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Revised: Fall 2007
ABSTRACT

Essay 1: ”The Creation of the Self...” addresses Hegel’s response to the individualistic ontology of the Nineteenth Century. I will explore Hegel’s idea of the social construction of the self, and subsequently culture, in humanity. Through Marx, I will attempt to show the inadequacies of Hegel’s approach, and also how contemporary society limits humanity’s ability to define the self. Finally, I hope to show some of the limits of Marxian theory in the human relationship to nature.

Keywords: Hegel; Marx; master; slave; spirit; alienation; labour; consciousness

Subject Terms: Hegel, GWF; Marx, Karl; consciousness; alienation; spirit

Essay 2: ”Human, Nature, World...” addresses the environmental crisis through the later Martin Heidegger. To universalize Heidegger and approach his “planetary thinking”, I will touch on some agreements between Heidegger and Buddhism, as well as the Japanese philosopher, Watsuji Tetsuro. Finally, using the works of Augustin Berque and Heidegger’s theory of technology, I conclude that humanity should reject any separation between itself, culture and nature in order resolve our current environmental issues.

Keywords: Heidegger; Buddhism; pratitya samutpada; technology; Watsuji; Berque; space; environment; nature; world; human

Subject Terms: Heidegger, Martin; Watsuji, Tetsuro; Berque, Augustin; philosophy; environment; technology
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1: THE CREATION OF THE SELF IN HEGEL AND MARX
Part I

No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;

- John Donne

Most people are familiar with the spirit if not the words of Donne's poem. It is a bromide often used by those trying to help a friend who seems reluctant to accept help. We also find it present in other pronouncements such as “It takes a village” or “Think globally, act locally”. We are assured that we are not alone, that others understand what troubles we are going through and can help us overcome. As these examples show, many who see themselves as fighting for social justice accept this idea as truth. For them, it is clear that humans cannot face the challenges of the world on their own and need the help and support of others. However, what, exactly, is one saying when he or she states that “no man is an island”? When we talk of humans as social beings, are we merely talking about the need to look after and care for one another, or does it go further? To answer these questions, we first need to understand from what sort of sentiment they arise. In order to do that, we need to explore just how it is a person makes and discovers their self. In other words, we need to ask how one arrives at self-
consciousness. One good guide for such an investigation would be the 19th-century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. ¹

What Hegel attempted, and Karl Marx subsequently amended, was to show how previous liberal and individualistic ontological approaches were deficient. Disagreeing with the Enlightenment ideal of the individual standing alone and defining himself, Hegel instead sought to show how it was in fact only through a social context that one could define himself. While acknowledging the importance of past philosophers and philosophies, Hegel argued that in their emphasis on the part (the individual) rather than the whole (society) these earlier philosophers made a fatal error: they could only focus on consciousness itself as opposed to its interactions with others and thus how it actually manifests itself. Marx concentrates on the social aspect of consciousness as well, but differs from Hegel in his focus on the material conditions that affect consciousness.

Before any discussion of Hegel begins, one must first come to terms with Hegel's terms. He is, quite famously, an obscure and difficult writer. It is not always easy to get what he is trying to say on either your first, second or fifth reading. He often repeats ideas only in different language and from a different perspective. He is also quite different from those who came before, both in theory and methodology. In fact, it is the latter that is the key to understanding what it is that Hegel is trying to say. One needs to become fully immersed in his methodology, and once you are there, it is almost impossible to extract yourself.

¹ For this, I will be using the Bailey translation of one small, but important section from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* that is commonly referred to as the "Master/Slave Dialectic", and reproduced in Gardner's *Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*. Also, to maintain consistency between the original and this essay, I will be using the masculine, third person pronoun throughout.
After reading Hegel for some time, I found myself constantly looking at art and the world in a "Hegelian" way. This is by design, for Hegel wanted his system to be universal and absolute. He felt that this was the only way for us to understand not only the world, but also ourselves. The first step in this system is the dialectic.

Traditionally, philosophy and logic followed the Aristotelian method, either inductive or deductive. In inductive logic, one makes a statement based on observations. For example, I see a car. The car is blue. All the cars I see next are also blue. Therefore, I conclude that all cars are blue. With that conclusion in hand, I can then go on to try and prove either the veracity or falsity of the claim. In this case, one can see that the statements based on observations are true so far; however, the inductive conclusion that all cars are blue is false for I now see there are other colour cars. In contrast, in deductive logic, the approach would be reversed, in that instead of beginning with what is particular, one begins with what is universal and deduces the particular from it. The most famous example of the deductive approach is as follows: All humans are mortal. Socrates is human. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

These are the methods that generally prevailed for most of the history of Western philosophy. However, Hegel saw these as inadequate as they allowed only for static, "closed" systems merely describing things as they are. For him, what was needed was a logical system that could contain a notion of progress, of becoming. Hegel's logic needed to be something that could account for the idea of progress he had, and for the progress in the world itself. Furthermore, his logic
has an ontic status. I will focus on this ontic dimension after first addressing Hegel’s dialectic.

Dialectic as a term and method had been used since the Greeks, but Hegel developed it further. Essentially, what it means for Hegel is that for every statement one makes, or thing that exists, the opposite is also implied. For us today, this is almost as cliché as saying that no man is an island. We see it everywhere, in popular culture, in art, in politics, in our everyday interactions. For example, in the popular 90s TV show *Seinfeld* there was an episode where the character George Costanza decides to tell his girlfriend that he loves her. His friend, Jerry, warns him that he better be sure that she feels the same way. Why? Because he, and by extension we, know that when one condition, love, exists, its reverse, not love, must also exist. How can we know what light is without dark? We define many things by that which they are not. The Scottish writer Irvine Welsh once remarked that he thought we Canadians were a bit odd because we were the only people who found our identity in that which we are not: I am Canadian, NOT American. Yet does every country not do the same? By simply stating that you are something, you are simultaneously stating that you are not a host of others. You can go on to say that because I am Canadian and not American I believe in universal healthcare, or any of a wide range of issues. Regardless, the conflicting ideas of the “other” are also present in these declarations. But is this all there is to the dialectic, an acknowledgement that there are two sides to every coin? Well, no, but I’ll address another aspect of the dialectic, namely how the dialectic leads us to progress, later on in this paper.
“Okay,” you may be saying, “but how does this lead us to self-consciousness? I already know who I am and I know that I’m not you. This is clear.” Or is it? The question then becomes a chicken-and-egg one: When did you become conscious of yourself, before or after you met an other? Hegel attempts to show that it is the latter, for

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or “recognized”. The conception of this its unity in its duplication, of infinitude realizing itself in self-consciousness, has many sides to it and encloses within it elements of varied significance. (Hegel 43, emphasis in original)

Self-recognition, then, comes about because not only is meaning found in the other, it is also found in context. Here, Hegel makes a distinction between the individual and the universal. Many believe that it is the individual that is concrete; that it is the only truly solid “knowable” thing. Think of the so-called self-made man, they might say. He has stood on his own and found his own way. Thus, they conclude that truth is found in the “one”, in the individual because this is all of which they can be sure. The universal, on the other hand, they hold, is too diffuse, uncertain and abstract. It is outside themselves and as such, cannot be known with any conviction.

Hegel turns this around and argues that it is the universal that is concrete and not the individual, and this is because of a fatal flaw in the individual: it is, as
it were, a moment and without context and as such has almost no meaning as long as it stands alone and has no frame of reference. If, for instance, I were to put random words on a page they would have little meaning unless you were aware of a) in what order I wanted them, b) that it is an art project, and as such has no prescribed order, or c) some other rubric. In this way, we as humans also need context. An individual without circumstance has little meaning. This meaning can only come in juxtaposition with another individual. So, the random words need to be seen with other words to have significance, and it is the same with human beings. One’s self can only have significance when put into context with an other, and vice versa. Moreover, the meeting of these two individuals necessarily takes place in and is part of nature, as nature is the seat of our human existence.

The question then becomes, what is the context in which one can make one’s self and so come to self-recognition? At its most basic level, this context is the meeting of two consciousnesses. At this level, the consciousness is only aware of things on a sense-data level. In its observations of the world around it, the consciousness doesn’t get beyond sensory understanding. It is, for Hegel, like a child or even like an animal. It is a passive observer of the world around it. Therefore, when these two consciousnesses first encounter one another, they can merely observe each other. They are still unaware of what, if any, meaning there is. And here’s where Hegel separates the men from the animals as it were. Even though any animal can see another doing the same thing as it is doing, it cannot recognize its action beyond instinctual survival. If one lion (to use an
example) can see another competitor hunting a gazelle, the first will only try to take the object from the second. In other words, their rivalry is played out for the object itself and attainment of that object is the only goal. If one needs to destroy the other on the way to gaining the object, so be it. Destruction of the rival is not the end in and of itself. For Hegel, this is a closed cycle that prevents any sort of progression because victory only leads to the satisfaction of the most basic animal needs, food and shelter.

In contrast to this closed-cycle picture, at some point in our collective past, humans must have adopted the death of the competitor as one of their goals. Why? Further along in its development than that of mere animals, consciousness may be able to observe the action of the other and understand that it, too, is doing the same action. When two human consciousnesses meet, they both know that they are not the other, yet when they each see the other doing what it is they are doing, it causes anxiety, for each takes the other as being itself. In Hegel's philosophy, this anxiety is caused because there is no essential human nature: one is what one does. Beginning in the Enlightenment and continued by Hegel, ontology started to move away from the conception that humanity is anything essential. That is to say, we start to get the notion that a thing is what it (actively) does, not what it (passively) is. So, when we look for a definition of human, we do not state that humans are this or that, but rather that humans do this or that. For example, Descartes, though still essentialist, already defined himself by an activity, that of thinking. If a man hunts then he is a hunter. He is not a hunter
because that is what he was born as. It is only through his actions that he can define who he is.

So, how can one be both itself and that other? In effect, we, as onlookers, see that there are two self-consciousnesses present:

Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an other being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other (*ibid* 43, emphasis in original)

Until this moment, the consciousness thought of itself as the only one. It was in-itself and for-itself, certain of itself as an individual. In order to return to the unity it had thought it had as one, it needs to “cancel this its other” so that it can return to the certainty of self “as true being” (*ibid* 43). If both consciousnesses do this, they will return the unity of one to each other. This is achieved by the life-and-death struggle.

To understand this better, let me again turn to a recent cultural example. In the 1997 book and 1999 movie, *Fight Club*, a friend (Tyler Durden) challenges the unnamed protagonist to a fight. Thinking it absurd, the unnamed protagonist inquires as to why he should fight Tyler without the pretext of anger or any apparent rivalry. Tyler replies, “How much can you really know about yourself if you’ve never been in a fight?” While most commentators see in this the need of contemporary males to rediscover their primal, masculine selves, I see it in a
different, Hegelian way. If a consciousness has not staked its life, then it has not asserted its independence because it has not shown itself to be beyond the bare level of life. It is still caught up in the mechanistic world of sense data and observation. By putting its life on the line, as it were, the consciousness succeeds in showing itself as a pure negation of its objective form, or in showing that it is fettered to no determinate existence, that it is not bound at all by the particularity everywhere characteristic of existence as such, and is not tied up with life. (ibid 45, emphasis in original)

That is to say, it is free from doing what is determined for it by its external reality only when it establishes itself as a being-for-itself and not for others. Ironically, this can only be achieved by confrontation with the other, and it is the same for the other itself. Through this struggle one can find freedom because one is no longer tied to a prescribed existence. Furthermore, it is now that being is also realized since the consciousness has now confronted the dialectical opposite, non-being. In other words, in confronting death, the condition of nothing or non-being, the consciousness assures itself that it does indeed exist. Yet the two consciousnesses must be certain not to go too far, not to kill each other, for in death there can be no consciousness. If the other is killed then the first consciousness has no rival in which it can recognize its own consciousness anymore; moreover, if both are killed then there is no consciousness at all: "They cancel their consciousness which had its place in this alien element of natural existence; in other words, they cancel themselves and are sublated as terms or
extremes seeking to have existence on their own account” (ibid 46). This is why in Fight Club there were strict rules about not killing the other. Once your rival is destroyed, he can no longer raise you up. But what if during the fight one gives up and cries uncle as it were? What then?

Here, the two consciousnesses embark on a complicated relationship, that of the master and the servant. The one who gave up then becomes “a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another, i.e. as an existent consciousness, consciousness in the form and shape of thinghood” (ibid 47). This is the servant. The other becomes independent “and its essential nature is to be for itself” (ibid 47). This is the master. The servant is dependent on the master and has its existence mediated through the master. It is important to note here what Hegel had in mind with this relationship.

It is not one simply existing in external reality, that of an actual servant and an actual master, but rather it is a metaphor. It can be internal, it can describe interpersonal relationships, and it can even work between nations. So when we saw North Korea trying desperately to succeed in making a nuclear weapon, it has entered into a struggle to attain recognition of other nations. As a Stalinist state, it is aware of and believes in the dialectic as passed down from Marx and Engels and amended by the likes of Lenin and Stalin; therefore, it is also trying to drive the situation forward because tension leads to progress. We now need to look at each role and how it is played out, starting with that of the master.

Let us go back to where we first found our two consciousnesses, back to the rivalry and its ontic significance. They both saw each other doing the same
thing, and as we are what we do, they recognized themselves in the action. This last point is crucial and bears elaboration. As I stated before, Hegel disagreed with the idea that there is an "essential" human being. He further extended this to include nations, but I'll keep my focus on individual consciousness. We, as individuals, are constantly in a state of becoming. In a very real way, I am not who I was when I was born, or even who I was five years ago. For Hegel, this movement is driven by the dialectic: The master saw the servant desiring the same object as he did and decided that he had to "sublate" (that is, do away with) this other. By winning the struggle, or "mastering" the other, the master has now proven himself to be what he does: a master. Having won the struggle, the master becomes the independent consciousness and as such, holds the attention of the servant (ibid 47). He has the recognition of the servant and, consequently, self-recognition too. How so? Or does he?

Throughout the master/slave dialectic, Hegel uses the idea of mediation. By mediation, in general, he means that one's experience of the world and one's own being is achieved through something else. Here it would be helpful to look at the mediations of both consciousnesses in detail, starting with that of the master. First we need to ask a question: "What is a master?" According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, one meaning of master is "1): one having control (2): an owner especially of a slave or animal". In other words, a master rules someone, namely a slave. As I will show, this ruling over the slave leads to the first moment of mediation.

The master commands the slave to labour, to get or do things for him, and
the slave complies. But from where do these "things" come? They come from nature. For the meeting of these two consciousnesses does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in the physical world. Let's say that their first meeting may have been while hunting. Once the master has established his control over the slave, he no longer needs to hunt. He now has the slave to do that for him. In fact, the master can now order the slave to perform all sorts of tasks for him, but they all need to be played out in the realm of nature. This necessarily removes the master from a direct (non-mediated) relation with nature and, as a consequence, his experience of it is mediated through the slave. Here is the first mediation: the master enjoys nature by means of the slave's labour on it.

The second mediation is found *après coup* in the moment when the master became master. The slave is tied to him by fear. After all, it was the slave who gave up, who decided that living was more important than continuing the struggle with the other, and who trembled in fear of the nothingness entailed by death. The slave labours for the master, mediates nature for the master, out of fear. And fear, of course, is a natural emotion. Thus, we have the second mediation, that of the master using nature to hold the slave. Here, then, is the double mediation:

In these two moments, the master gets his recognition through an other consciousness, for in them the latter affirms itself as unessential, both by working upon the thing, and, on the other hand, by the fact of being dependent on a determinate existence; in
neither case can this other get the mastery over existence, and succeed in absolutely negating it. (ibid 48)

The slave is non-essential because he works for the master and not himself and is reliant upon the master's will. In other words, the slave can only do whatever the master requires. We shall explore the implications of the slave's non-essentialness later on. However, as I will explain below, the master's essentialness is his undoing.

Remember that Hegel rejected essentialisms. They key to consciousness for him was becoming because it is only by becoming that we can have progress. Since a thing is what it does, the master can only be what he does. Specifically, he must order the slave around. This is a limited position because there is no room for growth or development. The master is caught in a loop of doing and it is a terminal position. Even though his every desire is fulfilled, his every command obeyed, he can do nothing but consume both labour and the product of this labour. Yet even this enjoyment is fleeting since he must constantly reassert himself as the master. Therefore, he has re-entered the realm of determinate existence and has sacrificed his freedom. Here Hegel returns the master to the animals, for his goal has once again become the attainment of the object of his desire. Furthermore, he cannot even attain true self-consciousness because those through which he is mediated, namely the slave and nature, have become mere means to ends. Neither means anything to him as consciousnesses, so the master even loses that self-recognition for which he had staked his life; even if the slave recognizes him, he sees the slave as non-essential, as simply the
aforementioned means to an end. Recognition, and subsequently, self-recognition, requires the presence of equals. Ironically, it is the slave who finds both freedom and his self.

I have explored the double mediation in which the master dominates, so now I'll turn my attention to the slave. First, I'll see how the slave is mediated by nature. This again is found at the penultimate moment when the slave gives up in the struggle. At that moment, the slave-to-be gives in to the fear that could not sway the master-to-be, specifically, the fear of having all desire fulfilment negated. As a consequence, the slave comes into being and is chained to the master (who also comes into being as a result) by his natural fear of death. If he does not do what the master orders then he will give up not only his life, but also his consciousness. Hence, he fulfils whatever task the master orders. This labour is where the other mediation is found. The master desires things from nature, but has no need to get or produce them himself. For this, he has the slave. The slave, then, goes to nature and obtains the objects that the master desires. Here now the slave is mediated through the master to nature, and can get no enjoyment from it:

The servant being a self-consciousness in the broad sense, also takes up a negative attitude to things and cancels them; but the thing is, at the same time, independent for him and, in consequence, he cannot, with all his negating, get so far as to annihilate it outright and be done with it; that is to say, he merely works on it. (ibid 47)
In other words, the slave cannot consume in the same way the master does. He can work on the object, fashion it into whatever the master wants, but his desires are eclipsed by the work he must do. But how does he become unessential?

There is also a definition for slave in Merriam-Webster's: “1: a person held in servitude as the chattel of another; 2: one that is completely subservient to a dominating influence.” Again, since for Hegel a thing is what it does, it would appear that the slave is also caught up in the loop of determination. If, by definition, the master orders the slave, then the slave, by definition, does what he is ordered to do. And yet herein lies the slave’s salvation, for it is in the labour that the slave can find his self. By working on the object, the slave is doing something that the master cannot: he can create a lasting thing, and, in contrast to the master, his enjoyment is not short-lived. He can see himself in the object and know that he indeed exists as the maker of that object.

Labour, on the other hand, is desire restrained and checked, evanescence delayed and postponed; in other words, labour shapes and fashions the thing. The negative relation to the object passes into the form of the object, into something that is permanent and remains; because it is just for the labourer that the object has independence. (ibid 49, emphasis in original)

Through the fashioning of the thing, the slave creates a new, non-natural thing. It is a cultural object, nature mediated by the slave. The master cannot get the same enduring satisfaction from the object because he is removed from it. The master can only prescribe in a very general way what is to be created, but the
slave can shape and mould the object according to his own plan. It was, after all, *he* who found the raw materials, it was *he* who used his hands to create the generally prescribed object in his accordance with his own specific ideas, and it was *he* who laboured over it.

In fashioning the thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account (*an und für sich*). By the fact that the form is objectified, it does not become something other than the consciousness moulding the thing through work; for just that form is his pure self-existence, which therein becomes truly realized. Thus precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider’s mind and ideas involved, the servant becomes aware, through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a “mind of his own”. (ibid 50)

It is in this creation of culture that the slave escapes the terminal position that becomes the lot of the master. The slave is freed from determinate nature because he is now free to progress and develop through something manmade, namely culture. Thus, the slave is now the only one of the two consciousnesses who is truly separate from the animals.

Until this point, I have been using the terms master and slave as if they were abstractions. That is to say, I have been using them as mere metaphors for
the making of the self. In that regard, they could correspond to two particular humans, two particular nations or even two particular parts of one human, as they have been subsequently used in psychoanalysis. For Hegel, it is important that this struggle is realized internally. He felt that the tensions played out in nature and manifested in history were imperative in developing the overall Geist, or Spirit in humanity. The master/slave dialectic shows humanity's Spirit evolving by moving from determinate nature to culture, self-recognition and, ultimately, freedom. This occurs because of the tension that was initially present when the two consciousnesses first met and recognized their own consciousness reflected in the other. Now we can see how the dialectic allows humanity to progress.

Getting back to North Korea, one could say that it is not seeking recognition of its self so much as trying to shake up the current situation. It wants tension because it is only through conflict, be it real or imaginary, that things can move forward. Or again, we can return to Fight Club: "How much can you know about yourself if you've never been in a fight?" By not risking it all, you are stuck where you are, spinning your wheels as it were. The protagonist of the novel/film needs combat in order to fully realize his self. It is important here to note that the "friend" who challenged the protagonist to his first fight was, in fact, a figment of his imagination. The protagonist finds his self by fighting himself. So necessary was tension to his development that, with the absence of an external other, he was forced to confront a wholly internal one. Because of this lack of an other, it all ends in near disaster for our protagonist. He has not succeeded in making his self because at all points it was only himself that he was struggling with. Coming
to this knowledge creates a crisis of self and forces him to confront the fact that he is not even sure who he is anymore. In the end, he destroys the internal other and is thus free to re-engage with the external world and start anew. And this ties in nicely with Hegel for it is for the sake of the internal development of Spirit that the external world exists. Through the conflict in nature, we develop our Spirit and, thus, we drive history forward. It is in the process of coming to self-recognition that history progresses.

However, we come against those terms again, master and slave. And herein lies my problem with this endeavour. Karl Marx famously asserted that Hegel had stood the dialectic on its head. As stated above, the internality of the dialectic is what is of the utmost importance to Hegel because it here that Spirit is developed. As Spirit is being developed, history progresses. The external world is merely a means to an end if you will. But does all this happen in a vacuum? There are indeed actual masters and slaves in the world, but they did not get that way together. What of the one who is born a slave? Or what of his master? Hegel doesn’t seem to account for how outside forces can affect the initial meeting. What are the backgrounds of the two? Neither has gone through the process, and yet they are living its reality. How can a slave achieve self-recognition without having struggled? It seems that there needs to be some sort of recognition of the context in which the consciousnesses find themselves. Even if this were a one-time event in humanity’s distant past, for progression to continue, the dialectic would also have to continue. There would have to be new eras with new masters and new slaves, but while the actors may change, the
circumstances do not. A slave in ancient Greece is, for all intents and purposes, in the same position as a serf in 18th Century Germany. As Marx said, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" ("The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon", 1852, quoted at http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm). In other words, the external situation pre-exists the internal, not the other way around, as Hegel would have it. If the formulation for Hegel is: conflict in nature=development of Spirit= progress in history, then for Marx it would be: conflict in nature (or class) =progress in history=development of Spirit. In what would come to be known as Marxist dialectical materialism, the material conditions of history pre-exist the Hegelian conflict and you cannot put the cart before the horse.

I will now return to Donne. His "Meditation XVII" concludes with lines as famous as those it began with:

any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls it tolls for thee.

What Donne certainly has in mind here is a Christian notion of brotherhood. We are all God's children, and as such, need to look out for one another. Remember that Cain's words to his father were an unwitting self-condemnation. Loving one's
brother, even one's enemy, is one of the foundations of the Church. And while Hegel's dialectic seems to turn on a negative premise, that of the conflict and the master and slave, its true goal is a more holistic reading of history. One can no more have an impression of self without the other as one can live without a community. Knowledge of self and one's relationship with others will develop the Spirit of the community, of the nation and move it forwards. But what is one to make of the pre-existing inequities, of the imbalance of power, of the inability of the servant to break out of his material conditions? Self-consciousness not only implies knowledge of existence, but knowledge of the state of said existence. And this is where Marx comes on the scene.

Part II

Commuter, work, commute, sleep...

-Graffiti, Paris, 1968

By the late 20th/early 21st centuries, it has become quite commonplace for people to think that there is something alienating about contemporary society. One needn't look further than popular entertainment to find examples of this feeling of alienation. Television is filled with characters complaining about their jobs, about their positions, about their "lot in life". Then there is the rise of so-called "reality television", which promises to allow the alienated masses back into the game of life fulfilment by offering them fame, fortune and recognition. Outside
of the world of immediate fame, millions of dollars a year are spent on lotteries with people hoping and praying that hitting the jackpot will finally deliver them from the world of dead-end jobs and meagre pleasures. Study the ad campaigns for the lotteries and one can easily see how most people feel about the current situation. But where does this alienation come from? What is the cause of it? In the 19th century, Hegel, for one, had attempted to address this issue. As we have seen in the first part of this essay, he thought that alienation arose from a lack of self-consciousness on the part of the subject. Through struggle with an other, self-consciousness could be achieved. Once that was done, then the self was more or less complete and Geist, or Spirit, could be developed. Eventually, this Geist could be developed society-wide, and, consequently, throughout history, thus helping humanity travel towards what Hegel believed was its telos.

However, there was a problem with Hegel's idea, as I alluded to at the end of the first part of this essay. The problem, as first elucidated by Karl Marx, was one of context. Hegel essentially assumed that the two consciousnesses would enter into conflict as equals, but as Marx would later show, this could not be the case: History was not developed by Geist, but rather history was already present, and it was a creation of material forces. While Marx agreed with, and used, Hegel's dialectical method, he did so in a significantly different way. In fact, Marx described his dialectic as contra Hegel:

My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain, i.e.,
the process of thinking, which, under the name of "the Idea," he
even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of
the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal
form of "the Idea." With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing
else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and
translated into forms of thought. (Preface to the 2nd Edition of Das
Kapital)

In this excerpt, Marx is delineating himself as a materialist as opposed to Hegel's
(admittedly soft) idealism. In Hegel's philosophy, "[t]he object does not reveal
itself only as returning into the Self" (Marx, 265-266, emphasis in original). Or at
least this avoidance of solipsism is what Hegel claimed. Marx believed that Hegel
failed to avoid the solipsism trap because "[f]or Hegel, human life, man, is
equivalent to self-consciousness. All alienation of human life is, therefore,

nothing but alienation of self-consciousness" (ibid 266, emphasis in original). In
other words, if developing the self is humanity's ultimate goal, it is essentially an
internal aim that is divorced from humanity's (real) external nature. This is not far
off from invoking God. In fact, for Marx, Geist could be just another name for
God, and as such it is mere abstract thought which "ignores real nature and man"
(ibid 263). The insight that most philosophy until Marx's time supplanted reality

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3 I will be relying on the excerpts of Marx, "Critique of Hegel's Dialectic", "Alienated Labor",
"These on Feuerbach" and "Ideology in General, German Ideology in Particular" anthologized
in Gardner's Nineteenth-Century Philosophy.
with abstract thoughts, Marx attributed to one of his predecessors, Ludwig Feuerbach.

Feuerbach stated that religion was a both a creation and reflection of humanity, and in order to truly understand religion, one must examine society more closely. Culture is not a reflection of Geist rather Geist is a reflection of culture. Humanity posits an entity outside itself based on its material conditions and then adapts that entity as conditions change. Ultimately, the entities we create to “control” our immediate physical circumstances are mere creations of our minds. Feuerbach begins to approach materialism, but doesn't quite achieve it as far as Marx is concerned. According to Marx, Feuerbach's was a kind of “spectator epistemology” that couldn’t quite come to terms with the interrelatedness of society:

The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (including that of Feuerbach) is that the things (Gegenstand), reality, the sensible world, are conceived only in the form of object (Objekt) of observation, but not as human sense activity, not as practical activity, not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the active side was developed abstractly by idealism, which, of course, does not know real, sense activity as such. (ibid 281, emphasis in original)

What Marx is criticizing here is the kind of epistemology that states that all things are just objects of consciousness and have no effect on the observer at all. It is a
one-way street as it were. Marx further goes on to state that Feuerbach is only concerned with theory and does not apprehend the significance of other (i.e. socio-economic) activities (ibid 281). Thinking in the way that Feuerbach does is purely theoretical and in that manner, nearly useless. Feuerbach can be seen as a materialist, and certainly when compared to Hegel, he is. Beyond Hegel, Feuerbach “wants empirical observation” (ibid 282), but he fails to see that “[a]ll social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which lead theory towards mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice” (ibid 282-283, emphasis in original). Thus, Marx sees that religious sentiment is not individual, but “dialectic”. It is the result of the interrelation of subjects and objects. Here again we have a problem of context and this brings me back to Marx’s critique of Hegel.

If human life is equivalent to self-consciousness, what can one make of the material conditions of that life? What of wealth, the state, school and work, for example? These are very real conditions that affect our lives and our selves. To conceive of them as mere obstacles challenging spirit is, for Marx, a dangerous abstraction. In this, he insists that “Hegel commits a double error” (ibid 263). The first of these two errors, according to Marx, is that if “wealth, the power of the state, etc.” exist “only in their thought form”, then the philosopher becomes the measure of this alienated world (ibid 263-264).

However, Marx is missing something important here that I feel I should address at this point: as I alluded to earlier in this essay, for Hegel none of these things exist purely “in their thought form”. Needs, desires and the objects created
to fulfil them exist in nature, and it is when humans work on them that they can come to self-consciousness. Consequently, spirit comes about through human action and understands itself through reflection on that action. This misunderstanding arises because Marx and Hegel are referring to different times in the process of human consciousness. Hegel is studying the point at which humans create societies, while Marx is looking at what happens after that creation. Hegel is writing about humans in general and investigating why societies come about at all. Marx, on the other hand, is looking more specifically at one particular type of society (capitalist) and why humans become alienated in that society. As a consequence, Marx is more concerned with the material preconditions of consciousness than Hegel is.

So, as Marx reads Hegel, if the philosopher becomes the measure of the alienated world, then the sensible material conditions stand in opposition to abstract thought. This devalues the sensible world and creates the alienation of nature from spirit. Thus, there can be no progression, but only a movement from A (abstract thought) to A (abstract thought) again.

It is not the fact that the human being \textit{objectifies} himself \textit{inhumanly}, in opposition to himself, but the fact that he \textit{objectifies} himself by \textit{distinction} from and in \textit{opposition} to abstract thought, that constitutes alienation as it exists and as it has to be transcended.

\textit{(ibid} 264, emphasis in original)
In other words, beyond the original error of context, making the self as I
described in the first part of this essay is really no movement at all. It is again
spinning one's wheels, so to speak. The second of the “double error” committed
by Hegel as Marx states it, is the appropriation “of the objective world for man”
through “the recognition of sensuousness, religion, state power, etc. as mental
phenomena”, thus as products of the mind (ibid 264, emphasis in original). As
mental products, they are therefore abstracted and, for all intents and purposes,
unreal. They are “phases of mind, entities of thought” (ibid 264, emphasis in
original) and consequently exist only for the creation of Spirit and go nowhere
towards improving material conditions. As a result, this again does nothing to
supersede humanity's alienation.

And yet, Hegel argued that the slave could find his self in the object that
he created for his master. There is an acknowledgement of the physical,
sensuous world here. It is in the real production of real goods that the slave
ultimately finds self-consciousness. If a slave makes a chair for his master, that
chair is two things: 1) it is the slave's way of sublating nature, of using nature for
his own ends, in this case, for his survival. By taking on the task ordered by his
master, the slave is reconnecting with nature in a more profound way than that of
mere animal survival; and 2) in fashioning the chair based on his own ideas, the
slave is proving himself a culture maker and it is in the product of this culture that
he can truly find his self. It is in locating the recognition of the self in an external,
material product that Hegel hoped to avoid the solipsistic trap of Idealism. Yet
look closely at the two effects of labour mentioned above. Where do they take
place? Both are located entirely within thought. The slave’s reconnection with his human nature as beyond animal survival and his subsequent recognition of self in the product of his labour are both thought activities. They are internal consequences of what are external actions. In Hegel’s dialectic, the facticity of the created object—who provided the material for it, who takes it after completion, what others think of it—is essentially irrelevant. All that is required for the self is that an object has been fashioned by the subject. This irrelevancy of the material consequences of the slave’s activities leads us to the Marxian conception of alienation.

Of course, it is not just the dialectic that ties Marx to Hegel. Hegel was one of the first, if not the first, to theorize about history as a coherent progression from one state to the next with the goal of developing humanity. One cannot understate the importance of this conception on Marx’s own philosophy. That Hegel, in Marx’s estimation, put history “on its head” should be seen for what it truly was: a mistake that put Marx on the path that he felt was right. If it were not for Hegel’s original project, Marx would’ve had no point from which to begin. Marx acknowledges as much himself

The outstanding achievement of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*—the dialectic of negativity as the moving and creating principle—is, first, that Hegel grasps the self-creation of man as a process, objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and transcendence of this alienation and that he, therefore, grasps the nature of labour, and conceives objective man...as the result of his
own labour. The real, active orientation of man to himself as a species-being, or the affirmation of himself as a real species-being...is only possible so far as he really brings forth all his species-powers (which is only possible through the co-operative endeavours of mankind and as an outcome of history) and treats these powers as objects, which can only be done at first in the form of alienation (ibid, 265, emphasis in original)

Here we can see the kernel of what was to become Marx's main goal—the analysis of labour, the interrelation of human beings within society and history, and the attendant alienation that results. In order to tackle these issues, I will look closely at the forms of alienation that Marx spelled out: 1) the alienation of the worker from his product; 2) the alienation of the worker from the work itself; 3) the alienation of humanity from its “species-being” (a term I will explore in more detail below); and 4) the alienation of humans from each other.

To understand these four forms of alienation, I need to return to the anti-essentialist ontology discussed previously, that a person is what he does, not what he is. Marx's idea was that humanity is both productive and creative. Man is the only animal that refurbishes his environment for his own needs and does so universally. While a swarm of bees may build a hive, there is little to no deviation from hive to hive, area to area. That is to say, if you were to travel to any place where bees are able to live in the wild, you would be able to recognize a beehive as such. There is production to be sure, but little creativity. On the other hand,
the sheer variety of human dwellings speaks to our ability to adapt “inorganic nature” (i.e. non-biological nature) to our purposes: “Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard.” (ibid 278) One can certainly see that for Marx, labour is a necessary component of who we, as a species, are. If you take away a person’s ability to labour, you take away their self. Moreover, if you take away the product of that labour, you are taking away the one tangible result of a person’s self. This is the first of the four forms of alienation, alienation of the worker from his product.

If we recall the first part of this essay and Hegel’s notion of finding the self in the product of labour, we can see just where the Marxist critique can come in. The slave or worker does not own the product of said labour. He works on it at the behest of his master and turns it over upon completion. One cannot help but think of the motto above the gate to Auschwitz I, the Nazi concentration camp, “Arbeit Macht Frei”—Labour Makes One Free. While this was certainly an Orwellian exercise in ironic sloganeering for the purposes of propaganda and obfuscation, not to mention 100 years after Hegel, it nevertheless holds an insight into the Marxian critique of Hegel. Labour alone cannot be the path to freedom, to self-consciousness. There are too many factors outside labour itself to justify such a philosophy. Granted, Marx had time on his side. He was living/writing in the midst of the industrial revolution at the height of the new
capitalistic system, as opposed to the more pastoral system that Hegel was familiar with. This is why he can write paragraphs such as this:

We shall begin from a contemporary economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour does not only create goods; it also produces itself and the worker as a commodity, and indeed in the same proportion as it produces goods. (ibid 273, emphasis in original)

What he is describing in this passage is the effect wage labour has on the production of goods. With the advent of wages, the worker then becomes a commodity himself. No longer is he tied to the land, or a master, but is instead limited by his ability and the forces of the market. If an overabundance of goods is produced, then his labour becomes less valuable. In a wage labour system, the means of production come to be more valuable than the abstract labour power represented by the worker. Since the worker is no longer intimately tied to the product, he is now “related to the product of his labour as to an alien object” (ibid 273, emphasis in original). No longer can the slave “find” his self in the object, as Hegel stated. The product can no more be a reflection of the labourer. I am reminded of the 2006 Canadian documentary Manufactured Landscapes. It
opens with a stunning tracking shot of a factory in China that produces cheap consumer goods like electric fans. The shot carries on for over ten minutes as it passes from workstation to workstation, each laden with parts for these cheap consumer goods. The alienation of labour can clearly be seen in this one ten-minute piece of film for there is absolutely no creativity involved in the production of these goods. The workers' activities are a near-hypnotic repetition of one action after the other, producing countless identical products endlessly. But why do these workers produce these goods? One word: survival.

This is the return of the survival (read: animal) mode discussed in relation to Hegel above. Here we can find a further outcome of the alienation of the product. The worker in effect becomes a slave to the product of labour itself because it represents the means of subsistence (ibid 274). In his product, the worker can only see his survival, not his self, and, consequently, becomes tied to it, much as the slave had become tied to the master in the Hegelian master/slave dialectic. The worker, who began as a culture maker as the way of transcending animal existence, is now relegated to that existence by the very means he had hoped to use to escape.

This brings us to the second form of alienation, the alienation of the worker from the activity. This affects the worker in that the work is external to the worker, that is it is not part of his nature; and that he, consequently, does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being...The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure
time...His work is not voluntary but imposed, *forced labour* ...Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion, it is avoided like the plague (*ibid* 275, emphasis in original)

The avoidance of labour caused by its alien nature is so common today that it is hardly ever remarked upon in any substantially critical way. It is alluded to, as mentioned earlier, in advertisements or TV shows, but is done so in a superficial manner. Basically, the lucky few can elude this fate and the unlucky many are doomed by it. This is the inspiration for the graffiti that heads this part of the essay: “Commute, work, commute, sleep...” The job offers no reward, and, in fact, reduces one to subsistence living. There can be no creation of the self when it is being crushed under the tyranny of survival. In order to transcend this fate, the worker then thrusts himself further into the “animal functions—eating, drinking, and procreating” (*ibid* 276) and the owners help push him along. Yet as we have seen, these “animal functions” are not, for Marx, the highest function of humanity, not his nature as a “species-being”. It is within the realm of species-being that we can locate the third form of alienation.

Before we delve into the alienation of humanity's species-being, we must first investigate the word itself. Marx, being the strict materialist that he was, conceived of humanity as just another animal in the natural world. We may have different wants needs and drives, but all come from our being in nature. We can look at the activities of humanity with the same eye as we look at the activities of
the aforementioned bees. They are both actors within “inorganic nature” and employ it for their own ends. How they go about this is their species-being. What Marx is referring to by use of this term with regard to humanity is the essential quality that marks the human species as distinct from others. And as we have already encountered it above, it is the ability to make culture out of the whole of nature itself and do so in a creative manner (ibid 276-277). Once Marx has articulated the concept of humanity’s species-being, he can then go on to show just how we become alienated from our species-being through forced labour. Just as other animals live from nature, so, too, does humanity. However, because alienated labour alienates humanity first from the product and second from the activity, it also alienates humanity from its species-being (ibid 277). No longer is labour a part of its life activity, as it now exists solely to perpetuate survival. The worker’s labour is now inextricably tied up with his purely physical needs, not his deeper species ones. Today this sort of behavioural determinism is usually shunned, but for Marx, it is an imperative part of who we as humans are. There can be no self-consciousness, as Hegel described it, where the subject is increasingly at odds with whom he is supposed to be and what he is supposed to do. Working on things outside himself is vital to the labourer as a natural being and

As a natural being... he is, on the one hand, endowed with *natural powers* and *faculties*, which exist in him as tendencies and abilities, as *drives*. On the other hand, as a natural, embodied, sentient, objective being, he is a *suffering*, conditioned, and limited being,
like animals and plants. The objects of his drives exist outside himself as objects independent of him, yet they are objects of his needs, essential objects which are indispensable to the exercise and confirmation of his faculties (ibid 268, emphasis in original)

The objects described in the above selection are, for humans, those things upon which we labour. There is an essential interconnectedness between the subject and the object, a kind of two-way process of communication that provides meaning for both. Take them out of context, and either one approaches meaninglessness. As Marx puts it, “A non-objective being [one that lacks an object] is a non-being” (ibid 268 emphasis in original). If you take away the material results of the worker’s labour, you deny him the chance to be an objective being because the sensuous object of his labour is, for all intents and purposes, gone. We must keep in mind here that a purely intellectual object is inadequate for Marx at this point because it is abstract and not “real”. Finding one’s self in the satisfaction of a job well done, or the praise of the master, or the simple creation of culture holds no weight for Marx even if it had for Hegel. The alienation of the worker as a species-being leads to the final form of alienation: alienation of humans from each other.

So far, we have seen three of the four forms of alienation: 1) alienation of the worker from the product; 2) alienation of the worker from the work itself; and 3) alienation of the worker from his “species-being”. The fourth is a culmination of the other three. To analyze this form more closely, it would be helpful to once again turn back to the earlier part of this essay and the Hegelian dialectic. I
began, and ended, Part 1 with idea that no man is an island. That is, that we all
find meaning and indeed self-consciousness through our relations with others,
specifically through the Hegelian master/slave dialectic. This relationship,
however, is by definition imbalanced, and as a result, leads not towards, but
away from the self. In labouring on the object, the worker pushes himself further
away from it, the activity and his natural being. But who orders this labour? One
could say that it is a God, but as I have shown, Feuerbach argued that this is
merely a reflection of humanity itself. Thus, "[I]f the product of labour does not
belong to the worker, but confronts him as an alien power, this can only be
because it belongs to a man other than the worker" ("Alienated Labour" 279,
emphasis in original). The overarching form of alienation, then, is the alienation
of human beings from each other. By controlling both the means and result of the
labour of another, the owner controls the labourer's self. And how can the means
and results of labour be best described?

through alienated labour, the worker creates the relation of another
man, who does not work and is outside the work process, to this
labour. The relation of the worker to work also produces the relation
of the capitalist (or whatever one likes to call the lord of labour) to
work. Private property is, therefore, the product, the necessary
result, of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to
nature and to himself.
Private property is thus derived from the analysis of the concept of alienated labour; that is, alienated man, alienated labour, alienated life, and estranged man. (ibid 280, emphasis in original)

Private property, then, becomes the wall between the labourer and his self. Private property works as a fragmenting force that pushes people away from what Marx called their “life activity” and towards alienating activity. Replacing this “life activity” is the pursuit of material goods, but it is a poor substitute. If it is nearly impossible to find one’s self in an object not of one’s making, then it surely is impossible to find one’s self in an object one merely buys. Thus, the more the worker pursues the “fetish” of the commodity, the more alienated he becomes, not only from his self, but also from his species-being and his fellow humans. This is why Marx saw the elimination of private property as the key to humanity’s salvation.

The question then arises, is this salvation at all possible? Writing here, in the year 2007, aware of all the baggage that the name Marx carries, it seems that the answer is a resounding “No!” Of course, we haven’t the time or the space within this essay to properly explain that answer. Instead, we must look at the fundamental flaw of Marx’s philosophy as it pertains to humanity’s quest for the self. Essentially (pun intended) it’s his essentialism. That is to say, his theory is

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4 Of course, one may ask about art here. It’s an important question. Art may be the last frontier of authenticity in this regard, as the creation and appreciation of the singular artistic work gives art the ability to allow one to approach one’s self. The owner(s) of the artwork is, after all, the producer and/or the buyer. There is no “boss” as it were. Also, art needn’t be a commodity in the same way other objects are: art (or crafts) may just as easily be obtained or created for free and thereby outside the realm of the commodity.
predicated on the assumption that humanity’s species-being is as a culture maker and, as result is alienated from its nature. Here, another piece of graffiti from Paris, 1968 is instructive:

Under the paving stones, the beach.

The paving stones are, of course, part of the culture of humanity. Whether that culture was created by a slave under the direction of his master, by a worker under the direction of his boss, or by a free person under the direction of himself, the result is the same—culture has been created. But what are the effects of this culture? According to the writer of this graffiti, the paving stones work to separate human beings from nature, from something that they feel is more real than culture. To the writer, the actual beach is more real because it is immediate, unfiltered and eternal. The paving stones are an impediment to their enjoyment of the real beach, of nature itself. Is this just a singular case? Or is culture an alienating element in and of itself? Where does culture end and nature begin? In the face of these questions, how can one go about finding one’s self? Is this even a goal for the majority of people? Humanity may be far more complex than Marx, or Hegel, ever thought.
Reference List


2: HUMAN, NATURE, WORLD: HEIDEGGER, BUDDHISM, JAPAN AND ECOLOGY
Introduction

“Only a god can still save us”

-Martin Heidegger, Der Spiegel, 1966

A recent British documentary on Martin Heidegger begins with a long helicopter flight over the Black Forest in Germany. There is nary a sign of humanity in the whole shot, just countless green trees. Why would this be? Why would a documentary on one of the most influential philosophers of the Twentieth Century begin this way? And why is his name still brought up constantly when the issue of environmentalism arises?

On a recent visit to one of the top universities in Japan, I was surprised to discover that Heidegger was still studied seriously by most students there, much more so than here in Canada. Why would this German philosopher still garner such respect and academic rigor in a country as different from his own as Japan is? More importantly for my task here, how are these two situations--those of environmentalism and of Heidegger's importance in Japan--related?

From the start of his career as a preeminent philosopher, Martin Heidegger has been studied and analyzed by Japanese philosophers. In the last twenty years or so, some Western thinkers concerned with our current ecological crises have begun to do the very same. At the same time, these same eco-philosophers have been looking East, to the traditions of Asia for insights into a
way out of our current ecological predicament. There seems to be a dialogue of sorts going back and forth between the three. In this essay, I’ll attempt to take a closer look at the connections between Heidegger, Buddhism and a Twentieth Century Japanese philosopher by the name of Watsuji Testuro¹ (和辻銘路), and what these connections have to do with the environment. I’ll be focusing on Heidegger’s 1951 lecture entitled “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” (heretofore, “BDT”) and then showing the relationship between his ideas of locale and space with the Buddhist concepts of Suunyata (nothingness) and Pratitya Samutpada (co-dependent arising). I’ll then discuss Watsuji’s 1935 book Fuudo (風土. English translation, Climate and Culture), especially as the French cultural geographer Augustin Berque interprets it. Thus, I hope to show how human beings and the cultures they create are dependent on the environment in which they create them and vice versa. By looking more closely at the human relationship with the Earth, I hope we can come up with a more integrative way of living. As Berque states, “the dynamic coupling of two terms, one of which is our animal body, and the other is our social body...is not only technical and symbolic, but necessarily also ecological, since it imprints itself into, and is conditioned by, the ecosystems of the biosphere” (Berque, 2004: 392). In other words, we cannot separate ourselves from the “natural world” anymore than it can separate itself from us, as we shall see.

¹ I will follow the convention of Japanese naming, family name first.
Part I

The goal of Martin Heidegger's 1951 lecture "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is to seek "a new way of envisaging man's position with regard to things" (from David Farrell Krell's introduction to "BDT", Basic Writings, 1993: 344). Heidegger wished to show how Beings, or Dasein, related to and interacted with their world. He had already shown in his masterwork Being and Time how Dasein was in fact a being-in-the-world by using the workshop as an example (Zimmerman, 1990: 137). For the term being-in-the-world, "in' signifies pragmatic attachment rather than spatial inclusion and 'world' refers not to the totality of physical objects, but rather to the nexus of intelligibility organized by our identity-constituting life-projects" (Thomson, 2004: 384-85). If we think about a craftsman in his shop, we know that he can make objects there because he understands the tools he has and the goal he wishes to achieve. He "understands in advance the equipment and supplies with which he works in terms of the network of relationships and possibilities that constitute his world" (Zimmerman, 1990: 138; Canan, 2001). He lives and works within his context and so can create. In fact, the craftsman is often unaware of the "thingness" of the objects he uses due to routine and "fore-structure". He knows what he needs to use and just reaches for them without a thought. It is only when what he needs no longer fits that he becomes conscious of it as an object (Zimmerman, 1990: 139). But where do we as people in general fit into all this?

The workshop can be thought of as the "world" of the craftsman, yet this "world" would not exist without the craftsman for
Without the world opened up by human existence, beings would not "mean" anything. Hence, the phenomenon "world" is not to be understood as the totality of natural entities or as the domain of creatures made by God, but instead as the structure of reference relationships constituted by and for human existence, a structure that enables entities to manifest themselves or "to be" in various ways. (Zimmerman, 1990: 140)

Thus, the world of the workshop, and by extension, the world outside of it, can only be created by Beings that are conscious of the referential relationships contained therein. Phenomenologically speaking, if a tree falls in the forest and no one is there, it does not make a sound because only a Being aware of the term "sound" and the idea it conveys can make that distinction. The object and the consciousness come together to form a world and this world "determines whether a thing is urgent, or it can wait, whether it is remote or near, etc. That is, the meaning of Being for each thing is determined by the 'world'. Especially important for us... not only the world, but also the earth exist 'only so: in the utensil'" (Canan, 2001: 102, emphasis in original). So, even if a non-human animal were to hear the tree fall, it is part of its world and together, they can determine the meaning of that tree's fall. The question then becomes, what is Heidegger's "new way of envisaging" in "BDT"? Just how do humans and earth relate?
Over the course of the lecture, Heidegger introduces the idea of the “fourfold\(^2\)”. These are the four main elements that constitute the world of humanity: earth, sky, gods and mortals. Each one of these helps us “to comprehend humanity’s being-upon-the-world (earth), being-through-the world (sky), being-with-the-world (gods), and being-in-the-world (mortals)” (Brown and Owsley: para. 7). Here, Heidegger is reminding us that “the four modalities must be gathered to ask the question by which our existence is made clear: ‘What is the meaning of Being?’” (ibid, para. 7). The fourfold can only be gathered when and where humans decide to dwell. Once this is decided, we must build, for

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings. (“BDT”, 1993: 350)

We, as a species, as living things, are dwellers, meaning we exist in a place. Even the most nomadic of peoples exist in a place even if they are mobile. We exist in our dwelling and must take care of the place where we dwell, because “[w]ith dwelling, our self ‘stretched’ in time and place, exists in a manner that cares for the people and the ‘things’ that are incorporated into this ‘stretching’....

Rather than manipulating the environment around us, we should let the myriad processes around us ‘be’....Put simply, we are always Being-in-a-world, and we should be ‘at home’ in that place” (Young, 2002: 191). Just as the craftsman

\(^2\) For a more detailed exploration of each term, see Part IV below.
needs to take care of his tools in order to have them readily at hand, so should we as dwellers take care of the world in which we dwell. To this end, Heidegger introduces the bridge:

The bridge swings over the stream ‘with ease and power.’ It does not just connect the banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge expressly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings the stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood. The bridge gathers the earth and landscape around the stream. (BDT, 1993: 354, emphasis in original)

The bridge allows the mortals to carry on with their business while also allowing the stream to carry on its merry way (ibid, 354). And yet it does more than this. It brings together elements that were previously apart, namely the banks, but also the mortals and the earth. It reaches into the sky and gathers the gods there (ibid, 355). Merely by existing, by being built by the mortals, “The bridge gathers to itself in its own way earth and sky, divinities and mortals” (ibid, 355, emphasis in original). The bridge has succeeded in gathering the fourfold. But how?

It is important to realize that the gathering that takes place is not dependent on any one element of the fourfold (Malpas, 2007: 234).
gathering is essentially interrelational with each part dependent on the other three in order for it to occur. “The way all four of the elements of the world are gathered together in and through the thing [in this case, the bridge] means that no one element can be taken to be the ‘source’ or ‘ground’ for the thing” (ibid, 234). Nature is no more the “ground” than the bridge because it is only in relation to the bridge and the other three elements that we become aware of nature itself (ibid, 234) and vice versa. Berque (1997) makes much the same argument that nature is only nature when viewed in relation to the human. Furthermore, the thing that helps gather the fourfold needn’t be a manmade object. It could just as easily be a tree (Malpas, 2007: 237-239). The gathering centred on a tree is necessarily different than that centred on a highway bridge (ibid, 240), but both are understood “through the interplay of the parts that make it up” (ibid, 244). The key is that there be a relation between the four elements and that this relation happen in a locale.

The locale is the place where the gathering can occur. Without this locale, there would be no physical place where the fourfold could come into view. Yet this locale cannot exist before the bridge is built (“BDT”, 356). Sure, there are many places where a bridge could be built, but it is only after it exists that the locale is created. We cannot say that this locale exists if any of the four elements are absent. The bridge, by virtue of its allowing things to be as they are, by dint of its joining that which was formerly apart, “allows a site for the fourfold” and helps determine “the places and paths by which a space is provided for” (ibid, 356). For human beings, these locales are necessarily buildings for they best provide a
place for the fourfold to gather. This place is indispensable for not only the
gathering of the fourfold, but for Being itself. However, the locale and the thing
that gathers both condition the meaning of that gathering.

Things can only be if they have to the space to exist. However, space
requires a locale in order to be space. For example, what makes a room a room
is that fact that it provides a space for things to be and occur in that room. In
other words, “Space is in essence that for which the room has been made, that
which let it into its bounds. That for which the room is made is always granted
and hence is joined, that is, gathered, by virtue of a locale... Accordingly, spaces
receive their essential being from locales and not from ‘space” (ibid, 356,
emphasis in original). The locale gives a boundary to the space in order to give it
shape. There is a Buddhist proverb that says if not for the banks, the river could
not flow. Therefore, the locale, in this case the bridge, provides a parameter
within which the gathering of the fourfold can take place. The notion of
parameters, or limits, is an important one in the thinking of Heidegger as well as
Buddhism. In fact, Heidegger’s main criticism of modern technology is that it
erases the boundaries that had previously ordered our lives, and that we as
species are not equipped to deal with this limitless world. So, “from a
Heideggerian viewpoint, the technological world contains no spaces, even space
becomes a problematic notion since there is no place from which a limit on such
a space could be determined, and so no space as such” (Malpas, 2007: 298).
Yet it is imperative for humans to have these locales for our relation to locales,
and through them, spaces, is inherent in our dwelling (“BDT”, 359).
We must create these locales in such a way as to allow the gathering to take place. The bridge must not impede the flow of the river. It must not have as its goal a way to use the earth or the sky. It must integrate with its surroundings and allow them to “be”. To give an idea of this, Heidegger describes a farmhouse in the Black Forest:

Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and sky, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope, looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and that, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. (ibid, 362, emphasis in original)

He is arguing that we need to think carefully about not only where we build, but also how we build, just as people used to when they built such dwellings as the farmhouse described above. Modern technology “coerces beings, which are governed by a hidden law of emergence and withdrawal, into perpetual presence...to appropriate their coming to be for our own purposes” (McGrath, para. 2). It no longer allows the earth and the sky to “be” because it desires to force them to conform to our way of being. We no longer need build houses like this one because we can just install insulation against the cold and air conditioning against the heat. Mortals no longer dwell in these spaces, but instead merely live in them. Thus, we can see that “Modern architecture is ‘the
system' that 'goes anywhere and everywhere, but genuinely fits nowhere’” (Le Corbusier, as quoted in McGrath, para. 9). Modern communication technology further complements this “disruption in our sense of location” (Malpas, 2007: 296) by flattening and narrowing the world itself into a distanceless mass, so while we still physically live in different locales we psychologically exist in the same ones. What is taken to be the “good life” in one locale is now accepted in another regardless of actual physical conditions. A consequence of this is, to use an extreme example (Dubai), the creation of manmade tropical islands in a place where they never existed before. The reordering of the locale that occurs in a situation like this forces a whole new type of gathering to occur, a gathering that would at best struggle to integrate the fourfold. There is no more reciprocation between humans and the earth. We now occupy different worlds.

Part II

Having briefly looked at Heidegger’s theory of how humanity interacts with the Earth, we can now move onto exploring how his ideas match with some traditional Buddhist philosophy. To do this, I’ll be concentrating on the idea of *Suunyata* (nothingness) as it relates to space and *Pratitya Samutpada* as it relates to epistemology and being-in-the-world. I believe these comparisons are important in order to create a cultural context in which to approach Watsuji’s ideas, and also to complement Heidegger’s, since “Eastern modes of thought...may resonate with and thus complement and enrich the concepts of
nature and values in nature recently emergent in the historical dialectic of Western ideas" (Callicott and Ames, 1989: 17). In fact, Heidegger himself quite famously called for “planetary thinking” in order to address the problems he saw in relation to modern technology, which as I wrote above, are of a global nature. For various reasons, the dialogue between East and West has been more one-sided, with the East more thoroughly engaging with Western philosophy. A major reason for this, as Graham Parkes writes in the Introduction to Heidegger and Asian Thought is that for the most part, Eastern philosophy has been seen as far too speculative and poetic/literary to be taken seriously in the West (Parkes, 1987: 5). However, the global ecological crises we face necessitate a more planetary thinking in order to find ways to resolve them. Beyond that, however, philosophically speaking, the identification of one philosophy with the East and one with the West reifies what are geographical boundaries into intellectual ones as well (Thompson, 1986: 236). This not only creates antagonistic thinking, it also “makes traditions appear self-enclosed, with no gaps and passageways among them” (ibid, 236). And there are certainly passageways between Heidegger and Buddhism, as he himself is once reported to have remarked:

William Barrett recounts the story of a German friend of Heidegger, who, when calling on him, found him reading some of [D.T.] Suzuki’s essays. “If I understand this man correctly,” Heidegger is supposed to have said to his visitor, “this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings.” (Hirsch, 1970: 247)
Whether this story is exactly true or not (Parkes, 1987: 6), it is indeed clear after careful study that much of European Continental Philosophy "has developed philosophical terminologies that are far more in harmony with many strains of Asian thought than are those of Anglo-American philosophy" (ibid, 6).

Heidegger's first major work was Being and Time, and as evidenced by the title, between time and place, he prioritizes time with regard to existence. Heidegger saw humanity's inherent temporality as the main boundary of human existence, and in fact, "His criticism of ontology since Plato is made from the standpoint of conceiving human existence in terms of finitude, that is, death" (Umehara, 1970: 273). Buddhism can also be seen as perceiving beings in terms of death (ibid, 277), as is clear from the four noble truths:

1. The truth that suffering exists
2. The truth that suffering has a cause.
3. The truth that the cause can be removed.
4. The truth that there are eight practices by which the cause of suffering can be removed. (ibid, 277)

Suffering is caused by the human knowledge that we are mortal and will die, so we try whenever possible to attach ourselves to the physical world in order to try to achieve some sense of permanence. Many people constantly desire more and more as a way of removing themselves from the temporality of existence because while they may understand that the physical world is in a state of flux and that nothing is permanent, they do not accept it. Thus, they concern themselves with "things", but in the incorrect way. Here, many in the West
extrapolate an intrinsic nihilism, or world-denying character in Buddhism (Shaner, 1989: 169; Dallmayr, 1992: 38). However, a Buddhist must neutralize “excessive desires and false conceptions (the cause of our own suffering) so that the practitioner can become intimate with the process of becoming depicted by the phenomenal world” (Shaner, 1989: 169-70). That is to say, the practitioner needs to know the physical world and accept it in order to achieve enlightenment. The acceptance “of the finitude of being makes man free from attachment to fame, money, and sex...there is no path for man in Buddhism without his awareness of transiency” (Umehara, 1970:278). Suunyata, or nothingness, then, is the ontological equivalent of the space that allows Being. This is crucial for our current concern for the environment and the earth itself. The realization that we are creating the world at the same time that we are living in it brings us to the Buddhist concept of Pratitya Samutpada, or co-dependent arising (also translated as equiprimordiality, dependent co-origination or contingent co-arising (ibid, para. 1)).

Co-dependent arising is strongest in the Chinese Hua-yen philosophy (Chan, 1963) and is best illustrated through the Avatamsaka Sutra (Flowery Splendor Scripture) and the theory of the Ten Mysterious Gates (ibid, 406-407). The main principle behind co-dependent arising is that “all things are coexistent, interwoven, interrelated, interpenetrating, mutually inclusive reflecting one another, and so on” (ibid, 407). Pratitya Samutpada is sometimes translated as causality since as “one dharma [being] rises, all dharmas rise with it (ibid, 407) thereby causing the arising of each other. Furthermore,
Since dharmas have no substance of their own, they are empty. It is precisely this emptiness that combines them in these mutual relationships. In a real sense, dharmas exist only in relation to each other and to the entire universe, which is a set of interrelationships. (*ibid*, 407-408)

In other words, the pencil on my desk does not exist until I need it and turn my attention to it. Nor do I exist for my pencil, for that matter, until it is needed by me. This kind of holistic thinking seems perfectly in line with Heideggerian thought.

In short, co-dependent arising means, quite simply, that all things “including humans condition one another and are contingent upon one another. Nothing is self-explanatory or self-contained” (*ibid*, para. 7). In other words, no man, no animal, no thing is an island, not even an island itself! An island can only be so if there is a body of water delineating it as such. Clearly, this can also be seen in Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the-world. We must remember that this situation is not one of dualities. We can no more separate the dancer from the dance (as Nietzsche put it) than we can separate the room I am currently in from the space it provides, nor myself from the space and room for that matter.

Because of this co-dependency, “there is no substantiality to things, hence their emptiness” (*ibid*, para. 7). This emptiness is not necessarily a negative, however. It provides a space in which things can exist, just as the locale did for the bridge.

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3 In order to avoid slipping into idealism, it would be good to remember Heidegger (I'm paraphrasing): *Being* depends on us (humans), but *beings* do not. That is to say, while an entity’s meaning is dependent on humanity, its existence is not. The computer’s factuality is not contingent on my interacting with it, but its facticity is.
in "BDT". In fact, one can view it as an openness for we are now able to see the interdependence that is integral to our existence:

To be open finds us ready to receive and involves dissolving those barriers (which we ourselves create by fear and desire) which separate, get in the way, and close us off from one another and our world. In a way, therefore, Suunyata or emptiness represents the openness within ourselves which is prepared to acknowledge, receive, accept the relatedness which binds us to one another, nature and all that constitutes the world. (ibid, para. 8, emphasis mine)

Therefore, we need to accept the nothingness that is part and parcel of our existence in order to open ourselves up to each other and everything around us, just as the bridge opened itself to receive the fourfold, or this room opened itself to receive me. We need to recognize that we are not centered within ourselves, and once this is done, we can be one who "no longer excludes nor is excluded" (ibid, para. 10). The question then becomes what, exactly, is our world as expressed above? And does this world differ from earth? If so, how? To approach these questions, I will examine the philosophy of Watsuji Tetsuro.

**Part III**

Watsuji Tetsuro was a Japanese philosopher and ethician active in the first half of the Twentieth Century. While influenced by numerous writers and thinkers
from his native Japan, such as members of the Kyoto School (who were in turn deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism) and the novelist Soseki Natsume, he also became "representative of the kind of East-West philosophical dialogue generated out of the modern Japanese context" (Dilworth, 1974: 3-4). Just as Heidegger showed an admitted affinity with Eastern thought, so, too, Watsuji with the West. In fact, he is often credited with having introduced Kierkegaard to Japan, and traveled extensively both around Asia and Europe. It is this period of travel that interests us. Having had the opportunity to read Heidegger's *Being and Time* immediately after its publication in 1927, Watsuji started a critical dialogue with the German philosopher that culminated in Watsuji's *Fuudo* (風土, usually translated as *Climate and Culture*). Although he started writing the ideas that would result in *Fuudo* in 1929, it wasn't published until 1935. While problematic in many regards—it is very much "of its time", with numerous essentialisms and stereotypes sprinkled throughout, and forays into *nihonjinron* (日本人論), or Japanese exceptionalism—I believe it is still useful today with regards to its phenomenological approach to humanity and its place on the Earth. One of the main criticisms with deep ecology and eco-phenomenology is the requirement that people begin, somehow, to see the world as "one" (Evernden, 1993). For many, this is far too transcendentalist and abstract to be practical. Moreover, it can preclude concern for humans in a way that many see as misanthropic or nihilistic. On the other hand, deep ecologists and eco-phenomenologists see this as the only way out of our current ecological crises because every other approach treats the earth as an object, and it is precisely
this kind of thinking that got us where we are today. I believe that Watsuji's ideas allow us to find a way towards bringing the human back into accord with the Earth without either denying the subjecthood of both humans and the Earth.

To begin to understand *Fuudo*, I will first briefly look at Watsuji's criticism of *Being and Time*. By the time of "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", Heidegger had amended his philosophy considerably to include place (locale) as an important part of human existence, but in *Being and Time* he specifically rejects it the second half in favour of temporality, hence *Being and Time* (Dilworth, 15-16). In Watsuji's mind, this rejection missed an essential aspect of human existence.

In *Fuudo*, Watsuji wrote that by "man" (*ningen*) he does not mean the "abstract individual," but man concretely existing as the dialectical unity of the individual and the universal, or society. He calls this dual characteristic of *ningen* the essential nature of man. For a true and full understanding of man, the analysis of human existence involves both the temporal individual and the spatial-social whole in this kind of "dialectic of absolute negation." The "space-and-time-structure" of human existence revealed as "climatic history and historical climate" grounds this essential *In-der-Welt-Sein* [Being-in-the-world] which Heidegger had explored. (*ibid, 15*)

Watsuji argued that the Heidegger of *Being and Time* unfortunately abandoned this insight into the interrelatedness of Being by the end of the book and instead looked too much towards the individual (*ibid, 15-16*). Part of Watsuji's critique
can be found in the Japanese word for human that he uses, *ningen*. *Ningen* is composed of two Chinese characters, the first (人) meaning person and the second (間) space, or “in-between”. Furthermore, *gen* itself is composed of two other characters, one (門) meaning gate and the other (日) sun, as in one can see the rising sun through the space in the gate, and as a result can also be read as *aidagara* or *aida* (Bein, 2003: 4). However, this individual character is difficult to translate into English because “it entails many different concepts. ‘Space,’ ‘interval,’ and ‘between’ are all appropriate depending on the context, but for Watsuji the most important reading of *aidagara* is ‘betweenness.’ He takes the *nin* element to represent one's individualistic or self-centered drives, and the *gen* to symbolize one’s social and communal nature” (*ibid*, 4). Thus, we can see that in Watsuji's philosophy, humans have an essentially social as well as individual self. Here, again, we see strong echoes of *Pratitya Samutpada* examined above: I am in this room because of the space it provides and it provides space for me to be in it. One cannot occur without the other. This is where Watsuji introduces the notion of climate.

In most (older) translations of Watsuji's 1935 book, the title *Fuudo* is translated as *Climate and Culture*, as mentioned above. In order to understand what Watsuji meant by that title, we need to again look closely at the Japanese. When read individually, the two Chinese characters that make up *Fuudo* (風土) usually mean wind (風) and earth (土). There is one important other reading for the first character, however. It can also mean “style” or “manner”, such as *wafuu* (和風) meaning “Japanese style” or *youfuu* (洋風) meaning “Western style”.
These terms are often used to distinguish between Japanese and Western styles of cooking, hotel, clothing, etc. Hence, the title *Fuudo* can be more accurately translated as “a manner of earth.” In this regard, one of Watsuji’s more recent interlocutors Augustin Berque has translated *fuudo* as *milieu*⁴ (Berque, 2004), referring to the human environment. It is this translation that I wish to use for I find climate to be too strongly associated with weather. This misunderstanding also leads to the charges of geographical determinism which have become commonplace among his readers (ibid, 389). However, Watsuji’s goal in the book is not to explore merely how human cultures are conditioned by the weather or even their geographical environment, but rather to clarify mediance (*tūdosei*) as the structural moment of human existence (*ningen sonzai no kōzō keiki*). So the question here is not about how the natural environment (*shizen kankyō*) determines human life. What is generally understood as natural environment is something that has been disengaged, as an object, from the mediance of the human considered as its concrete basis. When one considers the relation between such an object and human life, human life itself is already objectified. Accordingly, this standpoint consists in examining the relation between an object and an object, it does not concern human existence in its subjecthood. It is the latter which is our problem here. Even if medial phenomena

⁴ “the relation of a society to *space* and to *nature*...both natural and cultural, collective and individual, subjective and objective, physical and phenomenal, material and conceptual...” (Berque, 1993: 131)
(fudoteki keishō), here, are ceaselessly put into question, it is as expressions of subjective human existence, not as the so-called natural environment. I should like to deny in advance such a confusion. (Watsuji, 1935: v, Berque's translation, 2004: 389)

In other words, “Watsuji’s task was to articulate ‘the intentional or directional relationships’ that the ‘climatic' (fudoteki [milieu]) structure of Dasein’s subjectively fundamentally and primordially exhibit (Dilworth, 1974: 13). Ontologically speaking, “just as climate [milieu] shapes ningen, climate is also conditioned by ningen” (Bein, 2003: 6) because we are simultaneously subject and object to each other. But what are médiance and the “structural moment of human existence”?

First, a note about translation. In the first, and most common English translation of Fuudo, Geoffrey Bownas’ 1961 edition, the first sentence of the above-quoted passage reads, “My purpose in this study is to clarify the function of climate as a factor within the structure of human existence” (Watsuji, 1961: v, emphasis mine). In his translation, Berque translates fudosei as médiance and not climate as Bownas does. As Berque later explains,

In this instance, médiance was meant to express a medium character between the physical and the phenomenal, the natural and the cultural, the collective and the individual which in my eyes was proper to human milieux. Thus I defined mediance as the ‘attributive dimension or character of milieux; sense of a milieu’.

(Berque, 2004: 391, emphasis in original)
In other words, fudosei, or mediance is not an "objective" climate outside of ourselves because humans can only experience it when we are immersed in it. It is at the moment that we become aware of its existence and our own. I think Berque's term mediance is useful because it more accurately conveys the unity of Watsuji's original concept.

In order to show the unity of the human with the earth, Watsuji begins his study by exploring the idea of cold and how we experience it:

Therefore, in feeling the cold, we discover ourselves in the cold itself. This does not mean that we transfer ourselves into the cold and there discover ourselves thus transferred. The instant that the cold is discovered, we are already outside in the cold. Therefore, the basic essence of what is "present outside" is not a thing or object such as the cold but we ourselves...That we feel the cold is an intentional experience in which we discover our selves in the state of "ex-sistere" or ourselves already out in the cold (Watsuji, 1961: 3-4, emphasis in original)

This discovering of ourselves while simultaneously discovering the cold “is primarily and irreducibly intersubjective—a “we” or “mutual” relation in which we discover ourselves and each other in the particular season” (Dilworth, 1974: 14, emphasis in original). The German phenomenologist Max Scheler once said that existence is understood through resistance, and that we become aware of ourselves only when resistance appears. Therefore, when we are “out there”, we can find ourselves “as an element in the ‘mutual relationship’—in ‘climate’"
no matter what form it takes. It "resists" us. And yet "Such apprehension is not the recognition of the "I" as the subject that feels the cold and the heat or as the subject that is gladdened by the cherry blossoms. In these experiences we do not look towards the 'subject’" (Watsuji, 1961: 5), but instead we engage with them socially by working together to fight the cold, beat the heat, or marvel at the cherry blossoms (ibid, 5-6). "The apprehension of the self in climate is revealed as the discovery of such measures; it is not the recognition of the subject (ibid, 6). Thus, “We cannot be understood in isolation from our landscape and its features, tools, buildings, and so forth, and vice versa. Such things are 'in-the-world' with us, and the selves we ‘project’ are tied with them” (Young, 2002: 191) and this is the milieu, which is the “medium character between the physical and the phenomenal, the natural and the cultural, the collective and the individual”. As such, it creates the structural moment of human existence.

What, exactly is this structural moment? According to Berque, “the difficulty here is moment (in Japanese keiki). It is necessary, referring to Hegel in particular, to understand this word as a power of moving produced by the combination of two contrary (or different) forces, as in mechanics. In Watsuji, this means the dynamic unity of that which dualism has opposed: the human subject on the one hand, objective environment on the other” (Berque, 2004: 391). It seems impossible not to see “two contrary forces” as a dualism; however, to accomplish this, it might be helpful if one were to think of a wheel. A wheel is a unity and cannot work if it is split into two. Yet as it moves there are two opposing
forces acting dynamically causing that motion. Now take one half of the wheel and paint it black and paint the other half white. As it moves, you’ll notice that as the white half goes up, the black half goes down. Then as the black half goes up, the white half goes down. Neither is moving independently of the other, yet they are moving. They are driving the wheel, whether it is going forward or not is a matter of perspective. It is dynamic. If this black and white wheel reminds one of the Buddhist yin/yang symbol, that is not by accident. I am talking here about a relationship of equilibrium, of reciprocity, of mutuality. If there is only one, it cannot be. They work in total harmony together and it is only limit of language which forces us to divide them.

Part IV
Throughout this essay, three terms have reoccurred without any real explanation as to what they really mean: earth, human and world, while a fourth, the gods, has not been discussed much at all. For most, the first term and the third are nearly, if not completely, synonymous. However, if we think about Heidegger, Buddhism and Watsuji, we can see that all four terms are necessary for each other and fundamentally interrelated. With the three approaches discussed so far—Heidegger’s, Buddhism’s and Watsuji’s—in mind, I now wish to define the four terms separately and show exactly how they are interrelated.

The world, according to Heidegger, “is our culture; the tradition we are ‘thrown’ into when we are born. Within the World, we ‘grow into’ an interpretative
possibility of ourselves and the world [earth]" (Young, 2002: 191). There may be some confusion here between world and World, \textit{Welt} in German. \textit{Welt} (World) is the culmination of the cultural and social relationships seen earlier. It is what humans "create" when they recognize those other "things" which arise co-dependently. It is that to which Watsuji was referring when he discussed the sociality of the cold, or the heat, or the cherry blossoms. These are features of our World. While Heidegger usually referred to this within the confines of time, if we follow \textit{Pratitya Samutpada} and Watsuji, we can see that it is just as much a function of place. The French geographer Dardel introduced "geographicity" as a response to Heidegger's historicality (Berque, 2004: 390). The World we live in can be as dependent on place as it is on time. We can return to Heidegger's farmhouse and remember how well it was designed to function in its environment, giving rise to a World for the inhabitant to dwell in. Watsuji has a couple of rather lengthy descriptions of the traditional Japanese house and how it also creates a World in and of itself (Watsuji, 1961). These dwellings (and I use the word purposefully here) both informed and were informed by their milieu and the culture which produced and lived in them. Just as the house is a cultural adaptation to a particular geographical area, so too is the culture itself.

The Earth is thus an integral part of our Worlds. We can now return to the ideas of locale and space. In his Socratic dialogue \textit{Timaeus}, Plato introduces the idea of \textit{chôra}. What is \textit{chôra} and how does it relate to the task at hand? As Berque explains:
Now, chôra radically exceeds this principle of identity [logos/basho]. It is, contradictorily, both a matrix and an imprint of the various beings of the sensible world: Plato compares it here to their ‘mother’ or ‘nurse’, and elsewhere to their ‘imprint in the wax’. He also compares it to the roving of a dream. In other words, chôra is unidentifiable, undetermined and undefined in itself. It is necessarily relational.

Now, Brisson’s huge study on the Timaios translates chôra with milieu spatial. (Berque, 2004: 391-2)

In other words, chôra can be associated with the space where existence can happen. It is the emptiness in the cup that allows water to be collected. It is the emptiness of the room that allows me to sit and work. It is necessarily relational since it is part of a unity—we can’t have the cup without the emptiness, nor we can we have a room. Think again of the banks of the river allowing it to flow. The earth performs the same function for humans. We react to the earth as the animals we are, creating our unique cultures as our way of adapting. In this reaction, we create Worlds. In fact,

what these concepts are pointing at; that is, the evolution of a primate into Homo sapiens was made possible through the extériorisation of the ‘animal body’s’ functions into a ‘social body’, coupled with the former within a structure which is properly human, since the latter is constituted with technical and symbolic systems.

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The interaction between these two terms brought forth what we presently are. (ibid,392)

The interaction Berque refers to here is the previously mentioned "structural moment of human existence" where our interaction with the earth in what he terms our "animal bodies" gives rise to our "social bodies" which in turn create the Worlds we inhabit. Consequently, we come to "dwell" in places, providing "locales" for the gathering to occur. The Human, then, acts as the mediator between World and Earth.

The Worlds we have come know are the ones we have "created" through the mediation of the Earth we inhabit. We cannot have our Worlds without our earth and vice versa. Unfortunately, it seems that this is exactly where we are today—trying to have our Worlds without our earth, at least since the so-called Copernican revolution, if not before. However, this is no longer merely a concern of the West, where this separation has its roots. Berque (1993), for example, specifically describes how Japan abandoned a holistic view of the earth in favour of the schism more common here in the West. One could just as easily point to numerous other places on the planet where a similar shift has occurred. Humans no longer recognize the unity around us for we tend to see everything dualistically, as one force opposed to the other. The earth is something to be conquered, to be "challenged" in the words of Heidegger. Somewhere along the

It is possible that the schism has always been present in the so-called West, at least since we as a people began to feel the need to separate and categorize all the natural features we see around us. It may even go back further to when some ancestor of ours first posited a human soul, but no such thing for anything non-human, a sort of human exceptionalism if you will.
way we as humans have lost the ability to recognize our ontological dependence on the earth. As Berque writes:

Modernity has brought forth a schism — gradually expressed since the Copernican revolution — between two worlds: the internal world of the subject, and the external world of the object. Now, as Plato already had put it clearly, the world (kosmos) cannot be dualistic: it is necessarily ‘one’ (heis) and sole of its kind (monogenēs). This unity of the world, or cosmicity, is precisely that which modernity has lost, in the process which Heidegger called Entweltlichung (deworldlization), and which I prefer to call decosmization. Unable to find a place in any natural order — as is utterly expressed by postmodern thinking —, the human has become a decosmized being. (ibid, 393)

Modernity has weighted the wheel on one half, trying to force it to drive us forward, like the wheels on a locomotive. We now have the technological means to export different Worlds to different milieux. For example, we bring a culture born of the cooler climes of Northern Europe and the American Northeast into the desert (Las Vegas) and force the Earth to conform. This disregard for limits, I believe, makes clear the true import of the slogan, “Think globally, act locally”. If one allows the Earth to “Earth” on a local level rather than challenging the Earth, the global will take care of itself. Instead of trying to force the Earth to conform to our different Worlds, we should be trying to facilitate the co-dependent arising that is necessary. We have forgotten about balance.
This brings us to the fourth element, the gods\(^6\). We must remember that \textit{all} four elements must be present for the gathering to take place. No one element can stand on its own. But they cannot all just be “there” together doing nothing (Malpas, 2007: 234). What is important is \textit{how} they work together and what they actually do. To devalue one element at the expense of another, or to see one as primary and the others as secondary leads to the problems mentioned by Berque above. For Heidegger, “deworldlization” creates a situation whereby all of humanity essentially becomes homeless. Because modern technology has abolished the distances between different spaces and locales, we can no longer feel a sense of nearness (\textit{ibid}, 226-7). In fact, because of “that technology, everything is rendered equally distant and equally close, which is to say that ‘everything gets lumped together into uniform distancelessness’” (\textit{ibid}, 227).

However, one can only truly experience the “being-with-the-world” that is represented by the gods if one has a sense of nearness to a locale. If all peoples and lifestyles are transient then they lose a deeper sense of meaning. The gods are an important part of the fourfold because they help establish a strong connection with where we dwell. Since we lack any real connection to the physical locales we live in nowadays, we also lose any sense of care for that locale. In our failure to see ourselves as mortals who care, we lose any sense of

\footnote{Feenberg (1993: 194-199), among others, has pointed out how appealing to the gods doesn't really help humanity deal with issues of technology because it is too abstract and mysterious to be adopted by others. Furthermore, tying the fourfold so closely with one geographical area seems to imply nationalism/tribalism at the very least. Malpas (2007: 299), citing Albert Camus, charts a path out of this double criticism by appealing to our sense of beauty and in our everyday existence.}
connection to the gods, or our being-with-the-world. Current technology creates this framework and modern lifestyles simply follow along.

Conclusion

What is it in particular that has led us to our (almost) universally acknowledged ecological crisis? So far in this essay I have alluded to the fact that our current approach to and belief in technology has facilitated this crisis, but I have not spelled out in detail how this has come to be. The counter argument to the blame that is heaped on technology and instrumental reason is that humans are capable of anything and that the technology that got us into this mess can only be counteracted by more technology. Furthermore, our reliance on technology and instrumental thinking is so ingrained and is such a guarantor of freedom that any attempt to criticize or contradict them is doomed to failure.

The assumption made by most is that the response to modernity or the attendant ecological damage implied by criticisms like the one Berque makes above is to return to some previous, Romantic era in human history that we seem to have already passed. Or that to turn to the East is also ineffective because it is so alien to Western tradition or that it is asking for a commitment to spirituality long abandoned in the secular West. Moreover, many can (rightly) point to Japan, China, India and the other nations of the East and show that they, too, are polluting at rates equal to or beyond that which is happening in the West. However, by looking more closely at what Heidegger has to say about
technology can allow us to see just what it is that may help us out of our ecological situation.

Using the Greek root techne, Heidegger understands technology “in terms of...‘disclosing’ or ‘letting-appear’” (Malpas, 2007: 271). In his essay, “The Question Concerning Technology”, Heidegger puts the idea of technology as a revealing against our current “instrumental and anthropological definition of technology” (Heidegger, 1993: 312). That is to say, when we here in the 20th Century ask what technology is, we usually say that it is a means to an end and a human activity (ibid, 312). However, he critiques the first of these conceptions by showing that the four causes attributed to Aristotle cannot really be separated (ibid, 313-316). Much as the cultural and the natural cannot truly be separated because each depends on the other to define it, neither can the man-made object be separated from the causa materialis, the causa formalis, the causa finalis, nor the causa efficiens. When a person takes some silver in order to make a chalice, to use Heidegger’s example, he or she is “bringing forth” the chalice by choosing the material (causa materialis), choosing the shape (causa formalis), choosing the reason for the chalice to exist as a chalice (causa fianlis) and, finally, bringing it all together (causa efficiens). Here, again, we can see the fourfold gathering.

Thus, the four causes can only be brought out by the bringing-forth or occasioning (ibid, 317) of that which allows them to gather. It is through the techne, or skill of the craftsman that reveals that which does not bring itself forth of its own accord. “Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to
presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place” (ibid, 319). Because for Heidegger, being depends on us (humans), we allow their being to come forth in a meaningful way to us. The windmill harnesses the wind that is already there and provides energy for us, but it is still free to be what it is: wind (ibid, 320).

Modern technology, while it reveals, also challenges by making the earth first and foremost a “mineral deposit” (ibid, 320), for example. Modern technology, then, “enframes” (das Gestell in German) the earth as a reserve (Bestand) of raw material for our own ends. Furthermore, this enframing occurs on a global scale, thus erasing “the boundaries of space and place” (Malpas, 2007: 281). As a consequence of this enframing

The metaphysical disclosure of things as “objects” itself gives way to the technological ordering of things as resource so that “today there are no longer objects (no beings, insofar as these would stand against a subject taking them into view)—there are no only resources...(beings that are held in readiness for being consumed).” There are thus no limits to technological ordering, nothing that stands outside its compass, nothing that is not taken into its global calculation. (ibid, 282)

In turn, the globalizing of “technological ordering” homogenizes the world and eliminates the differences inherent in places and spaces. Earlier, I mentioned an extreme example of this homogenization (Dubai) and alluded to another (Las Vegas). In both these cases, the enframing of the world by modern technology
allows us to create environments that do not naturally occur. I will now give
another more mundane example: bananas. I love bananas and eat one pretty
much every day. Why? Because they are delicious and (relatively) cheap. Is
there any reason why I, living here in Vancouver, BC, should need bananas? I do
not think so. However, modern technology provides the means for me to obtain
bananas regardless of how little I need them, or how much damage their large-
scale production and transportation do to the environment. On even this
seemingly insignificant level, modern technology transcends boundaries. Place
loses its importance because every place is essentially no place. In a very real
way “technology changes our relation to things through its effect in the
transformation of nearness and distance—technology, says Heidegger, prevents
things from appearing as things, and it does this through the abolition of distance,
and so also of nearness” (ibid, 293). Everything is now at hand.

For Heidegger, the solution to this crisis is to rescue the other sense of
techne, that of art and artist, and for each of us to dwell poetically upon the earth
(Heidegger, 1993: 339-340). While some may find this to be an impossibly
Romantic task to ask of most humans since the essence of modern technology
explored above is “the water that they swim in” so to speak, I tend to agree with
Heidegger. However, I also feel that it is only when pushed to crisis that humans
find the impetus to act. As long as it seems that the solution for each problem is
around the corner, we’ll keep on doing what we are doing. In his book Collapse,
Jared Diamond describes more than one instance of a community threatened
with destruction due to environmental degradation. Some, like the Vikings, tried
desperately to cling to a way of life developed in one milieu (Scandinavia) while dwelling in another (Greenland). They stubbornly refused to adapt to the new milieu and paid the price. We should take heed of that lesson, but I fear that we as a species won’t. To dwell poetically on the earth means, to me, to acknowledge the interconnectedness we have with the natural environment and to act accordingly. It means to constantly ask ourselves why we are living the way we are and what the consequences may be. I hope that the God Heidegger invokes in the quote that I used to open this essay does not need to save us. I hope that we are able to save ourselves.

Epilogue

The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought.

Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”
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