the globality of Interbeing. As the perceptive interpreter of Confucius Herbert Fingarette puts it:

Acts that are *li* are not mere rote, formula-conforming performances; they are subtle and intelligent acts exhibiting more or less sensitivity to context, more or less integrity in performance. *We would do well to take music, of which Confucius was a devotee, as our model here* (italics added). We distinguish sensitive and intelligent musical performances from dull and unperceptive ones; and we detect in the performance confidence and integrity, or perhaps hesitation, conflict, “faking,” “sentimentalizing.” We detect all this *in* the performance; we do not have to look into the psyche or personality of the performer. It is all “there,” public. Although it is there *in* the performance, it is apparent to us when we consider the performance not as “the Beethoven Opus 3” (that is, from the composer perspective), nor as a “public concert” (the *li* perspective), nor as a “post-Mozartian opus” (the style perspective), but primarily as this particular person’s performance (the personal perspective).⁴⁶

Epilogue

Humanity alone, paradoxical though it may sound, is capable of saving the earth. The mortal of all mortals alone is destined to save the earth. Here again, Heidegger has wise advice for us on the question of what it means to save the earth: “saving does not only snatch something from a danger. To save really means to set something free into its own presencing [i.e., *Gelassenheit* or serenity]. 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, which is merely one step from spoliation.”⁴⁷

We cannot afford to fiddle while the earth is being scorched. In the end, the ethico-aesthetic injunction to reinhabit the earth as sheltering element for the new millennium and beyond would be: “small is beautiful” (and virtuous as in *te* in *Tao Te Ching*)—to reiterate the elemental and frugal expression of E. F. Schumacher who fashioned the aesthetic habitus of taking delight in small things or all “ten-thousand things” with his deep knowledge that both ecology and economics are inseparable household (*oikos*) matters. As anthropos is connected to nature, so is “aesthetic anthropology”⁴⁸ connected to the aesthetics of nature since all valuing is anthropogenetic or has its genesis in anthropos.⁴⁹ Everything, however small it may be, is a vital element of what Bachelard calls “coexistentialism.”⁵⁰ It is, in other words, a “house-friend” (*Hausfreund*) of the earth.⁵¹ We all together, humans and nonhumans, form what Aldo Leopold calls “a biotic community.”⁵² Thus—to evoke John Donne’s well-known devotional meditation with a slight modification—no human is an island unto himself/herself: to be alone is not to be. Even the death of a small thing diminishes my being because I am inextricably involved in a web of relationships in the world of all living beings and non-living things, both large and small. Therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. If we continue to speak the same language together without a radical continental shift to “earthcare”⁵³ as a household word, we are surely doomed and heading toward the end of the earth as well as humanity.⁵⁴ I would contend that Sinism, particularly Taoism as an album of ecosophia, holds humanity’s future in the palm of its hand. Taoism, which is deeply Sinic, should become the “Great Mother” of geophilosophy. Now its task is to transversalize its messages globally—from East to West, from South to North, and diagonally. Taoism’s ecosophia awakens us from the deadly slumber of complacency without falling into despair or nightmare. In the judicious middle between complacency and despair lies hope—the hope of greening the earth once again: it beckons a beacon of hope for the future of the earth, the only one and irreplaceable earth which provides all of humanity, as Hannah Arendt puts it, a natural habitat without effort and artifice.⁵⁵

NOTES

1. Martin Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us Now,” trans. David Schendler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 6 (1977), pp. 5-27.
2. Hwa Yol Jung, “The Ecological Crisis: A Philosophic Perspective, East and West,” *Bucknell Review* 20 (1972), pp. 25-44.
3. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 85.
4. Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), p. 4.
5. Kah Kyung Cho, *Bewusstsein und Natursein* (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1987).
6. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Baines and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), pp. 119-120.
7. Chuang Tzu, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 43.
8. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p. 104.

9. See Robert Pogue Harrison, *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), especially pp. 107-152.

10. See Hugh G. Dick ed., *Selected Writings of Francis Bacon* (New York: Modern Library, 1955), *passim*.

11. See Hwa Yol Jung, “Transversality and Geophilosophy in the Age of Globalization,” in *Calvin O. Schrag and the Task of Philosophy after Postmodernity*, ed. Martin Beck Matustik and William L. McBride (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), pp. 74-90; “Transversality and Comparative Political Theory: A Tribute to Fred Dallmayr’s Work,” in *Letting Be: Fred Dallmayr’s Cosmopolitical Vision*, ed. Stephen F. Schneck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2006), pp. 230-250; and “Edouard Glissant’s Aesthetics of Relation as Diversality and Creolization,” in *Postcolonialism and Political Theory*, ed. Nalini Therese Persram (Lanham: Lexington Press, 2007), pp. 193-225.

12. Quoted in Hwa Yol Jung ed., *Comparative Political Culture in the Age of Globalization: An Introductory Anthology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), p. 1.

13. Martin Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, trans. William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), p. 107.

14. Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man, and Technology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 33. The opposite of relationalism, according to him, is “reductionism,” which views that “effective understanding of a complex system can be achieved by investigating the properties of its isolated parts” (*ibid.*, p. 189).

15. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Interbeing*, rev. ed., ed. Fred Eppsteiner. Berkeley (Parallax Press, 1993).

16. Václav Havel, *Living in Truth*, ed. Jan Vladislav (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p. 136.

17. Václav Havel, *The Art of the Impossible: Politics as Morality in Practice*, trans. Paul Wilson and others (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p. 93.

18. For a brief discussion on Watsuji’s thought based on *Fudo* and *Rinrigaku*, see Hwa Yol Jung, “Interbeing and Geophilosophy in the Cultural Topography of Watsuji’s Thought,” in *Why Japan Matters!*, ed. Joseph F. Kess and Helen Lansdowne (Victoria: Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria, 2005), vol. 2, pp. 691-702.

19. Richard E. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

20. Augustin Berque, “A Basis of Environmental Ethics,” *Diogenes* 52 (2005), pp. 9-10.

21. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice [Le sens pratique]*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 57.

22. Rodin’s *The Thinker*, too, conveys the anti-Cartesian notion of thinking as embodied activity. It is worth noting here that Heidegger’s writings are seldom explicit about embodiment. However, in his *What Is Called Thinking* occurs a marvelous and unsurpassable passage concerning many ways of the hand and chiroscopic humanity that culminate in thinking as “handicraft” (handy craft) in the same way that the use of language—both speaking and writing including Chinese calligraphy—is the *techne* (art) of the body. It defies paraphrasing and is worth quoting in full:

We are trying to learn thinking. Perhaps thinking, too, is just something like building a cabinet. At any rate, it is a craft, a “handicraft.” “Craft” literally means the strength and skill in our hands. The hand is a peculiar thing. In the common view, the hand is part of our bodily organism. But the hand’s essence can never be determined, or explained, by its being an organ which can grasp. Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands. The hand is infinitely different from all grasping organs—paws, claws, or fangs—different by an abyss of essence. Only a being who can speak, that is, think, can have hands and can be handy in achieving works of handicraft. But the craft of the hand is richer than we commonly imagine. The hand does not only grasp and catch, or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives, and welcomes—and not just things: the hand extends itself, and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand

holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a sign. Two hands fold into one, a gesture meant to carry man into the great oneness. The hand is all this, and this is the handicraft. Everything is rooted here that is commonly known as handicraft, and commonly we go no further. But the hand's gestures run everywhere through language, in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think—not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes. Every motion of the hand in everyone of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Therefore, thinking itself is man's simplest, and for that reason hardest, handiwork, if it would be accomplished at its proper time.

Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking*, trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 16-17.

23. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Husserl et la Notion de Nature (Notes Prises au Cours de Maurice Merleau-Ponty)," *Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale* 70 (1965), p. 261.

24. Herrlee Glessner Creel, *Sinism* (Chicago: Open Court).

25. See Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, ed. Philip P. Wiener, rev. trans. (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964), pp. 175-294.

26. Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), p. 294.

27. Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 13.

28. Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966).

29. Susan Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), pp. 3-34.

30. *Op. cit.*, p. 265. Lik Kuen Tong writes that "We may say, in the metaphysical terminology of the *I Ching*, that speech is the *yang* of silence, and silence the *yin* of speech. But 'one-*yin*-one-*yang* is called *Tao*'. The alternation of speech and silence is thus an instantiation of the cosmic law of *I*, the primordial process of Creativity which is the ultimate reality of the universe." See "The Meaning of Philosophical Silence: Some Reflections on the Use of Language in Chinese Thought," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 3 (1976), pp. 169-183. So speech and silence are correlative: the correlation between the two follows the logic of *yin* and *yang*. In Chinese thought, moreover, silence is connected to action, that is, it embodies action. Speaking of action as "the embodiment of silence," Tong says: "Speech stems from the silence of action and returns to the silence of action" (*ibid.*, p. 176). There is an inextricable link in the triangle of silence, speech, and action.

31. See Philip Fisher, *Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), especially pp. 149-180.

32. Here I have in mind E. F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) in which he speaks of "Buddhist economics." William Blake, who was most critical of techno-science and Newtonian physics, was also delighted with the idea that "small is beautiful" when he wrote the first stanza of his "Auguries of Innocence":

To see a world in a grain of sand
and a Heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your
hand
And Eternity in an hour.

33. Kenneth Clark, *The Nude* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 5. Certainly, Clark contradicts Hegel and Roland Barthes who view that the body without clothing has no meaning.

34. The Confucianist Chang Tsai, too, envisioned in an encompassing way when he wrote the following reputed passage in depicting the cosmos in the Confucian imageries of a family union: “Heaven is my father, and earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.” Wing-tsit Chan ed., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Wing-tsit Chang (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 497.

35. An excellent summation of a Taoist critique of humanity’s arrogance is found in Hans-Georg Moeller, *The Philosophy of the Daodejing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 133-145. The ecopoet Loren Eiseley describes in the following the arrogance of humanity from the very moment of its appearance on earth: “It is with the coming of man that a vast hole seems to open in nature, a vast black whirlpool spinning faster and faster, consuming flesh, stones, soil, minerals, sucking down the lightning, wrenching power from the atom, until the ancient sounds of nature are drowned in the cacophony of something which is no longer nature, something instead which is loose and knocking at the world’s heart, something demonic and no longer planned—escaped it may be—spewed out of nature, contending in a final giant’s game against its master.” *The Firmament of Time* (New York: Atheneum, 1960), pp. 123-124.

36. Speaking of Tao, Heidegger writes: “The word ‘way’ probably is an ancient primary word that speaks to the reflective mind of man. The key word in Laotse’s poetic thinking is *Tao*, which ‘properly speaking’ means way. But because we are prone to think of ‘way’ superficially, as a stretch connecting two places, our word ‘way’ has all too rashly been considered unfit to name what *Tao* says. *Tao* is then translated as reason, mind, *raison*, meaning, *logos*. Yet *Tao* could be the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think what reason, mind, meaning, *logos* properly mean to say—properly, by their proper nature. Perhaps the mysteries of thoughtful Saying conceals itself in the word ‘way,’ *Tao*, if only we will let these names return to what they leave unspoken, if only we are capable of this, to allow them to do so. Perhaps the enigmatic power of today’s reign of method also, and indeed preeminently, stems from the fact that the methods, notwithstanding their efficiency, are after all merely the runoff of a great hidden stream which moves all things along and makes way for everything. All is way.” *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 92.

37. Chang Chung-yuan, *Tao: A New Way of Thinking* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 71-72.

38. For Heidegger, poetry is an eco-aesthetics. He writes that “poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling.” *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 218. The following two poems of Han Shan enshrine both Heideggerian and Taoist Way of humanity’s earth-dwelling:

There’s a naked bug at Cold Mountain [i.e., Han Shan]
With a white body and a black head.
His hand holds two book-scrolls,
One the Way and one its Power [or Virtue].
His shack’s got no pots or oven,
He goes for a walk with his shirt and pants askew.
But he always carries the sword of wisdom:
He means to cut down senseless craving.

Cold Mountain is a house
Without beams or walls.

The six doors left and right are open
The hall is blue sky.
The rooms all vacant and vague
The east wall beats on the west wall
At the center nothing.

Gary Snyder, *Riprap and Cold Mountain Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons Foundation, 1977), pp. 51-52.

39. Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953). Cf. Robert M. Pirsig's extremely popular work *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: William Morrow, 1974).

40. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962).

41. *The Sense of Wonder* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 88-89. Mircea Eliade defends "the myth of the eternal return" against the "terror of history" (or historicism). See *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).

42. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 52, 141.

43. See Hwa Yol Jung, "The Orphic Voice and Ecology," *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1981), pp. 329-340.

44. See Hwa Yol Jung and Petee Jung, "The Way of Ecopiety: A Philosophic Minuet for Ecological Ethics," in *Commonplaces: Essays on the Nature of Place*, ed. David W. Black, Donald Kunze and John Pickles (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), pp. 81-99. It is most interesting to note that the sound of music surrounds us and is ubiquitous, that is, it is *global*. We may speak of the "globe of Interbeing" both interhuman and interspecific. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore write: "The ear favors no particular 'point of view.' We are enveloped by sound. It forms a seamless web around us. We say, 'Music shall fill the air.' We never say, 'Music shall fill a particular segment of the air.' We hear sounds from everywhere, without ever having to focus. Sounds come from 'above,' from 'below,' from in 'front' of us, from 'behind' us, from our 'right,' from our 'left.' We can't shut out sound automatically. We simply are not equipped with earlids. *Where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniformed connected kind, the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships*" (italics added). *The Medium is the Message* (New York: Bantam, 1967), p. 111. Since the sound of music is global, it is "ecological," that is, geophilosophical.

45. For a call for the new ethics of virtue for "the green belief," which is neither utilitarian nor deontological, see Rosalind Hursthouse, "Environmental Virtue Ethics," in *Working Virtue: Virtue Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*, ed. Rebecca L. Walker and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 155-171. It is worth emphasizing that in East Asian thought, particularly in Taoism, the *yin* of "shadows" and "idleness" in contrast to the *yang* of "light" and "busy-ness" is the aesthetic *Stimmung* of serenity. See, for example, Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker (Stony Creek: Leete's Island Books, 1977) and Yoshida Kenko, *Essays in Idleness*, trans. G. B. Sansom (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005). Both works have significant ecological implications vis-à-vis the ideas of civilization as "en/lightened" and of techno-industrial civilization as "busy." Robert Pogue Harrison's defense of "forests in the shadow of civilization" is, as we have above shown, immensely revealing and ecologically satisfying.

46. *Confucius—The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 53.

47. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 150. See also Hwa Yol Jung and Petee Jung, "To Save the Earth," *Philosophy Today* 14 (1975), pp. 108-117.

48. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 203.

49. Cf. Bachelard who writes: "Everything, even size, is a human value" (*ibid.*, p. 215).

50. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

51. Here I am borrowing Heidegger's expression in paying a tribute to the poet Johann Peter Hebel as a "friend to the house of the world" or "friend of the house." "Hebel—Friend of the House," trans. Bruce V. Foltz and Michael Heim, in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, vol. 3, ed. Darrel E. Christensen *et al.* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), pp. 89-101. See also Fred Dallmayr, *The Other Heidegger* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 181-199. Witold Rybczynski writes: "'Home' brought together the meanings of house and of household, of dwelling and of refuge, of ownership and of affection. 'Home' meant the house, but also everything that was in it and around it, as well as the people, and the sense of satisfaction and contentment that all these conveyed." *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Viking Press, 1986), p. 62. Then he adds that "home" is not only a physical place but also has "the more abstract sense of a 'state of being,' . . . German, Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, Dutch, and English all have similar sounding words for 'home,' all derived from the Old Norse 'heima'" (*ibid.*).

52. Also Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, special commemorative ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). In reference to his landmark "land ethic," he writes that "there is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. Land, like Odysseus' slave-girls, is still property. The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations" (*ibid.*, p. 203). He goes on to say that "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (i.e., a biotic community) (*ibid.*, p. 204). For him, the aesthetics of the land is correlative to the "land ethic." See Hwa Yol Jung, "The Splendor of the Wild: Zen and Aldo Leopold," *Atlantic Naturalist* 29 (1974): pp. 5-11.

53. The single word *earthcare* comes from the title of Carolyn Merchant's work *Earthcare: Women and the Environment* (New York: Routledge, 1996). The importance of the feminist formulation of care is that it is a "heterocentric" or "heteronomic" idea. Milton Mayeroff's work *On Caring* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) is one of the early philosophical works on care or, better, caring as heterocentric or "other-directed" which, as he contends, differs from Heidegger's *Sorge*. The heterocentric approach to nature vindicates that Erazim Kohak is right when he says that "To recover the moral sense of our humanity, we would need to recover *first* the moral sense of nature" (*italics added*). *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 13. Therefore, it is misleading to talk about the "rights of nature." Rather, we should talk about "caring" for nature. Caring is covered under the umbrella of the "ethics of responsibility" which presupposes the primacy of the other both human and nonhuman over the self, i.e., heteronomy.

54. We take for granted often if not always that the end of the earth is necessarily the end of humanity, not vice versa. Thus Gaia-cide may be called the death of all deaths. Indeed, nature has become transparent to modern humanity. The transparency or "banalization" of nature may be the root cause of ecocide. Humanity can no longer abuse and inflict violence on nature with impunity. So-called "dumb" nature is now capable of mutiny or silent revolt against its allegedly sovereign master. C. S. Lewis, who is interested in Taoism in search of remedy for the "abolition of man," has a few wise words for us: "if you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. *To 'see through' all things is the same as not to see*" (*italics added*). *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p. 50.

55. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 2.