

*WEIZIRAN* (為自然) AND *ALOHA ‘ĀINA*: PLACE, IDENTITY

AND ETHICS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

By

Andrew Soh

Dissertation Committee:

Roger T. Ames, Co-Chairperson  
Franklin Perkins, Co-Chairperson  
Masato Ishida  
Samuel M. Gon III  
David R. McCraw

Keywords: *Weiziran* (為自然), *Aloha ‘Āina*, place, identity, environmental ethics

© 2019  
Andrew Soh  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*To Anna Lou Abatayo, Ph.D.*

*Your love, generosity, belief, strength of character, and intellect  
give witness to all that is good and true in life.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was born of the many intersections of important people and institutions in my life over the past seven years of my Ph.D. studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, as well as during my philosophy studies and teaching at Ateneo de Manila University.

I am greatly indebted to my dissertation adviser, Professor Roger T. Ames, without whose belief, guidance and encouragement this dissertation would not have been completed. I applied for admission to the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for the opportunity to study under him, and through my classes and interactions with him, and especially throughout the process of working on this dissertation with his guidance, I learned so much more than I had hoped I would. His scholarly work in Chinese and comparative philosophy, and his philosophical reflections on place inspired me to explore the connections between a Daoist sense of place and the ethics of the environment for my Ph.D. dissertation. Professor Ames was the most incredible mentor and guide: insightful, wise, generous, inspiring, and patient yet firm when he needed to be. He listened to different iterations of my arguments and lines of inquiry, read through my drafts and gave me valuable advice and insight to work through my ideas in the written form, and, in his wisdom, challenged me to think deeper and wider and to engage with the texts and the questions that I was pursuing. He believed in me when I thought I could go no further, and, in the process, made a place for me to believe in myself as a researcher and as a person.

I am very grateful to my dissertation co-chair, Professor Franklin Perkins, for his generosity and trust in taking on my dissertation project. His insights, questions, comments and suggestions helped me clarify my ideas and lines of argument. I benefitted from his careful

reading of my drafts and his suggestions for improving both my writing and my understanding of the texts. He asked difficult questions that helped me refine my arguments and organize my writing. I am truly fortunate to have had his guidance.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Samuel M. Gon III for guiding me in my exploration of Hawaiian ecological wisdom and sense of place. His knowledge and lived experience of Hawaiian ecological wisdom and conservation biology was instrumental in helping me make connections between Hawaiian culture and conservation and environmental ethics. He read through my drafts with a close eye for detail, pointing out weaknesses in my arguments and offering advice on ways to strengthen them, affirming those areas where I was making good connections and offering me the right measure of encouragement at each juncture of the project. It was Dr. Gon, through his lecture on place in Hawaiian culture at the University of Tokyo-University of Hawai'i Summer Institute, who inspired me to pursue a dialogue between Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place for my dissertation.

My sincere thanks to Professor Masato Ishida for his belief, support, and encouragement throughout the process of the dissertation writing. His understanding and advice at critical junctures of my Ph.D. studies were truly valuable. I am also grateful for the challenging questions that he posed during my dissertation oral defense, and for pointing out areas and avenues that I could pursue in further research on the topic.

I am grateful to Professor David R. McCraw, my teacher in classical Chinese, who gave me a foundation in reading and interpreting the classical texts. I am also grateful to him for challenging me to clarify points in my dissertation, in particular, my translations of passages

from the *Daodejing*. His questions during my dissertation oral defense helped me think further on the connections and linkages between Chinese and Hawaiian culture and ecological ethics.

Appreciation is due to Professor Edward S. Casey. His published works on place were an immense help in my research, but I am especially grateful that he took the time (when he was at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for a philosophy conference) to listen to me talk about my research project. He listened to my ideas over lunch and offered helpful suggestions on “reimplacement,” and for bringing the relation of Daoist sense of place and locality down to earth.

My Ph.D. studies were made possible through a number of grants and scholarships, which helped to defray the cost of graduate school in Hawai‘i. I am grateful for the financial support through the following: Ateneo de Manila University-Loyola Schools Faculty Development Grant, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Philosophy Departmental Merit Scholarship, Dai Ho Chun Fund for Graduate Fellowships, June Chun Naughton International Student Services Scholarship Fund, Dr. Ashok Kumar Malhotra “Seva” Award, and Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education.

I am grateful to my teachers, fellow graduate students and classmates at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa for the opportunity to learn and dialogue, and for their friendship. Special thanks to Nicholas Hudson, Joseph Harroff and Jing Liu for their advice as I prepared for the comprehensive exams and dissertation defense. I am grateful to the staff of the Department of Philosophy, especially Renee Kojima-Itagaki, for her invaluable help and advice for navigating the ins and outs of departmental and university protocols and

requirements as I prepared for the comprehensive and language exams, and my dissertation defense and submission.

I was fortunate for the opportunity to spend a year as a Visiting Ph.D. Student at the University of Copenhagen with the Department of Food and Resource Economics (IFRO), from 2016 to 2017. I am grateful to the Head of Department, Professor Bo Jellesmark Thorsen, for his invitation to conduct my research and work on my dissertation at IFRO. I am also grateful for the collaboration and guidance of Professor Niels Strange, and to Professor Christian Gamborg and Professor Mickey Gjerris for inviting me to be a guest presenter for their graduate course on “Ethics, Environment and Society.”

I am grateful to my alma mater, Ateneo de Manila University-Loyola Schools, and to Professor Manuel B. Dy, Jr., my first mentor in research and teaching at the Department of Philosophy there. My interest in Chinese philosophy began when I was an undergraduate student in his Ancient Chinese Philosophy class. I am grateful for the support shown by my Department chairs towards my Ph.D. studies, Dr. Remmon E. Barbaza, Dr. Agustin Martin Rodriguez, and Dr. Jean Page-Tan. I am grateful for the support of Dr. Maria Luz Vilches, my former Dean at the School of Humanities and current Vice-President of the Loyola Schools. My sincere thanks to my teachers and colleagues at the Department of Philosophy, who welcomed me to the community and life of philosophy, and to my former students, through whom I learned much more than I taught.

My gratitude to Karen Mikel, my International Student Adviser at the office of International Student Services at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, who was an important

guide to me when I found myself at an intersection of possible futures in my graduate studies. I am grateful for her patience, understanding and advice.

My appreciation goes to the *'ohana* at the Newman Center-Holy Spirit Parish through whom I found a home away from home during my time at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. My deepest gratitude to Fr. Jack Ryan for offering me a job as campus minister from 2012 to 2016, Jeffrey Freitas, my colleague for his generous and supportive collaboration in ministry and his friendship, to the parishioners and community members, especially Virgie Chattergy, Rita Andrade, Rosemary Casey, Suzanne Ching, Alyce Dodge, Beth Freitas, Paula Harris, Adrian and Laureen Kwock, Rose Anne Petro, Carmen Salazar, Anna Viggiano, and Sara and Mark Wakayama.

There are a number of people to whom I wish to offer sincere thanks for their support as I prepared for my dissertation defense: Christopher Derige Malano for generously hosting me and for his support before, during and after my defense, Fadi Youkhana, Margaret Morris, Hla Htun, and Ulises Diaz for their support at my practice presentation and at my defense. I am grateful to Darene Koga, MaryAlice Kordof, Emma Irwin and Lisa Widdison for their moral support at my dissertation defense.

I am grateful to my family, especially Margaret and Francis Soh, Mary Soh, and Joshua Voon. Their constant prayers and encouragement from afar have given me invaluable support in my academic pursuit over the years.

Ultimately, there is no one more important to me than Anna Lou Abatayo, my wife, best friend, discourse partner, travel buddy, fellow food lover, and academic role model. I will always be grateful for her love, patience, strength, courage, honesty, belief, and wisdom. When it



seemed impossible for me to complete this dissertation, I looked to her example of discipline, grit and scholarship to remind myself that it could be done. On hindsight, I realize that I made it harder for myself than I should have, and I owe her a debt of gratitude much deeper than I can ever express for seeing this through and supporting me through the ups and downs, doubts and fears, the writing, defense, revisions and submission of my dissertation, and the completion of my Ph.D. She is the best friend and partner that I could ever ask for. There is no other person that I want to explore the world and the future with. And, truly, our lives will not be complete without Elphie, Raffie, Genius and Everybody.

## ABSTRACT

“人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”—*Daodejing* 25

“*Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.*” —*Hawai‘i State Motto*

Our home, planet Earth, is under threat from a host of environmental problems: global climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution of the air and waterways from industries. The reality of climate change affects all of us—it affects habitats and entire ecosystems, and raises other risks such as health and security risks, as well as food production risks. The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), unequivocally concludes that “[h]uman influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems.”<sup>1</sup>

I posit that this global crisis arises from the loss of our sense of place in the world, a loss of our rootedness in our natural world. At the heart of this loss of rootedness is a particular understanding of our place in the world. Our view and experience of the world has evolved from an experience of place to one of the world as space. The dynamic, lived experience of being in the world has been replaced by a quantifying and abstracted distance from the natural world around us.

In this dissertation, I argue that we need to recover our sense of place in the world in order to address the root problem of the environmental crisis. In this endeavor, I will reflect on

---

<sup>1</sup> Rajendra K. Pachauri and Leo A. Meyer (eds.), *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report, Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Geneva, 2014), 2.

the problem of the loss of our sense of place by first examining the meaning of place, and how by recovering what place means, we can begin to redevelop our sense of place. My reflections on place are aided by the insights of humanistic geographers Yi-Fu Tuan, Tim Cresswell and Edward Relph as well as philosophers Martin Heidegger and Edward S. Casey. By recovering a sense of place, I will inquire into the possibility of finding an enduring ethics of the environment. I believe that the challenge of developing such an enduring ethics of the environment requires a way of thinking that is more capacious and inclusive, and that is built on dialogue.

The philosopher J. Baird Callicott made a place for dialogue by bringing together environmental ethicists and philosophers of non-Western traditions in search of common ground for a more representative, global ethics of the environment. My dissertation contributes to this ongoing discourse by bringing together the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions in a dialogue on place, from which I glean a Daoist sense of place and a Hawaiian sense of place. Through a reflection on the Daoist sense of place—which emphasizes *wu* (無), a disposition of not overdoing by which our interactions with the world are undertaken for the sake of achieving harmony and equilibrium (*he* 和) and the Hawaiian sense of place—which is centered on *pono*, the Hawaiian value of appropriateness that ensures that we act in a beneficial manner towards the land (*‘āina*), I find common ground for my proposal for a Daoist and Hawaiian Ecological Ethics: *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>1.1 Statement of the Problem.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1.2 Responses to Environmental Problems.....</i>	<i>8</i>
1.2.1 Conservationism.....	9
1.2.2 Animal Rights .....	11
1.2.3 Biocentrism .....	16
1.2.4 Ecocentrism.....	22
1.2.5 Contributions of J. Baird Callicott to Environmental Ethics .....	29
<i>1.3 Loss of Our Sense of Place .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study .....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>1.5 Methodology.....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>1.6 Dissertation Chapters .....</i>	<i>43</i>
1.6.1 Chapter 2: Place .....	43
1.6.2 Chapter 3: Place in Daoist Thinking .....	43
1.6.3 Chapter 4: Hawaiian Sense of Place .....	44
1.6.4 Chapter 5: Ecological Ethics of <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha ‘Āina</i> .....	45
<b>Chapter 2: Place.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<i>2.1 Loss of Our Sense of Place .....</i>	<i>46</i>
2.1.1 From Place to Space.....	48
<i>2.2 Relation of Place and Space .....</i>	<i>51</i>
2.2.1 The Difference Between Space and Place .....	51
2.2.2 Phenomenology and Place: Sense of Place .....	54
<i>2.3 Place as Embodied Experience.....</i>	<i>57</i>
2.3.1 Place is Space Endowed with Meaning .....	57
2.3.2 Sense of Place Is Developed Over Time.....	61

2.3.3 Can We Develop a Sense of Place Without “Long Residence”?	62
2.4 <i>Place Experienced as Breadth</i>	62
2.5 <i>Place Experienced as Depth</i>	64
2.6 <i>Critiques of Place</i>	66
2.6.1 Place as Mobile	66
2.6.2 Place as Unbounded	66
2.6.3 Place as Process	68
2.7 <i>Implication: Dialectic of Body and Place</i>	69
2.7.1 Philosophical Argument for the Inseparability of Place and the Human Person	70
2.7.2 Being-in-Place as Event	72
2.7.3 Place and Identity	72
2.8 <i>Limitations to Our Understanding of Place</i>	73
2.8.1 First Limitation: The Fallacy of Simple Location	74
2.8.2 Second Limitation: Dualistic Thinking	76
2.9 <i>Place as Event and At-One-ness: Insights from Martin Heidegger</i>	76
2.10 <i>In Search of a Dynamic and Capacious Sense of Place</i>	79
<b>Chapter 3: Place in Daoist Thinking</b>	<b>81</b>
3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	81
3.1.1 Fallacy of Simple Location and Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness	82
3.1.2 Problem of Dualistic Thinking	83
3.2 <i>Non-Dualistic Relation Between the Human Person and the World</i>	85
3.2.1 The World is Continually Becoming	85
3.2.2 Understanding of Continuity Through an “Unlearning”	87
3.2.3 Mutually Entailing Relationship Between the Human Person and the World Expressed in Chinese Culture and Arts	89
3.3 <i>Optimizing Experience Through Placemaking</i>	92
3.4 <i>Understanding Place in the Relation of Daode (道德)</i>	94
3.4.1 Dao (道) and De (德) as Continuity and Multiplicity	95
3.4.2 Ongoing Achievement of Symbiosis	97
3.5 <i>Placemaking is a Harmonious Ongoing Symbiosis (he 和)</i>	98
3.6 <i>Placemaking is Continuity and Multiplicity (yiduobufen 一多不分)</i>	102

3.7 Placemaking is Nameless (wuming 無名) .....	105
3.8 Placemaking is Ziran (自然) .....	108
3.9 Placemaking is Wu (無) .....	113
3.10 Placemaking is Knowing How to Dwell Rightly.....	126
3.11 Weiziran (為自然) and Aloha ‘Āina.....	132
<b>Chapter 4: Hawaiian Sense of Place.....</b>	<b>133</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	133
4.2 Why Hawai‘i? Why Hawaiian Sense of Place? .....	134
4.2.1 Hawaiian Sense of Place and Daoist Sense of Place Contribute to an Efficacious Dialogue .....	134
4.2.2 Hawaiian Sense of Place Resonates with Daoist Sense of Place .....	136
4.2.3 Hawai‘i’s Ecosystems Represent Two-thirds of the Earth’s Ecosystems.....	137
4.2.4 Hawaiian Islands are Closely Connected to Oceania in a Sea of Islands .....	138
4.3 Hawaiian Sense of Place in the Kumulipo.....	142
4.3.1 Hawaiian Cosmogony .....	143
4.3.2 Hawaiian Genealogical Narrative Identity .....	147
4.3.3 Kia ‘i: Those Born of the Land Watch Over Those Born of the Sea .....	148
4.3.4 Narrative of Hāloanaka and Hāloa: Injunction to Mālama ‘Āina .....	150
4.4 Hawaiian Sense of Place as Seen in Hawaiian Land Practices .....	152
4.4.1 Concentricity-Radiality of the Kanaka Relation with ‘Āina .....	152
4.4.2 Sense of Place Found in Ahupua‘a System.....	153
4.5 Hawaiian Sense of Place via Mo‘olelo and Mo‘okū‘auhau (Narrative and Genealogy) .....	155
4.5.1 Narratives Told Through Place Names .....	156
4.5.2 Place Names as Proverbial Sayings (‘Ōlelo No‘eau).....	159
4.6 Hawaiian Sense of Place in Relation to Hawaiian Religion, Ritual, and Gods .....	161
4.6.1 Akua Establish a Hawaiian Sense of Place .....	162
4.6.2 Kinolau Strengthen Hawaiian Bond to ‘Āina.....	169
4.7 Aloha ‘Āina: Hawaiian Sense of Place.....	170
4.7.1 Aloha .....	170
4.7.2 ‘Āina .....	173
4.7.3 ‘Imi Loa .....	175
4.7.4 Aloha ‘Āina .....	176

4.8 <i>Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka 'Āina I Ka Pono</i> .....	177
<b>Chapter 5: Ecological Ethics of <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i></b> .....	<b>179</b>
5.1 <i>Introduction: Retracing Our Steps</i> .....	179
5.2 <i>Resonance between the Daoist Sense of Place and the Hawaiian Sense of Place, and <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i></i> .....	186
5.2.1 Process Cosmology in the Daoist Sense of Place and the Hawaiian Sense of Place .....	187
5.2.2 Concentricity-Radiality of the Hawaiian Sense of Place ('Āina—Honua) and Continuity-Multiplicity of the Daoist Sense of Place.....	189
5.2.3 Vital Relationality between the Human Being and the Natural Environment.....	191
5.2.4 Narrative Sense of Place in the Hawaiian Sense of Place and the Daoist Sense of Place ..	194
5.2.5 We are Called to be Placemakers.....	195
5.2.6 Attentiveness in Knowing and Understanding the World: 'Imi Loa and <i>Wuzhi</i> (無知) .....	196
5.3 <i>Differences between <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i></i> .....	197
5.3.1 Daoist Texts Do Not Mention Concrete Places, while Hawaiian Texts are Replete with Place Names .....	198
5.3.2 Daoist Cosmogony is Metaphorical, while Hawaiian Cosmogony is Literal .....	199
5.3.3 Hawaiian Sense of Place is Heavily Reliant on Religion, while the Daoist Sense of Place Does Not Appeal to Religion .....	199
5.4 <i>Objections to <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i></i> .....	200
5.4.1 Daoist and Hawaiian Perspectives are Limited in Scope and Not As Capacious As Claimed .....	201
5.4.2 Must We Reject Modernity and Science in Order to Embrace <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i> ? .....	203
5.4.3 Does a Sense of Place Require Some Objective Relationship with Nature, or Can One Have a Sense of Place in Any Circumstance? .....	206
5.5 <i>Final Considerations: Ecological Ethics of <i>Weiziran</i> (為自然) and <i>Aloha 'Āina</i></i> .....	210
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>212</b>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“Hōkūle‘a and her crew have been crossing the ocean for over 40 years in the wake of our ancestors, committed to showing the world that old knowledge can be made new again, and that traditional ecological understanding holds the key to solving some of Earth’s greatest problems.” —Nainoa Thompson, President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, on the Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage*

### ***1.1 Statement of the Problem***

Nainoa Thompson, modern-day master of the traditional Polynesian art of non-instrument navigating, led a worldwide circumnavigation voyage between 2014 and 2017 with the traditional Hawaiian vessel, *Hōkūle‘a*, on the *Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage* (the voyage to care for our Island Earth). The purpose of the voyage was, in his own words, to “find and share stories of hope for our ocean, Earth and communities.”<sup>2</sup> On the surface, this voyage may come across as merely a nice way to spread Hawaiian *aloha* and friendship around the world. But the voyage represents much more than that. Nainoa and *Hōkūle‘a* stand as symbols of hope for humanity’s search for a solution to the crisis of global environmental destruction.

Our home, planet Earth, is under threat from a host of environmental problems, one of which is global climate change. In fact, according to the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the “period from 1983 to 2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years in the Northern Hemisphere, where such assessment is possible (medium confidence). The globally averaged combined land and ocean

---

<sup>2</sup> Nainoa Thompson, “Traditional Knowledge for Today’s Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress,” *IUCN World Conservation Congress*, last modified 2016, accessed August 1, 2016, <http://iucnworldconservationcongress.org/news/20160721/article/traditional-knowledge-todays-obstacles>.



surface temperature data as calculated by a linear trend show a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06]°C over the period 1880 to 2012.”<sup>3</sup> Despite denials from doubters and naysayers over the past few decades, climate scientists have provided us with increasingly accurate data to confirm both the veracity of climate change and the anthropogenic causes of the acceleration of climate change.<sup>4</sup> The scientific data is compelling and continues to support the argument that the rapid climate change that we have been experiencing over the past three decades, and continue to experience, is closely tied to anthropogenic causes. The AR5 reports observed changes in the climate system, including warming of the atmosphere and ocean, diminishing levels of snow and ice and rising sea levels. Atmosphere greenhouse gases (GHG) have also increased, with levels of concentration of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide “unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years.” The report concludes that it is “extremely likely” that “anthropogenic increase in GHG” and “other anthropogenic forcings” are responsible for “more than half of the observed increase in global average surface temperature” over the past sixty years from 1951 to 2010.<sup>5</sup> In a report released in January 2019, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that the past four years were the warmest on record in NOAA’s 139-year climate record, with 2018 being the fourth warmest after 2016, 2015 and 2017.<sup>6</sup> The report points out that “[t]he years 2015–2017 each had a global temperature departure from average that

---

<sup>3</sup> Pachauri and Meyer (eds.), *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report*, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pachauri and Meyer (eds.), *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–8.

<sup>6</sup> NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, “Global Climate Report for Annual 2018,” last modified 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/201813>.

was more than 1.0°C (1.8°F) above the 1880–1900 average, which is a period that is commonly used to represent the pre-industrial conditions. However, 2018 was just shy of reaching the 1.0°C (1.8°F) mark at 0.97°C (1.75°F).”<sup>7</sup> The reality of climate change is one that affects all of us—it affects habitats and entire ecosystems. The AR5 unequivocally concludes that “[h]uman influence on the climate system is clear, and recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, despite the overwhelming evidence that supports this, all the information that we receive from such reports can remain distant—abstract even—to many, as we do not normally have an experience of what a number such as a 0.85°C rise in global temperature feels like and what that has to do with our everyday lives. Nevertheless, the impacts of climate change are inescapably real for inhabitants in certain parts of the world. Take, for example, the people of Kiribati or other island nations whose homelands are slowly but surely being inundated by rising sea levels due in part to the melting of the polar icecaps.

Residents in North and South Carolina, who were hit by Hurricane Florence in September 2018, and those in Florida, who bore the brunt of Hurricane Michael in October of the same year, as well as those on the eastern seaboard of the United States and in Haiti who felt the destructive forces of Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 or those in the Philippines and China who faced the fury of Typhoon Haima in the same month do not have the luxury of distance and abstraction

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Pachauri and Meyer (eds.), *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report*, 2.

from the effects of climate change.<sup>9</sup> Such extreme weather events are forecast to increase as climate change continues to wreak havoc on our global weather systems.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note here that climate change is, in reality, one of the many environmental issues and concerns that require our attention and action although it may be the most generally well known issue. We are also facing major environmental problems such as the loss of biodiversity, pollution of the air and waterways from industries to name a few.<sup>11</sup>

These environmental problems are exacerbated by an over-exploitation of the natural environment for resources, for instance, coal, oil, copper and lumber. We have carved up mountains and valleys, stripped bare pristine forests, polluted river systems and watersheds to harvest the earth's resources. Our interventions have also given us the power to interfere with the processes of the natural world. For instance, with the invention of electricity, the steam engine

---

<sup>9</sup> BBC News, "Hurricane Michael: Death Toll Continues to Rise Amid Searches," *BBC News*, last modified 2018, accessed February 19, 2019, [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45893486?intlink\\_from\\_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cn7pgq7159jt/hurricane-michael&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45893486?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cn7pgq7159jt/hurricane-michael&link_location=live-reporting-story); CBS News, "Florence Gone but Its Flooding a Crisis in Parts of North Carolina," *CBS News*, last modified 2018, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/hurricane-florence-aftermath-weather-flooding-power-outage-death-toll-fema-latest-forecast-live/>; Robert Ray, "Hurricane Matthew Leaves North Carolina Town under Water - CNN.Com," *CNN*, last modified 2016, accessed August 1, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/15/us/north-carolina-matthew-flooding/>; Joseph Guyler Delva and Scott Malone, "Hurricane Matthew Kills Almost 900 in Haiti before Hitting U.S | Reuters," *Reuters*, last modified 2016, accessed August 1, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-matthew-idUSKCN1250G2>; James Griffiths, Joshua Berlinger, and Ben Westcott, "Typhoon Haima: Philippines Hit by Second Storm in a Week - CNN.Com," *CNN*, last modified 2016, accessed August 1, 2016, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/18/asia/typhoons-haima-philippines/>.

<sup>10</sup> Rajendra K. Pachauri et al., *Future Climate Changes, Risks and Impacts, Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), "Biodiversity and Nature's Contributions Continue Dangerous Decline, Scientists Warn," last modified 2018, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://www.ipbes.net/news/media-release-biodiversity-nature's-contributions-continue-dangerous-decline-scientists-warn>.

and then the fuel combustion engine, we have slowly but surely “mechanized” the world. We have learned to change the cycle of the day, turning night into day and day into night.<sup>12</sup> We have also made an imprint on the world. We have tunneled through mountains, laid down railway tracks deep into the countryside, planted towering skyscrapers in the jungles, carved up bays into gigantic port cities. We have not only taken from the earth; we have also “created” new land through land reclamation in coastal areas such as that done by the governments of Singapore and Macau. We have also transplanted flora and fauna into new habitats, new locations they could never have gotten to naturally, and by doing so, upset the ecosystems of the host habitats.

The degradation of the natural environment continues at a fearful pace, and we need to respond to the problem. Faced with this growing crisis, various sectors of society have responded within their capacities to the challenges of this global problem—governmental and inter-governmental, scientific, socio-cultural, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots groups—which meant that the response to the environmental crisis took on different forms. There is good reason to believe that awareness of the environmental crisis is growing. In spite of this, and of the multi-level efforts alluded to above, the problem persists. Genuine concern for the natural environment remains rare, and marginal. Care for the natural environment does not seem to figure in our daily choices and decisions: the choice of our mode of transportation, the household chemicals we use, and the amount of solid waste that we generate. Why does the purported increase of awareness of the environmental crisis not translate to actions and choices?

---

<sup>12</sup> Although a common phrase, this idea is found in the thought of Martin Heidegger, in his discussion of the dwelling of mortals in the fourfold. See Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), 150.

Have we distanced ourselves from the natural environment to the extent that we see it only as some “resource” to be tapped? Have we erected so many concrete structures in our modern cities such that we have lost our connection with the natural environment? Are the modern comforts of our “concrete jungle” insulating us from the loss of biodiversity in distant natural jungles? What are the root causes for this seeming general failure to properly respond to the environmental crisis?

I venture an argument that this distance that we feel from the natural environment is tied to a deeper disconnectedness, and that is, that we have lost our sense of place in the world. There are a number of complex factors that have contributed to this loss of our sense of place: social and population pressures pushing people off their lands, economic hardships forcing people to migrate to foreign shores in search of a livelihood, modernization and urbanization turning farmland and the countryside into cities, the growth of a nomadic lifestyle with the development of air travel, industrialization leading to the growth of industrial towns and cities, and large-scale cash crop plantations such as oil palm estates leading to the clearing of wide swaths of forests and ancestral lands to name a few. The ever-present threat of human avarice leads to the commodification of the natural environment as we view nature as a resource that we can exploit to meet our wants. There are a number of commentators who have pointed to the modern turn and the growth of science and technology, which fueled the Industrial Revolution, as the main cause of this loss of our sense of place. I think, though, that it would be unfair to think of modernity as the sole factor that led to the loss of our sense of place. As we shall see in “Chapter 2: Place,” this loss of our sense of place—which Edward S. Casey describes as a shift from place to space—can be traced all the way back to the influence of Plato. Nevertheless, we cannot deny

the influence that modernity has had on our perceptions of the world and our relation to the world around us. Neither can we deny that the modern scientific revolution—and the industrial revolution that followed—has given humanity an unprecedented power to affect the natural environment on a scale hitherto unknown and unattainable.

Thus, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge the role that science has played in the loss of our sense of place—while recognizing, at the same time, that it is not the only cause of this loss. Science has taught us to quantify the world, and, as a result, we have learned to relate to the world in abstraction. In our post-industrial information age, our lives have become disconnected in many ways from the world in which we live.<sup>13</sup> The world that used to be home, a habitat, is now measurable and quantifiable in terms of centimeters, cubic meters, degrees centigrade and knots. When once we stood atop a mountain and marveled at the splendor of the forests and valleys below us and the sky above us, we now stand atop the same mountain and calculate how many cubic meters of lumber we can harvest from the mountainside, what possible ore deposits there are that lie in the valley and where we can construct our transmission towers to carry our electricity generated by the hydro-electric plant on the other side of the mountain to the cities some hundreds of kilometers away. As a result, we are no longer as much affected by the loss of a tree or the habitat for a rich variety of flora and fauna because we do not see the flowers, the squirrels, the butterflies—an entire ecosystem—being destroyed as a consequence. Our relationship to the natural world has become more and more distanced and abstract.

---

<sup>13</sup> Marion Hourdequin and David B. Wong, “A Relational Approach to Environmental Ethics,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005): 28.

Nowhere is this disconnectedness more acutely felt than in the progress-minded pursuit of the modern industrial era—where the disconnectedness arising from our objectification of the physical world gave us license to control and harness it for our ends—be they economic, industrial, scientific, political or social. However, starting sometime in the late 1940s but picking up steam in the 1960s, a number of key figures began to question this ethic of progress and exploitation of the natural world. This marked the advent of environmental ethics, starting from a conservation consciousness of people who found the unchecked exploitation and destruction of the natural environment troubling. However, environmental ethics did not have an easy birth. It went through a period of birthing pains as early thinkers worked through the difficult questions of extending ethics beyond purely human relations to include other non-human elements of the natural world.<sup>14</sup> It will be profitable to take a look at the growth and expansion of environmental ethics as various thinkers over the past half century or so sought to establish a normative justification for the ethical treatment of the environment.

## ***1.2 Responses to Environmental Problems***

Environmental ethics emerged from the first awakenings to the questions of extending ethics beyond human relations. One way to view the growth of the environmental ethics movement is to see it as a set of expanding concentric circles, in which each extension away

---

<sup>14</sup> Alasdair Cochrane, “Environmental Ethics,” *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/envi-eth/>; Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, “Environmental Ethics,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed April 16, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/ethics-environmental/>.

from the center is an extension of ethics from the human person outwards to other sentient animals, then to all life forms, and eventually the land. Aldo Leopold, whom many regard as the father of modern environmentalism, brought the problem of the environment to the forefront of people's consciousness with his groundbreaking book, *A Sand County Almanac*.<sup>15</sup> The field has grown over the years and a view of the literature will reveal myriad approaches and emphases. Most environmental ethicists drew from traditional ethical perspectives, that is, deontological, utilitarian and virtue ethics, to locate a common ground for ethical treatment of the environment. The forms of ethical arguments are also varied: from conservation ethics, to animal rights, to biocentric ethics and ecocentric ethics. Some ethicists have characterized the different arguments of environmental ethics as lying along a spectrum from light green environmental ethics to dark green environmental ethics.<sup>16</sup>

### *1.2.1 Conservationism*

Early iterations of environmental ethics were mainly driven by anthropocentric interests. This might be a reason that Leopold's idea of a holistic ethics, which proposed that the land had intrinsic value, was not well received by his contemporaries. When *A Sand Country Almanac*

---

<sup>15</sup> Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).

<sup>16</sup> Patrick Curry categorizes the different theories in environmental ethics along a scale from "Light Green," to "Mid-Green," to "Dark Green." He discusses "Light Green or Shallow (Anthropocentric) Ethics" with examples such as stewardship and lifeboat ethics. He includes animal liberation, animal rights and biocentrism under the heading of "Mid-Green or Intermediate Ethics." For him, theories like the Land Ethic, Gaia Theory, Deep Ecology, and Ecofeminism fall under the category of "Dark Green or Deep (Ecocentric) Ethics." Patrick Curry, *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011).



was first released in 1949, sales were poor—only a few thousand copies were sold, before its “renaissance in the 1960s.”<sup>17</sup> Many of the early environmental ethicists were conservationists who based their arguments for the preservation of the natural environment upon the view that the degradation of the environment meant the loss of natural resources for future generations of human persons. We see this expressed in the preservation of tracts of wilderness as national parks. A conservationist might fight to preserve a mountainside as a national park because it will provide pleasure and enjoyment to current and future vacationers. Thus, underlying this form of conservationist ethic is a utilitarian ethic. However, not all who supported the resource conservation movement were utilitarian because it was also supported by those who proposed the stewardship argument.<sup>18</sup> One of the early proponents of such an argument was Walter C. Lowdermilk, a little-known forester and hydrologist, who chose to reinterpret the creation story in the book of Genesis not as a license to dominate nature but rather as a command from God that humankind be stewards of nature. This effort followed in the wake of Lynn White’s critique of the Judeo-Christian tradition for bringing about humankind’s exploitative attitude in relation to the natural environment.<sup>19</sup> The argument charges the human person with the care of the rest of

---

<sup>17</sup> Roderick Frazier Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>19</sup> Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–1207, <http://www.jstor.org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/stable/1720120>. In his essay, first published in 1967, White, a prominent medieval historian, traced the exploitative attitude of modern western science and technology to its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. He argued that the Judeo-Christian notion of the human person’s “transcendence of nature,” a result of our being made in God’s image, laid the rational foundation for the growing ecologic crisis that he observed at the time of his writing.

creation. One may argue that stewardship made her a sort of “benevolent ruler,” yet the bottom line was that she was still set apart from nature in a hierarchical relationship.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, this was a step forward from a purely utilitarian anthropocentrism. This position was premised upon the understanding and the recognition that the natural environment was valuable beyond its benefit for the human person. The environment was valuable because it was God’s creation. Reading the biblical creation story from the first chapter of Genesis in this light, the proponents of the stewardship argument heard the declaration that God looked upon all that God had made and saw that it was good.<sup>21</sup> And because it was good, the human being as steward of God’s creation, ought to manage it well so as to preserve that which was good in God’s eyes. This argument from stewardship looked to be an improvement from the earlier iteration of conservationism, but it would still require quite an intellectual leap from this acknowledgement of human responsibility to care for God’s creation while still remaining within the framework of conservation ethics (that is, that it is still very much a utilitarian ethics) to the defense of the rights of the natural environment as having value in and of itself (as envisioned by Leopold) apart from its utility to the human person. Nevertheless, this set the stage for the extension of ethics to recognize the value and rights of animals.

### *1.2.2 Animal Rights*

It is interesting to note that, as it was with the conservationists, animal rights advocates and those who argued for the protection of animals began with anthropocentric arguments. The

---

<sup>20</sup> This is the same critique that Deep Ecologists have of traditional conservationists. See Nash, 149-150.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 25, 31.

early animal protectionists chose the argument that cruelty to animals was wrong not because they were concerned with animal suffering, or that the animals themselves had rights or intrinsic value but because cruelty to animals might have a negative effect upon the person perpetrating the violence. Being cruel to animals was a cause for concern because a person who committed cruel acts on animals might have a propensity for committing acts of cruelty on fellow human beings. The focus was still on the human person in that the argument against cruelty to animals centered not upon the effect of such cruelty on the animals themselves or upon the belief that it violated any rights that animals may possess, but upon the belief that it was wrong for human persons to be cruel.<sup>22</sup> This anthropocentric argument was challenged by animal rights philosophers, notably Peter Singer,<sup>23</sup> who began to argue for the moral equality of animals. With the publication of his book, *Animal Liberation*, in 1975, Singer sought to ground the justification of animal rights on some principle other than the older anthropocentric justifications. He searched for a common element shared by both human persons and animals, and found it in what he called *sentience*, that is, the ability to feel pleasure and pain. All animals, he argued, were sentient beings, and thus possessed some form of interests, namely, to experience pleasure and to avoid pain, just as an infant or a person with mental disabilities who may be argued to lack a degree of rationality had similar interests. He claimed that this was the only acceptable moral

---

<sup>22</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Singer, an Australian philosopher and activist, first published his ideas in an essay, "Animal Liberation," in the *New York Review of Books* and the *National Observer*. In his essay, he surmised that the movement for animal liberation would require "an expansion of our moral horizons [through which] practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable are now seen as intolerable" (Nash, 138).

norm, a denial of which would make a person guilty of *speciesism*, which Singer claimed was akin to racism or sexism, where the rights of a person or a group of persons are denied for arbitrary reasons.<sup>24</sup>

Singer writes:

If a being suffers there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being, the principle of equality requires that its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering—insofar as rough comparisons can be made—of any other being. If a being is not capable of suffering, or of experiencing enjoyment or happiness, there is nothing to be taken into account. So the limit of sentience (using the term as a convenient if not strictly accurate shorthand for the capacity to suffer and/or experience enjoyment) is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others. To mark this boundary by some other characteristic like intelligence or rationality would be to mark it in an arbitrary manner.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of speciesism, one was biased in favor of one's own species against that of another species. Singer argued that because animals possessed the capacity for suffering and the enjoyment of pleasure, there is no rational justification for discounting animal suffering. If we choose to ignore the suffering of animals, we will do so through an irrational bias. Arguing for the right of animals to ethical consideration, Singer was very much aware of the kind of intellectual and foundational changes that would be needed for the extension of moral principles to include animals. Animal liberation, he wrote, “will require greater altruism on the part of human beings than any other liberation movement” as the “animals themselves are incapable of demanding their own liberation, or of protesting against their condition with votes,

---

<sup>24</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement (40th Anniversary Edition)* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 38–39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 38.

demonstrations, or boycotts.”<sup>26</sup> Such altruism, as Singer expressed it, would be needed much more when environmentalists take the argument further to “liberate” more than just animals but all of the natural environment. This would include, in the words of Aldo Leopold, the “soil, waters, plants, animals.”<sup>27</sup>

Another animal rights advocate, Tom Regan,<sup>28</sup> took the argument further and tried to widen the foundation for animal protection with what he called the “rights view.”<sup>29</sup> Regan argued that animals had “an equal natural right to life” for the reason that animals were, like human persons, “capable of valuing their lives.”<sup>30</sup> He likened animals to oppressed groups of human persons, and applied the same arguments that championed the natural rights of persons. He reasoned that, like human persons, animals “can experience desires, feelings and other mental states” and are thus “subjects of a life.”<sup>31</sup> For this reason, they had intrinsic value, apart from their instrumental value to human pursuits and ends. Writing in 1979, Regan reasoned, “The truth we must emphasize is that just as blacks do not exist for whites, or women for men, so

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 356.

<sup>27</sup> Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 204.

<sup>28</sup> Tom Regan, a philosopher at North Carolina State University and a leading animal rights advocate, began to consider the problems of ethical extension at the same time as Peter Singer, in 1972, as an outgrowth of a study on non-violence and Mahatma Gandhi. He has written extensively on environmental philosophy and animal rights. One of his most influential works is the book, *The Case for Animal Rights* (first published in 1983). Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 143; Tom Regan, “The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic,” in *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, ed. Frederik A. Kaufman, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 87.

<sup>29</sup> Kathie Jenni, “Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005): 3; Tom Regan, “The Case for Animal Rights,” in *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, ed. Frederik A. Kaufman, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 156–163.

<sup>30</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 143.

<sup>31</sup> Jenni, “Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview,” 3.

animals do not exist for us. They have a life, and a value, of their own. A morality that fails to incorporate this truth is empty.”<sup>32</sup> The centerpiece of his argument for the liberation of animals from human domination was founded on the rich history of liberation and of the extension of rights, a history that had seen the emancipation of slaves and women. Regan’s arguments were appealing and groundbreaking in the effort to extend ethics beyond mere anthropocentric ethical considerations. However, like Singer, his arguments still fell short of an environmental ethics that would also grant to the rest of the natural environment equal ethical consideration. Singer’s argument of sentience and Regan’s argument of the capability of being “subjects of a life” meant that their principles were based on the possession of consciousness and sentience, which would exclude a whole range of elements in the ecosystem from ethical consideration, namely, plants and inanimate elements such as soil, and water. Thus, a mountainside and a river had no intrinsic value and neither did a redwood tree or a bamboo shoot. Singer did, however, try to expand his ethical grounding later by appealing to the notion of habitat, on which animals were dependent for survival. As such the destruction of the animal’s habitat would also bring about the death of the animal. In this way, Singer tried to extend his ethical boundaries beyond just animals.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 143.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

### 1.2.3 Biocentrism

The circle of ethical consideration widened further with the argument for biocentrism, that is, the extension of ethical consideration to include all living things, which was championed by Paul W. Taylor and Gary Varner.<sup>34</sup>

Paul Taylor's<sup>35</sup> philosophy "rested on the assumption of absolutely equal inherent value, and hence moral merit, of all forms of life, including humans."<sup>36</sup> By pointing to the inherent value of all forms of life, Taylor extended the circle of ethical consideration from humans and animals to include plants—from the mighty redwood to the tiny plankton. He argued that each living being had a "good of its own" in that it can either be "benefited or harmed."<sup>37</sup> In widening the circle of ethical consideration, Taylor also made a controversial claim that all forms of life, regardless of whether it was a human person, an animal, or a plant had "equal inherent value" thus leveling the playing field that for almost two thousand years had been understood in a hierarchical manner—the rational human person being at the top of the hierarchy, followed by sentient animals, plants and non-living things.<sup>38</sup> Following this idea, it would be just as morally reprehensible to kill a fly as it was to kill a human person. This was an important shift in ethical thinking and an expansion of ethical consideration for environmental ethics. However, it also left the work to biocentrists to provide rational grounds to defend their position. It is not hard to

---

<sup>34</sup> Jenni, "Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview," 4; Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 155–156.

<sup>35</sup> Paul W. Taylor was Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. As a biocentric philosopher, he denied the superiority of human persons over other living organisms, and argued against the use of rationality as a criterion for the justification of such purported superiority.

<sup>36</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 155.

<sup>37</sup> Jenni, "Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview," 4.

<sup>38</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 155.

imagine the difficulty of defending the claim that it is immoral to kill a fly or a mosquito. To address such difficulties, Taylor did, in fact, allow for what he called “adequate moral reason” in taking a life. There were extenuating circumstances in which taking a life was permissible, for instance “swatting a fly off food,” or “picking a plant to eat,” or even “killing a person in self-defense.” However, beyond such “extenuating circumstances,” Taylor held that it was essentially wrong to take any form of life. He justified the “necessary evil” of taking life by making a distinction between what he called “basic needs” and “non-basic needs” of all forms of life. For instance, there is a difference between picking fruit and vegetables for food and wantonly destroying a grove of fruit trees by recklessly driving a bulldozer through it. In the first instance, one “takes life” in response to the basic need of human persons for nutrition, which, according to Taylor’s ethical view, is a justifiable act of “necessary evil.” Human persons, like all forms of life, have a basic need for nutrition. In addition, human persons also have other basic needs such as the need to “create shelter, and . . . to realize their own special potential in activities as the arts, medicine and technology.” Taylor pointed out, however, that because we live amidst other life forms, each with basic needs of its own, respect for nature meant that we must “accord all beings a similar opportunity to fulfill their various potentials.” Consequently, to wantonly destroy a grove of apple trees would be to violate the plants’ basic need to life. He also placed the onus on the shoulders of human persons, as the only moral agents in the biosphere, to exercise restraint in our actions so as to limit our “environmental impact.”<sup>39</sup> And since, all life have “equal inherent value” the human person is ethically bound to practice such restraint in all

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



aspects of human activity—from the construction of infrastructure and dwellings to economic activity such as mining.

Taylor's ideas were not free from criticism. He was criticized for his idea of "equal inherent worth" of all living beings, in that it would open the door to numerous situations of conflict of interest between and among different life forms. If all living things are of equal inherent worth, how will we decide among equal conflict claims?<sup>40</sup> To his credit, Taylor was realistic enough to recognize the difficulty of such an initiative, noting that it would require "nothing less than a revolution in our ordinary ethical vision."<sup>41</sup>

Addressing this criticism of a conflict of interest between life forms, Gary Varner<sup>42</sup> advocated the ranking of interests to make biocentrism more practicable. Varner proposed the ranking of living organisms, in descending order, in terms of their possession of what he called "ground projects, noncategorical desires, and biological interests."<sup>43</sup> According to him, an interest is higher than another if the satisfaction of that first interest requires the satisfaction of the latter, but not vice versa.<sup>44</sup> How will we determine which organisms have interests? Varner

---

<sup>40</sup> Jenni, "Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview," 4–5.

<sup>41</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 156.

<sup>42</sup> Gary Varner is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, specializing in environmental ethics, animal welfare and animal rights philosophies, and philosophical issues in environmental law. He has published numerous articles on such topics as medical research, cloning, animal agriculture and human nutrition, and pet ownership, as well as philosophical issues associated with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the property takings debate. He is author of *In Nature's Interests? Interests, Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics*.

<sup>43</sup> Gary Varner, "Biocentric Individualism," in *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, ed. Frederik A Kaufman, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 235.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

argued that an “entity has interests if and only if the fulfillment of its needs and/or desires creates intrinsic value,” that is, that it has value “independently of its value to anything else.”<sup>45</sup> He further distinguished between “preference interests” and “biological interests,” the former being interests that an organism might prefer based on its “beliefs about the world” while the latter are interests that are related to its biological need.<sup>46</sup> All living organisms have biological interests whether or not they are capable of having preference interests, which are based upon one’s ability to be aware of such interests. Thus, all living organisms have intrinsic value. He calls this the “psycho-biological theory of individual welfare.”<sup>47</sup> For example, a human person and banana plant have the same biological interest of taking in nutrition. As such, both the human person and the banana plant have intrinsic value in that they are both living organisms that possess biological interests. However, a human being possesses interests beyond the merely biological. Therefore, a human person would have higher interests than plants and thus have priority in a situation of a conflict of interests. Varner further clarified his argument by drawing upon the notion of “ground projects” proposed by Bernard Williams. A “ground project,” according to Williams, is “a nexus of projects . . . which are closely related to [one’s] existence and which to a significant degree give a meaning to [one’s] life.”<sup>48</sup> A ground project required the satisfaction of other day-to-day desires, both “categorical desires,” namely those that address

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 231–232.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 233.

the question of whether a life is worth living, and “noncategorical desires,” which are those desires that do not necessarily address the question of one’s worth but are composed of such day-to-day desires such as the desire to eat.<sup>49</sup> Based on Williams’ distinctions, Varner argued that living organisms that possess ground projects have more value than those that do not since the satisfaction of a ground project requires the satisfaction of numerous noncategorical desires. For instance, a person whose ground project it is to become a successful athlete will need to first build his strength and conditioning through the daily intake of food and nutrition. Varner called this the “principle of the priority of ground projects,” which he expressed thus: “Generally speaking, the satisfaction of ground projects is more important than the satisfaction of noncategorical desires.”<sup>50</sup> He supplemented this principle with another: the “principle of the priority of desires,” which stated that “[in general], the death of an entity that has desires is a worse thing than the death of an entity that does not.”<sup>51</sup> In this way, Varner argued that “conscious organisms” have priority over plants since the former are capable of forming desires, whereas the latter are not.<sup>52</sup> This approach of Varner’s reintroduces a hierarchical valuation to biocentrism, which seems at odds with the basic premise of biocentric environmental ethics, that is, that living things are of equality value. Varner was aware of this but he believed that the distinctions would make biocentrism applicable in situations of conflict of interest. He, however,

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; Jenni, “Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview,” 5.

<sup>52</sup> Varner, “Biocentric Individualism,” 235.

insisted that his position was not “speciesist,” in that he did not base his arguments on the satisfaction of human desires over that of animals.<sup>53</sup> Rather, he pointed out, by employing the notion of ground projects as a distinguishing factor in the hierarchy of interests he was not arguing in favor of anthropocentrism since it was conceivable that other nonhuman animals could also possess ground projects.<sup>54</sup>

Another criticism that has been leveled against Taylor and biocentrists is that biocentrism, with its emphasis upon living beings, excludes a very important element of the natural environment, namely, the wider ecosystem. Detractors also claim that the biocentric environmental philosophers are “individualist” in that their ethical system gives moral standing to individual living organisms, without taking into account the ecosystem as a whole.<sup>55</sup> In other words, critics of biocentrists argue that the latter have the right idea in extending the boundaries of inherent value and moral standing, but their scope is still not broad enough. This takes our discussion on to the next group of philosophers: the ecocentrists. Ecocentrists attempt to come up with a holistic environmental ethics that addresses the limitation that bogged down the biocentrists by extending ethics to the entire ecosystem.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Jenni, “Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview,” 5.

#### *1.2.4 Ecocentrism*

To capture Aldo Leopold's environmental ethics in a phrase, I believe it would be apt to express it in this famous phrase of his: "thinking like a mountain." For Leopold, to "think like a mountain" meant to "transcend our anthropocentric and utilitarian bias" in order to develop an ethics that respected the land, and all that the land community included, namely, "soils, waters, plants, and animals."<sup>56</sup> In his essay, "Thinking Like A Mountain," Leopold described how the well-intentioned, but ultimately misdirected, human desire to protect the deer population in the Wisconsin wilderness led them to rid the mountainside of wolves, their natural predators. Rid of its natural predator, the deer population grew unchecked and, as a result, the deer overgrazed the mountainside. This led to a severe food shortage, which eventually led to the death of the deer from starvation. Ironically, the killing of their natural predators brought about the very opposite of the desired effect. This experience taught Leopold the lesson of the intricate balancing act of nature.<sup>57</sup> To "think like a mountain" involved thinking beyond narrow anthropocentric concerns such as economics, which Leopold saw as a major obstacle to the "land ethic" that he championed.<sup>58</sup> He questioned the comprehensiveness of an environmental ethics that was based solely on economic interests, since "most members of the land community [had] no economic value." Leopold's reflections were drawn from years of experience in the US Forestry Service. For instance, he noted that of the twenty-two thousand species of "higher plants and animals"

---

<sup>56</sup> Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 132, 204. Cited in Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 64.

<sup>57</sup> Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 132.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

native to Wisconsin, it was quite likely that not more than five percent would have any economic value whatsoever.<sup>59</sup> This would leave the almost ninety-five percent of the species out of such anthropocentric considerations. How would these species prosper under an economically driven environmental ethic? In the final chapter of his magnum opus, *A Sand County Almanac*, the chapter entitled, “The Land Ethic,”<sup>60</sup> Leopold argued for the extension of ethics to the land by characterizing ethics as a “process in ecological evolution.”<sup>61</sup> He wrote:

An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct. These are two definitions of one thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of co-operation. The ecologist calls this symbiosis.<sup>62</sup>

Leopold used this notion of evolution to illustrate what he thought was a process in the extension of ethical considerations from relations between human beings to those involving human beings and the natural environment. This extension of ethics, he pointed out, would occur in three stages. The first involved relations between individual human persons, while the second involved relations between individuals and society. The third, he noted would be the final extension of ethics to regulate the relations between human persons and the “land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it.”<sup>63</sup> Human persons had thus far, he noted, attained to the second level of ethical relations but he argued that the third level was both “an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity.”<sup>64</sup> By this he meant that, from the evolutionary nature of

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 201–226.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 202–203.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 203.

ethics in its expanding circle of ethical consideration, it was not impossible for us to extend ethics to the stage of holistic ethical relations. But what was also striking about this statement was his assertion that it was an “ecological necessity”—it is necessary for us to develop a “land ethic” in order to remain good members of the land community. Drawing from his understanding of the intricate relations in the ecosystem, Leopold juxtaposed ethics with instinct. Noting that ethics was premised upon the fact that each “individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts,” he pointed out that while one’s instincts prompted him to “compete for his place in that community, . . . his ethics prompts him also to co-operate.”<sup>65</sup> Extending this to the human person’s relation to the wider community that he called “land,” which included “soils, waters, plants, and animals,” Leopold argued that living according to a land ethic would change the role of the human person from “conqueror” to that of a “plain member and citizen.”<sup>66</sup> He wrote:

[A] land ethic changes the role of *Homo Sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.<sup>67</sup>

The role of conqueror, he pointed out, was self-defeating. He explained:

In human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating. Why? Because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows, *ex cathedra*, just what makes the community clock tick, and just what and who is valuable, and what and who is worthless, in community life. It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves . . . In the biotic community, a parallel situation exists.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 203–204. One can read the influence of Darwin’s theory of evolution in this statement of Leopold’s.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 204–205.

This parallel situation was shown in the human person's belief, mistakenly, that he knew exactly what made the natural environment's "clock tick," yet, history has proven us wrong time and again. Hence, the many instances of our attempts at conquering the environment leading to eventual defeat in the form of soil, air and water pollution. To this day, we continue to destroy the natural environment, and as we are a member of the community that is the natural environment, we destroy ourselves as well.

A second point that Leopold makes, which I had discussed in part above, is that the land ethic necessarily directs us away from a conservation ethic based on purely economic considerations. Expanding on that argument, he points out that even though possibly ninety-five percent of the flora and fauna in an ecosystem may have no economic value whatsoever, each of them is an essential part of that ecosystem. Each member of an ecosystem is an indispensable element in what he calls the "biotic pyramid," which is made up of the soil as the base, upon which other members of the pyramid—plants, insects, birds and rodents, and so on—depends.<sup>69</sup> Each layer in the food chain is dependent on the one below it such that a diminution in one layer would certainly have an effect on other layers—both higher and lower. Thus, he points out, it is imperative that we direct our focus away from purely anthropocentric interests to the interest of the land community so that our decisions and actions will benefit the ecosystem as a whole, which in turn benefits each member of that symbiotic community.

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 210, 214–215.



Another representative of ecocentrism is the Deep Ecology movement, which traces its beginnings to the thoughts of Norwegian philosophers, Peter Zappfe, Sigmund Kvaløy and Arne Næss. Deep Ecology has been a strong rallying voice for ecocentrism since its inception in the 1970s.<sup>70</sup> This ecology movement as described by two of its foremost practitioners, George Sessions and Bill Devall, “goes beyond a limited piecemeal shallow approach to environmental problems and attempts to articulate a comprehensive . . . philosophical worldview . . . [Its] basic insight . . . of biocentric equality is that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of . . . self-realization.”<sup>71</sup> Deep ecologists called for a new paradigm, “ecological egalitarianism,” to replace what they called the “dominant paradigm,” which was the anthropocentric, utilitarian understanding of the human relationship with the natural world. This “ecological egalitarianism” was an attitude of respect for “every form of life to function normally in the ecosystem, that is, ‘the right to live and blossom’.”<sup>72</sup> The deep ecologists “based this axiom on the ‘inherent’ . . . right of all beings to life, to freedom from excessive human interference, and to the opportunity to pursue their own

---

<sup>70</sup> Deep ecology traces its roots and development to Norway, since it was Norwegian philosophers who first articulated the outlines of such a holistic environmental philosophy. In 1941, Peter Zapffe outlined a non-anthropocentric theory of human-environment relations that he called “biosophy.” Another Norwegian, Sigmund Kvaloy coined the term “ecophilosophy” in an article in *North American Review*, published in 1974. But it remained for their compatriot, Arne Næss to develop it into a coherent philosophy of the environment. Næss first proposed deep ecology in 1972 (Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 146.). Arne Næss, *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Næss*, ed. Alan R. Drengson and Bill Devall (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2010); Alan R. Drengson and Yuichi Inoue, eds., *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995).

<sup>71</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 121.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 146–147; Arne Næss and David Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 29.

definite happiness.” Thus, all parts of the ecosystem had a right to be and to function as what it was.<sup>73</sup> The foregoing are expressed in the first two principles of the “Deep Ecology Platform,” which was drawn up by George Sessions and Arne Næss when they camped together at Death Valley, California in 1984. The first two principles read:

The flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth has intrinsic value. The value of non-human life forms is independent of the usefulness these may have for narrow human purposes.

Richness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth.<sup>74</sup>

Deep ecologists, unlike the animal liberationists, allowed for the killing of animals in the fulfillment of what they called “vital needs.” Næss admitted that it was inevitable to take life to sustain life but he used very strong language in his emphasis upon the protection of “nonhuman life.” The third principle was phrased in the form of an injunction against the destruction of the richness and diversity of life forms: “Humans *have no right* to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.”<sup>75</sup> Recognizing the importance of a multi-pronged response to environmental protection, the deep ecologists called for structural changes on the social, political, economic and ideological levels. The sixth principle called for a change of policy— involving “economic, technological, and ideological structures.”<sup>76</sup> The ideological change, which was stated in the seventh principle, is geared towards simpler living, aimed surely at

---

<sup>73</sup> Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, 147.

<sup>74</sup> Næss and Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, 29. The Deep Ecology Platform consists of eight principles.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

effecting a transformation of contemporary consumerist culture—a culture of wants and waste.

The seventh principle reads as follows:

The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of intrinsic value) rather than adhering to a high standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.<sup>77</sup>

Intrinsic value can be understood in relation to the “well-being and flourishing” of all life forms, as stated in the first principle. Yet this flourishing, in particular human flourishing, must be guarded against avarice. In this respect, it is significant that Sessions and Næss made a distinction between “big” and “great.” To say that something is big is to emphasize a horizontal expansion, meaning an expansion in scale but not necessarily in value. In contrast, to say that a thing is great is to emphasize its significance, magnitude and true importance in the ecosystem. Applying this distinction between big and great to modern-day life, we see it expressed in the conflict between a consumerist attitude of always wanting more and a more discerned approach of deciding how much consumption is healthy for the ecosystem. Thus, instead of desiring expansion, we should inculcate an attitude and disposition that enables us to recognize what is “great,” that is, what has significance, magnitude, and true importance. From such an attitude of recognition for what is “great,” one must act to bring about the necessary changes, which is enshrined in the eighth principle: “Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.”<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

### 1.2.5 Contributions of J. Baird Callicott to Environmental Ethics

A discussion of the growth of environmental ethics will be incomplete if I do not highlight the work of J. Baird Callicott.<sup>79</sup> Callicott's contribution to environmental ethics cannot be overstated. He taught the world's first environmental ethics course in 1971 and was instrumental in the setting up of the first environmental studies program in the United States, at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.<sup>80</sup> Callicott is one of the foremost interpreters of the environmental philosophy of Aldo Leopold. He has explicated and further developed Leopold's ideas in his books, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*, and *Beyond the Land Ethic*—the former published in 1989 and the latter ten years later.<sup>81</sup> Michael P. Nelson captures Callicott's philosophy succinctly thus:

Building upon the work of biologist Charles Darwin and philosophers David Hume and Adam Smith, Leopold and Callicott point out that one's sense of ethical inclusiveness corresponds with one's sense of a shared community. And, since evolution and ecology portray the "soils and waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" and human beings as part and parcel of a shared social community, Leopold and Callicott have argued

---

<sup>79</sup> J. Baird Callicott is University Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus and Regents Professor of Philosophy (retired) at the University of North Texas. Callicott is a pioneer in the field of environmental ethics, having taught the first course on environmental ethics in 1971 and has been instrumental in the development of the field for close to five decades. His research focuses on theoretical environmental ethics, comparative environmental ethics and philosophy, the philosophy of ecology and conservation policy, and biocomplexity in the environment, coupled natural and human systems. Callicott is the leading contemporary exponent of Aldo Leopold's land ethic and is currently exploring an Aldo Leopold Earth ethic in response to global climate change. His major works in environmental philosophy include: J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989); J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); J. Baird Callicott, *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999); J. Baird Callicott, *Thinking Like a Planet: The Land Ethic and the Earth Ethic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>80</sup> Michael P. Nelson, "J. Baird Callicott," in *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, ed. Joy A. Palmer (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 290–295.

<sup>81</sup> Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*; Callicott, *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*.

that the ethical duties that we admittedly owe to one another can be and ought to be prompted and extended to this land community as well.<sup>82</sup>

Callicott is considered an ecocentrist environmental philosopher, and is one the earliest theorists to highlight the environmental attitudes and ethics of traditional societies, such as those of the North American Indian societies. He wrote:

The implicit overall metaphysic of American Indian cultures locates human beings in a larger social, as well as physical environment. People belong not only to a human community, but to a community of all nature as well. Existence in this larger society, just as existence in a family and tribal context, places people in an environment in which reciprocal responsibilities and mutual obligations are taken for granted and assumed without question or reflection.<sup>83</sup>

He later developed this line of thinking into a commentary on the environmental attitudes and values expressed in a wide range of world cultures and religious traditions, and has made a lasting contribution to comparative environmental philosophy. In *Earth's Insights*, he explores wide-ranging views on the environment—from the historical roots of western European, to South Asian and East Asian, to Polynesian and American Indian, to South American, to African and Australian attitudes and perspectives on the environment.<sup>84</sup> He paved the way for a dialogue among philosophical traditions from different cultures, which an endeavor such as this requires.<sup>85</sup> The environmental crisis is a global phenomenon, which thereby necessitates a global response.

---

<sup>82</sup> Nelson, "J. Baird Callicott," 292.

<sup>83</sup> Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, 189–190.

<sup>84</sup> Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*.

<sup>85</sup> Among his contributions to comparative environmental philosophy are two books that bring Asian philosophies into the discourse: J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames, eds., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989); J. Baird Callicott and James McRae, eds., *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014).

In a 2001 essay, Callicott makes an argument for an “orchestral approach” to the pursuit of a multicultural environmental ethics where the many stakeholders might hold differing views on how best to tackle the problems of the environment.<sup>86</sup> Even more difficult is the task of coming to an agreement on a more fundamental level, that is, agreeing on the intellectual framework that should form the basis of discussion. The global environmental crisis is a one-and-many problem—there is basically one problem but there are many actors involved, and myriad levels of discourse that need to be brought into agreement, for instance the dominant discourse of “commerce,” “geopolitics,” and “science.”<sup>87</sup> His orchestral approach proposes that stakeholders can come to an agreement if they are able to find a unifying framework for dialogue, much like the different instruments in an orchestra are able to create a beautiful symphony when they each play their part, under the guidance of a conductor. The unifying framework that he proposes is the “land ethic.”<sup>88</sup> He also makes the case for a fruitful dialogue between modern science and indigenous traditions, noting that both science and traditional knowledge can be mutually validating and co-creating. In the case of the former, he cites as an example how modern scientific tests have validated centuries-old agroecological practices of Kayapó Indians of South America.<sup>89</sup> In the latter case, science can draw on the narratives of indigenous traditional cultures to provide the “images, similes, and metaphors” to make their discoveries more

---

<sup>86</sup> J. Baird Callicott, “Multicultural Environmental Ethics,” *Daedalus* 130, no. 4 (2001): 77–97.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–89.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 93–94.

accessible to the layperson. Scientific discourse can be “dry, bloodless, abstract and accessible only to initiates,” for instance an idea such as physicist David Bohm’s “‘implicate order’, a holistic interconnectedness of matter and energy.”<sup>90</sup> Such a concept can be made accessible through images such as the “Jeweled Net of Indra or the Yin-Yang mandala.”<sup>91</sup>

Environmental ethics has come very far since its inception in the 1960s. At present, the field of environmental ethics continues to engage the environmental crisis and environmental philosophers are continuing the discourse in search of a more complete environmental ethics, one that helps us address the task of caring for the environment in a more holistic and inclusive manner. As we have witnessed above, there are many approaches to the questions asked of environmental philosophers at a time when the excesses of the past—with many continuing in the present—have left us with mounting environmental problems. Each of the iterations of environmental ethics continues to expand the concentric circle of the relation between the human person and the natural environment and to offer arguments for the extension of ethics to the non-human elements in our world. Each of these approaches has brought us closer to the answers we seek. As an ongoing conversation, as conversations go, each interlocutor approaches the discussion from a particular context and perspective. Each—from the conservationist, to the proponent of animal rights, to the biocentrist and the ecocentrist—is concerned with solving a particular piece of the puzzle as it unfolds and unravels. Callicott’s proposal for an orchestral approach to multicultural environmental ethics is truly valuable and takes us another step further

---

<sup>90</sup> David Bohm’s writings on the implicate order can be found in his groundbreaking work: David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>91</sup> Callicott, “Multicultural Environmental Ethics,” 94–95.

in the right direction. Along the way, one major challenge that environmental philosophers have had to address is the division between the human person and the non-human world in which we find ourselves, a division that is premised on a dualistic worldview. There is a presupposition of the separation of subject from object, which limits our approach to the problem. In the spirit of the ongoing conversation of environmental ethics, I propose that we address this dualism by reflecting on our place in the world. I believe that the central cause of the dualism is that we have lost our sense of place in the world.

### ***1.3 Loss of Our Sense of Place***

Loss of our sense of place: what exactly does this mean? The answer to this question can be found in a re-examination of the roots of the environmental crisis. As we have seen in the earlier discussion, the exploitation of the non-human natural environment was pre-disposed by a sense of disconnectedness that we felt and believed between ourselves and the non-human world that we viewed as an object that could be harnessed to fulfill human needs and projects. Seen in another way, this disconnectedness is an experience of a loss of our rootedness in our natural world. At the heart of this loss of rootedness is a particular understanding of our place in the world. Place, as central experience of our rootedness and relationality, has been replaced with an experience and understanding of the world as space. This has been a shift from a qualitative lived experience of the world to a quantitative valuation of the world as acreage, reserve, or resource. I believe the issue that lies at the heart of the problem is a question of identity: it is a question of our relation to the world and who we are in that relation. Given this, in order to address the



problem of environmental degradation, I will need to first address this problem of loss of rootedness.

Adding to this loss of rootedness, and exacerbating it, is a particular discourse and mindset that has dominated our relation to the non-human natural world. Prasenjit Duara argues that this dominant discourse is the discourse of western modernity, which has led to the commodification of the natural environment. In his book, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*, Duara argues that the current problem of unsustainability that the world is facing can be traced to a hegemonic set of “logics” in the economic, political and cultural spheres dictated by western Enlightenment ideals. In his discussion, economics refers to the “exchange and control of resources,” politics involves the “management of violence and rule,” while culture was the “ordering of symbolization and meaning.”<sup>92</sup> He argues that what led to the commodification of the natural environment was a dominance of economics and politics over culture. In his analysis, this “Enlightenment modernity” treats “nature and the world as objects and resources,” thus leading to unsustainability. To address this problem, Duara proposes that we take on a broader and emergent view of modernity and thus understand it in terms of the “human logic of culture, reflexivity and ethics.”<sup>93</sup> He writes:

Within a social formation, the advent of modernity came with the promise of a more just and materially better future in the Enlightenment. But it was accompanied by a range of material and practical iniquities and the unrestrained exploitation of nature. The promise of Enlightenment modernity represented by its rhetoric of equality, justice and freedom still holds value for most of the world because the universality of these ideals has become

---

<sup>92</sup> Prasenjit Duara, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 93.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 91–118.

meaningful. Testimony to this is the manner in which the new nations have mobilized and leveraged the modern logics of politics, economics and culture to achieve those ideals. What this has done is to exacerbate the underside of Enlightenment modernity – chiefly the freedom to treat nature and the world as objects and resources for man – leading to its unsustainability.<sup>94</sup>

I can argue further that the hegemonic thinking Duara refers to—even though it has been the dominant view that has driven the unsustainable modernization process—does not represent the majority view of the way we relate to the natural world. Duara adds that “[we] are judged not only by growth rates but also by the habits and practices of the individual which contribute to the ideal of material progress. A paradigm of sustainable modernity is needed to forge once again an equilibrium among the logics to restore the balance between humans and the world.”<sup>95</sup>

As highlighted by Duara, one of the main problems that was brought about by this hegemonic thinking is the view of the world as quantifiable. Science—although it is not entirely to blame for the loss of our sense of place—allowed us to mathematize the world. With this mathematization of the world, we experienced a shift of perspective and relation with the world around us. The modern mindset allowed us to view the world as space rather than as place. We will see in the next chapter what this paradigm shift means and how it has contributed to our loss of rootedness and to a profound disconnectedness between us and the world around us. I believe that it is imperative for us to overcome this profound disconnectedness and to rediscover—and recover—our sense of place in the world. Ecocentric thinkers such as Leopold and Callicott have opened the way for us to tread this path. Leopold makes a vital argument for the recognition of

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

land community, an argument and a vision that Callicott has championed and developed, for instance in his groundbreaking work, *Earth Insights*.<sup>96</sup> This vision of Leopold's invites us to question the presuppositions of our views on the natural world and our place in relation to the "soils, waters, plants, and animals." I believe that the challenge of developing a holistic and enduring environmental ethics calls for a way of thinking that is more capacious.

We find this in Daoist philosophy. Daoist philosophy presents an understanding of the world not through the lens of dualism but, rather, sees the human person as intrinsically and inseparably part of the world.<sup>97</sup> I posit that the root cause of the environmental crisis is a loss of place. In the Daoist worldview, place is not just physical space; it is not simply quantifiable matter. Rather, place—as it relates to us—involves a sense of place. Sense of place, in turn, is "*ars contextualis*—the art of effectively contextualizing and coordinating the experience of the human being within the processes of nature in their effort to optimize the creative possibilities of the cosmos."<sup>98</sup> Thus, the Daoist views place and our place in the world as placemaking: it is a dialectic process in which the world is achieved by our constantly making our place. Our placemaking becomes effective when it is guided by and is directed towards 和 (*he*), which is often rendered in English as harmony. The harmony that placemaking brings about, however, is not a simple harmony of a fixed end where there is no conflict or where parties come to an

---

<sup>96</sup> Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*.

<sup>97</sup> We find this throughout the Daoist text, *Daodejing*, as well as the first chapter of the *Huainanzi* entitled *Yuan Dao*. Cf. Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 2003); D. C. Lau and Roger T. Ames, *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to Its Source* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998).

<sup>98</sup> Roger T. Ames, "The Great Commentary (Dazhuan 大傳) and Chinese Natural Cosmology," *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 2, no. 1 (2015): 5.

agreement about a particular matter. Rather, it is more akin to the harmony in music where different singers' voices are perfectly balanced. A more appropriate rendering of *he* (和) would be harmonious ongoing symbiosis, a relationship that tells us of the whence, whither and wherefore of placemaking. This is beautifully expressed in the forty-second chapter of *Daodejing*: “道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，中氣以為和。”<sup>99</sup>

This is rendered into English thus:

*Dao* brings forth one, one brings forth two, two brings forth three, three brings forth the myriad things that are continually becoming. The myriad things that are continually becoming carry *yin* on their backs and embrace *yang* in their arms, blending *qi* harmoniously.<sup>100</sup>

Daoist philosophy provides a robust foundation for re-discovering our sense of place, and with it, an enduring environmental ethics.

One of Callicott's central foci in his environmental philosophy, drawing inspiration from Leopold, is that environmental ethics must be practical, that it must lead to real action and actual change in the way we relate to the non-human environment around us. An environmental philosophy that does not allow us to live it is practically useless. Given this, one may question

---

<sup>99</sup> *Daodejing* 42. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 142.

<sup>100</sup> Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall render this passage: “Way-making (*dao*) gives rise to continuity, continuity gives rise to difference, difference gives rise to plurality, and plurality gives rise to the manifold of everything that is happening (*wanwu*). Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its arms and blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious (*he*).” Ibid., 142–143. Robert G. Henricks translates this: “The Way gave birth to the One; [t]he One gave birth to the Two; [t]he Two gave birth to the Three; and the Three gave birth to the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry Yin on their backs and wrap their arms around Yang. Through the blending of *ch'i* they arrive at a state of harmony.” Robert G. Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 11. D.C. Lau translates this: “The way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures. The myriad creatures carry on their backs the *yin* and embrace in their arms the *yang* and are the blending of the generative forces of the two.” D.C. Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001), 63.

the applicability of a Daoist view of the environment, seeing that this philosophical tradition is separated from us by time and space. Reflecting on this possible objection in the place where I was a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa offered a response in the shape of the Hawaiian traditional relation with the natural world. The Hawaiian sense of place offers us a glimpse of what a real application of placemaking looks like. For several millennia, prior to the arrival of westerners, the people of Hawai‘i developed a comprehensive and sustainable system of land use, namely the *ahupua‘a* system, through an in-depth understanding of their island home. Delving further into the Hawaiian view of the relationship between the human person and the world around them, I found that it strongly resonates with the Daoist view of this relationship. Both offer a rich understanding and vocabulary for a recovery and rediscovery of place. Further, both Daoist and Hawaiian philosophies, I will argue in this dissertation, pass the test of validity and co-creation that Callicott proposes in his view of multicultural environmental ethics. These are compelling reasons for choosing a dialogue of Daoist and Hawaiian philosophies of the environment in my search for a robust and enduring ethics of the environment. Bringing the two into dialogue will offer us a way forward in our exploration of how a robust sense of place is needed if we are to imagine and live an enduring ethics of the environment.

Chapter 25 of the *Daodejing* ends with the following: “人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。” This is be translated as: “Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the

heavens, the heavens emulate *dao*, *dao* emulates what is naturally so.”<sup>101</sup> This passage illustrates the relation between human beings and the earth (*di* 地), the heavens (*tian* 天) and the naturally so (*ziran* 自然) of *dao* (道). Just as human beings “emulate,” are directed by, or are guided by the earth, and the earth “emulates,” or models itself on, or is directed by, or guided by the heavens. The heavens emulate/model itself on, or is directed or guided by *dao*, and *dao* emulates/models itself on, or is directed or guided by that which is naturally so.<sup>102</sup> Here in *Daodejing* 25 and in other places in the *Daodejing*, we can draw out an argument for a Daoist environmental ethic, which can serve as a philosophical grounding for our project of re-examination, one that involves re-discovering and recovering an authentic sense of place. The ancestral Hawaiians lived with complete sustainability on a finite island ecosystem by developing an intimate understanding of their place in the world, and “fine tuning themselves” to their island environment living where about 300 years ago, a population of some 600,000 people managed to live with 100 percent self-sufficiency and only about fifteen percent human footprint on the islands, meaning that 85 percent of the islands’ native ecosystems remained untouched.

---

<sup>101</sup> Ames and Hall translate the text in this manner: “Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate way-making, and way-making emulates what is spontaneously so (*ziran*).” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115. Henricks translates it: “Man models himself on the Earth; The Earth models itself on Heaven; Heaven models itself on the Way; And the Way models itself on that which is so on its own.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 77. Lau renders the passage: “Man models himself on earth, Earth on heaven, Heaven on the way, And the way on that which is naturally so.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 39.

<sup>102</sup> The translations of 法 (*fa*) here draw from the work of Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall; Robert G. Henricks; and D.C. Lau on the *Daodejing*.

They managed this by understanding their closeness to the land.<sup>103</sup> This dissertation presents an argument for an enduring environmental ethics through a dialogue of Daoist and Hawaiian wisdom traditions. In this respect, Nainoa Thompson's reflections on the *Hōkūle'a* worldwide journey help us to understand that to move forward toward an environmentally responsible and responsive living in the world, it is imperative that we look back to re-discover and re-cover the "old knowledge" that "can be made new again"—that is, that "traditional ecological understanding holds the key to solving some of Earth's greatest problems."<sup>104</sup> Hence, this dialogue between Daoist and Hawaiian cultures and philosophies have the rich potential to help us rediscover and recover our relation with, and hence our place in, the natural world. Further, I believe that in his dialogue, we will find resonances with other cultures around the world that are similar to and share the understanding of identity that is represented by the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions.<sup>105</sup> By reflecting on place and identity, we will be able to draw on a Daoist environmental ethic of *weiziran* (為自然) and a Hawaiian environmental ethic of *aloha 'āina*, which have the potential to offer us important insights in our search for an emergent and

---

<sup>103</sup> Samuel M. Gon III, Stephanie L. Tom, and Ulalia Woodside, "'Āina Momona, Honua Au Loli—Productive Lands, Changing World: Using the Hawaiian Footprint to Inform Biocultural Restoration and Future Sustainability in Hawai'i," *Sustainability* 10, no. 10 (2018): 3420; Samuel M. Gon III, "Lessons from a Thousand Years of Island Sustainability," in *TEDxMaui* (Maui, 2014), accessed February 28, 2017, <http://tedxmaui.com/sam-ohu-gon-iii-phd-lessons-from-a-thousand-years-of-island-sustainability/>.

<sup>104</sup> Nainoa Thompson, "Traditional Knowledge for Today's Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress."

<sup>105</sup> Graham Parkes presents a similar argument in his essay, "Lao-Zhuang and Heidegger on Nature and Technology." He argues that the "modern Western scientific worldview" is a view that is "extremely parochial" and fails to take into consideration the myriad ways that "previous eras and other cultures" view and understand the human-nature relation. He names some of these cultures: "the Australian aboriginal, Polynesian, Japanese Buddhist, and Native American cultures," and includes what he calls "non-mainstream currents of thinking in the West" that are compatible with the formerly named cultures represented by the deep ecology movement. Graham Parkes, "Lao-Zhuang and Heidegger on Nature and Technology," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 39 (2012): 112–113.

enduring ethics of the environment. By turning to these two traditions, we can make “old knowledge new again” and draw on “traditional ecological understanding” to ground an enduring ethics of the environment.

#### ***1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study***

This dissertation will focus on the Daoist text, the *Daodejing*. Through a close reading of the text, I will reflect on place in this text and draw out a Daoist ethic of *weiziran* (為自然). To glean a Hawaiian philosophy of place, identity and environmental ethics, I will focus on the *Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant*<sup>106</sup>, while drawing from other Hawaiian sources such as *Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*<sup>107</sup>, and Hawaiian prayers and chants. I will delve into the chants and work to uncover the most closely-felt and closely-lived relationalities between the ancestral Hawaiians and their connection to the land, ocean, plants and animals and to one another. A useful source of information on Hawaiian culture and practices is the two-volume, *Nānā I Ke Kumu*<sup>108</sup>. I will bring the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions together in a dialogue with contemporary reflections on place in the works of Edward S. Casey,

---

<sup>106</sup> I referred to Rubellite Kawena Johnson’s translation and commentary as well as the Kalakaua text in Hawaiian, and the translations by Queen Liliuokalani (1897) and Martha Warren Beckwith (1951). Rubellite Kawena Johnson (trans.), *Kumulipo: The Hawaiian Hymn of Creation* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., Ltd., 1981); Queen of Hawaii Liliuokalani, *The Kumulipo: An Hawaiian Creation Myth* (Kentfield, CA: Pueo Press, 1997); Martha Warren Beckwith (trans.), *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1972).

<sup>107</sup> Translated with original Hawaiian texts by Mary Kawena Pukui. Mary Kawena Pukui (trans.), *Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983).

<sup>108</sup> A source book of Hawaiian cultural practices compiled by Mary Kawena Pukui, E.W. Haertig and Catherine A. Lee. Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig M.D., and Catherine A. Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I* (Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1972); Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig M.D., and Catherine A. Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume II* (Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1972).



Tim Cresswell, Yi-Fu Tuan and Katrina-Ann R. Kapā‘anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira. The aim of this dialogue will be to locate an enduring ethics of the environment.

### ***1.5 Methodology***

This dissertation will explore the meaning of place (an exploration of place as placemaking) and how a reinterpretation and rediscovery of place can help us recover our place in the world and our identity in relation with the natural environment. In the attempt to recover our identity, I will focus on *Daoist* philosophy and Hawaiian traditional wisdom to draw out what I argue to be the central themes of each philosophy’s contribution to an enduring ground for environmental ethics, namely, *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*. In the exploration of Daoist and Hawaiian thought, I will elucidate key terms that pertain to each tradition. From the literature and resources, I will draw out a cluster of key terms for each of the two traditions, which will serve as guide posts for an in-depth understanding of place and identity of human persons in each of these two traditions. These key terms in the Daoist tradition are: *dao* (道), *de* (德), *he* (和), *ziran* (自然), *yiduobufen* (一多不分), *wu* (無)—with the *wu* forms: *wuwei* (無為), *wuyu* (無欲), and *wuzhi* (無知)—and *weiziran* (為自然). The key terms in the Hawaiian tradition are: *‘āina*, *aloha*, *mālama*, *kia ‘i*, *‘imi loa*, *kuleana*, *kupuna*, *akua*, *aumākua*, *kinolau*, *ahupua ‘a*, and *pono*. At the end of the dissertation, I will argue for placemaking as the key to uncovering an enduring ethics of the environment.

## ***1.6 Dissertation Chapters***

### *1.6.1 Chapter 2: Place*

Chapter 2 will offer us a reflective examination of the meaning of place. The discussion takes into account the richness of our experience of place. Place is location, a physical space, coordinates on a map—relations to place more akin to space. But this is a simplification of the relation between space and place. Place also refers to action, as when we ask a guest to place his coat on the hanger. Yet, there is something more to place, particularly our experience of space that allows us to consider it a place. For example, we refer to the town or city of our childhood as the “place where I grew up,” or a favorite bookstore as “my happy place.” In this chapter, I will discuss the reflections of Yi-Fu Tuan, Tim Cresswell, Edward Relph, Susanne Langer, Doreen Massey, Allan Pred, Edward S. Casey and Martin Heidegger on space and place. This discussion will take an in-depth look at our loss of place, and in what ways we might rediscover and recover our place. In this rediscovery of place, we realize that place is inescapably and undeniably relational. The relationality of place is a core experience that can serve as the foundation for an enduring ethics of the environment. The relationality of place, our sense of place, will be further enriched and developed in the following chapters on the Daoist sense of place and the Hawaiian sense of place.

### *1.6.2 Chapter 3: Place in Daoist Thinking*

Chapter 3 explores sense of place from a Daoist perspective. The *Daodejing* offers a rich vocabulary and insight into a process cosmology, which is elucidated through key terms such as *dao* (道), *de* (德), *he* (和), *ziran* (自然), *yiduobufen* (一多不分), and *wu* (無). Through a vision

of the world as a harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和) of the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物), we gain an understanding into place as placemaking. In the world as placemaking, human beings are enjoined to live and act according to *wu* (無): to act without overdoing (*wuwei* 無為), to desire what is appropriate to the most efficacious outcome for the totality (*wuyu* 無欲), and to know while being faithful to what is known (*wuzhi* 無知). The Daoist sense of place and placemaking will lead us toward the Daoist ethics of the environment: *weiziran* (為自然), that is, an ethics of acting with (*wei* 為) and for the sake of (*wei* 為) the harmonious ongoing symbiosis that makes up the natural environment (*ziran* 自然).<sup>109</sup>

### 1.6.3 Chapter 4: Hawaiian Sense of Place

Chapter 4 explores the underpinnings of the ancient Hawaiian sustainable mode of living. The ancient Hawaiians, prior to western contact, lived in a finite island ecosystem and maintained a fully self-sufficient population of some 600,000 people with a human footprint of less than fifteen percent of the total land area of the Hawaiian Archipelago (*ka pae 'āina Hawai'i*). They lived sustainably through a deep and close knowledge of and relation to the land

---

<sup>109</sup> A word about 為自然 (*weiziran*): 為自然 is a creative term that reflects my appropriation of one of the central themes in Daoist texts, namely, 道法自然 (*dao fa ziran*). We find this term, for instance, in *Daodejing* 25. I owe the idea for this creative appropriation, 為自然 (*weiziran*), to the essay by David L. Hall, “On Seeking a Change of Environment,” in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 99–112. In this essay, Hall makes an argument for *ziran* (自然) as ethical imperative for Daoist philosophy. The word (為) here takes on both the meaning of “to act” and “for the sake of.” Thus, 為自然 is an ethical norm to act with (為) and for the sake of (為) *ziran* (自然)..

and oceans. This chapter will explore the Hawaiian sense of place by reflecting on the cosmogony found in the *Kumulipo*. This Hawaiian creation chant establishes the genealogy of the people as descendants of the gods (*akua*), the land (*‘āina*) and sea (*kai*). I will also discuss how the Hawaiian sense of place is tied to the concentricity-radiality of *‘āina*. The chapter will explore how narratives (*mo‘olelo*), genealogy (*mo‘okū‘auhau*), the gods (*akua*), family gods (*‘aumākua*) and manifestations of the gods in nature (*kinolau*) shape and depend the Hawaiian sense of place. At the end of the chapter, I will reflect on the meaning and significance of *aloha ‘āina*, the Hawaiian sense of place and ethics of the environment, and how it is expressed through care for the land (*mālama ‘āina*) and appropriateness (*pono*).

#### 1.6.4 Chapter 5: Ecological Ethics of *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha ‘Āina*

In the final chapter, I retrace our journey in this study: the root cause of the loss of our sense of place and the key insights from the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, which become the foundation for my proposal for a Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment, namely *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*. Further reflection on *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina* highlights several important points of resonance between the two, but also raises some questions about the differences between them as well as objections to them. After presenting my responses to these objections, I offer some final considerations about where our search for an enduring ethics of the environment leads us.

## CHAPTER 2: PLACE

*“A deep human need exists for associations with significant places. If we choose to ignore that need, and to allow the forces of placelessness to continue unchallenged, then the future can only hold an environment in which places simply do not matter. If, on the other hand, we choose to respond to that need and to transcend placelessness, then the potential exists for the development of an environment in which places are for [people], reflecting and enhancing the variety of human experience. Which of these two possibilities is most probable, or whether there are other possibilities, is far from certain. But one thing at least is clear—whether the world we live in has a placeless geography or a geography of significant places, the responsibility for it is ours alone.” –Edward Relph<sup>110</sup>*

### **2.1 Loss of Our Sense of Place**

In the previous chapter, I argued that the environmental crisis we are facing is tied to the loss of our sense of place in the world. The exploitation of the natural environment is pre-disposed by the sense of disconnectedness that we feel and believe between ourselves and the world. This disconnectedness has led us to see the world as no more than an object that we can harness to fulfill human needs and projects. Seen in another way, this disconnectedness is an experience of a loss of our rootedness in our natural world. At the heart of this loss of rootedness is a particular understanding of our place in the world. Place, as the central experience of our rootedness and relationality to the world around us, has been superseded by an experience and understanding of the world as space. This is a shift from a qualitative lived experience of the world to a quantitative valuation of the world as acreage, reserve, or resource. The shift from place to space is not a one-way relation through which our view of the world is changed. The shift has also affected the way we see ourselves in relation to the world. A reflection on place is inevitably a reflection on ourselves. The issue that lies at the heart of the problem is a question of

---

<sup>110</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 147.

identity: *who* we are in relation to *where* we are. Therefore, if we are to address the problem of environmental degradation, we will need to first address this problem of loss of rootedness—our loss of place. By addressing the problem of loss of place, we aim to rediscover and recover our place in the world as well as a sense of place. In this process of rediscovering our place, we will realize that place is inescapably and undeniably relational. Whereas space is viewed as universal and abstract, place is particular and concrete. The relationality of place—the dialectic manner in which place is affected by and creates an effect in us—is the core experience that will be for us the ground for an enduring ethics of the environment. Hence, before I get to the core of the argument for an ethics of the environment, I need to work out the meaning of place.

When we think of or inquire about place, our minds inevitably turn to a consideration of physical places. Asked to think about the natural environment, we may picture in our minds a rainforest, rivers, our hometown, a park in the city, a neighborhood, a farm, the beach, a watershed or some other physical place. More often than not, we think of a specific place instead of an *abstract* notion of *the environment*. In like manner, we think of environmental problems in terms of specific threats to concrete places. These concrete places may be places that we have some form of attachment to, such as, our favorite beach, or the city we live in, or the river we go trout fishing at. The concreteness of place for us is precisely what grounds our search for an enduring environmental ethics through our reflection on Daoist and Hawaiian philosophy. Daoist and Hawaiian philosophies see the human person as intrinsically and inseparably part of the world. The human person is a placemaker in a world that is achieved as “*ars contextualis*,” which is guided by and is directed towards a harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和). In this manner, the concreteness of place takes on a dynamic meaning, that is, place is placemaking—

place becomes real in the process of co-creation between the human person and the natural world. Thus, our sense of place necessitates an objective experience of nature, and, as such, an enduring ethics of the environment must be grounded on such a sense of place. We are able to have a sense of place because we are embodied beings—our bodies allow us to be physically in a place.

In this chapter, I will consider the views of contemporary thinkers on the notion of place. Over the past four decades, humanistic geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan, Edward Relph and Tim Cresswell have contributed significantly to a renewed understanding of place. Philosopher Edward S. Casey has also written extensively on the question of space and place. I am indebted to the humanistic geographers for their contribution to the contemporary discourse on the notion of place. They raised awareness of the priority given to space at the expense of place.

### *2.1.1 From Place to Space*

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the turn from place to space was born out of a complex of factors. Some commentators argue that the turn is traceable to a shift that took place in the modern period. Edward S. Casey presents a compelling case for a more expansive and historically fair view of the turn from place to space, pointing out that the fascination for space had been part of the intellectual tradition of the ancient Greek thinkers. The modern turn from place to space, for its part, follows on the pursuit of science for basic universal properties. The scientific mind has resolved that the genuinely real is what we can reduce to the simplest principles. Place, which is seen as limited by its particularity, is considered secondary to space, which is seen as universal. The loss of place can be traced in modern philosophy from Descartes

to Kant, and it has contributed to the “assimilat[ion] of place to space under the common heading of relative position or situation.”<sup>111</sup>

In the modern period, place becomes “dissolved” into space. Place is seen as something of “limited consideration.”<sup>112</sup> This evolution of thinking about place and space has been described as a transformation from “the closed world to the infinite universe.”<sup>113</sup> Already in the writings of Pierre Gassendi (1592-1633), we see place relegated to mere dimensions and measurability while space gained independence from place.<sup>114</sup> Gassendi differentiated the measurability of space from place by emphasizing that while place is bound by “corporeality”, space was not so bound. Casey points out that Gassendi makes this distinction when he contrasts the characteristics of “corporeality” and “spatiality.” Gassendi writes:

Two sorts of dimensions are to be distinguished, of which the first may be called corporeal and the second spatial. For example, the length, width, and depth of some water contained in a vase would be corporeal; but the length, width, and depth that we would conceive as existing between the walls of the vase if the water and every other body were excluded from it would be spatial.<sup>115</sup>

Casey argues that by positing that space involves incorporeal dimension, Gassendi was separating space from matter, and in so doing treats space as “having its own dimensionality and

---

<sup>111</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, ed. Edward S. Casey, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 361.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, Reprint. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958). Samuel Sambursky argues in S Sambursky, *The Physical World of Late Antiquity*, ed. S Sambursky (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962) that Neoplatonic philosophers Iamblichus and Philoponus had laid the foundations for the modern turn from place to space.

<sup>114</sup> Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 139–141.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 139.



homogeneity” as well as “its own infinity.”<sup>116</sup> The separation of space from place will continue throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, carried on through the works of influential thinkers such as Isaac Newton, Rene Descartes, John Locke, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz until it reaches its pinnacle in the writings of Immanuel Kant. Casey observes that with Kant, even space loses its connection to the concrete world. Place, he points out, is hardly mentioned in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, and space (and time) is no longer “situated in the physical world” but “is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us.”<sup>117</sup>

The modern shift from place to space leads to an abstraction from lived experience of our surroundings. However, this is not the case with the notion of place that the pre-modern or post-modern human person experienced and understood. Casey points out that, in our experience of being in the world, we are always already in place. In the following section, I will take a look at place from the viewpoint of human geography. I will consider the following notions of place, namely: (1) the relation of place and space, (2) place as embodied experience, (3) place experienced as breadth, and (4) place experienced as depth. I will also examine a number of critiques of these notions of place, in particular: (1) place as mobile, (2) place as unbounded, and (3) place as process. I present as a response to these critiques Edward Casey’s reflections on place, specifically his emphasis upon “implacement,” which is the dialectic relation of body and place.

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>117</sup> Casey (1998), 136; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A/26; B/42.

## 2.2 Relation of Place and Space

Place is a notion that has received much attention since the 1970s in the field of human geography. Humanistic geographers in the 1970s emphasized the importance of subjectivity and experience in their study of place, drawing on philosophies of phenomenology and existentialism. They took the notion of place from merely an emphasis on particular places (as opposed to space as universal concept) to an examination of place “as an idea, concept and way of being-in-the-world.”<sup>118</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph have developed this new approach to geography most thoroughly.<sup>119</sup> The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter from Relph’s influential book, *Place and Placelessness*, highlights the challenge and the consequences of place as a “deep human need.”<sup>120</sup> He was writing in the context of understanding the meaning of place for the study of geography, but we can apply the challenge that he presents in his quote to our question about our relationship to the natural environment.

### 2.2.1 The Difference Between Space and Place

Yi-Fu Tuan highlights the difference between space and place, and why experience is central to place in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*.<sup>121</sup> He illustrates our experience of space with an example from the life of the German philosopher and theologian,

---

<sup>118</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004), 20. Prominent among these humanistic geographers were Yi-Fu Tuan, Anne Buttimer, David Seamon and Edward Relph.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 147.

<sup>121</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

Paul Tillich. Tillich was born in a small town in eastern Germany and lived most of his life there. The town was “[s]urrounded by a wall and administered from a medieval town hall, [and] it gave the impression of a small, protected, and self-contained world.”<sup>122</sup> Continuing the anecdote, Tuan adds that, each year, Tillich got a respite from the small town when he joined his family on their annual trip to their holiday location by the Baltic Sea where he felt a “limitless horizon and unrestricted space of the seashore”.<sup>123</sup> Tuan reflects that this experience of “closedness” of the small town and limitlessness of the open sea in Tillich’s early life led him to choose a retirement home on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>124</sup> Tuan captures the difference in the experience of place and space thus: “Place is security, space is freedom: we are attached to the one and long for the other.”<sup>125</sup>

Thinking of space as freedom helps us explain the desire of scientists to make the shift from place to space. As science developed and grew, it sought a way to break out from the confines of particularized and limiting place to the unlimited and universal promise of space. We can appreciate the reason why scientists wanted to break from the limiting confines of the notion of place to seek out a greater freedom in the notion of space. The expansion of knowledge and of understanding, of thinking and truth called for a widening of our experience and understanding and, hence, a broader and more encompassing concept of something more than place was needed. As scientists sought to explain the workings of nature and to discover the laws of the

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 3–4.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 3.

universe by universal principles, it makes sense for them to turn away from place and towards space.

However, despite the divergence of space from place, Tuan notes that “[i]n experience the meaning [of one] often merges with that of [the other].” Space is understood in contrast with place as in the statement that “[s]pace’ is more abstract than ‘place’.” He continues: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.” Nevertheless, although space and place are experienced differently, they “require each other for definition”. Tuan writes: “From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.”<sup>126</sup> Tuan’s reflection on space here is more akin to place rather than the quantifiable space envisioned by science. However, our contemporary notions of space reveal that we have taken it to mean more of the abstracted and quantified idea of space.

Humanistic geographers like Tuan and Relph give place a central focus in response to the overarching influence of what Tim Cresswell calls the “spatial science, the quantification revolution, and logical positivism.”<sup>127</sup> The latter tends to view the world and human beings as objects of study, emphasizing the subject-object dichotomy that modern scientific thinking relies on. The movement toward scientific generalization and the “objectification” of the world actually extends an idea of space as universal and limitless that had been thought since the time

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>127</sup> Tim Cresswell, “Place,” *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Elsevier, 2009), 171.

of Plato. Noting the emphasis on space, anthropologist Arturo Escobar writes: “Since Plato, Western philosophy—often times with the help of theology and physics—has enshrined space as the absolute, unlimited and universal, while banning place to the realm of the particular, the limited, the local and the bound.”<sup>128</sup> The privileging of space over place is understandable given the scientific goal of universality and objectivity. However, the trouble with this view is that it obscures the importance of our connection to the natural world. It creates a dichotomous thinking, which posits a separation between the human being and the world. Thus, the humanistic geographers’ notion of place is crucial to our reflection on rootedness. Cresswell writes: “It is this notion of experience that lies at the heart of the humanistic approach to place... While the spatial scientists wanted to understand the world and treated people as part of that world (just like rocks, or cars, or ice but with the magic ingredient of rationality added), humanistic geographers focused on the relationship ‘between’ people and the world through the realm of ‘experience’.”<sup>129</sup>

### *2.2.2 Phenomenology and Place: Sense of Place*

Humanistic geographers turned to phenomenology to help them find the language to ground their emphasis on the experience of place. One central element of phenomenology is that of intentionality, which emphasizes that our consciousness is always directed at something other than consciousness itself. Tuan writes in *Space and Place* that experience “is directed to the

---

<sup>128</sup> Arturo Escobar, “Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization,” *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (2001): 139–174.

<sup>129</sup> Cresswell, “Place,” 172.

external world.” Drawing from the philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s discussion of intentionality, Tuan points out that both seeing and feeling, the use of the senses and one’s emotions, reach out beyond the self. Feeling, he says, “designates qualities felt *on* things, *on* persons, and *on* the world.”<sup>130</sup> Our emotions are directed at those people or things beyond ourselves that we are experiencing.

This is an important point to note in our discussion of sense of place because our being in place is essentially an experience of being connected to the world.<sup>131</sup> Tuan also notes that there is another aspect of our experience of place—that it is also, at the same time, inward directed. He says that feeling also “reveals and manifests” the manner in which we are “inwardly affected” by our experiences of the world and of other people.<sup>132</sup> Both our emotions and our five senses work in concert to provide for us what we encounter as an “intricately ordered and emotion-charged world” that we live in and interact with daily.<sup>133</sup> This is what gives us a sense of place, which Tim Cresswell refers to as the “meanings associated with a place—the feelings and emotions a place evokes.”<sup>134</sup>

Sense of place along with two other elements, namely, location and locale, combine to make a site into a meaningful place for us. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift tell us that location refers to the “where” of place. Locale, on the other hand, refers to the “material settings for

---

<sup>130</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 9.

<sup>131</sup> In terms of the ethics of the environment, this is a connection to the natural world.

<sup>132</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 9.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>134</sup> Cresswell, “Place,” 169.

social relations.”<sup>135</sup> Location refers to what we normally associate with places we see on a map, a particular point that is denoted by a “specific set of coordinates and measurable distances from other locations.” For instance, Honolulu is located by the following coordinates: 21.3069° N, 157.8583° W, and is located approximately 7,990 kilometers or 4.965 miles from New York City (40.7128° N, 74.0060° W) and approximately 8,167 kilometers or 5,075 miles from Beijing, China (39.9042° N, 116.4074° E).

Locale takes into account particular buildings or streets and other material structures that make up the “visible and tangible aspects” of a particular place. When I think of Honolulu as a locale, I might think of Waikiki Beach, in particular, the stretch of beach close to the Duke Kahanamoku statue.<sup>136</sup> As I stand on the beach with my back to the ocean, I see the statue in front of me. To my left, I see the Honolulu Police Department Waikiki Substation about 200 feet away, and to my right is the Kuhio Beach Hula Mound, where regular hula performances are held for tourists. On a regular day, I can expect to see tourists and locals strolling about, sunbathing, swimming or surfing. Thinking of Honolulu as location provides me with information on where it is, but thinking of Honolulu as locale puts me in a concrete place like Waikiki Beach and endows it with meaning. The meanings that we draw from our sense of place can be both individual and shared with others. Shared experiences and meanings are possible because of our embodiment.

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> The Duke Kahanamoku statue was erected in 1990 to honor Duke Paoa Kahinu Mokoe Hulikohola Kahanamoku, the man known as the “father of modern surfing” for his role in increasing interest in the sport.

## ***2.3 Place as Embodied Experience***

Human beings are embodied subjects. Our bodies give us access to the world in a particular manner. Our stance—arising from the way our bodies are structured—affects and influences the way we encounter the world. Front and back, above and below, left and right, forward and backwards, upright and prone. The senses allow us to enter into and become immersed in the world of things around us. They make it possible for us to feel warmth or cold, expanse or narrowness. That experience of space and objects takes on meaning when we begin to associate it with something more than just a physical experience of the world.

### ***2.3.1 Place is Space Endowed with Meaning***

A warm ray of sunlight as I stand on my front porch watching the sun rise on the horizon is more than just an experience of the senses of sight and touch. If that porch is the porch of the house where I grew up, and I am visiting my grandparents over the Christmas vacation, then feeling that sunlight carries a meaning of home, love and family. I may feel safe and at ease and relaxed. I may recall my childhood days in that house, and sitting on the porch listening to my grandfather tell me stories of his childhood, about the war and about how he built this home with his own hands. Space, that location and the locale of my grandfather's house, becomes place for me when it is suffused with meaning from my childhood and from the feeling of love that it evokes of my being with family over the holidays.



Yi-Fu Tuan writes: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”<sup>137</sup> A particular space becomes place for us when we become familiar with it, and familiarity develops the more we spend time in a particular location and locale. Here Tuan’s insight that we encountered earlier on the relation of space and place comes to mind: “place is pause.”<sup>138</sup> When we are able to *pause* in a locale, we develop ties to and a connection with it. It slowly ceases to be merely a location as we develop a relationship with it. Consider this. In the course of our lives, we develop relationships with numerous places: different cities or towns where we have lived and traveled to, communities where we have friends, a university or college where we studied and made good friends, our places of work and recreation. Each place has a special and unique character for us in our memories and the way that we are connected to it. Our connection to a particular place that we have been to involves all of our senses—we can recall and relive the sights, sounds and even smells of that place.

Take another experience that is quite basic to us, and which, as a consequence, we often take for granted: our experience of the weather, of temperature—hot or cold. We do not experience the weather in the abstract. On the contrary, we experience the weather—and temperature, in particular—in a very real embodied manner. For instance, someone who moves from a country that uses the metric system for measuring temperature to one that uses the imperial system will initially encounter some degree of confusion when she listens to the weather report on the television. Hearing a forecast for a low of 55 degrees Fahrenheit in Honolulu

---

<sup>137</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 6.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

carries no meaning for a person who grew up with the embodied experience of cool weather and then learning that a particular sensation of coolness was measured as 13 degrees Celsius. We do not have an embodied experience of standard measures of temperature. We experience hot and cold weather conditions. And when we want to benchmark one experience of cold with another, we look to the temperature gauge for a comparison. This is a simple yet real insight into the centrality of place in our relation to the world and its importance in the developing of an ecological consciousness and ethic.

A third example is that of navigation, more specifically, the traditional skill and art of navigation without the use of modern navigational equipment known as “wayfinding.” Nainoa Thompson, modern-day master of the traditional Polynesian art of non-instrument navigating, tells us that wayfinding requires one to develop an attentiveness to the elements in one’s immediate and more distant surroundings—the ocean, the sun, birds on the horizon, the waves. This is an insight into the importance of place, and of placemaking in relation to our surroundings. Observation is combined with memorization—the navigator, or wayfinder, must memorize the “star compass.”<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> Nainoa Thompson, “On Wayfinding,” *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*, accessed August 1, 2016, [http://archive.hokulea.com/ike/hookele/on\\_wayfinding.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/ike/hookele/on_wayfinding.html). Thompson explains: “The star compass is the basic mental construct for navigation. We have Hawaiian names for the houses of the stars – the place where they come out of the ocean and go back into the ocean. If you can identify the stars as they rise and set, and if you have memorized where they rise and set, you can find your direction....The star compass is a mental construct and not physical like a western compass. The visual horizon is divided into 32 houses, a house being a bearing on the horizon where a celestial body resides. Each of the 32 houses is separated by 11.25° of arc for a complete circle of 360°.” Nainoa Thompson, “The Star Compass - Hōkūle‘a,” accessed May 26, 2018, <http://www.hokulea.com/education-at-sea/polynesian-navigation/the-star-compass/>.

The navigator learns to determine his position by a process of memorization and observation. Thompson writes: “You cannot look up at the stars and tell where you are. You only know where you are in this kind of navigation by memorizing where you sailed from. That means constant observation. You have to constantly remember your speed, your direction and time. You don’t have a speedometer. You don’t have a compass. You don’t have a watch. It all has to be done in your head. It is easy-in principle-but it’s hard to do.”<sup>140</sup> He adds: “The majority of navigation is observation and adjusting to the natural environment. The rougher the weather, the more the navigator needs to be awake and the less he can leave the crew on their own... Initially, I depended on geometry and analytic mathematics to help me in my quest to navigate the ancient way. However, as my ocean time and my time with Mau<sup>141</sup> have grown, I have internalized this knowledge. I rely less on mathematics and come closer and closer to navigating the way the ancients did.”<sup>142</sup>

Thompson’s description of the centrality of embodied experience to wayfinding highlights the inseparability of the human person from his surroundings. Yi-Fu Tuan’s reflections on place validate Thompson’s insight. Tuan writes in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*: “An object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind.”<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> Thompson, “On Wayfinding.”

<sup>141</sup> Pius “Mau” Piailug was a master navigator from Satawal, Yap State, Micronesia. Mau navigated the *Hōkūle‘a*, the traditional Hawaiian canoe that made the historic voyage from Hawai‘i to Tahiti in 1976. He taught Nainoa Thompson the traditional art of wayfinding between 1978 and 1980. Polynesian Voyaging Society, “Nainoa Thompson,” *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*, accessed August 1, 2016, [http://archive.hokulea.com/index/founder\\_and\\_teachers/nainoa\\_thompson.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/index/founder_and_teachers/nainoa_thompson.html).

<sup>142</sup> Thompson, “On Wayfinding.”

<sup>143</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 18.

### *2.3.2 Sense of Place Is Developed Over Time*

Our experience of living in a particular place for a long time versus visiting it as a tourist affords us very different experiences of that place and thus it becomes real for us in very different ways. “Long residence enables us to know a place intimately, yet its image may lack sharpness unless we can also see it from outside and reflect upon the experience. Another place may lack the weight of reality because we know it only from the outside—through the eyes as tourists, and from reading about it in a guidebook.”<sup>144</sup> We need both the closeness and reflective distance to bring an experience into clearer and sharper focus.

It appears from Tuan’s point above that unless we live in a particular place for an extended time, we cannot develop a familiarity with it or deep sense of place. This will make it very difficult for us to develop or have a sense of place for a location that is remote from where we are. We do not feel any pressure or need to protest a pipeline that is being laid in North Dakota, or a telescope that is being built atop Mauna Kea on Hawai‘i Island while we are comfortable in Copenhagen or Tokyo. And even if we do visit Hawai‘i as a tourist and do, in fact, visit Mauna Kea we might still not be affected by the passionate protests of native Hawaiians against the erecting of a research telescope on the mountain that they hold sacred. Similarly, we may not be concerned about the impacts of the Dakota Access Pipeline. How can we feel a sense of place for some location that we have no real connection to? On the surface, it appears to be very difficult and perhaps even impossible.

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

### *2.3.3 Can We Develop a Sense of Place Without “Long Residence”?*

So, how can we engender or develop a genuine concern for and an enduring ethics of the environment without being in those places and without a direct experience of them?

Perhaps we can find an answer to this question by taking another look at Tuan’s earlier point: “Long residence enables us to know a place intimately, yet its image may lack sharpness unless we can also see it from outside and reflect upon the experience. Another place may lack the weight of reality because we know it only from the outside—through the eyes as tourists, and from reading about it in a guidebook.”<sup>145</sup> Thinking on Tuan’s quote above, we can see that alongside “long residence” we also need to “see [a place] from outside.” What does this tell us about the importance of place as embodied subjects? We are meaning givers, and meaning involves the application of thought and reflection on our experiences. There is an element of stepping back from an experience in order for us to make sense of it, to come to understand it in relation to our lives as a whole. There is here an experience of place, and of placemaking, in relation to time. This leads us to another characteristic of place, that is, of the experience of place as breadth.

### *2.4 Place Experienced as Breadth*

Most people think of place in terms of a city, a region, or one’s home or homestead. However, we have seen that place can also extend beyond one’s locality. In fact, we can extend our understanding of place by taking on a different perspective, a new vantage point—be it

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

physical or intellectual. While we are standing on a particular spot in the middle of a field in our neighborhood, place for us may be as far as our eyes can see all the way to the horizons on all sides. Yet, if we were to view the Earth from outer space, the entire planet can be seen as a place. Arguing this very point, Tim Cresswell notes that astronauts “often commented on how the earth looks like home when it is seen from afar.”<sup>146</sup> The images of the earth taken from outer space evoke a sense of place in which we identify a belonging to and care for the earth as a whole. All of this—the entire planet—is our home, as well as the specific house and lot, and neighborhood and so on. Thinking of and experiencing the natural environment in this manner evokes a feeling and understanding of connectedness—a feeling of both the whole and parts as meaningful. Each has meaning in relation to the other. The whole gives meaning to and puts into a wider perspective the parts; the particular makes the whole concrete and real.

Our sense of place can broaden and contract, it can extend outwards or retract inwards. Thus, it is not just physical proximity that gives us a sense of place. Ironically, seeing a location or locale from afar can suffuse a similar sense of place within us. But how is this possible? What enables us to do this? Sometimes we need to see the bigger picture to find meaningful connections of our experience of the world. “Things fall into place” is a phrase commonly used to express one’s experience of how we make sense of something, or of how a situation is reaching some resolution or conclusion, or how a previously confusing or confounding reality is becoming clearer. Sometimes we need to stand back and see the whole or bigger picture in order for elements in it to come into better relief and so that we might understand the connections and

---

<sup>146</sup> Cresswell, “Place,” 170.

relations between and among those parts, and then we gain a better appreciation for the situation. Perhaps this is what allows us to develop a care for the environment that transcends our own locality. However, this does not preclude or negate the very real embodied experience of the world—in this case, the natural world—that is the foundation of our sense of place. This very real experience of the world lends depth to our being in the world.

### ***2.5 Place Experienced as Depth***

Edward Relph characterizes this as the depth of our experience of place. Our sense of place take on greater meaning when we experience place not just as spectators or transient visitors but as persons who dwell, and who call each place that we experience as home. Drawing on Martin Heidegger's philosophical notion of authenticity, Relph argues that sense of place is indispensable for living an authentic existence. An authentic attitude to place, Relph says, is marked by "a complete awareness and acceptance of responsibility for your own existence."<sup>147</sup> In contrast, inauthenticity, its opposite attitude, is "essentially no sense of place, for it involves no awareness of the deep and symbolic significances of places and no appreciation of their identities."<sup>148</sup>

To better understand Relph's point, it is helpful to consider the consequences of the opposite of place and authenticity, that is, that of placelessness, the result of inauthenticity. Placelessness manifests itself as a superficial relation, in which we feel a loss of attachment to

---

<sup>147</sup> Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 44.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

places. It is impossible for us to “make significant attachments if we move about too much, never stopping to linger and create roots.” He blames the increase of placelessness on the forces of “disneyfication, museumization, and futurization.”<sup>149</sup> We face a very real danger of living life as a caricature. The world is represented to us and mediated by virtual reality. Place becomes virtual space in an increasing manner in our contemporary lives. Take for example, a person living on the 30<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment building in a modern, urban nation such as Singapore. He hardly has the need to leave the comfort of his apartment and rarely sets out to encounter nature. He does not need to. This person will still have a sense of place. He will still have an experience of the sun, the wind, the sky and the world outside his window. However, this may not be as close a connection as being in the ocean, on the beach, or hiking up a mountainside. But he will most likely still have a sense of the beauty of the world (an aesthetic sense of place), which can be a key starting point for the development of a richer sense of place. Still, his sense of place might be greatly limited and narrow.

Authentic sense of place, on the other hand, is akin to being at home in the world where home or homeplace is associated with feeling “safe, secure, and loved.”<sup>150</sup> Humanistic geographers often use the home to symbolize “universal attachment.”<sup>151</sup> We can understand their point at a very intimate level when we think of our own feeling of being at home, whether it is in our family home, spending an evening at a favorite restaurant with good friends, or enjoying the team work with colleagues in a positive working environment.

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Cresswell, “Place,” 173.



## 2.6 Critiques of Place

### 2.6.1 Place as Mobile

In considering the experience of place as depth, especially in the light of Tuan's assertion that "place is pause," we might raise the question of whether such an experience necessitates the experience of place as fixed—of place as a fixed locale. Do we only feel a sense of place in relation to a specific locale or location? Or is it possible for us to have an authentic sense of place if that place is a mobile location. Given the fast-paced and fluid nature of our contemporary lifestyles, this is an important enough question to ask. Philosopher Susanne Langer argues for the possibility of "mobile place." She offers the example of a ship which by its very function is mobile, yet it is nonetheless a "self-contained place." She adds: "[S]o is a gypsy camp, an Indian camp, or a circus camp, however often it shifts its geodetic bearings. Literally we say that a camp is *in* a place, but culturally it *is* a place. A gypsy camp is a different place from an Indian camp though it may be geographically where the Indian camp used to be."<sup>152</sup>

### 2.6.2 Place as Unbounded

Another question that is related to fixedness of place is that of the "boundedness of place."<sup>153</sup> Doreen Massey, British social scientist and geographer, has argued that one of the prevailing contemporary reactions to mobility and change tends to be an "introverted, inward-

---

<sup>152</sup> Susanne K Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Scribner, 1953), 95. Italics in original.

<sup>153</sup> Cresswell, "Place," 176.

looking” construction of sense of place that inevitably sets up boundaries on the meaning of place. These boundaries tend to limit the meaning of place and to exclude those persons who do not share this meaning, and who are subsequently viewed as outsiders.<sup>154</sup> The trouble with this view of place as bounded, rooted or fixed is that those who are mobile and who are not directly related to that particular place are viewed as being out of place, as well as a threat to the stability of that particular place. A direct consequence of being an “outsider” is that we do not share a sense of place with people of the locale—which may occur either through being excluded by the professed locals, but which may also occur through a self-exclusion by the perceived outsider.

Massey disagrees with this notion of place that excludes. In response to what she sees as an attempt to “fix the meaning of places, to enclose and defend them” she argues that place can be reimagined as “formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence...of particular sets of social interactions.”<sup>155</sup> She adds that the identities of places are “inevitably unfixed.”<sup>156</sup> This is so because the interactions from which place draws its identity are themselves “dynamic and changing.”<sup>157</sup> Tim Cresswell describes Massey’s view of place as: “not clearly bounded, rooted in place, or connected to single homogenous identities but produced through connections to the

---

<sup>154</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 152.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 168–169.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

rest of the world and therefore are more about routes than roots. They are sites of heterogeneous, not homogeneous, identities.”<sup>158</sup> Massey calls this a “global sense of place.”<sup>159</sup>

Does Massey’s view offer us a more dynamic understanding of place—one that might more accurately characterize our contemporary experience of the places where we live, and work, and relate to fellow human beings and to the world? In her view, the social interactions that constitute the identities of a place are open to “positive interrelations with elsewhere.”<sup>160</sup> Her view challenges us to transcend the insistence on the local and nostalgic clinging to an idea of place that is bounded, and, thus, to open ourselves to the possibility that an authentic sense of place is one that “can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond.”<sup>161</sup>

### 2.6.3 *Place as Process*

Allan Pred adds a further challenge to the notion of sense of place by arguing that places are actually created in an ongoing process through human agency rather than as “frozen scenes for human activity.”<sup>162</sup> He proposes that place is “what takes place ceaselessly, what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of a physical setting.”<sup>163</sup> Following Pred’s thesis, we can surmise that a town square is not a completed human-made structure that stands in the middle of town. Instead, a town square is precisely a town square by

---

<sup>158</sup> Cresswell, “Place,” 176.

<sup>159</sup> Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, 146–156.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>162</sup> Allan Pred, “Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Places,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, no. 2 (1984): 279–297.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

virtue of its being used for the reason of gathering members of the community. Its meaning as town square is contingent upon the townsfolk's continued use of it as a gathering point for community events and activities, such as a weekend market, community festivals, and other activities that bring the people together. If the townsfolk stopped using that particular area for those, and similar, purposes that town square would cease to be a town square but just an empty space in the middle of town. Pred's main point is the interaction between "structure" and "agency." A place, in this way, is always what is brought about through an unceasing interaction between people and their world, whether it is the built world or the natural world. This view of Pred's offers place a dynamism beyond being a mere location. It becomes more of a locale imbued with a sense of place that the locals constantly reinforce by their participation in activities in that particular physical place.

## ***2.7 Implication: Dialectic of Body and Place***

We see from the foregoing that the humanistic geographers' reflections on place offer us a renewed appreciation and understanding of place. Tuan calls attention to the question of place in relation to space in the field of human geography, which puts the standing of place back into the foreground. Other humanistic geographers' proposals put the notion of place in clearer relief, pointing out the importance of sense of place, embodied experience of place and calling for closer examination of the scope, breadth and depth of place as well as the openness and dynamism of place as process, event and practice.

While recognizing their influence and contributions to the discourse on place and the relation between the human person and place, we still need to locate a clearer argument for the

inseparability of place and the human person. To examine the inseparability of the human person and place, I turn to Edward Casey.

### 2.7.1 *Philosophical Argument for the Inseparability of Place and the Human Person*

Casey sets up his argument by highlighting the rise of space over place—an evolution of thinking on these two notions from Plato to contemporary thinkers like Gaston Bachelard, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. The rise of space reaches its zenith with the modern scientific attitude, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Casey outlines an informative and insightful historical overview of the status of space and place in his influential book, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*.<sup>164</sup>

He responds to the challenge posed by the absolutism and totalization of space (and time) in the modern era by tracing out the genealogy of this scientistic attitude.<sup>165</sup> In doing so, he shows us how our conceptions of space and place have taken us successively further and further

---

<sup>164</sup> Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. He presents a succinct discussion of the milestones for this itinerary in two essays from Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*., namely, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time,” and “Smooth Spaces and Rough-Edged Places: The Hidden History of Place.”

<sup>165</sup> The scientistic attitude or view refers to scientism, a view that “the only rationality is scientific rationality.” The *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* describes scientism in this manner: “When science is credited as the one and only way we have to describe reality, or to state truth, such restrictive epistemology might graduate into scientism. According to this view, the only rationality is scientific rationality. Poetry, literature, music, fine art, religion, or ethics could not be considered sources of knowledge, according to this view, because they are not generated by scientific methods. Such fealty to the deliverances of science, especially at the expense of other ways of knowing, can become ideological, and scientism is the preferred description of such a view. While enthusiasm for science has been a part of its ethos since the Enlightenment, scientism goes beyond enthusiasm in its insistence that whatever falls outside the scope of science is not knowledge.” Eric C. Martin, “Science and Ideology,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (ISSN 2161-0002, n.d.), accessed March 18, 2019, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/sci-ideo/#H6>.

away from the experience of being-in-place, what Casey calls “implacement.”<sup>166</sup> He notes that Aristotle’s defining place (*topos*) as having the function of locating and surrounding a thing in space is a precursor to the later understanding of place as a point of location for things in the world.<sup>167</sup> Already in the writings of Aristotle, we see that place has been delimited to the function of locating things in the world. Place, according to Aristotle, is “where a thing is.”<sup>168</sup> A place is where a thing is in terms of its location in a specific point in the world, and it also presents the boundaries for that thing.<sup>169</sup>

Modern thinkers—represented by Rene Descartes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant in Casey’s discussion—will take this idea further to the point of conceiving of a subject who is displaced.<sup>170</sup> The displacement of the human being in Modernity is best exemplified in the thinking of Kant. Casey asserts that the “very term ‘place’ drops out of [Kant’s] discourse regarding the subject.”<sup>171</sup> Place, he points out “remains only as ‘position’ in [Kant’s] discussion of physical movement.” The “phenomenal self, the only self we can know, is radically unimplaced.”<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 3–21.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Edward Casey uses the term “unimplaced” to describe the loss of place that the human subject undergoes as a result of the modern fascination with space and the subsequent separation of the knowing subject of Descartes and subsequently Kant from the world of extension and the phenomenal world around him, respectively.

<sup>171</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 364.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

### 2.7.2 *Being-in-Place as Event*

Casey challenges the priority afforded to space by arguing from our experience of being-in-place as event. Drawing on phenomenology, like the humanistic geographer Tuan, Casey points to how our embodied experience of the world goes counter to the scientific view of space (and time) as universal. He points out that we are “bound by the body to be in place.”<sup>173</sup>

Implacement is a dialectic relation of body and place. Neither one is prior to the other as the experience of implacement is an event, in which both are at once involved. Thus, we never find ourselves located in a pure “simple location” devoid of all the relations of context and culture.<sup>174</sup>

Rather, we find ourselves always already in place with “emplaced experiences.” Casey writes:

To speak of space-time is to speak once more of *event*. For an event is at once spatial and temporal, indeed indissolubly both: its spatial qualities and relations happen at a particular time. But the happening itself occurs in a place that is equally particular. Thus “event” can be considered the spatiotemporalization of a place, and the way it happens as spatiotemporally specified. It is revealing that we speak of an event as having “a date and a place,” replacing “space” by “place”.<sup>175</sup>

### 2.7.3 *Place and Identity*

We realized from Casey’s discussion of the “unimplaced” subject of Kant that the loss of place has had the detrimental effect of a loss of “self.” Casey’s reflections help point out the

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 348. Alfred North Whitehead’s notion of the fallacy of simple location points out the wrongly placed emphasis of science on the idea that only something that can be localized in a mathematically simple point of space and time are genuinely real. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science in the Modern World* (New York: MacMillan, 1925), 50.

<sup>175</sup> Edward S. Casey, “How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena,” in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 37.

change that has been occurring in our identity as human persons in relation to the way that we have understood place and space. Whereas the human being viewed herself in relation to place as being in place (Aristotle), that view has over the course of western philosophical history changed to become one where we find ourselves placeless. For Aristotle, to be is to be in place, but the Kantian noumenal self is in no place, a “placeless subject.”<sup>176</sup> We suffer from an “absence of concrete, perceptible locales that allow for bodily ingression as well as for shared historicity.”<sup>177</sup> This loss of place leads to a loss of the self. This loss of the self is exemplified by Immanuel Kant’s transcendental subject, the noumenal self who is nothing more than the “consciousness of my thought.”<sup>178</sup>

In this way, our project of recovering and rediscovery of place is inextricably tied to a recovery and rediscovery of ourselves, our identity as beings-in-place.

## ***2.8 Limitations to Our Understanding of Place***

As I continue to reflect on place as ground for an enduring ethics of the environment, there are a number of limitations to the understanding of place that must be highlighted. The limitations are primarily two-fold: first, the problem of simple location, and second, the problem of a dualistic thinking.

---

<sup>176</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 364.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>178</sup> Immanuel Kant and Norman Kemp Smith (trans.), *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B413.



### 2.8.1 First Limitation: The Fallacy of Simple Location

The fallacy of simple location, according to Alfred North Whitehead, is the error of thinking that everything that is real must have a simple location in space. Whitehead's point here is that, through the influence modern science, phenomena are localized into specific mathematically simple points of space and time. The problem with this modern scientific view is that it fails to recognize the inherent connectedness of reality. What we see here is the effect of a dogmatism of material science that considered as real only those things that could be located in a simple point of space and time. Relations and connections are considered secondary to this simple location in space and time. This view runs counter to our experience of the world. We do not ever experience things in the world as isolated objects in space and time. We always experience an object within a field of other objects.<sup>179</sup> The trouble with simple location is that we reduce all places into simple points in space. Then, every place—which is rich and full of relations—is reduced to a simple point, a dot on a map.

The fallacy of simple location leads to a second error, which Whitehead calls the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. This is the error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete. In other words, we are mistaken when we treat an abstraction as something that is real. Whitehead points out that modern science has considered points of space as concretely real, and in fact consider this as more real than the field of relations that we experience in our everyday lives. Thus, he

---

<sup>179</sup> We find a corrective to this idea of simple location in Martin Heidegger's 1951 lecture, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in which he emphasizes that to be, to exist (*bin*) is to dwell (*ban*) in a world of things by "admitting" and "installing" the "fourfold" of "mortals, divinities, earth and sky." The very act of existing is imbued with the inescapable experience of the relation of human beings with the world around us. Thus, what is real is not simply located in a point in space; rather, what is real is the web of relations that we experience by being in the world. Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking."

argues, modern science has reversed the roles of the abstract and the concrete. In the context of our experience of the world, it would be to think of the coordinates of a place, for instance 40.7829° N, 73.9654° W, as real instead of the lived world of grass, trees, adults and children of Central Park. We encountered this problem in our discussion of the humanistic geographers above as the difference between location and locale. Place loses its concrete reality and becomes replaced by simple locator points in space.

Casey points out that the fallacies of simple location and misplaced concreteness lead to a “modern subject [who is] radically unlocated.”<sup>180</sup> This is a view of the human person who has lost a sense of place, where we live with the illusion of being able to relocate ourselves from one location to another, what Casey calls a “global nomadism.”<sup>181</sup> It is worth reading Casey’s own words here:

The modern subject is radically unlocated, someone who does not know the difference between place and space, or even the difference between either of these and the sites to which he or she is confined in the pseudo-voluntarism that thinks that such a subject can go anyplace. However, belief in global nomadism is a delusion, since to be able to go anywhere is to be located nowhere.<sup>182</sup>

This is a very important critique of the notion of placelessness that we find to be more and more prevalent in contemporary society. The objectification of the world, the turn from our identity of being-in-place to one of placelessness (Relph), the loss of sense of place along with the absolutism of infinite and eternal space, the dualistic thinking that underlies our conception of the world and our relation to it—all these lie at the heart of our scientific attitude towards the

---

<sup>180</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 365.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

world. If we are to truly address the environmental problems that we are facing, we need to rethink this scientific attitude and remedy it. As long as we are caught in this dualistic and displaced (unimplaced) condition, an enduring environmental ethic and response to the global environmental crisis will continue to elude us.

### *2.8.2 Second Limitation: Dualistic Thinking*

The second limitation, that of dualistic thinking, underlies the approach of the humanistic geographers. The language of space and place as well as the question of subject and object are still inescapably dualistic, even if it may not be their intention to perpetuate such a distinction. I think it is also fair to argue that this question of dualism is not a concern of theirs in their project to make the case for place. Casey addresses the problem of dualism and leads us to an answer by emphasizing our experience of place as event. He makes a strong argument for the relational connection between the human person and the world as event, where the event is an at-once happening of perceiver and perceived in place in which both the human being and the world are mutually involved.

## ***2.9 Place as Event and At-One-ness: Insights from Martin Heidegger***

To the experience of place as event and at-once-ness, I can add Martin Heidegger's thoughts from his 1951 lecture, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." According to Heidegger, the human being's essential relation to places is not one of separation or duality "as though [the human being] stood on one side, and space on the other."<sup>183</sup> Heidegger explains:

---

<sup>183</sup> Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 358.

When we speak of [the human being] and space, it sounds as though [the human being] stood on one side, space on the other. Yet space is not something that faces [the human being]. It is neither an external object nor an inner experience. It is not that there are [human beings], and over and above them space; for when I say ‘a man,’ and in saying this word think of a being who exists in a human manner—that is, who dwells—then by the name ‘man,’ I already name the stay within the fourfold among things.<sup>184</sup>

Heidegger’s point here is that, contrary to the two-fold abstractions that occur when we think of space as mere “extension” and as mere “analytic-algebraic relations,” we always experience spaces (Heidegger’s use of the term, “spaces,” is akin to our term, “place”) in relation to locales. A locale, according to him, is a place that “comes into existence only by virtue of [something like a] bridge.”<sup>185</sup> In this way, locales do not exist in and of themselves apart from the relationality of things in the world of experience. A locale is centered on things in relation with one another. Heidegger’s example of the old bridge in Heidelberg shows us how the banks of the river, the stream below and the land are “gathered” and brought together as a locale because of the bridge being there to connect the two banks and allowing the stream to flow beneath it and people to cross from one bank to the other.<sup>186</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. It is essential to note that Heidegger’s use of the term, “space,” is more akin to our use of the term, “place.” For him, space is not a universal, analytic quantity; rather, it is “always granted...joined, that is, gathered, by virtue of a locale....” Ibid., 352. He goes on to explain that he does not take “space” as abstraction, that is, on the one hand, mere “extension” (“the mere dimensions of height, breadth, and depth”) nor, on the other hand, mere “analytic-algebraic relations” of “purely mathematical construction of manifolds.” Ibid., 357. His idea of space is better expressed by the term, “spaces.” He says: “The spaces through which we go daily are provided for by locales; their essence is grounded in things of the type of buildings. If we pay heed to these relations between locales and spaces, between spaces and space, we get a clue to help us in the thinking of the relation of man and space.” Ibid., 358.

<sup>185</sup> Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” 355–356.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 354.

Further, Heidegger points out that our dwelling enables us to be connected to places both near and distant. He points out that “[e]ven when we related ourselves to those things that are not in our immediate reach, we are staying with the things themselves.”<sup>187</sup> But, how are we able to stay with something distant? Using the same example of the bridge in Heidelberg, he explains:

From this spot right here, we are there at the bridge—we are by no means at some representational content in our consciousness. From right here we may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing... Spaces open up by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man. To say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling* they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locales.<sup>188</sup>

What makes it possible for us to be with things that are distant is that our embodiment allows us to live intentionally—that is, we are always directed to the world of things through our embodiment. We are always living in places, and our thinking of a place that we have been to and experienced allows us to already be there. We are always already in relation to the world in which we live, and in each moment, we are engaged in placemaking of a locale.

Heidegger’s reflections on dwelling underline the error of dualistic thinking. He leads us to think about the essential relation between the human person and the world of things as one of dwelling. According to Heidegger, to dwell is an essential character of the human being’s existence. In Heidegger’s words, to be is to dwell. He traces the word *bauen* (to build) to its original meaning in Old High German, *buan*, which means to dwell. *Buan*, in turn, is part of the etymology for the word, *bin*, which means to be. Thus, he points out, when one says *ich bin* (I

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 358.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 358–359.

am) or *du bist* (you are), that person is really saying “I dwell,” or “you dwell.”<sup>189</sup> Heidegger explains:

The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling....The old word *bauen*, which says that [the human being] *is* insofar as he[or she] *dwells*, this word *bauen*, however, also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.<sup>190</sup>

To dwell is to be cognizant of our relation with things around us. Therefore, as long as we are alive, we cannot help but be in place; in the words of Casey, to be “implaced.” This—being implaced, to have a sense of place—is what Heidegger considers authentic existence. Inauthentic existence, its opposite, would then be a failure to recognize this and thereby to fail to live as placemakers. Inauthentic existence is a failure to dwell, to be in our deepest sense of being. Having a sense of place, then, is a part of our objective condition as embodied beings. Living an authentic existence involves being connected to our essence as placemakers, and as placemakers our having a sense of place involves being connected to our locales.

## ***2.10 In Search of a Dynamic and Capacious Sense of Place***

From the foregoing, we can see why it is imperative for us to recover and rediscover a sense of place—to live authentically, to dwell, to be placemakers—in order to envision and live an enduring ethics of the environment. When we live with an authentic sense of place, the world is not a mere collection of location points; it is not an object that is separate from ourselves. Rather, the world—both near and far—is our locale, to which we are inescapably related and

---

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 348–349.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 349.

which bears meaning for us. The world has value to us in relation to us beyond any purely instrumental value. A sense of place motivates us to care for our locales.

Our consideration and reflection on place has highlighted for us the centrality of recovering and rediscovering a sense of place, which is part of our identity as human beings. From the reflections of the humanistic geographers—Tuan, Relph, and Cresswell—to the philosophers—Casey and Heidegger—we have come to the realization that developing a proper appreciation of the sense of place is an essential step to developing an enduring ethics of the environment. Heidegger asks the question about the “proper plight of dwelling.”<sup>191</sup> He asks: “What if [the human being’s] homelessness consisted in this, that [the human being] still does not even think of the *proper* plight of dwelling as *the* plight?”<sup>192</sup> In response to this question, he proposes that we must “answer this summons...by trying...to bring dwelling to the fullness of its essence....” We can only accomplish this when we “build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling.”<sup>193</sup>

In the next two chapters, I will answer the challenge of “think[ing] for the sake of dwelling” by transcending the limitations of simple location and dualistic thinking. I will reflect on the sense of place through a dynamic and capacious consideration of the meaning of place—one that more fully reflects our dynamic and relational experience of the world. I believe that we will find this in both a Daoist and a Hawaiian perspective of place.

---

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 363.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3: PLACE IN DAOIST THINKING

“道大，天大，地大，王亦大。國中有四大，而王居一焉。”

人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”<sup>194</sup>

*“Dao is great, the heavens are great, the earth is great, the king is also great. Within the realm, there are four greats, and the king dwells as one.*

*“Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate dao, dao emulates what is naturally so.”<sup>195</sup>*

### 3.1 Introduction

In my discussion thus far, I have identified the loss of place—placelessness—as the central problem that underlies the environmental crisis that we are facing. I reflected on how we can recover the sense of place so that we may get to the heart of the problem. Our reflections on the meaning of place and placemaking—through the lens of the humanist geographers (primarily, Tuan, Relph and Cresswell) and philosophers (primarily, Casey and Heidegger)—gave us a clearer picture of their contributions to the discourse on place. In this chapter, I will reflect on the contributions of Daoist philosophy to place and placemaking. As I had set out at

---

<sup>194</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115. The Chinese text of the *Daodejing* is drawn from Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*. Subsequent citations will carry the abbreviation *DDJ* followed by the chapter number, for example, *DDJ* 25.

<sup>195</sup> Ames and Hall translate the text in this manner: “Way-making is grand, the heavens (*tian*) are grand, the earth is grand, and the king is also grand. Within our territories there are four ‘grandees’ and the king occupies one of them. Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate way-making, and way-making emulates what is spontaneously so (*ziran*).” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115. Henricks translates it: “The Way is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; And the king is also great. In the country there are four greats, and the king occupies one place among them. Man models himself on the Earth; The Earth models itself on Heaven; Heaven models itself on the Way; And the Way models itself on that which is so on its own.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 77. Lau renders the passage: “Hence the way is great; heaven is great; earth is great; the king is also great. Within the realm there are four things that are great, and the king counts as one. Man models himself on earth, Earth on heaven, Heaven on the way, And the way on that which is naturally so.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 39.



the beginning of this dissertation, I look to Daoist philosophy in an attempt to discern a more capacious understanding of our place in the world. It is an understanding that I hope can offer a more holistic, ecological approach to environmental ethics.

In the preceding chapter, I identified a two-fold problem with contemporary approaches to place (from both humanistic geographers and philosophers), namely, the fallacy of simple location—with its attendant problem of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness—and the problem of dualistic thinking.

### *3.1.1 Fallacy of Simple Location and Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness*

As we have seen above, the fallacy of simple location is the error of thinking that everything that is real must have a simple location in space. Whitehead's point here is that, through the influence of modern science, phenomena are localized into specific mathematically simple points of space and time. This fallacy suffers from the common error of thinking that the best way to understand anything in our experience is by isolating and decontextualizing it.<sup>196</sup> This runs counter to the evidence of our everyday experience of relatedness of people and places. The fallacy of simple location leads to the related fallacy of misplaced concreteness, where we mistake the abstract for the concrete by treating abstractions as though they are something real. It

---

<sup>196</sup> The tendency to isolate and decontextualize objects of knowledge is evident in one of the key differences between the approaches of modern medicine and classical Chinese medicine. Nathan Sivin highlights this difference in his Foreword to Manfred Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974). Whereas modern medicine is interested in identifying individual organs and the anatomy, classical Chinese medicine identifies systems and functions. The difference between the two is that the former is “concerned with the organism as a structure of parts,” while the latter with totality. In Sivin's words, the Chinese view is interested in “the dynamic interplay of what is best described as a number of functional systems.” Ibid., xiii.

mistakes the abstract entity, having a simple location divorced from its context, as what is concrete. Through these fallacies, we lose our connection to the richness and processual nature of experience of the world, which is contextualized by the ongoing interaction between the experiencer and what is experienced. Thus, when we simplify and reduce the world that we experience to things in space we lose our connection to the more holistic and richer experiences of a world that is constantly taking shape in our very interactions with it. It is not difficult to see why we can lose our sense of place and of placemaking when we view the world in the simplistic, reductionist and abstract manner that the fallacies of simple location and misplaced concreteness engender. In his critique of the limitations of our notions of place, Edward Casey summed up this problem by characterizing the human being as a “modern subject [who is] radically unlocated.”<sup>197</sup>

### *3.1.2 Problem of Dualistic Thinking*

The second and related problem, that of dualistic thinking, is another difficulty that we cannot easily extract ourselves from. This is because much of our present view of the world is already colored by the subject-object distinction. As I noted at the end of the previous chapter, this subject-object distinction is found in the very language that we use to talk about our world. The problem with the dualistic mindset is this: it decontextualizes experience, treating experience as if it can be removed from the context in and through which it occurs. The modern dualistic mindset is further exacerbated by a residual notion of teleology that we inherited from

---

<sup>197</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 365.

classical Greek thinking. When we think of things in the world as having within themselves an ultimate form and goal, we find ourselves distanced from them. When we think of this in terms of agriculture, our role as farmers or cultivators is mainly to facilitate the growth of the crop that has within it the potential to become what is already there. Our work is simply to nourish it and to be an external facilitator so that it can reach its in-built goal (*telos*). In contrast, the Daoist tradition views the relationship between the human being and the world as much more than that between a facilitator and potential waiting to be activated. The Daoist view of the relationship is aesthetic and mutually entailing. The aesthetic relationship between person and world means that the human being has the capacity to make of the world a work of art, much like a sculptor who fashions clay into an ornamental jar or a gardener who cultivates a Chinese garden. Our input is more than that of a mere facilitator; we are artists and meaning-makers capable of enhancing the world by optimizing the creative possibilities that the world presents to us. Thus, there is not a dualism or separation between the human being and the world that she interacts with. We find this insight in many places throughout the text of the *Daodejing*, wherein the harmonious working of *dao* (道) and *de* (德), *ziran* (自然), and *wanwu* (萬物) is followed by or leads to a commentary on the role and relationship of the human person (in some places exemplified by the sage [*shengren* 聖人]) and the world.<sup>198</sup>

I will approach our reflection on place in Daoist philosophy in the following order. First, I examine the non-dualistic relation between the human person and the world, which sets the

---

<sup>198</sup> I am indebted to Roger T. Ames for pointing out this distinction between the teleological emphasis of classical Greek thinking and the aesthetic, mutually entailing relationship found in Daoist thinking.

tone for our discussion of the Daoist sense of place as placemaking. Following this, I examine the myriad ways in which placemaking is reflected in Daoist philosophy, specifically as it is presented in the *Daodejing* (道德經): (1) Optimizing experience through placemaking; (2) Understanding place in the relation of *daode* (道德); (3) Placemaking as a harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和); (4) Placemaking as continuity and multiplicity (*viduobufen* 一多不分); (5) Placemaking as nameless (*wuming* 無名); (6) Placemaking as *ziran* (自然); (7) Placemaking as *wu* (無); (8) Placemaking as it involves knowing how to dwell rightly.

### ***3.2 Non-Dualistic Relation Between the Human Person and the World***

In our consideration of the non-dualistic relation between the human person and the world, let us examine the following three passages from chapters 42, 43 and 48 of the *Daodejing*.

#### ***3.2.1 The World is Continually Becoming***

First, in chapter 42, we find:

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，中氣以為和。天下之所惡，唯孤，寡，不穀。而王公以自名也。<sup>199</sup>

I render this into English as:

*Dao* brings forth one, one brings forth two, two brings forth three, three brings forth the myriad things that are continually becoming. The myriad things that are continually becoming carry *yin* on their backs and embrace *yang* in their arms, blending *qi*

---

<sup>199</sup> *Daodejing* 42. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 142–143.

harmoniously. These are detested in the world, that is, being orphaned, widowed and without grain. Yet the kings and lords use these to refer to themselves.<sup>200</sup>

The section from *Daodejing* 42 above describes the arising and continuity of all experience. All things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物) arise from *dao* (道) (“*Dao* brings forth one, one brings forth two, two brings forth three, three brings forth the myriad things”) and as they are brought forth by *dao* (道), all things co-exist as a harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和) of complementary forces (*yinyang* 陰陽). The natural world operates as an ongoing balancing of different—and at times opposite but complementary—forces that work together, each one interacting with one another. Through this ongoing interaction and symbiosis our world is continually brought forth. Thus, *wanwu* (萬物) is more aptly rendered as the myriad things that are continually happening or continually becoming. The world is always in process; it is not static. This ongoing symbiosis finds a natural balance and, thus, does not overdo. The human attitude that mirrors the workings of the natural world is one of *wuwei* (無為), the attitude

---

<sup>200</sup> Ames and Hall render this passage: “Way-making (*dao*) gives rise to continuity, continuity gives rise to difference, difference gives rise to plurality, and plurality gives rise to the manifold of everything that is happening (*wanwu*). Everything carries yin on its shoulders and yang in its arms and blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious (*he*). There is nothing in the world disliked more than the thought of being friendless, unworthy, and inept, and yet kings and dukes use just such terms to refer to themselves.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “The Way gave birth to the One; [t]he One gave birth to the Two; [t]he Two gave birth to the Three; and the Three gave birth to the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry Yin on their backs and wrap their arms around Yang. Through the blending of ch’i they arrive at a state of harmony. The things that are hated by the whole world [a]re to be orphaned, widowed, and have no grain. Yet kings and dukes take these as their names.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 11. Lau translates this: “The way begets one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures. The myriad creatures carry on their backs the *yin* and embrace in their arms the *yang* and are the blending of the generative forces of the two. There are no words which men detest more than ‘solitary’, ‘desolate’, and ‘hapless’, yet lords and princes use these to refer to themselves.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 63.

of acting in the world without overdoing. The passage goes on to point out that the kings and lords—those persons who are considered accomplished and who would lead in this world—emulate the harmonious working of *dao* (道) in the world by being unassuming. They take on those titles that are deemed undesirable, that is, being orphaned, widowed and without grain or food. *Daodejing* 43 below picks up on the same theme of *wuwei* (無為) in relation to the working of the natural world.

天下之至柔，馳騁天下之至堅。無有人於無間。吾是以知無為之有益也。不言之教，無為之益，天下希能及之矣。<sup>201</sup>

The softest things in the world, ride roughshod over the hardest things. That which has no substance penetrates that which has no spaces. Few are those who understand the benefit of doing things without overdoing. To teach without words, to benefit by acting without overdoing, few in the world are able to realize this.<sup>202</sup>

### 3.2.2 Understanding of Continuity Through an “Unlearning”

*Daodejing* 48 makes the same point in a slightly different manner.

---

<sup>201</sup> DDJ 43. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 144–145.

<sup>202</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “The softest things in the world ride roughshod over the hardest things. Only the least substantial thing can penetrate the seamless. This is how we know that doing things noncoercively (*wuwei*) is beneficial. Rare are those in the world who reach an understanding of the benefits of teachings that go beyond what can be said, and of doing things noncoercively.” Ibid., 145. Henricks translates this: “The softest, most pliable thing in the world runs roughshod over the firmest thing in the world. That which has no substance gets into that which has no spaces or cracks. I therefore know that there is benefit in taking no action. The wordless teaching, the benefit of taking no action—Few in the world can realize these!” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 12. Lau translates this: “The most submissive thing in the world can ride roughshod over the hardest thing in the world—that which is without substance entering that which has no crevices. That is why I know the benefit of resorting to no action. The teaching that uses no words, the benefit of resorting to no action, these are beyond the understanding of all but a very few in the world.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 65.

為學者日益，聞道者日損。損之又損，以至於無為。無為而無不為也。將欲取天下也恆無事。及其有事也，又不足以取天下也。<sup>203</sup>

In learning, there is daily increase, in making the way of *dao* there is daily decrease. They decrease and decrease until they arrive at a point of acting without overdoing. They act without overdoing yet nothing is left undone. Those who desire to rule the world do so without being overly engaged in their affairs. When they are overly engaged in their affairs, they will be unworthy of ruling the world.<sup>204</sup>

This chapter points out that when it comes to learning and understanding the manner in which *dao* (道) functions in the world, the less one does the more one achieves. This does not mean that the Daoist way is one of a rejection of knowledge or understanding. Rather, it is an emphasis on the recognition that if we are to better understand how the world functions, and how we may act in the world such that we are contributing to its optimal achievement, we ought to learn to not impose ourselves upon it and to act more in accordance with the ongoing balancing of the myriad elements in nature.

From the foregoing, we see that our being in the world and our interacting with the world shapes that world. Further, as a mutually entailing relationship, the effect is not unidirectional.

---

<sup>203</sup> DDJ 48. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 151.

<sup>204</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “In studying, there is a daily increase. While in learning of way-making (*dao*), there is a daily decrease: one loses and again loses to the point that one does everything noncoercively (*wuwei*). One does things noncoercively and yet nothing goes undone. In wanting to rule the world be always non-interfering in going about its business (*wushi*); for in being interfering you make yourself unworthy of ruling the world.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “Those who work at their studies increase day after day; Those who have heard the Tao decrease day after day. They decrease and decrease till they get to the point where they do nothing. They do nothing and yet there’s nothing left undone. When someone wants to take control of the world, he must always be unconcerned with affairs. For in a case where he’s concerned with affairs, [h]e’ll be unworthy, as well, of taking control of the world.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 17. Lau translates this: “In the pursuit of learning one knows more every day; in the pursuit of the way one does less every day. One does less and less until one does nothing at all, and when one does nothing at all there is nothing that is undone. It is always through not meddling that the empire is won. Should you meddle, then you are not equal to the task of winning the empire.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 69–71.

Rather, in our interactions with the world—as we aestheticize the world, we are, in turn, shaped by the world as we experience and as we make something of it. The world, then, or more precisely, the natural environment is not a static thing. Rather, it is as much a part of us as we are, by our living in the world, a part of it. Understanding the world or the natural environment, or nature, as place and placemaking becomes an invitation for us to rethink our view of it and what it means to us.

### *3.2.3 Mutually Entailing Relationship Between the Human Person and the World Expressed in Chinese Culture and Arts*

The idea of recognizing the inseparable and mutually entailing relationship between the human person and the natural environment can be found in Chinese tradition and culture, for instance, in various art forms such as painting, gardening and even in martial arts.

These forms of art, namely painting (especially of landscapes), gardening, as well as martial arts like *qigong* (氣功) and *taijiquan* (太極拳), exemplify the human being achieving balance and harmony with one's surroundings in one's place. Each of them is an art form, and each requires great skill, much practice to arrive at exactitude, and flow—a spontaneity that results from dedicated practice. Graham Parkes remarks that such practices bring about a “greater awareness of the relations between one's activities and the configurations of the surroundings, whether natural or built.”<sup>205</sup>

---

<sup>205</sup> Graham Parkes, “Winds, Waters, and Earth Energies: Fengshui and Sense of Place,” in *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 205.



The *shanshui* (山水) principle in landscape painting captures the dynamic elements of nature. In a typical Chinese landscape painting, the mountains and watercourses can be seen to animate the landscape.<sup>206</sup> Graham Parkes point out that: “Under the painter’s brush, as in nature, ‘the aspects of mountains and waters are born from the interaction of vital breath and the given layout to which that force imparts dynamism.’ In China, the purpose of painting is to rediscover the elemental and continuous course of the cosmic pulsation through the figurative representation of a landscape.”<sup>207</sup> The artist does not seek merely to represent reality or what one sees in the world. Rather, the artist in depicting nature in painting is attempting to draw the viewer into the dynamic interaction of the myriad elements in the work of art, and in doing so bring the dynamism of nature to life in the viewer.

The Chinese art of the garden is centered on the principle of mutual relationality between the human being and the natural environment that the gardener works on in one’s art. This art form reflects the close connection between gardener and garden. Commenting on the seventeenth-century classic garden manual, the *Yuanye* (园冶) or “*Craft of Gardens*” by Ji Cheng, Parkes notes that a “basic premise of the Chinese garden is the microcosm/macrocosm correlation...between the [human] body and landscape [wherein a] well designed garden sets up

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 203; François Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 94, 95–102.

<sup>207</sup> Parkes, “Winds, Waters, and Earth Energies: Fengshui and Sense of Place,” 203; Jullien, *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*, 94, 95–102.

a pattern of energies that corresponds to the dynamic configurations of a larger landscape.”<sup>208</sup> He added that the gardener is able to “improve, when necessary, the conditions of a particular site” by applying the principles of *fengshui* (風水).<sup>209</sup> But it is important to highlight that the relationship between the gardener and the garden is not a one-way relationship. Rather, it is a mutually entailing relation. Just as the gardener is able to enhance the aesthetic sense of the land and plants, the garden, in turn, has an effect on the gardener and those people who venture into the garden by inspiring in them a sense of calm or inner peace. This art form can be said to be a refinement of the sense of place that we have in relation to the natural environment.

From the examples above, we can see that through our being in the world, we enchant the world in our interaction with it, and the world in turn enchants our lives. The Daoist view of the world shows us that our being in the world is characterized by a manner of dwelling that is, at once, dynamic and mutually entailing. In this way, we are never just *present* in the world. And the world is never just simply there in front of us or apart from us. The manner in which we live in the world is integral to a making present of the world and the human being. Practitioners of both of the arts of landscape painting and gardening recognize the bond between the human being and nature. Their art lies in their ability to recognize this and to express it in their work. Hence, it would be more accurate to describe our place in the world as placemaking because of the dynamic and mutually entailing relation that our being in the world involves. Our sense of place is placemaking.

---

<sup>208</sup> Cheng Ji and Alison Hardie (trans.), *The Craft of Gardens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Cited in Parkes, “Winds, Waters, and Earth Energies: Fengshui and Sense of Place,” 203.

<sup>209</sup> Parkes, “Winds, Waters, and Earth Energies: Fengshui and Sense of Place,” 203.

### 3.3 Optimizing Experience Through Placemaking

The Daoist sense of place as placemaking respects the ecological relationality of the human being and the world. It does so by placing the onus on the human being to get the most out of one's experience (*de* 德) through a harmonizing of that relationship in an ongoing optimizing of the possibilities within that ecological relationship (*he* 和, harmonious ongoing symbiosis).<sup>210</sup> *Daodejing* 15 characterizes the disposition of those who seek this harmony as persons who “do not desire fullness.” This is because placemaking as an ongoing symbiosis is always on the way; it is never fixed.

葆此道者，不欲盈。夫唯不欲盈，是以能敝而不成。<sup>211</sup>

Those who preserve *dao* do not desire fullness. It is because they do not desire fullness, they can be worn out yet remain unfinished.<sup>212</sup>

Commenting on this point, Ames and Hall note: “Persons who have been most successful at making their way in the world have been immersed in the process itself, assuming for themselves the profound and complex character of the experience that they have forged.”<sup>213</sup> One way to understand this is to look at the changing of the seasons. In a temperate country, we experience

---

<sup>210</sup> This idea of “getting the most out of one's ingredients” and of one's environs, and of “optimizing experience” is a central insight in Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall's philosophical translation of the *Daodejing*. They provide a rich discussion of this insight in the “Philosophical Introduction” to their translation. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 11–54.

<sup>211</sup> *DDJ* 15. Ibid., 97. The Wangbi text differs in certain places: “葆此道者，不欲盈。夫唯不盈，故能敝而新成。” Lau translates this: “He who holds fast to this way [d]esires not to be full. It is because he is not full [t]hat he can be worn and yet newly made.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 23.

<sup>212</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “Those who prize waymaking do not seek fullness; It is only because they do not want to be full [t]hat they are able to remain hidden and unfinished.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 98. Henricks translates this: “The one who preserves this Way does not desire to be full; [t]herefore he can wear out with no need to be renewed.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 67.

<sup>213</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 98.

the flowing of one season into the next—spring, summer, autumn, winter—without an end. In each season, and in the transition from one season to the next, myriad events are taking place which exhibit an intricate and ongoing balance of all the elements in the ecosystem. For example, we experience the difference in warmth as the year progresses from spring to summer, and then to autumn and winter, and back again in an ongoing cycle. Warmth reaches its zenith in the summer, begins to wane in the autumn, and reaches its lowest in the winter and then begins to return in the spring. Within each season, the flora and fauna constantly adapt to the changes. The changing of the seasons shows us that the natural world never reaches a fullness or completeness once and for all. It is always filling up and emptying—as we see from our example of warmth. Thus, placemaking is not to seek fullness. Instead, it is always on the way, always on the way to becoming full and yet never actually reaching fullness. In this manner, in response to placemaking of the world, we ought also to allow the world to take place, to allow the place to be constantly made. Evidence from the environmental crisis indicates a failure on our part to recognize and respect this. Instead, we have been getting the most out of the world solely for our own benefit at the cost of upsetting the ecological balance. This has led us down the path to our present environmental crisis. It is, therefore, paramount that we come to a better understanding of placemaking.

In order to better understand the Daoist sense of placemaking, it will be helpful for us to examine the meaning of *dao* (道) and *de* (德) as they relate to *wu* (無) and *ziran* (自然). These key terms of Daoist philosophy will help us understand the role and relationship of the human being—exemplified by the figure of the sage (*shengren* 聖人)—and the world—referred to in the *Daodejing* with the terms *wanwu* (萬物) and *tiandi* (天地). One might raise an objection to

this choice of a starting point to a discussion of place. We might expect to begin a discussion of the Daoist sense of place by focusing on earth (*di* 地) or physical place (*difang* 地方). On the surface, it seems to make sense to begin there. However, I think that the urge or inclination to start there reveals precisely the fallacy of simple location that Whitehead criticized. I believe that this will become clearer as we flesh out the argument for a Daoist sense of place.

### 3.4 Understanding Place in the Relation of Daode (道德)

道生之，而德畜之，物形之，而器成之。是以萬物尊道而貴德。道之尊也，德之貴也，夫莫之爵也，而恆自然也。<sup>214</sup>

*Dao* brings forth all things, and *de* nurtures them, things that are continually becoming shape them, and their function complete them. It is for this reason that the myriad things that are continually becoming honor *dao* and value *de*. As for the honor given to *dao* and the valuing of *de*, no one ennobles them, yet they are constantly naturally so.<sup>215</sup>

Chapter 51 of the *Daodejing* describes the manner in which *dao* (道) and *de* (德) are mutually entailing in the making of the world. *Dao* (道) and *de* (德) are related as context and

---

<sup>214</sup> *DDJ* 51. Ibid., 156.

<sup>215</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “Way-making (*dao*) gives things their life, and their particular efficacy (*de*) is what nurtures them. Events shape them, and having a function consummates them. It is for this reason that all things (*wanwu*) honor way-making and esteem efficacy. As for the honor directed at way-making and the esteem directed at efficacy, it is really something that just happens spontaneously (*ziran*) without anyone having ennobled them.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “The Way gives birth to them and Virtue nourishes them; [s]ubstance gives them form and their unique capacities complete them. Therefore the ten thousand things venerate the Way and honor Virtue. As for their veneration of the Way and their honoring of Virtue—[n]o one rewards them for it; it’s constantly so on its own.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 20. The Wangbi text differs in several places: “道生之，德畜之，物形之，勢成之。是以萬物莫不尊道而貴德。道之尊，德之貴，夫莫之命常自然。” Lau translates this: “The way gives them life; [v]irtue rears them; [t]hings give them shape; [c]ircumstances bring them to maturity. Therefore the myriad creatures all revere the way and honor virtue. Yet the way is revered and virtue honored not because it is decreed by any authority but because it is natural for them to be treated so.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 73.

particular events in our experiences. Whereas *dao* (道) brings forth all things, *de* (德) nurtures them.<sup>216</sup> In relation to place, we can draw from this chapter that both the environment (taken to mean one's surroundings or context) and particular element or event are mutually responsible for bringing that place about. This is perhaps what Heidegger alluded to in his discussion of the inseparability of the four-fold (earth, sky, mortals, divinities) in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking". Each of the parts of the relation is necessary for the totality to come about, for it to happen, for it to be. Thus, place as it relates to the world is an ongoing consummation of the creative possibilities in the relationship of particular and context, of multiplicity and continuity.

### 3.4.1 *Dao (道) and De (德) as Continuity and Multiplicity*

The relation of *dao* (道) and *de* (德)—of continuity and multiplicity—is one through which the world of our experience comes into being. As *Daodejing* 42 points out, it is also a relationship that expresses continuity and multiplicity:

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，中氣以為和。<sup>217</sup>

*Dao* brings forth one, one brings forth two, two brings forth three, three brings forth the myriad things that are continually becoming. The myriad things that are continually becoming carry *yin* on their backs and embrace *yang* in their arms, blending *qi* harmoniously.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>216</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 156.

<sup>217</sup> *DDJ* 42. *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>218</sup> Refer to Footnote 100 for comparison with the translations by Ames and Hall; Henricks; and Lau.

The world is a continuity (*yi* 一; one) and multiplicity (*er* 二 , *san* 三 , *wanwu* 萬物; two, three, the myriad things that are continually becoming) arising from *dao* (道) but *dao* (道) is not *arche* or transcendent origin of the world.<sup>219</sup> Rather, *dao* (道) is the continuity in all of our experiences. The world of experience as it arises or takes place is made up of mutually entailing opposites (萬物負陰而抱陽; The myriad things carry *yin* [陰] on their backs and embrace *yang* [陽] in their arms), as we find in *Daodejing* chapter two:

天下皆知美之為美，斯惡已。皆知善之為善，斯不善矣。有無之相生也，難易之相成也，長短之相形也，高下之相盈也，音聲之相和也，先后之相隨，恆也。<sup>220</sup>

When the world knows the beautiful as beautiful, there is ugliness. When everyone knows the good, there is the bad. Something and nothing bring each other forth, difficult and easy complete each other, long and short mark each other out, high and low fill each other, tone

---

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Aristotle's definitions of *arche* in the *Metaphysics*, 1012b34-1013a20. Aristotle and C.D.C. Reeve (trans.), *Metaphysics* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2016). Ames makes a compelling argument in Chapter V of *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* for the difference between classical Chinese cosmogony and Western cosmogonies found in the Judeo-Christian and classical Greek traditions. He points out that, whereas in the latter cosmogonies there is an appeal to a metaphysical, transcendent, One-behind-the-many cause of the world, the classical Chinese cosmogonic myths allude to "genealogical birthings" that speak of a "procreative process" that is constantly taking place. Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 225–231.

<sup>220</sup> DDJ 2. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 79.

and voice harmonize with each other, before and after follow each other, this is constantly so.<sup>221</sup>

### 3.4.2 Ongoing Achievement of Symbiosis

Another important insight that we learn from *Daodejing* 42 is that the way the world functions—of the continuity and multiplicity as field and focus of all that is happening—is as an ongoing achievement of symbiosis (*he* 和), which expresses a continuity of negotiation of the multiplicity. What this implies for our understanding of place is that when we think of place, we do not think of it as mere location—as something that is simply there and unchanging. Rather, a more accurate description of place is that it is constantly taking place. In other words, place is a dynamic ongoing symbiosis of myriad elements through which place is made. Thus, a more appropriate way to speak of place is that it is placemaking. As with the mutual entailing of opposites (such as that which we find in *Daodejing* chapter 2), where there is no beauty without ugliness, no ability without ineptness, no determinacy without indeterminacy, no difficult without easy,<sup>222</sup> so it is with place: there is no place without non-place. What this means is that

---

<sup>221</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “As soon as everyone in the world knows that the beautiful are beautiful, [t]here is already ugliness. As soon as everyone knows the able, [t]here is ineptness. Determinacy (*you*) and indeterminacy (*wu*) give rise to each other, [d]ifficult and easy complement each other, [l]ong and short set each other off, [h]igh and low complete each other, [r]efined notes and raw sounds harmonize (*he*) with each other, [a]nd before and after lend sequence to each other—[t]his is really how it all works.” Ibid., 79–80. Henricks translates it: “When everyone in the world knows the beautiful as beautiful, ugliness comes into being; [w]hen everyone knows the good, then the not good comes to be. The mutual production of being and nonbeing, [t]he mutual completion of difficult and easy, [t]he mutual formation of long and short, [t]he mutual filling of high and low, [t]he mutual harmony of tone and voice, [t]he mutual following of front and back—[t]hese are all constants.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 54. Lau translates it: “The whole world recognizes the beautiful as beautiful, yet this is only the ugly; the whole world recognizes the good as the good, yet this is only the bad. Thus Something and Nothing produce each other; [t]he difficult and the easy complement each other; [t]he long and the short off-set each other; [t]he high and the low incline towards each other; [n]ote and sound harmonize with each other. Before and after follow each other.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 5. The text that Lau translates from does not contain the characters 恆也.

<sup>222</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 79–80.



place is always both “something” (place) and “nothing” (non-place). Non-place does not mean that it is not in existence but, rather, that it is always in the process of becoming. Thus, it is not a fixed, static place that does not change. The world as place is, as the *Daodejing* describes it, being made up of the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物). The world is composed of myriad elements in the ecosystem that are constantly interacting with one another and, in the process, continually bringing about place. Place is, therefore, placemaking.

### **3.5 Placemaking is a Harmonious Ongoing Symbiosis (*he* 和)**

From the insight into place as placemaking, the *Daodejing* highlights that placemaking is a dynamic and harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和) that is made up of elements that are constantly interacting and working together at all times to maintain a balance in the totality. We find in *Daodejing* 7:

天長地久。天地之所以能長且久者，以其不自生也，故能長生。是以聖人退其身而身先；外其身而身存。不以其無私與？故能成其私。<sup>223</sup>

I can render this text as:

The heavens and the earth are long-lasting.  
The reason the heavens and the earth are long-lasting,  
Is because they do not live for themselves,  
Thus are able to live long.  
It is for this reason that the sages withdraw themselves yet find themselves ahead;  
Put themselves out of mind yet remain cared for.

---

<sup>223</sup> *DDJ* 7. Ibid., 86.

Is it not because they are not concerned with themselves? Thus, they are able to achieve their needs.<sup>224</sup>

This is evident in the manner in which an ecosystem sustains itself. Each element acts not for itself alone, but within the workings of the natural environment, each one—wherever it sits on the food chain—plays a part in the sustenance of the entire ecosystem. There may not be a particular exogenous plan imposed upon it, but within the ecosystem itself, each part or element plays a role in the sustenance and health of the totality. Take, for example, the positive effects that the reintroduction of the gray wolf has had on the ecosystem of the Yellowstone National Park, or the importance of beaver dams to the formation of alluvial valleys.<sup>225</sup> When the gray wolves were completely wiped out from Yellowstone Park, the loss of a natural predator, which was an essential part of the ecosystem, led to a serious imbalance in the system. With the elimination of their natural predator, the elk population increased, and their grazing of aspen and

---

<sup>224</sup> Ames and Hall translate it: “The heavens are lasting and the earth enduring. The reason the world is able to be lasting and enduring [i]s because it does not live for itself. Thus it is able to be long-lived. It is on this model that the sages withdraw their persons from contention yet find themselves out in front, [p]ut their own persons out of mind yet find themselves taken care of. Isn’t it simply because they are unselfish that they can satisfy their own needs?” Ibid. Henricks translates it: “Heaven endures; Earth lasts a long time. The reason why Heaven and Earth can endure and last a long time—Is that they do not live for themselves. Therefore they can long endure. Therefore the Sage: Puts himself in the background yet finds himself in the foreground; Puts self-concern out of his mind, yet finds that his self-concern is preserved. Is it not because he has no self-interest, [t]hat he is therefore able to realize his self-interest?” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 59. Lau translates it: “Heaven and earth are enduring. The reason why heaven and earth can be enduring is that they do not give themselves life. Hence they are able to be long-lived. Therefore the sage puts his person last and it comes first, [t]reats it as extraneous to himself and it is preserved. Is it not because he is without thought of self that he is able to accomplish his private ends?” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 11.

<sup>225</sup> For further information, refer to the following studies: Julie S. Mao et al., “Habitat Selection by Elk Before and After Wolf Reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park,” *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 69, no. 4 (October 1, 2005): 1691–1707, accessed August 21, 2018, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2193/0022-541X%282005%2969%5B1691%3AHSBEBA%5D2.0.CO%3B2>; C. J. Westbrook, D. J. Cooper, and B. W. Baker, “Beaver Assisted River Valley Formation,” *River Research and Applications* 27, no. 2 (February 1, 2011): 247–256, accessed August 21, 2018, <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/rra.1359>.

cottonwood saplings affected the plants' growth, which also had a negative effect on other species, for example, the beaver and bison populations.<sup>226</sup> However, with the reintroduction of the gray wolf to the national park, researchers have observed a gradual restoring of the natural balance in the park's ecosystem.

This evidence from the workings of the natural world, wherein the constant interactions among species brings about an ongoing—and in many ways, delicate—balance, shows us the importance of placemaking in the world. Each member of the ecological community is reliant on others and contributes, for its part, to others and to the totality. We human beings, as members—and not the prime or most important members—of the ecological community are reminded that our role in placemaking ought to take into account the fact that, in the ongoing symbiosis of the natural world, we are one of countless foci (*de* 德) within the field (*dao* 道) of experience.

Ames and Hall note in their commentary to *Daodejing* 7<sup>227</sup>:

The sages in emulation of the natural processes are impartial and inclusive. Their concerns, on the model of nature itself, emerge out of the manifold of foci that are implicated within them.<sup>228</sup>

In the *Daodejing*, the sage is presented as an exemplar of the person who gets it right. To get it right in relation to the natural environment is to first be cognizant of the unfolding of the natural world. *Daodejing* 52 assures those who are cognizant of the unfolding of experience that

---

<sup>226</sup> William J. Ripple and Robert L. Beschta, "Trophic Cascades in Yellowstone: The First 15 Years after Wolf Reintroduction," *Biological Conservation* 145, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 205–213, accessed August 21, 2018, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320711004046>.

<sup>227</sup> DDJ 7. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 86.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 86–87.

they will live “free from danger or harm” if they are able to live in harmony with the natural unfolding of the world. We see this from the following passage of *Daodejing* 52:

天下有始，以為天下母。既得其母，以知其子，既知其子，復守其母，沒身不殆。  
229

The world has its beginning, which can be considered the mother of the world. Having attained the mother, then you will understand its child, having understood its child, you return to protect its mother, and to the end of your life you will be free from danger.<sup>230</sup>

The sage is respectful of the placemaking (*dao* 道) of the world, and acts in the world without overdoing (*wu* 無).<sup>231</sup> Acting in the world without overdoing (*wu* 無) is expressed in the passage above as “protect[ing] its mother.” In the example of the eradication of the gray wolf

---

<sup>229</sup> DDJ 52. Ibid., 157.

<sup>230</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “The world has its fetal beginning that can be considered the mother of the world. You have to have gotten to this mother, before you can understand her progeny, if you go back and safeguard the mother, you will live to the end of your days without danger.” Ibid., 158. Henricks translates this: “The world had a beginning, [w]hich can be considered the mother of the world. Having attained the mother, in order to understand her children, [i]f you return and hold on to the mother, till the end of your life you’ll suffer no harm.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 21. Lau translates this: “The world had a beginning [a]nd this beginning could be the mother of the world. When you know the mother [g]o on to know the child. After you have known the child [g]o back to holding fast to the mother, [a]nd to the end of your days you will not meet with danger.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 75.

<sup>231</sup> *Wu* 無: Ames and Hall render *wu* (無) as noncoercive or noncoerciveness to express a “deferential” sensibility in Daoist philosophy. I translate *wu* (無) as “not overdoing” be it in terms of acting (*wuwei* 無為)—acting without overdoing, knowing (*wuzhi* 無知)—knowing without limiting that which we seek to understand, or desiring (*wuyu* 無欲)—desiring without being controlling. *Wu* (無) is a disposition or an attitude of being aware that we are not in total control of what goes on in the natural world, and that the most efficacious way to respond to any situation is by first learning how the myriad elements or circumstances make up what is going on, and then to act accordingly. The sage is said to be *wuwei* (無為), *wuzhi* (無知), and *wuyu* (無欲), in that the sage acts, knows/understands and desires without wanting to control but does so in a deferential manner.

at Yellowstone, we can see how human overdoing by intervening in an ecosystem can lead to a malfunctioning of the system.<sup>232</sup>

### 3.6 Placemaking is Continuity and Multiplicity (*yiduobufen* 一多不分)

Understanding that the world is also placemaking and that the workings of nature is placemaking gives us insight into what contemporary Chinese philosopher, Tang Junyi, calls *yiduobufen* (一多不分), “the inseparability of one and many, of continuity and multiplicity.”<sup>233</sup> Tang makes use of the phrase *yiduobufen* (一多不分) to describe Chinese natural cosmology.<sup>234</sup> There are two chapters in the *Daodejing* that are particularly helpful here, namely, chapters 39 and 42. The former describes the “attaining of oneness” (*deyi* 得一), and the latter describes the continuity and multiplicity of all things in our experience as intrinsically related by a relation of *dao* (道) and *de* (德).

Attaining oneness involves acting with a proper understanding of the continuity of the myriad elements within our sphere of life. This insight ties in with the other chapters that we

---

<sup>232</sup> This resonates with Aldo Leopold’s argument in his *Land Ethic* for human beings to change our roles from conqueror to plain community members: “[A] land ethic changes the role of *Homo Sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.” Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 204.

<sup>233</sup> *Yiduo bufenguan* 一多不分觀. Junyi Tang, “Zhongguo Zhaxue Zhong Ziran yuzhouguan Zhi Tezhi 中國哲學中自然宇宙觀之特質 (The Distinctive Features of Natural Cosmology in Chinese Philosophy),” in *Zhongxi Zhaxue Sixiang Zhi Bijiao Lunwenji* 中西哲學思想之比較論文集 (*Collected Essays on the Comparison between Chinese and Western Philosophical Thought*) (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1988).

<sup>234</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 138–139, 143–144.

have encountered from the *Daodejing* that discuss the continuity of experience.<sup>235</sup> Chapter 39 adds an important point to the discussion, that is, it shows us the efficacy of realizing the continuity of all things. The opening lines of *Daodejing* 39 read:

昔之得一者：天得一以清；地得一以寧；神得一以靈；谷得一以盈；侯王得一以為天下正。<sup>236</sup>

Formerly those who attained oneness: the heavens attained oneness and became clear; the earth attained oneness and became stable; the spirits attained oneness and became divine; the valleys attained oneness and became full; the lords and kings attained oneness and brought order to the world.<sup>237</sup>

What we can draw from the above is that by realizing oneness, or attaining oneness, we gain an understanding into the world as placemaking, where in the particularity and the totality are mutually entailing within an harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和). In the passage, the lords and kings (who represent those who are worthy of taking on responsibility in the world) attained oneness and were able to bring order to the world. For us to attain oneness, in the light

---

<sup>235</sup> See, for instance, *DDJ* 7, 42, 51.

<sup>236</sup> *DDJ* 39. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 137. There are variants of this passage. For instance, the Wangbi text has this passage read: “昔之得一者：天得一以清；地得一以寧；神得一以靈；谷得一以盈；萬物得一以生；侯王得一以為天下貞。” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 58. Lau translates it: “Of old, these came to be in possession of the One; Heaven in virtue of the One is limpid; Earth in virtue of the One is settled; Gods in virtue of the One have their potencies; [t]he valley in virtue of the One is full; [t]he myriad creatures in virtue of the One are alive; Lords and princes in virtue of the One become leaders in the empire.” Ibid., 59.

<sup>237</sup> Ames and Hall render this passage thus: “Of old there were certain things that realized oneness: The heavens in realizing oneness became clear; the earth in realizing oneness became stable; the numinous in realizing oneness became animated; the river valleys in realizing oneness became full; the lords and kings in realizing oneness brought proper order to the world.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 137–138. Henricks works from the Mawangdui Texts A and B, with Text B being the same as the text that Ames and Hall consulted for their translation. Henricks translates it: “Of those in the past that attained the One—Heaven, by attaining the One became clear; Earth, by attaining the One became stable; Gods, by attaining the One became divine; Valleys, by attaining the One became full; Marquises and kings, by attaining the One made the whole land ordered and secure.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 8.

of Tang's assertion of continuity and multiplicity of all things (*viduobufen* 一多不分), is for us to understand that the world as *wanwu* (萬物; the myriad things that are continually becoming) is composed of a continuity of myriad elements (multiplicity). Thus, just as the heavens, the earth, the spirits, and the valleys operate in the continuity of multiplicity and thus function efficaciously, the human being is called upon to attain oneness and to act accordingly by contributing to the harmony of ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和).

*He* (和) is commonly translated as harmony. However, as we examine *he* (和) in the *Daodejing*, we need to emphasize that harmony is not something that is simply there. Harmony is not a thing. Rather, it is an achievement. From the lesson of the natural world, we see that the harmony in nature is brought about by the continual functioning together of many elements, such as what we witness in an ecosystem. The changing of the seasons is another example of harmony as an ongoing process of achievement. The change from one season to the next—from hot to cold and back to hot—involves the naturally so (*ziran* 自然) functioning of many parts of the natural world (from the movement of the earth around the sun changing the angle of the sun's radiation upon the northern or southern hemispheres, which increases or decreases the temperatures in either hemisphere). With the gradual rising or falling temperature, the members of an ecosystem respond accordingly. Some species migrate to warmer places in the winter; others, having evolved and adapted to withstand the colder temperatures, are able to remain in their habitats during the winter months. It is a wonder to observe the changing of seasons in a temperate country and see how the flora and fauna adapt and interact with one another throughout the year. At no point does the continual interaction of elements cease or stagnate.

Even in the midst of the coldest points of winter, the apparent stillness of the world that we observe outside our window hides all that is going on around us. Thus, realizing oneness in relation to the workings of the natural environment, describes the continuity of the natural processes. Realizing oneness involves acting with a proper understanding of the continuity of the myriad elements within our sphere of life.<sup>238</sup>

*Daodejing* 42 adds to the above by further underlining the inseparability of the one and the many in placemaking: “道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。(Dao brings forth one, one brings forth two, two brings forth three, three brings forth the myriad things that are continually becoming.)” This inseparability and the mutual entailing relation can be further elucidated by considering the ongoing symbiosis as “nameless.”

### 3.7 Placemaking is Nameless (*wuming* 無名)

The process of placemaking is also described in the *Daodejing* as nameless (*wuming* 無名). Its namelessness refers to its being seemingly small and inconsequential (*pu sui xiao* 樸雖小), yet placemaking in the world brings forth an equitable harmony for the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物). *Daodejing* 32 highlights this point:

道恆無名。樸雖小，而天下弗敢臣。侯王若能守之，萬物將自賓。天地相合，以降甘露，民莫之令而自均焉。<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> This insight ties in with the other chapters in the *Daodejing* that discuss the continuity of experience. See, for instance, *DDJ* 7, 42, 51.

<sup>239</sup> *DDJ* 32. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 126.



*Dao* is truly nameless. In its unworked state it seems small, yet no one in the world dares to treat it as a subject. Were the lords and kings able to maintain it, the myriad things that are continually becoming would submit on their own. The heavens and the earth would unite to send down their sweet dew, the people without being ordered would themselves fairly distribute it.<sup>240</sup>

This characterization of *dao* (道) suggests that the ongoing processes of the world that we encounter—although for the most part can be so inconspicuous as to escape our attention, and we, therefore, pay little or no heed to them—work in such a way as to distribute the benefits to all accordingly and equitably. If we allow the dynamic process of ongoing symbiosis of the world to operate as it is meant to, then we will find ourselves cooperating with and benefitting from it as well. The namelessness of *dao*, in the quiet working of the natural world, occurs within a pattern of nothing (*wu* 無) and something (*you* 有). We find this in *Daodejing* 1: “兩者同出異名，同謂之玄。” This passage can be rendered: “Both of these [referring to *wuming youming* 無名有名, the nameless and the named mentioned earlier in this chapter] emerged together yet

---

<sup>240</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “Way-making (*dao*) is really nameless (*wuming*). Although in this unworked state it is of little consequence, No one in the world would dare to condescend to it. Were the nobles and kings able to respect this, [a]ll things (*wanwu*) would defer of their own accord. The heavens and the earth would come together [t]o send down their sweet honey, [a]nd without being so ordered, [t]he common people would see that it is distributed equitably.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “The Tao is constantly nameless. Though in its natural state it seems small, no one in the world dares to treat it as a subject. Were marquises and kings able to maintain it, [t]he ten thousand things would submit to them on their own, [a]nd Heaven and Earth would unite to send forth sweet dew. By nature it would fall equally on all things, with no one among the people ordering that it be so.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 84. Lau translates this: “The way is for ever nameless. Though the uncarved block is small [n]o one in the world dare claim its allegiance. Should lords and princes be able to hold fast to it [t]he myriad creatures will submit of their own accord. Heaven and earth will unite and sweet dew will fall, [a]nd the people will be equitable, though no one so decrees.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 49.

are differently named, together they are called profound.”<sup>241</sup> Both—nothing (*wu* 無) and something (*you* 有)—express the ongoing process of the nature as we have seen in our discussion of *he* (和; harmony via a process of ongoing symbiosis). As with the seasons or the growth and maintenance of an ecosystem, the constant changes within the totality are expressions of nothing (*wu* 無) or namelessness (*wuming* 無名), while the achievement of harmony or balance at any moment is an expression of something (*you* 有) or of what is named (*youming* 有名). Thus, place is always placemaking because the world is constantly being made. It is an ongoing symbiosis of the myriad elements in the natural world.

This insight is important to our reflections on the environment in two ways. On the one hand, it reminds us that as members of the ecological community, our actions have an effect on the community as a whole. This leads us to the second point: that precisely because our actions have consequences and we are able to influence our place, it is therefore imperative that we understand our role in placemaking. We have a responsibility to contribute to this process. But it is important to understand that our contribution should respect the delicate balancing act of placemaking. *Daodejing* 32 also warns that if we try to “regulate the world” (*shizhi* 始制) we

---

<sup>241</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “These two—the nameless and what is named—emerge from the same source yet are referred to differently. Together they are called obscure.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 77. Henricks translates it: “These two together emerge; They have different names yet they’re called the same; That which is even more profound than the profound.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 53. The Wangbi text differs slightly: “此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。” Lau translates it: “These two are the same [b]ut diverge in name as they issue forth. Being the same they are called mysteries.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 3.

face the danger of disrupting the intricate balance of ongoing symbiosis, as we have witnessed with anthropogenic causes of climate change, extinction of species from hunting, and pollution of waterways from industrial effluents, to name a few examples. Thus, we ought to be cognizant of the effects of over-doing it.<sup>242</sup>

### 3.8 Placemaking is *Ziran* (自然)

The reason for this is that the world as placemaking—as an ongoing process of achievement—is *ziran* (自然; that which is naturally so). We find this idea in *Daodejing* 25:

有物混成，先天地生。寂呵寥呵，獨立而不改，[周行而不殆，]可以為天地母。吾未知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。”<sup>243</sup>

There was something that is continually becoming that formed out of chaos, coming forth before the heavens and earth. Silent and empty, standing alone it does not change. [Surrounding all, it does not endanger], it can be considered the mother of the heavens and the earth. I do not yet know its name, I style it *dao*. Forced to name it, I would call it great.

---

<sup>242</sup> The particular section of the text of *DDJ* 32 reads: “始制有名，名亦既有，夫亦將知止。知止所以不殆。” I translate this: “When we begin to regulate [the world] there are names, once there are already names, we must also know to stop. Knowing to stop we will therefore not be in danger.” Ames and Hall render it: “When we start to regulate the world we introduce names. But once names have been assigned, [w]e must also know when to stop. Knowing when to stop is how to avoid danger.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 127. Henricks translates it: “As soon as we start to establish a system, we have names. And as soon as there are set names, [t]hen you must *also* know that it’s time to stop. By knowing to stop—in this way you’ll come to no harm.” (Italics in original) Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 84. D. C. Lau translates it: “Only when it is cut are there names. As soon as there are names [o]ne ought to know that it is time to stop. Knowing when to stop one can be free from danger.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 49.

<sup>243</sup> *DDJ* 25. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115.

Great, it can be called passing; passing, it can be called far away; far away, it can be called returning.<sup>244</sup>

But what is *ziran* (自然) in relation to our discussion of the natural environment? From the foregoing, we have seen that the world is placemaking as an ongoing symbiosis. Thus, what is naturally so is that the world is an ongoing, never-finished achievement that involves all the elements that make it up. A key insight that *Daodejing* 25 emphasizes is that Daoist cosmology describes the natural world as an ongoing process. Daoist cosmology, as with early Chinese natural cosmology, is akin to process cosmology. Ames and Hall observe that “[i]n early Chinese natural cosmology, there is no appeal to some substratum or independent metaphysical origin, no ‘One’ behind the many.”<sup>245</sup> Instead, they argue that early Chinese natural cosmology was more akin to a process worldview in which “the particular and its context are at once continuous and distinct.”<sup>246</sup> Their view is consonant with that which Angus Graham takes in distinguishing between the classical Greek view of reality and the classical Chinese view of reality. According

---

<sup>244</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “There was some process that formed spontaneously [e]merging before the heavens and the earth. Silent and empty, [s]tanding alone as all that is, it does not suffer alteration. [All pervading, it does not pause.] It can be thought of as the mother of the heavens and the earth. I do not yet know its name (*ming*). If I were to style it, I would call it way-making (*dao*). And if forced to give it a name, I would call it grand. Being grand, it is called passing, passing, it is called distancing. Distancing, it is called returning.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “There was something formed out of chaos, [t]hat was born before Heaven and Earth. Quiet and still! Pure and deep! It stands on its own and doesn’t change. It can be regarded as the mother of Heaven and Earth. I do not yet know its name; I ‘style’ it ‘the Way.’ Were I forced to give it a name, I would call it ‘the Great.’ ‘Great’ means ‘to depart’; ‘[t]o depart’ means ‘to be far away’; ‘[a]nd to be far away’ means ‘to return.’” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 77. The Wangbi text differs in certain places: “有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道，強為之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。” Lau translates this: “There is a thing confusedly formed, [b]orn before heaven and earth. Silent and void [i]t stands alone and does not change, [g]oes round and does not weary. It is capable of being the mother of the world. I know not its name [s]o I style it ‘the way’. I give it the makeshift name of ‘the great’. Being great, it is further described as receding. Receding, it is described as far away. Being far away, it is described as turning back.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 36–39.

<sup>245</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 116.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 116–117.

to Graham, in the classical Greek view what is truly real is anchored upon the One behind the many, that is, there is eternal, unchanging Being that our world of experience represents. The classical Chinese view of reality differs in that what is real is not separate or separable from the ongoing process of complex relationships that is evident in our daily experiences of the world.

Graham writes:

In seeking the One behind the many, as also in seeking the constant behind the changing, *Lao-tzu* is using concepts that seem fully identifiable with our own. There is however an important difference from the Western tradition, that no Chinese thinker conceives the One and the constant as Being or Reality behind the veil of appearance.... If we ourselves would prefer to think of it as absolute Reality that is because our philosophy in general has been a search for being, reality, truth, while for the Chinese the question was always, 'Where is the Way?' Chinese thinkers want to know how to live, how to organize community, and at the very end of the pre-Han period, how to relate community to the cosmos.<sup>247</sup>

Thus, while classical Greek thinkers were seeking for truth as discrete and which can be attained by pointing to how well or closely one thing corresponds to Being or Reality, the classical Chinese thinkers sought to understand how we can make the most of the ever-changing circumstances to arrive at the most efficacious relationship at any given point in time. As Ames points out, the Greek tradition emphasizes "the discrete and quantitative," whereas the Chinese tradition values "the qualitative and continuous."<sup>248</sup> One argument that we can make to highlight the importance of placemaking is through the reading of *zi* (自) not as individual, but to read it in the light of the classical Chinese view of *zi* (自; the self) as inclusive. Ames makes an argument for reading *zi* (自) as inclusive self in *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*. He points out that

---

<sup>247</sup> A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), 222–223.

<sup>248</sup> Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, 218–220.

the classical Chinese view of *zi* (自) is not constrained by the dualistic understanding of self that arises from substance ontology. He writes that the “familiar dualisms such as subject/object, agent/action, mind/body, nature/nurture...that arise from substance ontology have little relevance for the Confucian notion of relationally constituted persons.”<sup>249</sup> He adds: “Indeed, this Confucian conception of the person makes no appeal to superordinate, substantive categories such as ‘soul,’ ‘self,’ ‘will,’ ‘faculties,’ ‘nature,’ ‘mind,’ ‘character,’ and so on, but instead locates person gerundively as the embodied, social activity of thinking and feeling within the manifold of relations that constitutes family, community, and the natural environment.”<sup>250</sup> Although, in the quotes above, Ames was discussing the relationality of the self (*zi* 自), the notion of the intrinsically relational self is not limited to the Confucian self. Our discussion of the world and of the inseparability of the myriad elements in the ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和) has given us a hint of the place of the human being in the placemaking of the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物). In the world of relationality, the human being can only also be relational. Thus, *ziran* (自然) can be understood to be the becoming of inclusive self. In this manner, everything is defined and understood within the context of and in virtue of the quality of one’s place within the totality. This understanding of *ziran* facilitates the optimal productiveness of the totality. The oneness is not the “one” of individualism, but “one-ness” of continuity within a multiplicity.

---

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

Thus, we see in the *Daodejing*, that the world is a co-creation in an ecological sense, wherein the functioning of the whole is the result of a coming-together of each member of that ecological environment or community. This resonates with Aldo Leopold's land ethic, which was based on his conviction that an "individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts."<sup>251</sup> To this assertion of Leopold's I add the *Daodejing*'s contribution of the role of each of the members of such a community as well as the nature of the world as placemaking. *Daodejing* 7 reveals the nature of placemaking as "not overdoing."

天長地久。天地之所以能長且久者，以其不自生也，故能長生。是以聖人退其身而身先；外其身而身存。不以其無私與？故能成其私。<sup>252</sup>

The heavens and the earth are long-lasting.  
The reason the heavens and the earth are long-lasting,  
Is because they do not live for themselves,  
Thus are able to live long.  
It is for this reason that the sages withdraw themselves yet find themselves ahead;  
Put themselves out of mind yet remain cared for.  
Is it not because they are not concerned with themselves? Thus, they are able to achieve their needs.

The heavens and the earth (*tiandi* 天地)—in other words, the natural world—are involved in an ongoing symbiosis in which each element is implicated in the totality while, at the same time, constantly interacting with one another. Thus, we can surmise that the myriad elements in the natural world—referred to in the *Daodejing* chapter above in terms of the heavens and the earth—function with the inherent "interest" of the totality, that is, the ecosystem or even the totality of ecosystems that comprise the Earth as a whole; not for a limited and

---

<sup>251</sup> Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 203–204.

<sup>252</sup> DDJ 7. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 86.

individual purpose divorced from the totality. In this milieu, when we consider our role in relation to the world around us, of which we are a part, it would be wise to mirror and resonate with the way of the world, that is, placemaking. The *Daodejing* presents our role as one that is expressed in terms of *wu* (無), that is an attitude of not overdoing, of doing what is appropriate in any given situation or milieu. This involves acting with a clear awareness of what is needed in any given context. In the *Daodejing*, the type of action, knowledge and desire that is appropriate is termed as *wuwei* (無為; acting without overdoing or acting in an appropriate manner), *wuzhi* (無知; knowing that is faithful to what is known), and *wuyu* (無欲; desiring or intending what is appropriate to the most efficacious outcome for the totality).

### **3.9 Placemaking is Wu (無)**

*Daodejing* 16 highlights the necessity for not overdoing (*wu* 無), that is, that our interactions with the world ought to be such that they are undertaken for the sake of achieving harmony and equilibrium (*he* 和). We have already seen how the natural world, as ongoing symbiosis, tends towards harmony and equilibrium, albeit with periods of extinctions and disasters. The members within an ecosystem are always interacting in such a way that they achieve an equilibrium. If an aberration occurs, where there is an excess, the members of the ecosystem adjust to it and eventually find another state of harmony and equilibrium. In this chapter, this achieving of harmony and equilibrium is referred to as *guigen* (歸根; returning to its root). From *Daodejing* 16:



致虛極也，守靜篤也。萬物並作，吾以觀復也。夫物芸芸，各復歸於其根。歸根曰靜，靜是謂復命。復命常也，知常明也。不知常妄，妄作，凶。<sup>253</sup>

Extend your emptiness to its utmost, maintain your equilibrium. The myriad things that are continually becoming arise together, I observe their returning. These numerous things, each returns to its root. Returning to their root is called equilibrium. Equilibrium is called returning to the way things are meant to be. Returning to the way things are meant to be is constantly so. To know what is constantly so is to have understanding. To not know what is constantly so is to be reckless, to act recklessly is to invite misfortune.<sup>254</sup>

A good example of this was shown in the role played by both predator and prey as well as the various elements within the food chain in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Left alone each element played its part in continually maintaining an ongoing balancing of the ecosystem. Only when human beings decided to eliminate one essential element of that carefully self-balancing ecosystem, by completely eliminating the population of gray wolves, did the balance get upset. This led to a cascade of effects that harmed the ecosystem of Yellowstone. Yellowstone park authorities acted to “return to the root” by reintroducing the gray wolf into the ecosystem, which

---

<sup>253</sup> DDJ 16. Ibid., 99.

<sup>254</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “Extend your utmost emptiness as far as you can [a]nd do your best to preserve your equilibrium (*jing*). In the process of all things emerging together (*wanwu*) [w]e can witness their reversion. Things proliferate, [a]nd each again returns to its root. Returning to its root is called equilibrium. Now as for equilibrium—this is called returning to the propensity of things, [a]nd returning to the propensity of things is common sense. Using common sense is acuity, [w]hile failing to use it is to lose control. And to try to do anything while out of control is to court disaster.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “Take emptiness to the limit; [m]aintain tranquility in the center. The ten thousand things—side-by-side they arise; [a]nd by this I see their return. Things come forth in great numbers; Each one returns to its root. This is called tranquility. ‘Tranquility’—This means to return to your fate. To return to your fate is to be constant; [t]o know the constant is to be wise. Not to know the constant is to be reckless and wild; [i]f you’re reckless and wild, your actions will lead to misfortune.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 68. The Wangbi texts differs in some places: “致虛極，守靜篤。萬物並作，吾以觀復。夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。歸根曰靜，是謂復命。復命曰常，知常曰明。不知常，妄作凶。” Lau translates this: “I do my utmost to attain emptiness; I hold firmly to stillness. The myriad creatures all rise together [a]nd I watch their return. The teeming creatures [a]ll return to their separate roots. Returning to one’s roots is known as stillness. This is what is meant by returning to one’s destiny. Returning to one’s destiny is known as the constant. Knowledge of the constant is known as discernment. Woe to him who willfully innovates [w]hile ignorant of the constant.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 22–25.

slowly but surely helped the recovery of the whole, of which the gray wolf was a part. The action of reintroducing the gray wolf to Yellowstone is what we might call *wuwei* (無為), which is an action that is appropriate to allow the members of the ecosystem to find their balance and equilibrium. The earlier action of eliminating the gray wolf is an example of the opposite of *wuwei* (無為), that is, it was an act of overdoing that clearly was inappropriate to the ongoing maintenance of a healthy ecosystem.

We find a similar emphasis in *Daodejing* 9, which warns against the excesses of overdoing things and recommends, instead, the opposite of avarice (wanting to fill the treasure hall):

持而盈之，不若其已；揣而銳之，不可長葆也。金玉盈室，莫之能守也；貴富而驕，自遺咎也。功遂身退，天之道也。<sup>255</sup>

Holding it upright and filling it, is not as good as to stop; pounding and sharpening it, it cannot be preserved for long. With gold and jade filling the hall, no one can protect it. Arrogance with an abundance of wealth, only invites misfortune upon one's self. Withdrawing when the work is accomplished, this is the *dao* of the heavens.<sup>256</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> DDJ 9. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 88.

<sup>256</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: "It is better to desist [t]han to try to hold it upright and fill it to the brim. Pounded to a point [i]ts sharpness cannot be long maintained. When treasure fills the hall, [n]o one is able to keep it safe. Those who are arrogant because of station and wealth [b]ring calamity upon themselves. To retire when the deed is done [i]s the way (*dao*) that *tian* works." Ibid. Henricks translates this: "To hold it upright and fill it, [i]s not so good as stopping in time. When you pound it out and give it a point, [i]t won't be preserved very long. When gold and jade fill your rooms, [y]ou'll never be able to protect them. Arrogance and pride with wealth and rank, [o]n their own bring on disaster. When the deed is accomplished you retire; [s]uch is Heaven's Way!" Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 60. The Wangbi text differs in some places: "持而盈之，不如其已；揣而銳之，不可長保。金玉滿堂，莫之能守；富貴而驕，自遺其咎。功遂身退天之道。" Lau translates this: "Rather than fill it to the brim by keeping it upright [b]etter to have stopped in time; [h]ammer it to a point [a]nd the sharpness cannot be preserved for ever; [t]here may be gold and jade to fill a hall [b]ut there is none who can keep them. To be overbearing when one has wealth and position [i]s to bring calamity upon oneself. To retire when the task is accomplished [i]s the way of heaven." Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 12–13.

The avoiding of excess is another way of saying that *wu* (無) is the central attitude or disposition for placemaking. This is expressed in the *Daodejing* in numerous ways. One of these ways is to abide by the female. *Daodejing* 10 makes this point: “天門啓闔，能為雌乎？”<sup>257</sup> It asks the question, with the gates of *tian* (天) or nature constantly swinging open and closed whether one is able to take the role of the female.<sup>258</sup> The female is used in the *Daodejing* to emphasize *yin* (陰), which as the complementary opposite of *yang* (陽), characterizes an attitude of not overdoing (*wu* 無). In light of the placemaking in our relationship with the natural environment, it is an important reminder that our actions ought to mirror that of the female, with its attendant characteristics of nurturance and care. To remain or keep to the female through our role in placemaking is to recognize that our approach to the natural environment is not one of subjugation but that of *growing* or nurturance. *Daodejing* 59 alludes to this attitude of nurturance:

治人、事天，莫若嗇。夫唯嗇，是以蚤服，蚤服是謂重積德。<sup>259</sup>

---

<sup>257</sup> DDJ 10. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 89.

<sup>258</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “With nature’s gates swinging open and closed, are you able to remain the female?” Ibid., 90. Henricks translates it: “In opening and closing the gates of Heaven—can you play the part of the female?” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 62. D.C. Lau translates this: “When the gates of heaven open and shut are you capable of keeping to the role of the female?” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 15.

<sup>259</sup> DDJ 59. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 169.

For ordering the people and serving the heavens, nothing is as good as being sparing. Only one who is sparing can accept the way early, one who accepts the way early is said to accumulate an abundance of virtue.<sup>260</sup>

The person who follows the *dao* (道) of *tian* (天) is one who takes on an attitude of nurturance, of being sparing with one's resources (*se* 嗇). Ames and Hall translate *se* (嗇) as “husbandry,”<sup>261</sup> which helps make sense of the argument for nurturance of the natural environment. According to Ames and Hall, *se* (嗇) refers to “both husbandry in the agricultural sense of growing and harvesting” as well as “in the economical sense of being sparing.” In the light of our reflection on placemaking as *wu* (無), this passage from the *Daodejing* calls on us to remember that our role in placemaking is one of nurturance instead of avarice.

The opposite of remaining the female (*weici* 為雌), in this interpretation of *weici* (為雌) as taking on the role of nurturance or husbandry (*se* 嗇) and of not overdoing (*wu* 無), can be understood as a form of over-control or coercion over the world. *Daodejing* 29 warns that when we attempt to “control the world,” we will end up losing it. Overdoing it only leads to ruin.

---

<sup>260</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “For bringing proper order to the people and in serving *tian*, nothing is as good as husbandry. It is only through husbandry that you come early to accept the way, and coming early to accept the way is what is called redoubling your accumulation of character (*de*).” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “For ordering humanity and serving Heaven, nothing’s so good as being sparing. For only if you are sparing can you, therefore, early submit to the Way. Early submission—this is called to repeatedly accumulate Virtue.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 28. Lau translates it: “In ruling the people and in serving heaven it is best for a ruler to be sparing. It is because he is sparing [t]hat he may be said to follow the way from the start; Following the way from the start he may be said to accumulate an abundance of virtue...” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 87.

<sup>261</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 169–170.

將欲取天下而為之，吾見其弗得已。夫天下神器也，非可為者也。為者敗之，執者失之。<sup>262</sup>

Those who desire to control the world, I see that they will not succeed. The world is a sacred vessel, it is not something that can be controlled. Those who control it ruin it, those who hold on to it, lose it.<sup>263</sup>

The chapter continues by pointing out the self-balancing act of all things in the world and invites us to act in accordance with the patterns of ongoing symbiosis.

物，或行或隨，或熱或吹，或強或硤，或培或墮。是以聖人去甚，去泰，去奢。<sup>264</sup>

Of the things that are continually becoming, some move ahead and some follow, some are hot and some blow cold, some are strong and some are weak, some rise up and some fall down. For this reason, the sages reject the excessive, the exalted and the extravagant.<sup>265</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> DDJ 29. Ibid., 122.

<sup>263</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “If someone wants to rule the world, and goes about trying to do so, I foresee that they simply will not succeed. The world is a sacred vessel, [a]nd is not something that can be ruled. Those who would rule it ruin it; [t]hose who would control it lose it.” Ibid. Henricks translates it: “For those who would like to take control of the world and act on it—I see that with this they simply will not succeed. The world is a sacred vessel; It is not something that can be acted upon. Those who act on it destroy it; [t]hose who hold on to it lose it.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 81. The Wangbi text differs: “將欲取天下而為之，吾見其不得已。天下神器，不可為也，為者敗之，執者失之。” Lau translates it: “Whoever takes the empire and wishes to do anything to it I see will have no respite. The empire is a sacred vessel and nothing should be done to it. Whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 44-45.

<sup>264</sup> DDJ 29. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 122.

<sup>265</sup> Ames and Hall render it: “In the way of things: Some move ahead while others follow behind; some breathe to warm themselves while others breathe to cool themselves down; some are strong while others are disadvantaged; some accumulate while others collapse. It is for this reason that the sages eschew the excessive, the superlative, and the extravagant.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “With things—some go forward, others follow; [s]ome are hot, others blow cold; [s]ome are firm and strong, others submissive and weak. Some rise up while others fall down. Therefore the Sage: Rejects the extreme, the excessive, and the extravagant.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 81. The Wangbi text differs slightly: “故物或行或隨；或歔或吹；或強或羸；或挫或隤。是以聖人去甚，去奢，去泰。” Lau translates it: “Hence some things lead and some follow; [s]ome breathe gently and some breathe hard; [s]ome are strong and some are weak; [s]ome destroy and some are destroyed. Therefore the sage avoids excess, extravagance, and arrogance.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 44-45.

At times, the world—the things that are continually becoming—move ahead or follow. At times, they are hot and at other times cold. At times, they seem strong and at other times weak, rise up and fall down. Like the changing of the seasons, or the cycles of the weather or the intricate processes of an ecosystem, change and transformation are part and parcel of the never-ending functioning of the natural world. Thus, those who understand this do not try to overdo in their interaction with the world. By not overdoing, the person who participates in the placemaking of the world remains in equilibrium and does not seek to be full. One does not seek fullness because one recognizes that one is on the way. We saw this in our discussion of *Daodejing* 15 above. The passage that I cited from the fifteenth chapter of the text reads: “葆此道者，不欲盈。夫唯不欲盈，是以能敝而不成。”<sup>266</sup> I translate it to read: “Those who preserve *dao* do not desire fullness. It is because they do not desire fullness, they can be worn out yet remain unfinished.” According to *Daodejing* 15, those who preserve *dao* do not desire fullness (葆此道者，不欲盈). This comes from an awareness that we are part of an intrinsic ongoing symbiotic relationship, and, as such, that our actions and the subsequent reactions are continuously affecting the outcome of the world that we are “co-creating”. In the light of placemaking, the *Daodejing* recommends that we gain an understanding or knowledge (*zhi* 知) that recognizes the rhythm of things, as we find in the following line from *Daodejing* 16: “歸根曰靜，靜是謂復命。復命曰常，知常曰明” (Returning to their root is called equilibrium.

---

<sup>266</sup> DDJ 15. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 97.

Equilibrium is called returning to the way things are meant to be. Returning to the way things are meant to be constantly so. To know what is constantly so is to have understanding.).<sup>267</sup>

Elsewhere in the *Daodejing*, we find a call for the ruler or the sage to act according to *wuwei* (無為) or, as we find in *Daodejing* 17, to simply have their presence acknowledged by those whom they govern. The text from *Daodejing* 17 reads: “太上，下知有之” (The highest rulers, their followers only know that they are there).<sup>268</sup> Those who would take on positions of authority and responsibility—and especially those who are the best or who hold the highest positions (*taishang* 太上)—do not seek to lord it over their subjects. Rather, recognizing the potential and the ability of their followers, they are able to synergize the capabilities of the people. In management terms, they are not micromanagers and they do not try to make those who work under them do what they are not suited to do. In terms of our relationship with the natural environment, this disposition enables the responsible agents to seek to understand the myriad elements in an

---

<sup>267</sup> Ames and Hall translate *chang* (常) as “the propensity of things.” Their rendering of this part of the text of *DDJ* 16 goes: “Returning to the root is called equilibrium. Now as for equilibrium—this is called returning to the propensity of things, And returning to the propensity of things is common sense.” Ibid., 99. Henricks translates it: “Each one returns to its root. This is called tranquility. ‘Tranquility’—This means to return to your fate. To return to your fate is to be constant; [t]o know the constant is to be wise.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 68. The Wangbi text differs in some places: “歸根曰靜，是謂復命。復命曰常，知常曰明。” Lau renders it thus: “Returning to one’s roots is known as stillness. This is what is meant by returning to one’s destiny. Returning to one’s destiny is known as the constant. Knowledge of the constant is known as discernment.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 22–25.

<sup>268</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “With the most excellent rulers, their subjects only know that they are there,” whereas Henricks translates it: “With the highest kind of rulers, those below simple know they exist.” Lau translates it: “The best of all rulers is but a shadowy presence to his subjects.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 102; Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 69; Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 24–25.

ecosystem, to learn about the intricacies of the web of life and to do their best to let the myriad things that are continually becoming do what they are meant to do.

The disposition of “simply being known to be there” highlights another important characteristic of *wu* (無), namely, *wuyu* (無欲) or an attitude of deference towards desiring.<sup>269</sup> *Wu* (無), as I discussed above, is a disposition of “deference” instead of an attitude of rejection. It is not a “simply not” stance or attitude. Rather, it is an attitude of generosity and being open to the possibilities in any situation. It also involves a respect for the latent possibilities of the different elements or members of an ecosystem. Given this, *wuyu* (無欲) is the counterpoint to the grasping and controlling mindset that modernity has brought about. It is a deferential attitude toward the world. Instead of wanting to put our mark on the world and trying to tailor it to suit our wants, we become attentive to the delicate balancing act of nature and tailor ourselves to desire a harmonious relationship with the world. *Daodejing* 12 describes the perils of unbounded wanting in its argument for *wuyu* (無欲):

五色使人目盲；馳騁田獵，使人心發狂；難得之貨，使人之行妨。五味使人之口爽，五音使人之耳聾，是以聖人之治療也，為腹而不為目，故去彼而取此。<sup>270</sup>

The five colors cause one to be blind; the swift gallop of the hunt causes one’s heart and mind to be agitated; goods that hard to attain interfere with one’s proper conduct. The five flavors ruin one’s sense of taste, the five sounds impairs one’s hearing. For this reason the

---

<sup>269</sup> *Wuyu* (無欲) is alternately translated as “objectless in their desire” (Ames and Hall), “without desires” (Henricks), and “free from desire” (Lau). As one of the key *wu* (無) forms, we find it discussed within different contexts throughout the text of *Daodejing*, for instance in chapters 3, 7, 9, 10, 15, 44, 46, 77, 80.

<sup>270</sup> DDJ 12. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 92.



sage's remedy for governing is to favor the belly and not the eye, rejecting one and taking the other.<sup>271</sup>

In this chapter, *Daodejing* warns that when we give in to the desires of the senses, we are easily led to excess and lose our sense of balance and harmony. The wise person, one who is *wuyu* (無欲), emphasizes the “abdomen” rather than the “eye.” The reason for this is that one’s abdomen, when satiated can take no more food, whereas one’s eye can still desire more even though one can no longer consume any more food or drink. The eye represents unbounded wants, while the abdomen represents the satiability of one’s deferential desiring.

The key takeaway from this is that one who engages in placemaking ought to do so with *wu* (無). The *wu* (無) forms in the *Daodejing* describe our best way of dwelling deferentially in the world and letting our experience of it “take place.” It is through our cultivation of this quality of deferential relatedness that we are able to optimize the creative possibilities of our experience in the world, and thus mirror the placemaking of the natural environment.

---

<sup>271</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “The five colors blind the eye, the hard riding of the hunt addles both heart and mind, property hard to come by subverts proper conduct, the five flavors destroy the palate, and the five notes impair the ear. It is for this reason that in proper governing by the sages: They exert their efforts on behalf of the abdomen rather than the eye. Thus, eschewing one they take the other.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “The five colors cause one’s eyes to go blind. Racing horses and hunting cause one’s mind to go mad. Goods that are hard to obtain pose an obstacle to one’s travels. The five flavors confuse one’s palate. The five tones cause one’s ears to go deaf. Therefore, in the government of the Sage: He’s for the belly and not for the eyes. Thus he rejects that and takes this.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 64. The Wangbi text reads: “五色令人目盲；五音令人耳聾；五味令人口爽；馳騁田獵，令人心發狂；難得之貨，令人行妨。是以聖人為腹不為目，故去彼取此。” Lau translates it: “The five colors make man’s eyes blind; [t]he five notes make his ears deaf; [t]he five tastes injure his palate; [r]iding and hunting [m]ake his mind go wild with excitement; [g]oods hard to come by [s]erve to hinder his progress. Hence the sage is [f]or the belly [n]ot for the eye. Therefore he discards the one and takes the other.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 16–17.

Mirroring the placemaking of the world happens, according to *Daodejing*, when our decisions and actions are guided by *ziran* (自然). *Daodejing* 25 presents a vision of the human being's relation to the world that is rooted in an understanding of our place and in our role in placemaking.

道大，天大，地大，王亦大。國中有四大，而王居一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。<sup>272</sup>

*Dao* is great, the heavens are great, the earth is great, the king is also great. Within the realm, there are four greats, and the king dwells as one. Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate *dao*, *dao* emulates what is naturally so.<sup>273</sup>

We are charged to emulate *dao* (道), the heavens (*tian* 天) and the earth (*di* 地).<sup>274</sup> Our place in relation with *dao*, the heavens and the earth is encapsulated in the following phrase: “人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”<sup>275</sup> This translates to: Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate *dao*, *dao* emulates what is naturally so. From this we see that by emulating *dao* (道), the heavens (*tian* 天), and the earth (*di* 地), human beings (*ren* 人) attain *ziran* (自然). Read in another way, this is an invitation to human beings to

---

<sup>272</sup> DDJ 25. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115. The Wangbi text is slightly different: “故道大，天大，地大，王亦大。域中有四大，而王居其一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。” D.C. Lau renders it thus: “Hence the way is great; heaven is great, earth is great; and the king is also great. Within the realm there are four things that are great, and the king counts as one. Man models himself on earth, Earth on heaven, Heaven on the way, And the way on that which is naturally so.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 36–37. Henricks works from the *Mawangdui* Text B that contains the same characters as the text which Ames and Hall work from for their translation of the *Daodejing*.

<sup>273</sup> For a comparison of the translations of Ames and Hall; Henricks; and Lau, refer to Footnote 195.

<sup>274</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

emulate nature by not overdoing.<sup>276</sup> In the *Daodejing*, the human being's place in the world is no greater than that of the earth (*di* 地), the heavens (*tian* 天) and *dao* (道). Graham Parkes makes this point in his discussion of this chapter of the *Daodejing*. He points out that of the four (*dao* 道, the heavens 天, the earth 地 and the king 王), the king (王) is named last. The king (王)—the greatest of human beings in the view of the ancients—is last when compared to the three.<sup>277</sup> The heavens (*tian* 天), as the Daoist understands, refer to nature or the natural world. *Tian* (天) is often used to refer to *tiandi* (天地) or nature, that is, the forces of nature both around and within the human being.<sup>278</sup> *Ziran* (自然) is connected to the notion of “natural limits.”<sup>279</sup> The forces of nature around and within the human being unfold within a self-balancing system (of natural limits) of interactions and relationships. For instance, the fine balance that exists between predator and prey in an ecosystem.<sup>280</sup> The natural world works through processes of interactions among the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物)<sup>281</sup>, and the human being is called to act within a natural limit of checks and balances (emulate the earth

---

<sup>276</sup> See, for example, *DDJ* 9, 23, 77.

<sup>277</sup> Parkes, “Lao-Zhuang and Heidegger on Nature and Technology,” 115.

<sup>278</sup> For more information, see the discussion of nature from the essay of Antoine Dussault in Antoine Dussault, “Ecological Nature: A Non-Dualistic Concept for Rethinking Humankind’s Place in the World,” *Ethics & the Environment* 21, no. 1 (2016): 1–37.

<sup>279</sup> Parkes, “Lao-Zhuang and Heidegger on Nature and Technology,” 116.

<sup>280</sup> We have seen an example of this predator-prey relationship and its effects on the wider ecological community in our discussion of the eradication from—and subsequent reintroduction of—the gray wolf to the Yellowstone National Park in the United States.

<sup>281</sup> See, for instance, *Daodejing* 34, 42, 51, 52.

地...the heavens 天...*dao* 道...*ziran* 自然).<sup>282</sup> This manner of human action in the world is what the *Daodejing* refers to as *wuwei* (無為).<sup>283</sup> In the context of environmental ethics, when we act with *wuwei* (無為) toward the environment, we are acting with *ziran* (自然). This is what I call the Daoist environmental ethic of *weiziran* (為自然).<sup>284</sup> The sage is charged to emulate *dao* (道) and thus, just as the *dao* of *tian* (天之道) brings “benefit [to all] without harming” the

---

<sup>282</sup> A note on the order of 人 (*ren*), 地 (*di*), 天 (*tian*), and 道 (*dao*) presented in *Daodejing* 25: “道大，天大，地大，王亦大。國中有四大，而王居一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。” Liu Xiaogan’s study of the different extant versions of the *Daodejing* reveals that the arrangement of *dao* (道), *tian* (天), *di* (地), and *wang* (王) was most likely the work of later redactors of the text to highlight the importance of *dao* (道), a key concept in the *Daodejing*. Liu writes: “In the bamboo-slip version of Chapter 25, the following passage is different from all other known versions: 天大，地大，道大，王亦大。...人法地，地法天，天法道。Heaven is great, Earth is great, Dao is great, And the king is also great. ...Man models himself after earth, Earth models itself after Heaven, Heaven models itself after Dao. Needless to say, the sequence of the first passage—heaven, earth, Dao, and king—is not in order and does not correspond to the sequence of man, earth, heaven, and Dao in the second passage. Thus, beginning with the silk versions, the sequence in the first passage was reorganized into Dao, heaven, earth, and king, which is in accordance with Daoist doctrine and acknowledges the ultimate position of Dao. The reorganization does not change the essential idea of the text, but sharpens the focus.” Xiaogan Liu, “From Bamboo Slips to Received Versions: Common Features in the Transformation of the ‘Laozi,’” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63, no. 2 (2003): 368–369.

<sup>283</sup> We find a similar notion in *Zhuangzi* 19: *xiangtian* (相天).

<sup>284</sup> A word about 為自然 (*weiziran*). I explained the meaning and provenance of the term in Footnote 109 in “Chapter 1: Introduction,” but it is worth repeating it here. 為自然 is a creative term that reflects my appropriation of one of the central themes in Daoist texts, namely, 道法自然 (*dao fa ziran*). We find this term, for instance, in *Daodejing* 25. I owe the idea for this creative appropriation, 為自然 (*weiziran*), to the essay by Hall, “On Seeking a Change of Environment.” In this essay, he makes an argument for *ziran* (自然) as ethical imperative for Daoist philosophy. The word (為) here takes on both the meaning of “to act” and “for the sake of.” Thus, 為自然 is an ethical norm to act with (為) and for the sake of (為) *ziran* (自然).

person who is involved in placemaking is able to nurture and “benefit” the world without “harming” it.<sup>285</sup> It is, as Heidegger points out, knowing how to dwell.

### ***3.10 Placemaking is Knowing How to Dwell Rightly***

上善似水。水善利萬物而又爭居衆人之所惡，故幾於道矣。居善地，心善淵，予善天，言善信，政善治，事善能，動善時。夫唯不爭，故無尤。<sup>286</sup>

The highest good is like water. Water benefits the myriad things that are continually becoming yet dwells in places that the multitude dislike, and thus is close to *dao*. In dwelling, the good is being in place; in thinking and feeling, the good is in depth; in giving, the good is being like the heavens; in speaking, the good is being sincere; in

---

<sup>285</sup> DDJ 81: “故天之道，利而不害；聖人之道，為而不爭。” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 203. This can be translated: “Therefore, the *dao* of the heavens brings benefit without causing any harm, the *dao* of the sages is to act without contending.” Ames and Hall render this: “Thus, the way of *tian* is to benefit without harming; [t]he way of the sages is to do without contending.” Ibid., 204. Henricks translates it: “Therefore the Way of Heaven is to benefit and not cause any harm; [t]he Way of Man is to act on behalf of others and not to compete with them.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 37. Lau translates the Wangbi text: “天之道，利而不害；聖人之道，為而不爭。” thus: “The way of heaven benefits and does not harm; the way of the sage is bountiful and does not contend.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 116–117.

<sup>286</sup> DDJ 8. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 87.

governing, the good is in being orderly; in serving, the good is in being capable; in acting, the good is in being timely. Because it does not content, it is without fault.<sup>287</sup>

This passage from *Daodejing* 8 highlights the importance of dwelling (*ju* 居) by drawing on the image of water, which benefits all things in the world while occupying the lowest of places (since water always flows downwards). Flowing downwards to the “lowest places” water carries with it nutrients and thus makes the valleys and the deltas fertile. We can extend this image to reflect on the question of dwelling (*ju* 居). The passage points out the “in dwelling, the good is being in place” (*jushandi* 居善地). As Heidegger points out, our being human is inextricably tied to dwelling. “To be is to dwell.”<sup>288</sup> Here in the eighth chapter of the *Daodejing*, we find an added insight about the manner in and through which human beings dwell on the earth: our dwelling reaches its highest efficacy when we consider that dwelling involves being in place—knowing where the right place is. Dwelling is placemaking. But more than the act of

---

<sup>287</sup> Ames and Hall render this: “The highest efficacy is like water. It is because water benefits everything (*wanwu*) [y]et vies to dwell in places loathed by the crowd [t]hat it comes nearest to proper way-making. In dwelling, the question is where is the right place. In thinking and feeling, it is how deeply. In giving, it is how much like nature’s bounty. In speaking, it is how credibly. In governing, it is how effectively. In serving, it is how capably. In acting, it is how timely. It is only because there is no contentiousness in proper way-making [t]hat it incurs no blame.” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “The highest good is like water; [w]ater is good at benefitting the ten thousand things and yet it does not compete with them. It dwells in places that masses of people detest, [t]herefore it is close to the Way. In dwelling, the good thing is the land; [i]n the mind, the good thing is depth; [i]n giving, the good thing is being like Heaven; [i]n speaking, the good thing is sincerity; [i]n governing, the good thing is order; [i]n affairs, the good thing is ability; [i]n activity, the good thing is timeliness. It is only because it does not compete, that therefore it is without fault.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 60. The Wangbi text differs in some places: “上善若水。水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾於道。居善地，心善淵，與善仁，言善信，正善治，事善能，動善時。夫唯不爭，故無尤。” Lau translates this: “Highest good is like water. Because water excels in benefitting the myriad creatures without contending with them and settles where none would like to be, it comes close to the way. In a home it is the site that matters; [i]n quality of mind it is depth that matters; [i]n an ally it is benevolence that matters; [i]n speech it is good faith that matters; [i]n government it is order that matters; [i]n affairs it is ability that matters; [i]n action it is timeliness that matters. It is because it does not contend that it is never at fault.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 10–11.

<sup>288</sup> Heidegger writes in “Building Dwelling Thinking,” that: “To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.” Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” 349.

searching for a right location, knowing where the right place is, involves a *making-right* of the place. We take this from the first stanza of the chapter, which discusses the manner in which water (*shui* 水) benefits everything that is continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物). Seeking for one's place, and knowing one's place in dwelling is a coordinated effort between the human being and the world that one lives in. Just as water dwells in the lowly places (*juzhong renzhi suo* 居衆人之所惡 “dwells in places that the multitude dislike”), and by doing so “is close to *dao*” (*gu jiyu daoyu* 故幾於道矣), the human being can learn by seeking out the role that supports and allows for the gathering of all that is good (a valley or low-lying body of water is where the nutrients and fertile soil flows into).

Further, to dwell is to be at home. D.C. Lau translates *ju* (居) as “a home.” One way to understand the meaning of home is to figure out in what manner *ju* (居) is used here. If we read *ju* (居), as Ames and Hall do, as a gerund<sup>289</sup>, we emphasize the point of participation, and of the ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和) that *dao* (道) makes in the world (*tiandi* 天地—the heavens and the earth, and *wanwu* [萬物]—the myriad things that are continually becoming). Thus *weiziran* (為自然) invites us to care for the natural environment, to dwell, to participate in the placemaking of the world.

---

<sup>289</sup> In fact, they read each of the succeeding words (*xin* 心, *yu* 予, *yan* 言, *zheng* 政, *shi* 事, *dong* 動) as gerunds: thinking and feeling, giving, speaking, governing, serving, and acting, respectively.

Essential to placemaking is also the knowledge of how to dwell within one's locale. Another passage in the *Daodejing* points out that it is not necessary to venture far from one's door in order to know the world. *Daodejing* 47 begins with the following lines: “不出於戶，以知天下...” (It is not necessary to venture far from one's door to know the world).<sup>290</sup> It continues by saying that we need not look outside our window in order to understand the workings of the heavens (不窺於牖，以知天道。)”<sup>291</sup> In the context of placemaking, this is an invitation to fully dwell (as Heidegger calls us to dwell within the fourfold) within our surroundings, to fully immerse ourselves in our locale, in our world that we are co-creators of by our contribution to its becoming and taking place. This realization points us to another important insight from this chapter of the *Daodejing*, that is, in order to fully understand the world that we are a part of making, we need to understand not just what the world is and how it works, but that the world is taking place precisely because we are equally responsible for placemaking in a world that is “realized” and brought about in our interaction with its myriad elements. Ames and Hall call this

---

<sup>290</sup> *Daodejing* 47. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 150. Ames and Hall translate this: “Venture not beyond your doors to know the world...” Ibid. Henricks translates this: “No need to leave your door to know the whole world...” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 16. The Wangbi text reads: “不出戶知天下” Lau translates this: “Without stirring abroad one can know the whole world” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 68–69.

<sup>291</sup> Ames and Hall render it, “Peer not outside your window to know the way-making (*dao*) of *tian*.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 150. Henricks translates this: “No need to peer through your windows to know the Way of Heaven.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 16. The Wangbi text reads: “不闕牖見天道,” which Lau translates: “Without looking out of the window [o]ne can see the way of heaven.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 68–69.



knowing or understanding “knowing-whence.”<sup>292</sup> Knowing-whence involves a disposition of knowing the world that is attendant to the natural environment as placemaking. In *Daodejing*, it is called *wuzhi* (無知).<sup>293</sup> We learned from our previous discussion that *wuwei* (無為) and *wuyu* (無欲) provide the disposition for the manner in which we act and desire. *Wuzhi* (無知), for its part, is the disposition for knowing that defers to the rich and unfinished experience that comes from being immersed in the world. Through the lens provided by *Daodejing* 47, we recognize that, in order to know the world, we must be attentive to our implacement, the place where we are. In the language of the text, this involves “not looking outside the window” but being fully present to our experience in the here and now. *Daodejing* 71 speaks of *wuzhi* (無知) in another way:

知不知，尚矣，不知知，病矣。是以聖人之不病，以其病病也，是以不病。<sup>294</sup>

This translates to: Knowing that one does not know, this is to truly know. Not knowing that one knows, this is truly an illness. For this reason, sages do not suffer illness, because sages

---

<sup>292</sup> “‘Knowing’ entails not only ‘know-how’ and ‘know-what,’ but also ‘know-whence.’ That is, the world is always known from one perspective or another, and never from nowhere. Knowledge is not the subjective representation of some objective reality, but a quality of the local experience itself. It is the ‘realizing’ of a particular kind of experience in the sense of bringing it about and making it real.” Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 150.

<sup>293</sup> *Wuzhi* (無知) is rendered “to be unprincipled in their knowing” (Ames and Hall), “without knowledge” (Henricks), and “not knowing anything” (Lau).

<sup>294</sup> DDJ 71. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 189.

recognize an illness for what it is. For this reason, they are not afflicted.<sup>295</sup> *Wuzhi* (無知) involves being cognizant of our tendency to prejudge events and impose our preconceived notions of how things ought to be. In the context of our place in the world, it is to overcome the dualistic stance of modernity and recover and rediscover our place in the world. It is to be fully immersed in the world as placemaking, and to let the world take place. The Daoist sense of placemaking, that is centered on *wu* (無), elucidates the attitude and stance that we ought to take in relation with the world that we are a part of making. As a guide to an ethics of the environment, Daoist placemaking points us toward *weiziran* (為自然), that is, an ethics of acting with (*wei* 為) and for the sake of (*wei* 為) the ongoing symbiosis that is the natural environment (*ziran* 自然). Thus, as I pointed out previously, we are called upon to emulate *dao* (道). As *Daodejing* 81 points out, the *dao* of *tian* (*tianzhidao* 天之道) brings benefit [to all] without causing any harm (*lierbuhai* 利而不害). From this, we see that the person who is involved in placemaking is able to nurture and “benefit” the world without “harming” it. The passage in *Daodejing* 81 reads: “故天之道，利而不害；聖人之道，為而不爭。” I render this: “Therefore,

---

<sup>295</sup> Ames and Hall translate this: “Knowing that one does not know is knowing at its best, [b]ut not knowing that one knows is suffering from a disease. Thus, the reason the sages are free of disease [i]s because they recognize the disease as a disease. This is why they are not afflicted.” Ibid. Henricks translates it: “To know that you don’t know is best. Not to know you don’t know is a flaw. Therefore, the Sage’s not being flawed [s]tems from his recognizing a flaw as a flaw. Therefore, he is flawless.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 42. The Wangbi text reads: “知不知上；不知知病。夫唯病病，是以不病。聖人不病，以其病病，是以不病。” Lau translates it: “To know yet to think that one does not know is best; Not to know yet to think that one knows will lead to difficulty. It is by being alive to difficulty that one can avoid it. The sage meets with no difficulty. It is because he is alive to it that he meets with no difficulty.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 104–105.

the *dao* of the heavens brings benefit without causing any harm, the *dao* of the sages is to act without contending.”<sup>296</sup>

### 3.11 *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha ‘Āina*

Having considered environmental ethics from the Daoist perspective (*weiziran* 為自然), I will continue my search for an enduring environmental ethics that is grounded on place, where placemaking mirrors the taking place of the natural world. As I have endeavored to draw from Daoist philosophy in our reflections of place and placemaking in this chapter, I look to the ecological wisdom in the Hawaiian tradition in the next chapter to help us answer Heidegger’s challenge of “think[ing] for the sake of dwelling.” The Hawaiian wisdom shows us an analogical sense: how to live in the world where everything has its proper place. I will reflect on the sense of place through a dynamic and capacious consideration of the meaning of place—one that more fully reflects our dynamic and relational experience of the world.

---

<sup>296</sup> DDJ 81. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 203.

## CHAPTER 4: HAWAIIAN SENSE OF PLACE

*“Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono.”*

*“The life of the Earth will endure if people act appropriately.”<sup>297</sup>*

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I examine a way of placemaking that has been successful at bringing about a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between people and the land. My reflection on what may be called the Hawaiian environmental ethic sets up the lived experience of place as a context, which particularizes the sense of place. Recalling the Daoist sense of place from the previous chapter, we see that *wu* (無) placemaking inspires a way of dwelling deferentially in the world and letting our experience of it “take place.” By undertaking actions that are appropriate to allow the members of the ecosystem to find their balance and equilibrium within the ongoing symbiosis (和 *he*), by not seeking excess and by seeking to nurture instead of taking out of avarice, and by recognizing the rhythm of the natural environment, we will be able to take part in the placemaking of the world. By cultivating this quality of deferential relatedness, we will be able to optimize the creative possibilities of our experience in the world, and thus mirror the placemaking of the natural environment. Place as *wu* (無) placemaking that the Daoist tradition brought out for us becomes, through the Hawaiian sense of place, placemaking as lived

---

<sup>297</sup> Government of the State of Hawai‘i, “State Motto,” *Hawaii Revised Statutes*, last modified 1959, accessed December 8, 2018, [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01\\_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0005/HRS\\_0005-0009.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0005/HRS_0005-0009.htm). The common translation of the state motto of Hawai‘i is: “The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.” My rendering of the state motto into English is consistent with my proposal for a Hawaiian sense of place and ethics of the environment. I make my case for this translation towards the end of this chapter, when I discuss my proposal for a Hawaiian ethics of the environment.

experience. Hawaiian culture is a rich resource for the experience and language of placemaking because of the closeness of ancient Hawaiians to their land, *āina*. The Hawaiian expression, *mālama 'āina*, rendered into English as care for the land, carries with it a deep expression of connection, which I will explore and uncover here.

I aim to discover the Hawaiian sense of place by examining several sources. First, I will reflect on the *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian creation chant and draw from it the foundations for the Hawaiian sense of place. Following this, I will reflect on the land-and-sea-use practices of the ancient Hawaiians—practices that are deeply ingrained in their lives. I will also look at sense of place through the narrative and genealogical traditions of the ancient Hawaiians, as well as how the Hawaiian sense of place has been ingrained in their lives through religion.

#### ***4.2 Why Hawai‘i? Why Hawaiian Sense of Place?***

Before I enter into a discussion of Hawaiian sense of place and the environmental ethics that we might draw from it, I need to address an objection in the form of: Why should we talk about a Hawaiian sense of place in our search for an enduring global environmental ethics? Also, why bring together a Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place? At first glance, we might suppose that ancient China and Hawai‘i cannot be further apart. They are physically separated by an ocean and culturally speaking are as different as any two cultures can be.

##### ***4.2.1 Hawaiian Sense of Place and Daoist Sense of Place Contribute to an Efficacious Dialogue***

Nevertheless, despite the obvious differences, I believe that the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place when thought through together make for an efficacious and enriching partnership for elucidating an enduring environmental ethics. This is especially relevant to the ongoing

comparative philosophical discourse that J. Baird Callicott initiated on the question of environmental ethics. Bringing the Daoist and Hawaiian voices into dialogue with the more established Western ethical approaches will certainly aid us in our search for a more capacious and efficacious ethics of the environment. As I rehearsed the history of environmental ethics earlier in this dissertation, I realized that—as Duara proposes—we do need to step back from the present way of doing things and take a more inclusive and capacious view of the problem.<sup>298</sup> Callicott has blazed the trail for comparative environmental ethics, bringing Eastern and Western traditions into a dialogue. I believe this is the more efficacious way forward. Surely, a reflection on the contributions of these viewpoints will offer greater insight as a way of cultural contrast than a mere either-or comparison. This is even more relevant given that it is my aim to discover a more capacious understanding of place in our pursuit of an enduring ethics of the environment. I believe it will be more advantageous for us to bring more voices to the discussion table in order to advance the discourse than to silence a few just so that we can say our piece.

By engaging the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions in dialogue I am not merely taking from two distinct and unrelated traditions, but, rather, from two traditions that have long histories and that have made substantial contributions to the human person's sense of place. This can only help

---

<sup>298</sup> In “Chapter 1: Introduction,” I presented Duara’s proposal for a solution to what he calls the hegemonic set of “logics” in the realms of economics, politics and culture that have been dictated by the ideals of Western Enlightenment. He argues that the commodification of the natural environment, which led to our present environmental crisis, is a result of this hegemony of Western Enlightenment ideals. To address this problem, Duara proposes that we take on a broader and emergent view of modernity and thus understand it in terms of the “human logic of culture, reflexivity and ethics.” Duara, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*, 91–118.

to broaden our collective understanding of our sense of place in the world as it pertains to our search for a more capacious and enduring ethics of the environment.

#### 4.2.2 Hawaiian Sense of Place Resonates with Daoist Sense of Place

Second, from our understanding of *wu* (無)—not overdoing—as the central inspiration for the placemaking of Daoism, we will find that the Hawaiian understanding of the relationship between the human being and the natural environment resonates with the Daoist sense of place. As we will see in our discussion below, the Hawaiian sense of place resolves around the Hawaiian concepts such as *aloha* (love, reverence), *mālama* (care for, nurture) and *pono* (appropriateness)<sup>299</sup>. These foundational values of the Hawaiian sense of place resonate with the Daoist 為自然 (*weiziran*) of acting for the sake of that which is naturally so. In this view, when we look deeper into the relationality of the human being and the environment in Hawaiian culture, we will find more resonances with *dao* (道). The sinologist, Nathan Sivin, has argued that similarity of knowledge across cultures may exist because peoples draw from a limited stock of ideas. He wrote this in the foreword to Manfred Porkert’s *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence*: “man’s prodigious creativity seems to be based

---

<sup>299</sup> *Pono* has variable meanings in the Hawaiian language, according to the context in which the word is used. The *Hawaiian Dictionary* defines *pono* as: “Goodness, uprightness, morality, moral qualities, correct or proper procedure, excellence, well-being, prosperity, welfare, benefit, behalf, equity, sake, true condition or nature, duty; moral, fitting, proper, righteous, right, upright, just, virtuous, fair, beneficial, successful, in perfect order, accurate, correct, eased, relieved; should, ought, must, necessary.... Completely, properly, rightly, well, exactly, carefully, satisfactorily, much (an intensifier).” Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1986), s.v. “*Pono*.” In the context of the Hawaiian sense of place, I render *pono* as: “appropriateness.”

on the permutations and recastings of a rather small stock of ideas.”<sup>300</sup> Both Daoist and Hawaiian cosmogonies are genealogical<sup>301</sup>—a narrative and process cosmology of placemaking born of peoples separated by time and space, and yet related by a worldview that begins from the primacy of vital relationality. This places them in contrast with the ancient Greeks who espoused a substance ontology.

#### 4.2.3 *Hawai‘i’s Ecosystems Represent Two-thirds of the Earth’s Ecosystems*

A third reason for exploring a Hawaiian sense of place in pursuit of environmental ethics is given to us by the diversity of the Hawaiian islands’ ecosystems. Within the seven habitable islands of Hawai‘i, with a land area of 17,400 square kilometers, a little more than 70 percent of the Earth’s ecosystems can be found. According to the Holdridge Lifezone System, which is one the classic ways of cataloguing ecosystem diversity on earth, there are 38 lifezones that describe the full range of terrestrial ecosystems on Earth. A US Forestry Service Holdridge Lifezone analysis on the Hawaiian islands revealed that 27 of the 38 lifezone categories are found in the archipelago.<sup>302</sup> The result of this study reveals that Hawai‘i can be taken to represent more than two-thirds of the earth’s ecosystems, which is certainly much more than can be said of most of the concentrated terrestrial zones on Earth. The science of ecology has also shown us that we are

---

<sup>300</sup> Porkert, *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence*, xi.

<sup>301</sup> Although both cosmogonies are genealogical, I should point out that the Daoist genealogical cosmogony is metaphorical, as we find in the 俶真訓 chapter of the 淮南子 (*Huainanzi*), while the Hawaiian genealogical cosmogony is literal, as we will see in our discussion of the *Kumulipo*.

<sup>302</sup> Gregory P. Asner et al., “Ecosystem Structure Along Bioclimatic Gradients in Hawai‘i from Imaging Spectroscopy,” *Remote Sensing of Environment* 96, no. 3–4 (2005): 497–508; Gon III, “Lessons from a Thousand Years of Island Sustainability.” See also: L. R. Holdridge, “Determination of World Plant Formations From Simple Climatic Data,” *Science* 105, no. 2727 (April 4, 1947): 367–8.



able to embody similarities in natural processes, for example physiognomy (physical structures of vegetation), which allow us to feel an affinity to similar natural systems and processes anywhere on Earth. For example, standing in a subalpine shrubland anywhere in the world can evoke those feelings generated by long-term experience of the same kind of shrubland from personal experience in the World's subalpine regions. This feeling of affinity is made possible by the similar physiognomy of vegetation at those elevations and temperature regimes. Thus, once we have had sufficient experience of subalpine ecosystems, we can feel an affinity to and assign value to subalpine ecosystems anywhere around the planet.<sup>303</sup> What this points out is that we have the ability to globalize elements of our sense of place. Therefore, by examining and reflecting on the Hawaiian sense of place we are not only limiting ourselves to the experience and insights of the inhabitants of a small group of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Rather, we are reflecting on a shared experience that, through its broad ecosystem representation, is quite global in nature.

#### *4.2.4 Hawaiian Islands are Closely Connected to Oceania in a Sea of Islands*

On the last point of the globalization of our sense of place, I should note that Hawai'i is not as isolated as we might think. Hawai'i, which is part of Polynesia, has a long history of connections with other island cultures. Studies of the voyaging history of the peoples of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia have shown that these peoples are not living in isolation on

---

<sup>303</sup> I am indebted to Samuel M. Gon III for this insight into the affinity that we feel towards similar natural systems in different places.

islands in the large ocean or sea. On the contrary, it is more likely that they are living as part of “a sea of islands.”<sup>304</sup> The Tongan anthropologist, Epeli Hau‘ofa has argued in his 1994 essay that the peoples of what he prefers to call Oceania (rather than the Pacific islands) have a long history of voyaging, and engaged in trade between islands throughout the entire region—from the south to the north Pacific. Hau‘ofa uses the term “Oceania” instead of the “Pacific Islands” to describe the region, which includes Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, because he believes that Oceania more accurately describes the nature of the relationship between the peoples—“ocean peoples”—and their environment. Pacific Islands, he argues, denotes “small areas of land sitting atop submerged reefs or seamounts,” while Oceania denotes “a sea of islands with their inhabitants.”<sup>305</sup> It was “a large sea full of places to explore, to make their homes in, to breed generations of seafarers like themselves...[and their world was a] large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled, unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers.”<sup>306</sup>

The view of “a sea of islands” represents the voyaging cultures of Oceania before the western powers divided them with “invisible lines” into small separate island jurisdictions. Hau‘ofa presents an argument from the exchange of cultures and trade of the “ocean peoples” of Oceania. The 2014-2017 worldwide voyage of the *Hōkūle‘a* (besides drawing attention to environmental issues and the preservation of the Earth) is a powerful testament to the voyaging

---

<sup>304</sup> Epeli Hau‘ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 148–161, accessed May 16, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23701593>.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 153–154.

life of the peoples of the sea of islands. Hau‘ofa points out the following important realities of Oceania life:

To the peoples of Oceania their “universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas.”<sup>307</sup>

The ocean peoples travelled from one island to another and created networks of interdependent relationships among the inhabitants. “Evidence of the conglomerations of islands with their economies and cultures is readily available in the oral traditions of the islands, and in blood ties that are retained today.”<sup>308</sup> Hau‘ofa offers as examples the kin connections held by the high chiefs of Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga.<sup>309</sup> Further evidence of the culture of ocean peoples is how their resources are “no longer confined to...national boundaries,” but rather “locate wherever these people are living, permanently or otherwise, as they were before the age of western imperialism.”<sup>310</sup> These resources are seen in the form of “goods from home,” construction, agricultural material, handcrafts, tropical fruits and root crops, and so on.<sup>311</sup> Hau‘ofa also points to the interdependence of the peoples—between those living and working abroad and those at home. There is an exchange of goods and of “maintaining ancestral roots...lands...a home,” language, and culture. Contrary to the misconception that the people of

---

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 154–155.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

Oceania “live from day to day,” Hau‘ofa points out that most native islanders “plan for generations, for the continuity and improvement of their families and kin groups.”<sup>312</sup> Hau‘ofa’s study is very much relevant to our reflections on Hawaiian culture and sense of place, as the Greater Oceania connects some of the most far-flung peoples within the Polynesian Triangle. Research also supports the Hawaiian traditional stories that the ancestors of the Hawaiians were voyagers from Tahiti.<sup>313</sup> Indeed, the linguistic similarities of the peoples of Hawai‘i, Aotearoa (New Zealand), and Rapanui (Easter Island) indicate their cultural closeness despite the maximal geographic separation.

Edvard Hviding expresses a similar idea in: “Both Sides of the Beach: Knowledge of Nature in Oceania.” In his chapter to the book, *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, he says that the peoples of Oceania had an important relation to land and sea that was at once local and extensive. He writes that the “typical approach taken by Pacific Islanders to the island environment...is characterized on the one hand by detailed knowledge of and intense engagement with the land and its associated reefs and inshore seas, and on the other by a fundamental outwards-looking view of the world as not confined to the home island but connected across the ocean with other natures and cultures.”<sup>314</sup> This connectedness further underlines the connectedness of Hawai‘i with the rest of Oceania.

---

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>313</sup> For more information, see: Thompson, “Traditional Knowledge for Today’s Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress”; Polynesian Voyaging Society, “Nainoa Thompson”; Nainoa Thompson, “A Challenge to Learn,” *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*, last modified 1999, accessed October 20, 2016, [http://archive.hokulea.com/hoonaaauao/intro\\_hoonaaauao.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/hoonaaauao/intro_hoonaaauao.html); Thompson, “On Wayfinding.”

<sup>314</sup> Edvard Hviding, “Both Sides of the Beach: Knowledges of Nature in Oceania,” in *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2003), 254–255.

Considering the vastness of the realm of Oceania, this connected relationship comes closest to one that is truly global. Thus, our choice of engaging in a dialogue between the Hawaiian and Daoist traditions is one that is worth making.

Having made the case for the dialogue between the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, let us delve into the Hawaiian sense of place as it is rooted in the *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian chant of creation.

#### **4.3 Hawaiian Sense of Place in the Kumulipo**

The *Kumulipo*,<sup>315</sup> the Hawaiian chant of creation, can be read as a central narrative of the Hawaiian sense of place. The *Kumulipo* presents a narrative of cosmogonic genealogy in Hawaiian culture. Martha Warren Beckwith points out that the genealogical prayer chant links “the royal family to which it belonged not only to primary gods belonging to the whole people and worshipped in common with allied Polynesian groups, not only to deified chiefs born into the living world, the *Ao*, within the family line, but to the stars in the heavens and the plants and animals useful to life on earth, who must also be named within the chain of birth and their

---

<sup>315</sup> Beckwith (trans.), *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant*; Rubellite Kawena Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth* (Honolulu: [Publisher not identified], 2000); Liliuokalani, *The Kumulipo: An Hawaiian Creation Myth*. Rubellite Kawena Johnson’s translation of the *Kumulipo* draws on a number of versions of the text and reincorporates the “Luanu‘u genealogy” that was not used by Queen Liliuokalani and Martha Beckwith in their translations of the *Kumulipo*. Johnson theorizes that the current text of the *Kumulipo* is a conglomeration of: (1) a “David Malo manuscript [that contained] a separate *Kumulipo* genealogy containing only lists of names in *papa helu* recitations identical to the Kalakaua text translated into English by Lili‘uokalani” (Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, vii.) and (2) “poem sections...by Moloka‘i *kahuna* to the Hale Naua members who had been sent by King Kalakaua to Moloka‘i to collect ancient traditions” (Ibid., viii.).

representatives in the spirit world thus be brought into the service of their children who live to carry on the line in the world of mankind.”<sup>316</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Hawaiian Cosmogony

This reading of the Hawaiian chant of creation can be gleaned from the name of the chant itself, that is, *Kumulipo*. The name is made up of two words in the Hawaiian language, *kumu* and *lipo*. *Kumu* means source, while *lipo* means the dark depths.<sup>317</sup> Thus, *Kumulipo* can be interpreted as a chant that traces the source (*kumu*) of the Hawaiian chiefs (*ali ‘i*) and everything that we find in the land and sea of the Hawaiian islands to their very beginnings (*lipo*, the dark depths). As it is told in the *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian cosmogony can be read in the first ten of its sixteen *wā* (alternatively translated as era, epoch, or period). The eleventh to the sixteenth *wā* are genealogies of the gods and the chiefs of Hawai‘i.<sup>318</sup> The chant makes use of the visual perception of darkness and light in its story of the coming to being and the evolution of the land and sea and of life forms in the sea and rivers and land. Johnson observes that the story of cosmogony in the *Kumulipo* is told in the form of a transition from deep-darkness to light.<sup>319</sup>

---

<sup>316</sup> Beckwith (trans.), *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant*.

<sup>317</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Kumulipo*.”

<sup>318</sup> The *Kumulipo* is divided into sixteen *wā*, which means: period of time, epoch, era, time, occasion, season, age. Ibid., s.v. “*Wā*.” Each *wā* can be read as a separate chapter, as of a book, and the *wā* describe the cosmogony of the Hawaiian islands and the genealogy of the Hawaiian peoples, through the line of King Kamehameha, the first king to unify the Hawaiian islands. The sixteen *wā* are as follow: (1) *Ka Wā Akahi*, (2) *Ka Wā Elua*, (3) *Ka Wā Ekolu*, (4) *Ka Wā Ehā*, (5) *Ka Wā Elima*, (6) *Ka Wā Eono*, (7) *Ka Wā Ehiku*, (8) *Ka Wā Ewalu*, (9) *Ka Wā Eiwa*, (10) *Ka Wā ‘Umi*, (11) *Wā ‘Umikūmākahi*, (12) *Wā ‘Umikūmālua*, (13) *Wā ‘Umikūmākolu*, (14) *Wā ‘Umikūmāhā*, (15) *Wā ‘Umikūmālima*, and (16) *Wā ‘Umikūmāono*.

<sup>319</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 56–57.

The first seven *wā* describe the birth of all things—starting from the sea (*kai*) and moving inland (*uka*)—within the backdrop of darkness. For instance, the first *wā*, *Ka Wā Akahi*, begins:

*O ke au i kahuli wela ka honua*  
*O ke au i kahuli lole ka lani*  
*O ke au i kuka 'iaka ka la*  
*E ho 'omalamalama i ka malama*  
*O ke au o Makali 'i ka po*  
*O ka walewale ho 'okumu honua ia*  
*O ke kumu o ka lipo i lipo ai*  
*O ke kumu o ka po i po ai*  
*O ka lipolipo o ka lipolipo*  
*O ka lipo o ka la*  
*O ka lipo o ka po*  
*Pō wale ho 'i.*<sup>320</sup>

Johnson renders this into English thus:

When space turned around the earth heated  
When space turned over, the sky reversed  
When the sun appeared standing in the shadows  
To cause light to make bright the moon  
When the Pleiades are small eyes in the night  
From the source in the slime earth formed  
From the source in the dark, darkness formed  
From the source in the night, night formed  
From the depths of darkness, darkness so deep  
Darkness of day  
Darkness of night  
Of night alone.<sup>321</sup>

At the end of each of the first seven *wā*, the chant ends with the words: “*Pō nō*,” meaning, “It is yet night,” or “Still night,” or “Only the night.”<sup>322</sup> Light enters into the chant

---

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid., 1–24.

with the eighth *wā* after the birth of human beings. The eighth and ninth *wā* end with the phrase: “*Ua ao*,” meaning, “It was day.”<sup>323</sup> The movement from darkness to light is significant in that it could connote two things: first, the cosmogonic tale of the *Kumulipo* takes us far back into the very beginnings of all things, and, second, the birthing of the human being brings with it an ability of seeing and observing, and of knowledge and understanding. Regarding the first implication, we might say that the reference to the deep-darkness represents a reaching back so far into the past that it is shrouded in darkness. Yet, the darkness is not a darkness in a pejorative sense. Darkness is not contrasted with light in the manner that presents darkness as representing something negative and light representing something good. There is not the value judgment of negative (dark) versus positive (light). Rather, darkness representing a far distant past highlights the claim of the cosmogonic tale of its antiquity, as far as things go back. The darkness is meant to take our minds to a place of beginnings. The second element of darkness and light—that of the birthing of the human being bringing light, or the world becoming light with the birth of the human being—highlights the role of human being as one who is able to understand the cosmogonic tale, which paints a picture of the intricate connectedness of all life and of the land and sea. It is we who have the ability to understand the genealogy of life on earth, and it is we who are charged with passing on the tale of the connectedness of life and of the importance of maintaining or caring (*mālama*, in the Hawaiian language) for the land (*‘āina*).<sup>324</sup> Care for the

---

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 25–27.

<sup>324</sup> *Mālama* is defined in the *Hawaiian Dictionary* as: “[t]o take care of, tend, attend, care for, preserve, protect, beware, save, maintain; to keep or observe, as a taboo; to conduct, as a service; to serve, honor, as God; care, preservation, support, fidelity, loyalty; custodian, caretaker, keeper.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Mālama*.”



land (*mālama ʻāina*), in the Hawaiian sense of place, involves care for all the elements of the ecosystem. The *Kumulipo* cosmogonic tale highlights the deep connection of the physical elements of the Hawaiian ecosystems—from the coral polyp (*ʻUkuko ʻako ʻa*) to all lifeforms in the sea, in the rivers and streams, on land and in the air.

The birthing of species of marine, freshwater and terrestrial flora and fauna in the chant reveals the careful and keen observation of the ancient Hawaiians of their surroundings. It reveals the Hawaiian sense of place as one that involves a close attentiveness to and connection to their surroundings, learning from and understanding how to live and make the most of their rich, but clearly finite island habitat. Johnson highlights these details in her commentary to her translation of the *Kumulipo*. Her discussion of the connections between the biological life of the islands and the Hawaiians' observation of the stars and charting their calendar, including their agricultural and fishing calendars reveals how much the people organized their lives in relation to the world around them.<sup>325</sup>

---

<sup>325</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 39–78. Johnson shows how the ancient Hawaiians had organized their calendar by observing the Pleiades (the cluster of stars most obvious to the naked eye in the night sky). Citing a study by Johanna Broda on Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican correlation of the sightings of the Pleiades to the approximate dates in the Gregorian calendar at a latitude of 21 degrees North (on which the island of Maui is also situated), Johnson compares the dates to the Hawaiian agricultural calendar. She also highlights a uniquely Hawaiian indigenous calendrical computation, noting that in “pre-contact times the Hawaiian calendar (dedicated to Lono-i-ka-makahiki, god of time) was set...to the first new moon after the first evening rise of the Pleiades on the eastern horizon....” This meant that the Hawaiian agricultural year was set to begin sometime in November. Johanna Broda, “Astronomy, Cosmvision and Ideology in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385, no. 1 (1982): 81–110; Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 32–35.

#### 4.3.2 Hawaiian Genealogical Narrative Identity

The *Kumulipo*'s depiction of the birth of species and their evolution does not attempt to tell the story of evolution as we would understand it from the perspective of natural science. It is not meant to do so. Instead, its aim is to narrate and explain the relationality of life forms and their interdependence within the ecosystem. For example, in the first *wā*, we find the following description:

*Hanau ka po*  
*Hanau Kumulipo i ka po he kane*  
*Hanau Po 'ele i ka po he wahine*  
*Hanau ka 'Ukuko 'ako 'a*  
*Hanau kana he 'Ako 'ako 'a, puka*  
*Hanau ke Ko 'e 'enuhe 'eli ho 'opu 'u honua*  
*Hanau kana he Ko 'e, puka*  
*Hanau ka Pe 'a*  
*Ke Pe 'ape 'a kana keiki, puka*  
*Hanau ka Weli*  
*He Weliweli kana keiki, puka...*<sup>326</sup>

These lines are translated:

Did night give birth  
Born *Kumulipo* in the night, male  
Born *Po 'ele* in the night, female  
Born the coral polyp  
Born of him a coral colony emerged  
Born the burrowing worm, hilling the soil  
Born of him a worm emerged  
Born the starfish  
The small starfish his child emerged  
Born the sea cucumber  
A small sea cucumber his child emerged...<sup>327</sup>

---

<sup>326</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 1.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

The narration of the birth of species in the passage quoted above illustrates how all lifeforms—both male and female—are born of night (*po*), which births deep darkness (*Kumulipo*) and dark night (*Po 'ele*). The coral polyp is the first to emerge in the seas, the firstborn of all lifeforms. This coral polyp (*'Ukuko 'ako 'a*) forms a coral colony (*'Ako 'ako 'a*). Following this, the burrowing worm (*Ko 'e 'enuhe*) is born, which brings forth a worm (*Ko 'e*). Following this, the starfish is born (*Pe 'a*), which in its turn brings forth the small starfish with its child (*Pe 'ape 'a kana keiki*). Then the sea cucumber (*Weli*) is born, which brings forth the small sea cucumber with its child (*Weliweli kana keiki*). As we trace the genealogy of creation, we eventually arrive at the human being. Thus, the *Kumulipo* situates the human being within the evolution of births as a descendant of the coral polyp. We are but one part of the ecosystem, we are not masters of the Earth; rather, we are younger siblings and should, therefore, know our place.

#### 4.3.3 *Kia 'i: Those Born of the Land Watch Over Those Born of the Sea*

The *Kumulipo* also highlights the close connection between the sea and land. It does so in the creation chant by pairing sea creatures and land creatures. Oftentimes, the connection is made of similar types of lifeform and oftentimes the pairs are made from creatures that bear similar-sounding names. One interesting point to note in the pairing of sea and land flora and fauna is that the flora or fauna associated with land is referred to as “watching over, or guarding, or

keeping” (*kia ‘i*) the flora or fauna associated with the sea.<sup>328</sup> Take, for instance, the following lines from the second *wā*, *Ka Wā Elua*:

*Hanau ka Pahau noho i kai*  
*Kia ‘i ‘ia e ka Lauhau noho i uka...*  
*Hanau ka He ‘e noho i kai*  
*Kia ‘i ‘ia e ka Walahe ‘e noho i uka...*<sup>329</sup>

Translated, they read:

Born the *pahau* fish living in the sea  
Kept by the hau-leaf living on land...  
Born the octopus living in the sea  
Kept by the Canthium shrub living on land...<sup>330</sup>

This *kia ‘i* device is significant for our understanding of the Hawaiian sense of place, and of the human participation and responsibility through *mālama ‘āina*. As human beings are born on land and fall within the terrestrial realm, the repeated pattern of land life being responsible for the care of sea life must be a fundamental part of the relationship between people and the living denizens of the sea. We will see this emphasis on care for both what lives and grows on land and sea in the following section when we discuss the Hawaiian land use practice of the *ahupua ‘a*.

---

<sup>328</sup> The *Hawaiian Dictionary* translates *kia ‘i* as “to watch, guard.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Kia ‘i*.” Johnson translates it as “kept.” To keep or to watch over, or to guard connote the land flora or fauna caring for or closely connected to its sea or water counterpart.

<sup>329</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 9.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.3.4 Narrative of *Hāloanaka* and *Hāloa*: Injunction to *Mālama ‘Āina*

A central story in the *Kumulipo* that establishes the Hawaiian sense of place is the story of *Papa* and *Wākea* as progenitors of the *ali ‘i* (chiefs) and *maka ‘āinana* (the common people).<sup>331</sup> In her work, *The Power of the Steel-tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*, Noenoe Silva explains the importance of the story to the Hawaiian injunction to care for the land (*mālama ‘āina*). She writes:

[T]he *Kumulipo*...trace[s] lineages of people, both *ali ‘i* and *maka ‘āinana*, to the same original parents of the ‘*āina* itself, usually *Papahānaumoku* (the woman *Papa* who gives birth to islands) and *Wākea* (the man who manifests as the expanse of the sky, among other forms). One of the most powerful stories in the *Papa* and *Wākea* complex is that of *Hāloanaka* (a.k.a. *Hāloalaukapalili*), the *kalo* [taro plant], and *Hāloa*, his younger [human] brother. *Hāloanaka* is the offspring of *Wākea* with his daughter, *Ho ‘ohōkūkalani*. At birth he resembled a cord rather than a child so they buried him near one of their houses. From the spot grew the first *kalo*, whom they named *Hāloanaka*. The second child from this pair was a human male, whom they named *Hāloa* after the first offspring. Based on this *mo ‘olelo*, Kame‘eleihiwa explains one of the central metaphors in *ali ‘i* (and *maka ‘āinana*) behavior toward ‘*āina*. *Hāloanaka* represents the ‘*āina* and *Hāloa* represents human beings; it is the *kuleana* of the older sibling to feed the younger, which the ‘*āina* does with *kalo*. It is the younger sibling’s *kuleana* to care for the older, which humans do through *mālama ‘āina*, or caring for and making productive the ‘*āina*.<sup>332</sup>

---

<sup>331</sup> *Wākea* is the Hawaiian god of light and of the heavens, while *Papa* is the Hawaiian goddess of earth and the underworld. Martha Warren Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1970), 294.

<sup>332</sup> Noenoe K. Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 84. Note: In the original text, the author does not italicize the Hawaiian terms. I have italicized these terms in this quotation, and will do the same for future quotations, for the sake of consistency in the use of Hawaiian words in this dissertation.

By fulfilling the mutual *kuleana*<sup>333</sup> the Hawaiian sense of place is lived through the people's care for the land (*mālama 'āina*) for which the land cares for the people.<sup>334</sup> Hawaiian historian, Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, captures this mutual care succinctly: "[I]t is the duty of Hawaiians to *Mālama 'Āina*, and as a result of this proper behavior, the *'Āina* will *mālama* Hawaiians."<sup>335</sup> The next section illustrates the successful living of mutual *kuleana* by the ancient Hawaiians, who organized a fully self-sufficient and sustainable livelihood within their finite island ecosystem.

---

<sup>333</sup> The *Hawaiian Dictionary* defines *kuleana* as: "Right, privilege, concern, responsibility, title, business, property, estate, portion, jurisdiction, authority, liability, interest, claim, ownership, tenure, affair, province; reason, cause, function, justification; small piece of property, as within an *ahupua'a*; blood relative through whom a relationship to less close relatives is traced, as to in-laws." Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. "*Kuleana*." In the context of *mālama 'āina*, *kuleana* would be more correctly understood as the mutual responsibility to care for each other.

<sup>334</sup> We can see a resonance between the Hawaiian emphasis on respect and care for the land and the insights of Aldo Leopold and J. Baird Callicott on the human being's relation to the land. Leopold's land ethic calls for a reevaluation of the human being's standing in relation to the land: "[A] land ethic changes the role of Homo Sapiens from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such." Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 204. Callicott points out that American Indian cultures view the human being within both the social and physical environments, through which we are a member of this wider, inclusive community bearing responsibilities and obligations to undertake actions that are in line with this relationship. He writes: "The implicit overall metaphysic of American Indian cultures locates human beings in a larger social, as well as physical environment. People belong not only to a human community, but to a community of all nature as well. Existence in this larger society, just as existence in a family and tribal context, places people in an environment in which reciprocal responsibilities and mutual obligations are taken for granted and assumed without question or reflection." Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, 189–190.

<sup>335</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Shall We Live in Harmony (Ko Hawai'i 'Āina a Me Nā Koi Pu 'umake a Ka Po'e Haole: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai?)* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992), 25.

#### *4.4 Hawaiian Sense of Place as Seen in Hawaiian Land Practices*

Ancient Hawaiians, prior to western contact, lived in a finite island ecosystem and maintained a fully self-sufficient population of some 600,000 people while having a human footprint of less than fifteen percent of the land area. This sustainable mode of living was made possible by the Hawaiians' deep and close knowledge of and relation to the land and ocean.<sup>336</sup> As we have seen from the discussion above, the ancient Hawaiians had an expansive sense of place, which transcended the boundaries of land to include a relationality with the ocean. This is closely tied to their history of voyaging, which helped shape their view of the world and their relationship with it.<sup>337</sup> Thus, the Hawaiian's sense of place can be considered both global as well as local.

##### *4.4.1 Concentricity-Radiality of the Kanaka Relation with 'Āina*

According to Samuel M. Gon III, this global sense of place “may be related to the definition of *'āina* (land) as a concentric set of places starting from the *hale* (house) of a *kanaka* (person, individual) to his *kuleana* (small piece of property or land that he is responsible for), his *ahupua'a* (land division extending from the uplands to the sea), his *moku* (district), *mokupuni* (island), *pae 'āina* (archipelago), and the interactions of the culture of that archipelago (e.g. Hawai'i) with the other Polynesian nations of *Moana Nui* (the greater Pacific Polynesian root culture).”<sup>338</sup> The implication of this concentricity-radiality of place, the local-global sense of

---

<sup>336</sup> Gon III, Tom, and Woodside, “*'Āina Momona, Honua Au Loli—Productive Lands, Changing World: Using the Hawaiian Footprint to Inform Biocultural Restoration and Future Sustainability in Hawai'i*”; Gon III, “Lessons from a Thousand Years of Island Sustainability.”

<sup>337</sup> Hau'ofa, “Our Sea of Islands”; Polynesian Voyaging Society, “Nainoa Thompson.”

<sup>338</sup> Samuel M. Gon III, “*'Āina as Concentric Set of Places*,” 2018.

place, is that to care for one's locale presupposes care for the Earth (*honua*). Thus, we can argue that *mālama 'āina* (care for the land) implies and involves *mālama honua* (care for the Earth). This notion of radial sense of place resonates with the Daoist notion of the inseparability of the continuity (道 *dao*) and particularity (德 *de*) of experience. *Dao* (道) and *de* (德) are related as context and particular events in our experiences, or as field and focus. In the relationship of particular to context, and vice versa, the totality is implicated within the particular.

#### 4.4.2 Sense of Place Found in Ahupua'a System

The Hawaiian sense of place as it relates to their daily lives is closely tied to the organization of the island's area of land and sea into *ahupua'a*. *Ahupua'a*, in Hawaiian land use, is a "[l]and division usually extending from the uplands to the sea, so called because the boundary was marked by a heap (*ahu*) of stones surmounted by an image of a pig (*pua'a*), or because a pig or other tribute was laid on the altar as [offering] to the chief. The landlord or owner of an *ahupua'a* might be a *konohiki*."<sup>339</sup> Dieter Mueller-Dombois describes the *ahupua'a* system in this manner:

In the term *ahupua'a*, the words *ahu* (stone altar or stone mound) and *pua'a* (pig), are combined. The *pua'a* was a carved wooden image of a pig head. These stone altars served as border markers and deposition places for offerings to the agricultural god *Lono* and a high chief (*ali'i nui*), who was the god's representative. Each *ahupua'a* in turn was ruled by a lower chief, or *ali'i 'ai*. He in turn appointed a headman, or *konohiki*. The *konohiki* served as general manager responsible for the use of an *ahupua'a* as a resource system. He in turn was assisted by specialists, or *luna*. For example, the *luna wai* was responsible for the fresh water flow and irrigation system (Kamehameha Schools, 1994). Sophistication in the traditional Hawaiian land use practices becomes evident already from the way island

---

<sup>339</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. "*Ahupua'a*."



areas were divided vertically, often in units of watersheds, and horizontally, in zones of ecosystem significance. Furthermore, the functionality of the individual zones was well understood as to their bioenvironmental potential. Wherever possible, the zones were modified by enhancing their natural ecosystem services.<sup>340</sup>

The drawing up of the *ahupuaʻa* system demonstrates the Hawaiians' close relation to their natural environment and their attentiveness to both the limitations and the possibilities for livelihood that their volcanic island environment provided them. The beginnings of the *ahupuaʻa* can be seen in the *Kumulipo*, the Hawaiian creation chant, specifically in the first two *wā*. The first two *wā*, *Wā Akahi* (First Era) and *Wā Elua* (Second Era), provide a description of the flora and fauna most likely drawn from a time of the early settlement periods of the Hawaiian islands. Rubellite Kawena Johnson posits that based on the types of fish and plants that are referred to in the first two *wā*, that “everything for survival of animals and plants is...basically in place, true survivors adjusted to the prevailing ecology are endemic flora and fauna of the raw environment, rather than human beings.”<sup>341</sup> She continues, commenting on the manner in which the chant describes the natural environment: “A picture is drawn of the environment from the coral reef habitat in three directions, one of which leads from the reef zone of intense wave action (surge zone) over the reef edge to the bottom or from the surface of the sea near land to the deep sea. Where the reef surrounds a protected area of water, such as a bay, the reef fauna and flora move from the coral reef zone into estuaries and coastal wetlands. The other moves upshore and inland

---

<sup>340</sup> Dieter Mueller-Dombois, “The Hawaiian *Ahupuaʻa* Land Use System: Its Biological Resource Zones and the Challenge for Silvicultural Restoration,” *Bishop Museum Bulletin in Cultural and Environmental Studies* 3 (2007): 23–33.

<sup>341</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 60.

to lower and upper regions of the dry forest into the wet forest area.”<sup>342</sup> The first two *wā* of the *Kumulipo* “describe the range of interaction between *kai* (coastal) and *uka* (inland) economic natural resources of the *ahupua‘a* ecosystem.”<sup>343</sup>

By living *mālama ‘āina* through the *ahupua‘a* system, ancient Hawaiians came up with a sustainable and respectful system with which to care for the natural environment of their home. Their wisdom was passed down through the generations in the form of practices, but also through the oral traditions of *mo‘okū‘auhau* (genealogy) and *mo‘olelo* (historical accounts). The Hawaiians imparted their understanding of their sense of place via narrative.

#### ***4.5 Hawaiian Sense of Place via Mo‘olelo and Mo‘okū‘auhau (Narrative and Genealogy)***

As Fred R. Myers argues in his study of the Pintupi Aboriginal group in Western Australia, narrative has the power to transform space to place. He describes the manner in which the Pintupi view their relation to places: “The process by which space becomes ‘country,’ by which a story gets attached to an object, is part of the Pintupi habit of mind that looks behind objects to events and sees in objects a sign of something else.”<sup>344</sup> As we have seen in our discussion of space and place in the second chapter of this dissertation, space takes on meaning and becomes place when we associate the locale with stories and life events. The Pintupi way of placemaking shows us that there is a narrative behind the objects of experience. The narratives aid us in making sense of the physical world; they give us a sense of place in relation to locales.

---

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Fred R. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 67.

In terms of the Hawaiian sense of place, we can discern from our discussion of the cosmogonic stories in the *Kumulipo*, that the Hawaiians' sense of place is a narrative sense of place. Their understanding of the world and their place in it—and, indeed, their relations within the world—is expressed through narratives: *mo'okū'auhau* (genealogy), *mo'olelo* (historical accounts), *mele* (song), *oli* (chant), and *pule* (prayer).

In order to understand the Hawaiian sense of place, we need to understand the narratives of the people. As Katrina-Ann R. Kapā'anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira writes, “the genealogical connection that *Kānaka* share with the *'āina*...are crucial to understanding a *Kanaka* worldview, and...through these cosmogonic genealogies we learn of the formation of the *'āina*, the first living organisms, and the birth of the *akua* (gods) and the people.”<sup>345</sup> The effect of oral traditions associated with a place enriches connections beyond the experience of a single person and beyond the experience of a single generation. Narratives have the power to broaden and foster a sense of place across generations.

#### 4.5.1 Narratives Told Through Place Names

One powerful form of narrative in Hawaiian culture is the naming of places. Genealogy in Hawaiian culture is closely tied to the naming of places. Hawaiian place names are often very descriptive and, in particular, place names as a form of genealogy have the capacity to “link people to their environment.”<sup>346</sup>

---

<sup>345</sup> Katrina-Ann R. Kapā'anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira, *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>346</sup> Katrina-Ann R. Kapā'anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira, “*Wahi A Kahiko*: Place Names as Vehicles of Ancestral Memory,” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 5, no. 2 (2009): 101.

Oliveira explains the importance place names to sense of place:

Place names link people to their environment. Just as people have an undeniable connection to their ancestors, many Indigenous peoples have attachments to place. We are an extension of our *kūpuna* (ancestors, elders); they are an extension of us. We are an extension of the *‘āina* (land; that which feeds); the *‘āina* is an extension of us. Because traditional Hawaiians understood the connections among themselves, their *kūpuna* and the *‘āina*, the concepts of *aloha ‘āina* (love for the land) and *mālama ‘āina* (caring for the land) extended beyond the physical presence of the *‘āina* to include their spiritual connection with their ancestors and the *‘āina*. Traditionally, *kūpuna* were often buried in their *kulāiwi* (ancestral lands). From these resting places, *kūpuna* continue to maintain their connection to the *‘āina* and to their succeeding generations of offspring who rely on the resources of the *‘āina*. From the embrace of their *kulāiwi*, ancestors of long ago continue to speak to their descendants via place names.<sup>347</sup>

Oliveira continues: “As ‘footprints’ of the past, place names allow us to tap into ancestral knowledge by serving as ‘vehicles of ancestral authority’<sup>348</sup> Myths and familial bonds with particular places are established through the act of naming. Because place names are so closely tied to our *kūpuna* and the *‘āina*, place names play a significant role in narrating our identity.”<sup>349</sup>

Oliveira explains that “only by understanding the ties shared between various places and their names can we truly understand the meanings of individual place names and the collective story that they tell. Hawaiian place names also serve as mnemonic devices in their oral maps. By recalling a place name, Native Hawaiians are able to recollect the story behind that name as well as the names and stories of nearby places. In traditional times, Native Hawaiians were generally

---

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

<sup>348</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 101.

<sup>349</sup> Oliveira, “*Wahi A Kahiko: Place Names as Vehicles of Ancestral Memory*,” 101.

quite deliberate in their naming of places. Even today, the recitation of place names can conjure up images of distant events in time. Every name told a story about the place.”<sup>350</sup>

John Charlot lists a number of categories of place names in Hawaiian culture. These include: (1) “observed physical characteristics,” (2) “specific function or activity performed in it,” (3) “stories told about them or personages who figure in those stories,” (4) “religious or psychic phenomena,” and (5) “epithets.”<sup>351</sup> The Hawaiians’ identification with nature is beautifully expressed in the symbolic vocabulary that they have developed. Charlot points out: “The seamless joining of physical description and symbolic meaning is symptomatic of the way the Hawaiian actually sees nature: not as bare fact, but as permeated by all the dimensions he senses in his existence. Moreover, such descriptions reveal also how the Hawaiian views himself and his emotions: as one with the world around him. The Hawaiian maintains the integrity of what the Westerner is continually dividing and subdividing.”<sup>352</sup> He adds that: “Knowledge of the land is physical, emotional and intellectual.”<sup>353</sup> An example of an emotional knowledge of the land is experienced when one enters a particular place and feels “peculiar sensations or feelings...attributed to the influence of the locality.”<sup>354</sup>

---

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 104. Oliveira offers examples in her article: “*Wailupe* (kite water), *Kaimukī* (the *ti* oven) and *Kalāwahine* (the day of women) commemorated significant events, while place names like *Ka’elepulu* (the moist blackness), *Māpunapuna* (bubbling) and *Āliapa’akai* (salt pond) described the physical characteristics of a place. Other names like *Wai’anae* (mullet water) and *Wai’ōpae* (shrimp water) alluded to the resources present at a particular location.”

<sup>351</sup> John Charlot, *Chanting The Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture* (Honolulu: Emphasis International, 1983), 57–58.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.5.2 Place Names as Proverbial Sayings (*‘Ōlelo No ‘eau*)

There is another aspect of the use of place names in Hawaiian culture that reveals the deeply ingrained sense of place of Hawaiians. This is found in the way that place names carry connotative values when they figure in proverbial sayings, narratives, and songs and chants. In their study on *Place Names of Hawaii*, Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert and Esther T. Mookini explain that very often Hawaiians make use of place names through proverbial sayings to express “emotional states or important events.”<sup>355</sup> Below are some examples of proverbial sayings that contain place names describing human emotions and conditions:

Anger: *Na-pele-pele nā pali o Ka-lalau i ka wili ‘ia e ka makani*, [meaning] “crumbling are the cliffs of [*Ka-lalau*]<sup>356</sup>, twisted by the wind.”

Grief: *Lu ‘u-lu ‘u Hana-lei i ka ua nui, kaumaha i ka noe o Alaka ‘i*, [meaning] “*Hana-lei* is downcast with great rains, heavy with the mists of *Alaka ‘i*.”

Love: *‘O ka ua o Hilo e mao ana, ‘o ke aloha i ka ipo, mea pau ‘ole*, [meaning] “the rain of Hilo [will end], love of a sweetheart—endless.”

Trouble [Difficulty]: *Aia i Kē ‘ē*, [meaning] “there at *Kē ‘ē* (a remote cliff difficult or impossible to climb on the *Nā-pali* coast, *Kaua ‘i*.)”<sup>357</sup>

Very importantly, Pukui, Elbert and Mookini point out, the “largest proportion show *aloha ‘āina* ‘love for the land and the people of the land’.”<sup>358</sup> They write:

---

<sup>355</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1974), 267.

<sup>356</sup> The original quote reads: “crumbling are the cliffs of Astray, twisted by the wind.” I have replaced “Astray” with the original Hawaiian word “*Ka-lalau*.” According to the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, *Ka-lalau* is the name of a valley in the northwestern part of *Kaua ‘i*, which was an uninhabited area and difficult to access. The phrase, “*Hele i Ka-lalau*,” literally “go to *Ka-lalau*” means “go astray.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Ka-lalau*”.

<sup>357</sup> Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii*, 267.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

Sayings that praise the land may be called *aloha ‘āina* sayings, a phrase taken from the famous song “*Kaulana nā Pua*” ‘famous [are] the children’ that describes the support of Hawaiians for their last queen, Lili‘uokalani, and their sorrow that she was forced to sign “the paper of the enemy” (*ka pepa o ka ‘enemi*) brought by the evil-hearted messenger (*ka ‘elele o ka loko*) with its sin of annexation (‘*ino ho ‘ohui ‘āina kū ‘ai hewa*) to America. The song ends with a salutation to the people who love the land (*ka po ‘e i aloha i ka ‘āina*).”<sup>359</sup>

Pukui, Elbert and Mookini note that there “are probably thousands of *aloha ‘āina* sayings,” many of which “name illustrious chiefs and places, important rains, seas, winds, and distinctive features....[These sayings] reinforce ties to family as well as to places, and are a link to a past that in many ways seems still a glorious never-never land.”<sup>360</sup> Further, emphasizing my point about the centrality of *aloha ‘āina* as sense of place, they write: “Even more cogent than the association of *aloha ‘āina* sayings with friends and relatives were the ties with the land and the sea, the source of life.”<sup>361</sup> The following is a sample of *aloha ‘āina* sayings about the rains, seas, winds and distinctive features of places on Hawai‘i island:

[Rain:] *Ka ua kani lehua o Hilo*, [which means] “the *lehua* [quenching] rain of *Hilo*.”<sup>362</sup>

[Seas:] *Kona kai ‘ōpua i ka la‘i*, [which means] “*Kona* seas with cloud billows that tell of peace to come.”<sup>363</sup>

[Winds:] *Āpa ‘apa ‘a*, (Kohala)<sup>364</sup>; *Kuehu lepo*, [which means] “dust scattering.”<sup>365</sup>

---

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 268.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>364</sup> *Āpa ‘apa ‘a* is the name of a strong wind associated with Kohala on the island of Hawai‘i.

<sup>365</sup> *Kuehu lepo* is the name given to a dust scattering wind at Ka‘ū, Hawai‘i. Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii*, 270.

[Distinctive features:] *I Kalapana i ka niu moe*, [which means] “at *Kalapana*, the coconut palms lie flat”<sup>366</sup>

These sayings evoke memories and feelings of nostalgia, reminding those who can relate to them of their home. When we consider the other side of the narrative, that of the originators of these sayings, we get a glimpse into their closeness to their natural environments. One needs to be observant and immerse one’s self in one’s surroundings to capture the uniqueness of those places with such descriptions. The Hawaiian narrative sense of place is further deepened by a sense of the sacred in the natural environment, as it is codified through religion and ritual.

#### ***4.6 Hawaiian Sense of Place in Relation to Hawaiian Religion, Ritual, and Gods***

Rituals express the interconnectedness and especially the relationality of people to deity, to one another, and to their natural environment. They serve to express as well as to concretize these connections and interdependence, and they also serve to codify and deepen them and fix them in the daily and seasonal activities of the community. We find examples of the close connection of religion and rituals to sense of place in the planting and harvesting rituals of the ancient Hawaiians. Each stage of the agricultural calendar is accompanied by a shared communal ritual, for example, in the planting of sweet potatoes (*‘uala*). After planting the sweet potato slips and after the sweet potatoes have set, “the farmer brings fish and *poi* to the fields and eats. He may also bring a pig which is cooked there and shared with friends.”<sup>367</sup> Hawaiian culture is

---

<sup>366</sup> Pukui, Elbert and Mookini explain in their text: “A traditional way to honor a very high chief was to ask the chief to hold on to the tip of the fronds of a young coconut tree while the people bent the tree over and subsequently trained it to grow flat on the ground. Queen Emma was the last *ali‘i* to be honored in this way, at *Kalapana*, when she visited there on horseback a short time before the death of Princess Ruth in 1883. Emma died in 1885.” Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> June Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko: Ancient Hawaiian Prayers* (Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983), 66.



replete with rituals and prayers for every aspect of life from birth to death. For example, there are prayers (*pule*) for children (*kamali 'i*), the home (*ke kauhale*), planting and farming (*kanu 'ana a mahi 'ai*), fishing (*lawai 'a*), the hula (*ka hula*), war (*kaua*), death (*make*), and for the chiefs, the people and the land (*na ali 'i, ka po 'e, ka 'āina*).<sup>368</sup> What this reveals to us is that for the Hawaiians, each aspect of their lives is imbued with the sacred.

#### 4.6.1 *Akua Establish a Hawaiian Sense of Place*

The *akua* (gods) of Hawaiian religion are closely tied to the natural world. *Akua* is defined in the *Hawaiian Dictionary* as: “[g]od, goddess, spirit, ghost, devil, image, idol, corpse; divine, supernatural, godly. *Akua* might mate with humans and give birth to normal humans, *mo 'o*, or *kupua*. Children of Ka-mehameha by Ke-opu-o-lani were sometimes referred to as *akua* because of their high rank.”<sup>369</sup> The four major *akua* are *Kāne*, *Lono*, *Kū* and *Kanaloa*. *Kāne* is the “creator of man; heavenly father of all men, symbol of life, nature; and the god of fresh water and sunlight.” *Lono* is the “god of agriculture, clouds [and] weather.” *Kū* is the “god of war and chiefs, god of the forests, canoe making, [and] fishing.” Finally, *Kanaloa* is “the ocean god; the god of salt water.”<sup>370</sup>

The Hawaiian gods are not transcendent gods. Rather, they are closely tied to the people and to the land. This aspect of their religion affects and, in fact, deepens the Hawaiians’ connection to the land and sea. The Hawaiian sense of place is woven into the fabric of every

---

<sup>368</sup> Ibid., passim.

<sup>369</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Akua*.” *Mo 'o* are lizards, or water spirits, while *kupua* are demigods or cultural heroes imbued with supernatural powers. Ibid., s.v. “*Mo 'o*.”

<sup>370</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*, 23.

aspect of their lives, and the strength of religion binds and codifies this sense of place. The gods provide the people with the gift of life through waters and the rain. The god *Kāne* is said to give life to the earth, as expressed in the following proverb: “*Ka honua nui a Kāne i hō ‘inana a ‘ahu kīnohinohi* (The great earth animated and adorned by *Kāne*).” Pukui explains that this proverb highlights the god’s role as the “god of fresh water and life.”<sup>371</sup> A prayer to *Kāne-i-ka-wai* (*Kāne-of-the-water*) is used during the making of ‘*awa*<sup>372</sup>:

*Ka wai laahia, e Kāne-i-ka-wai.*  
*Ka wai la ia, e Kāne.*  
*Ka wai i ka hikina, e Kāne.*  
*Nou Ka Wai Koo-lihilihi.*  
*Ka wai i ka olo la hua ‘ina.*  
*Kulia o lau mahu ‘e luna, o lau meha.*  
*O na meha huli honua.*  
*Hoouka kai hoe, e Kāne,*  
*A holo, e Kāne, e kele, e Kāne,*  
*He kaua ka lua kaala hoku,*  
*A hopu i ke aka, i ke aka o Kāne.*  
*A, kolo, i kolo a ‘e, kolo anuenua,*  
*E ukuhi i ka wai*  
*Pakahi ka lau na ‘ena ‘e, ka lau ‘ala o ka nahele.*

*Kihikihi oo ia*  
*Keekeehi iho no eo i ka hikina.*  
*Owai ia ali ‘i o ka hikina?*  
*O Kāne ali ‘i oe la, o no Uli,*  
*‘Au ‘au i ka wai poni-hiwa, e Kāne,*

---

<sup>371</sup> ‘*Ōlelo Noe ‘au* 1316. Pukui (trans.), ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, 143. ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings* is a book of 2942 Hawaiian proverbs collected, translated and annotated by Mary Kawena Pukui. It is a treasure trove of Hawaiian wisdom and sensibility from which we can glean many aspects of the richness of Hawaiian culture. The proverbs in the collection are numbered 1 to 2942. Subsequent citations from the book will be written as ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau* followed by the proverb number, for example, ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau* 1316.

<sup>372</sup> ‘*Awa* refers to “the kava (*Piper methysticum*), a shrub 1.2 to 3.5 m tall with green jointed stems and heart-shaped leaves, native to Pacific islands, the root being the source of a narcotic drink of the same name used in ceremonies, prepared formerly by chewing, later by pounding. The comminuted particles were mixed with water and strained. When drunk to excess it caused drowsiness and, rarely, scaliness of the skin and bloodshot eyes. Kava was also used medicinally.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “‘*Awa*.”

*He aka-ku kau i ka manawa,  
Ku mai a'e la ipu hele, e Kāne  
Ina ke oho o Mano ke hele ana, e Kāne,  
I ke ala kapua 'i akua, kapau 'i no Hina.*

*Eia ka pule, eia ke kanaenae nou, i Kāne ke akua.*

This translates to:

The sacred water, o Kāne-of-the-water.  
It is the water of Kāne.  
The water in the east, o Kāne.  
Yours is the water that supports the petals,  
The water in the long gourd gushing forth.  
Position of leaves wide open above, lone leaves.  
Lone leaves that face the earth  
Put your paddle inside, o Kāne,  
And go, o Kāne, and sail away, o Kāne  
A war is the pit for sling stone stars,  
And hold the reflection, the reflection of Kāne  
And move gently along, move the rainbow,  
Pour out the water  
One by one the leaves, the fragrant leaves of the woodland.

Projecting at angles  
Tread firmly to the east.  
Who is the chief of the east?  
You are the chief Kāne, of the Uli line  
Bathe in the dark waters of Kāne  
A vision placed on the top of the head,  
Caused the traveling gourd to land, o Kāne  
Here the hair of Mano is going, o Kāne  
In the way of the footprint of deity, footprint of Hina.

Here is the prayer, here is the chant of eulogy for you, o Kāne the deity.<sup>373</sup>

---

<sup>373</sup> Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko: Ancient Hawaiian Prayers*, 5–6.

In the prayer above, *Kāne* is appealed to as the god of fresh water. As water gives life to all things and sustains all, the Hawaiians' reverence for the god *Kāne* is analogous to their love for the waters of Earth that give them life.

*Lono* is the patron of agriculture, clouds and weather. He is believed to have “brought with him the techniques of the farmer and became patron of the fertility of the land.”<sup>374</sup> The people, giving thanks to *Lono* for the harvest, offer food to their patron. The following is a prayer that is chanted during the food offering:

*E Lono-i-ka-po,  
E Lono-i-ke-ao.  
E Lono-i-ke-ka 'ina o mua  
E Lono-nui-a-Hina  
Mai 'aniha mai 'oe iau, e Lono.  
E Lono maka hialele,  
A lele 'oe i ke kai uli,  
A lele 'oe i ke kai kea,  
I one huli la, i one 'ele,  
I mahinahina.  
I ke one i hanana  
O pipipi, o unauna,  
O 'alealea, o naka,  
O hee, o kualakai,  
O ka pakii moe one 'ula;  
O ka 'ulae niho wakawaka 'oi;  
O kama a 'opihi kau-pali  
O kulele poo; o helele 'i ke oho  
O Waha-lau-ali 'i; o Poli-hala;  
O kahi i waiho ai o ka hua 'olelo  
O pii-ma-lana o 'Oheke;  
O kama a Poepoe;  
O ka wahine i ka ipu 'olelo;  
E kama e i ke-ola nui;*

---

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 6.

*Eia ka 'ai,*  
*E Ku, e Lono, e Kāne.*  
*E Lono i ke ao uli e,*  
*Eia ka 'ai.*<sup>375</sup>

This chant is translated:

O *Lono* in the night,  
O *Lono* in the day,  
O *Lono* of the leading forward  
O great *Lono* given birth by *Hina*  
Do not be unfriendly to me, o *Lono*.  
O *Lono* of the restless sleepless eyes,  
You fly to the dark sea,  
You fly to the white sea,  
To the sand that seeks the sun, to the black sand  
In the pale moonlight,  
At the sand that was overflowed  
Of small mollusks, hermit crabs,  
Of 'alealea shellfish, of *naka* fish,  
Of octopus, of sea slug,  
Of the *pakii* flounder that lies on red sand;  
Of the lizard fish with serrated sharp teeth;  
Of offspring of the limpet that rests on the cliffs  
Of head that scatters, of scattered hair  
Of *Waha-lau-ali 'i*, of *Poli-hala*;  
Of the place that the word is left  
Of *Pii-ma-lana*, together with 'Oheke;  
Of offspring by *Poepoe*;  
Of the woman of the voice gourd;  
O offspring of the great life;  
Here is the food  
O *Ku*, o *Lono*, o *Kāne*  
O *Lono* in the firmament,  
Here is the food.<sup>376</sup>

---

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

*Kū* is the “god of war and chiefs, god of the forests, canoe making, [and] fishing.” As god of the forest and rain, *Kū* is invoked in prayer as:

*Kū-moku-hali* ‘i (*Kū* spreading over the land)  
*Kū-pulupulu* (*Kū* of the undergrowth)  
*Kū-olono-wao* (*Kū* of the deep forest)  
*Kū-holoholo-pali* (*Kū* sliding down steep)  
*Kū-pepeiao-loa a-poko* (Big- and small-eared *Kū*)  
*Kupa-ai-ke* ‘e (Adzing out the canoe)  
*Kū-mauna* (*Kū* of the mountain)  
*Kū-ka-ohia-laka* (*Kū* of the ohia-lehua tree)  
*Kū-ka-ieie* (*Kū* of the wild pandanus vine)<sup>377</sup>

As god of husbandry he is prayed to as:

*Kū-ka-o-o* (*Kū* of the digging stick)  
*Kū-kulia* (*Kū* of dry farming)  
*Kū-keolowalu* (*Kū* of wet farming)<sup>378</sup>

As god of fishing he may be worshiped as:

*Kū-‘ula* or *Kū-‘ula-kai* (*Kū* of the abundance of the sea)<sup>379</sup>

As god of war as:

*Kū-nui-ākea* (*Kū* the supreme one)  
*Kū-kā’ili-moku* (*Kū* snatcher of land)  
*Kū-keoloewa* (*Kū* the supporter)  
*Kū-ho’one’enu’u* (*Kū* pulling together the earth)<sup>380</sup>

As god of sorcery as:

*Kū-waha-ilo* (*Kū* of the maggot-dropping mouth)<sup>381</sup>

---

<sup>377</sup> Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*, 14–15.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, *Kanaloa* is the ocean god, and the god of saltwater. Thus, fishermen offer chants to him when they are out fishing. Here is a prayer chanted to *Kanaloa*, when fishermen are lowering their hooks and lures into the water to catch a *hele mahola* (octopus):

*Eia ke leho,  
He leho ula no ka hee-hoopai.  
Eia ka kao, he laau,  
He lama no ka hee-mahola, no ka hee-palaha.  
E Kanaloa i ke Ku,  
Kulia ke papa,  
Kulia i ka papa hee!  
Kulia ke hee o kai uli!  
E ala, e Kanaloa!  
Hoeu! hoala! e ala ka hee!  
E ala ke hee-palaha! E ala ka hee-mahola!<sup>382</sup>*

Gutmanis translates this:

Here is the cowry,  
A red cowry to attract the squid to his death.  
Here is the spear, a mere stick,  
A spear of *lama* wood for the squid that lies flat.  
O *Kanaloa* of the tabu nights,  
Stand upright on the solid floor!  
Stand upon the floor where lies the squid!  
Stand up to take the squid of the deep sea!  
Rise up, o *Kanaloa*!  
Stir up! agitate! let the squid awake!  
Let the squid that lies flat awake, the squid that lies spread out.<sup>383</sup>

---

<sup>382</sup> Gutmanis, *Na Pule Kahiko: Ancient Hawaiian Prayers*, 6.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.6.2 *Kinolau Strengthen Hawaiian Bond to 'Āina*

The gods manifest themselves in concrete form as *kinolau*, taking the shape of animals or plants. *Kinolau* means “many forms,” or “many bodies.”<sup>384</sup> In fact, *kinolau* are not restricted to biological entities. The *Hawaiian Dictionary* describes *kinolau* as: “Many forms taken by a supernatural body, as Pele, who could at will become a flame of fire, a young girl, or an old hag.”<sup>385</sup> *Kinolau* serve to strengthen the bond between Hawaiians and their natural world. Johnson observes that the “*kinolau* concept...works in such a way as to personify the *akua* and the ‘*aumakua* in nature and to establish an avenue of visible or audible contact with them in the whole of nature. The *akua* manifests in living forms, plant or animal, by which and in which his form, incarnate, is recognized.”<sup>386</sup> ‘*Aumākua* are “[f]amily or personal gods, deified ancestors.”<sup>387</sup> Pukui, Haertig and Lee point out that ‘*aumākua* can manifest themselves as *kinolau* in the form of “sharks, owls, mud hens, lizards, eels, and indigenous small field mice, caterpillars, even rocks and plants.”<sup>388</sup>

Thus, the *akua* and ‘*aumākua* entering the world as *kinolau* serve to deepen the Hawaiians’ sense of place. Placemaking, in Hawaiian culture, extends beyond a human process. The personification of winds, rains, stones, living plants and animals as *kinolau* of *akua* and ‘*aumākua* gives these natural elements the power of placemaking. Through the *kinolau*, these

---

<sup>384</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*, 36.

<sup>385</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Kinolau*.”

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid., s.v. “‘*Aumākua*.”

<sup>388</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*, 36.



natural elements are made sacred. As such, place as placemaking in Hawaiian culture is also a divine activity. Thus, the Hawaiian sense of place involves a reverence for the natural environment. It is a sense of reverence that can best be expressed as *aloha ‘āina*.<sup>389</sup>

#### ***4.7 Aloha ‘Āina: Hawaiian Sense of Place***

As we have seen in our discussion of place names above, *aloha ‘āina* is a principle that is deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture.<sup>390</sup> It literally means “love of the land,” but it is also taken to mean “love of one’s country, patriotism.”<sup>391</sup> However, as I alluded to above, *aloha ‘āina* can also mean “reverence for the land.” To understand what this Hawaiian sense of place means, I will examine the terms of the phrase *aloha ‘āina* separately, and then bring them back together.

##### ***4.7.1 Aloha***

The first term, *aloha*, is a rich term in the Hawaiian language and in Hawaiian culture. It has varied meanings and has several layers of meaning and significance. *Aloha* can mean “love, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, sentiment, grace, charity.”<sup>392</sup> *Aloha* is used in terms of “mutual regard and love,” as in this description from *Nānā I Ke Kumu (Look to the Source)* in which the Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig and Catherine A. Lee describe the spirit of *aloha* that animates and motivates the participants who partake of the *‘aha ‘aina kala*

---

<sup>389</sup> *Aloha ‘āina*, on one hand, can mean “nationalism or patriotism,” as expressed in the phrase *Na ka po ‘e aloha ‘āina Hawai‘i i kōko ‘o ka mō ‘i*, which means Hawaiian patriots supported their king. Kōmike Hua‘ōlelo, Hale Kuamo‘o, and ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, *Māmaka Kaiao: A Modern Hawaiian Vocabulary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>390</sup> Pukui, Elbert, and Mookini, *Place Names of Hawaii*, 268–269.

<sup>391</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Aloha ‘āina*.”

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. “*Aloha*.”

*hala* (feast of forgiving): “The gods may have been deposed and the food symbolism forgotten, but when modern Hawaiians hold an ‘*aha ‘aina* much of the spirit of old Hawaii [sic] yet lives. Usually dozens of family members, friends and neighbors get together to provide and prepare food, in the mutual helpfulness known as *kōkua* or *laulima* (‘many hands’). And certainly, in the eating, drinking, singing and talking together, the ties of man to fellow man are strengthened in the mutual regard and love summed up as *aloha*.”<sup>393</sup> The feast of forgiving (‘*ala ‘aina kala hala* literally means “feast to forgive wrong”) is a feast that is held to ask a god for forgiveness if someone had committed a serious offense against one of the gods. The feast brings together the Hawaiian, the gods, the *aumākua* (ancestral gods) and one’s ‘*ohana* (family members).<sup>394</sup> According to Pukui, Haertig and Lee, *aloha* (love and affection) is also one of the central attitudes which the Hawaiians appeal to in the settlement of disputes or hostility. Other “profound concepts” that “limited or prevented hostile behavior...or...neutralized hostile attitudes” include: “*ho ‘okipa* [hospitality],” “*lokomaiika ‘i* [generosity and good will], “*kōkua* [mutual help and cooperation],” and “*kala* [the mutual forgiving and freeing from offenses and the associated emotional ‘*eha* (pain).”<sup>395</sup> They observe that the key element that binds all of

---

<sup>393</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*, 3. The *Hawaiian Dictionary* defines *kōkua* as: “Help, aid, assistance, relief, assistant, associate, deputy, helper,” and *laulima* as: “Cooperation, joint action; group of people working together; community food patch; to work together, cooperate. Lit., many hands.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Kōkua*,” “*Laulima*.”

<sup>394</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*, 2.

<sup>395</sup> Pukui, Haertig M.D., and Lee, *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume II*, 220.

these “profound concepts” together is “‘*ohana*, the extended family.”<sup>396</sup> And, as we have seen, that family extends into the environment and the natural world.

The *Hawaiian Dictionary* also defines *aloha* as: “to love, be fond of; to show kindness, mercy, pity, charity, affection; to venerate...”<sup>397</sup> It is the first and last definitions on this list, namely, “to love” and “to venerate” that most clearly express the meaning of *aloha* in the Hawaiian sense of place, *aloha ‘āina*. The ability to venerate—to show deep respect for—the land is an invaluable element of our relationship with the natural environment that has been lost in the loss of our sense of place. There is a Hawaiian proverb that goes: “*He ali ‘i ka ‘āina; he kauwā ke kanaka*,” which translates to: “The land is a chief; man is its servant.”<sup>398</sup> This proverb illustrates the deep reverence that Hawaiians have for the land, and their recognition of its importance in their livelihood. Mary Kawena Pukui comments on this proverb writing, “Land has no need for man, but man needs the land and works it for a livelihood.”<sup>399</sup> The Hawaiian *aloha ‘āina* (love and reverence for the land) is further ingrained and codified, as we have seen in our earlier discussion on the centrality of religion to sense of place, through the role played by religion. The inseparability of the Hawaiian gods—as *akua*, *‘aumākua*, and *kinolau*—from the people and the natural environment (for example, the land, seas, winds, and rains) adds a layer of sacredness to the Hawaiian sense of place. Their love of the land is deepened into a reverence for the land. We do not desecrate that which we hold sacred. The Hawaiian religion also connects

---

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Aloha*.”

<sup>398</sup> ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau* 531. Pukui (trans.), ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, 62.

<sup>399</sup> ‘*Ōlelo No ‘eau* 531. Ibid.

the chiefs (*ali 'i*) to the gods such that the chiefs—as we have witnessed in the *Kumulipo*—are descended from the gods. Apart from the political aspect of this genealogy, the importance of this to sense of place is seen in the role that the *ali 'i* play in caring for the land. It is their responsibility to care for the land, *mālama 'āina*.

#### 4.7.2 'Āina

'Āina, as we have seen, is land or earth. From the *Kumulipo*, we have also learned that 'āina is our *kupuna*, that is, our ancestor: it is that from which we are born and through which we are sustained (*hānau*). It encompasses *kai* (sea) and *uka* (upland), it is sacred by virtue of *akua* (gods), 'aumākua (family/personal gods), and *kinolau* (manifestation of the deity in nature). Given these descriptions and experience of 'āina, how does one practice *aloha 'āina*? Noenoe Silva, in her book, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*, points out that “[a]loha 'āina is a complex concept that includes recognizing that we are an integral part of the 'āina and the 'āina is an integral part of us.”<sup>400</sup> John Charlot, writing in *Chanting The Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture*, echoes this sentiment on *aloha 'āina*, the Hawaiian sense of place which is also our proposal for a Hawaiian ethics of the environment. He highlights a distinction between two types of people in their relationship with and treatment of the land, namely, the “*po 'e i aloha i ka 'āina*: the people who

---

<sup>400</sup> Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*, 4.

love the land” as opposed to the “*loko ‘ino*” – “grasping foreigners with evil insides.”<sup>401</sup>

Charlot’s pitting the locals versus the foreigners carries historical weight given the manner in which business interests from the United States seized the Hawaiian islands and ancestral lands prior to and following the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States government. Leaving the political undertones aside, we can see that—in light of the care for the environment—this points to an important and helpful distinction between those with a sense of place, on the one hand, and unimplaced persons, on the other. It is a distinction between those who would *mālama ‘āina* (care for the land) and those who would destroy the land.

Also, as we have seen, *‘āina* includes the extensive relationality between the human being and the Earth in an ever-widening concentric circle of relations. Therefore, *aloha ‘āina* and *mālama ‘āina* means to *aloha honua* and to *mālama honua*: to love and reverence the Earth, and to care for the Earth. Our relationship with *‘āina and honua*, through *mo ‘okū ‘auhau* (genealogy) connects us to the past and the future. Through *aloha ‘āina*, the past and the future, and the old and the new are not mutually exclusive. As Nainoa Thompson points out in his message about

---

<sup>401</sup> Charlot, *Chanting The Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture*, 137. This distinction is a rather modern one, dating to 1893, and can be traced to an anti-annexation anthem entitled, *Kaulana nā Pua* (literally, Famous are the Flowers) composed by Eleanor Kekoahewaikalani Wright Prendergast. *Kaulana nā Pua* is a Hawaiian patriotic song written for the members of the Royal Hawaiian Band who protested the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani and the Hawaiian Kingdom by the United States. The first verse of the song goes: “*Kaulana nā pua a ‘o Hawai‘i, Kūpa‘a mahope o ka ‘āina, Hiki mai ka ‘elele o ka loko ‘ino, Palapala ‘ānunu me ka pākaha.*” Samuel H. Elbert and Noelani Māhoe translate this verse into English thus: “Famous are the children of Hawai‘i, Ever loyal to the land, When the evil-hearted messenger comes, With his greedy document of extortion. [Charlot translates the last two lines as: “the grasping foreigners with evil insides”].” The final verse of the song goes: “*Mahope mākou o Lili‘u-lani, A loa ‘a ‘ē ka pono a ka ‘āina, (A kau hou ‘ia e ke kalaunu), Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana, Ka po‘e i aloha i ka ‘āina.*” Elbert and Māhoe translate the last verse as: “We back Lili‘u-lani, Who has won the rights of the land. (She will be crowned again), Tell the story, Of the people who love their land.” Samuel H. Elbert and Noelani Māhoe, *Nā Mele o Hawai‘i Nei: 101 Hawaiian Songs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1970), 62–64.

the importance of the *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage: “*Hōkūle‘a* and her crew have been crossing the ocean for over 40 years in the wake of our ancestors, committed to showing the world that old knowledge can be made new again, and that traditional ecological understanding holds the key to solving some of Earth’s greatest problems.”<sup>402</sup> The *Hōkūle‘a* represents—among other things—a challenge to learn. Thompson, reflecting on the challenge to learn, says: “In the last few days, I have just tried to get quiet, calm and to study – that is how I prepare. I am thinking all the time about home, about the voyage, the weather, the crew, about what we have to do to make this work.”<sup>403</sup> He adds, “I think about home a lot because that’s why we do this. We love our homes, we love our people, we love our culture and our history, and we want to strengthen them – this is our opportunity, our chance to do something to support all those who care about these things.”<sup>404</sup>

#### 4.7.3 *‘Imi Loa*

We are invited to look back to past wisdom in order to move forward. The Hawaiian practice of *‘imi loa* (to search far) can be of invaluable help in this endeavor.<sup>405</sup> The importance of *‘imi loa* to our inquiry into a Hawaiian sense of place as the inspiration for a Hawaiian ethics of the environment is that it reminds us to constantly search for what is true and right. The Hawaiian discovers what is right when the method bears fruit. But the reality of life is that the

---

<sup>402</sup> Thompson, “Traditional Knowledge for Today’s Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress.”

<sup>403</sup> Thompson, “A Challenge to Learn.”

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> *‘Imi* means to “look, hunt, search, seek;” while *loa* means “Distance, length, height; distant, long, tall, far...” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*‘Imi loa*.” *‘Imi loa*, in the context of *aloha ‘āina*, therefore, can mean to search deeply or to search far.

natural environment is not static. It is changing and we need to continually adapt to the changes in order to be successful or efficacious in our search.

#### 4.7.4 Aloha ‘Āina

*Aloha ‘āina* also invites us to immerse ourselves in the rediscovery of placemaking by engaging in an understanding of place through narratives. On the genealogical understanding of place through a genealogy of place names, Oliveira writes:

By naming a place we are able to claim a space; by living in a place, we are able to humanize a place. Through the process of claiming and humanizing places, places become encoded with information about the people who originally gave them meaning. Place names allow scholars living in a different era to reconstruct a sense of a place as it existed years ago. Through place names it is possible to envision the landscape of that time complete with plants and wildlife. It is also possible to get a sense of the culture, traditions, values and spirituality of people who lived many generations ago.<sup>406</sup>

Thus, part of the challenge and invitation of the Hawaiian sense of place—of *aloha ‘āina*—is for us to “reconstruct [the] sense of...place...the landscape of that time complete with plants and wildlife” so that we may indeed discover an enduring ethics of the environment for our time and for our future.<sup>407</sup> Nainoa Thompson might hold the right approach by his commitment to make old knowledge new again.

---

<sup>406</sup> Oliveira, “*Wahi A Kahiko*: Place Names as Vehicles of Ancestral Memory,” 107.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.8 *Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka 'Āina I Ka Pono*

In this spirit of making the old new again in our search for a Hawaiian ethics of the environment, the Hawai'i state motto, "*Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono*," holds a dynamic meaning. The motto is commonly translated to mean: "The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."<sup>408</sup> In the light of our search for an enduring ethics of the environment through an engagement with the Hawaiian sense of place as *aloha 'āina*, I believe a more appropriate rendering of the phrase will be: "The life of the Earth will endure if people act appropriately." The meaning of the words in the phrase can be broken down in this manner<sup>409</sup>:

ua	to become
mau	endure
ke ea	the life
o	of
ka 'āina	the land [the Earth]
i	if
ka	the one who / the person in question
pono	correct [appropriate]

---

<sup>408</sup> Rubellite Kawena Johnson renders it: "The life of the land is continued in righteousness." In his book, *Man, Gods and Nature*, Michael Kioni Dudley makes the case for an environmental ethics in Hawai'i drawn from a deeper appreciation and understanding of Hawaiian culture. In this context, he proposes the following translation: "The life of the land continues now that all has been set right again." Michael Kioni Dudley, *Man, Gods and Nature* (Waipahu, HI: Nā Kāne O Ka Malo Press, 1990), 124.

<sup>409</sup> Meanings of the Hawaiian terms are drawn from Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*.



A literal word-for-word rendering of the phrase will produce: “To become – endure – the life – of – the land – if – the one who/the person in question – correct.” Rephrased, the motto will read literally: “The life of the land to become endure if the person in question correct.” More elegantly, it will read: “The life of the land will endure if people are correct.” However, from our discussion above, we have seen that in the concentricity-radiality of *‘āina*, the Hawaiian understands it to mean “this-land” as well as “the Earth.” Also, we have learned that *pono* also means “appropriate.” Thus, it will be valid to rephrase the motto as: “The life of the Earth will endure if people are appropriate.” A next step—one that I believe is consistent with *‘imi loa* and pertinent to our inquiry into a global and enduring ethics of the environment—is to render the motto to emphasize the *kuleana* of the human being to *mālama ‘āina* and *aloha ‘āina*. With this goal in mind, the motto can be rendered: “The life of the Earth will endure if people act appropriately.”

## CHAPTER 5: ECOLOGICAL ETHICS OF *WEIZIRAN* (為自然) AND *ALOHA ‘ĀINA*

“合抱之木，作於毫末；九成之台，作於蘊土；百仞之高，始於足下。”<sup>410</sup>

“A tree whose trunk is as wide as a person’s embrace, is born of the smallest tip; a nine-story tower, is started with a basketful of earth; a lofty hundred-foot structure, is begun at the soil beneath one’s foot.”<sup>411</sup>

### 5.1 Introduction: Retracing Our Steps

In this final chapter, I will draw together the threads of the Daoist sense of place and the Hawaiian sense of place and weave these threads into a dynamic, capacious and enduring ethics of the environment. However, before I do so, I think it might be helpful to retrace our steps—to see where we have come from, so that we might envision where we are to go.

We are facing a global problem: planet Earth is under threat from a host of environmental problems. Among them are global climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution of the air and waterways from industries. Each day, we witness further evidence of climate change through the effects of global warming such as the increase of extreme weather events (hurricanes, storms, droughts), rising sea levels that threaten island nations such as Kiribati and coastal cities around

---

<sup>410</sup> DDJ 64. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 177.

<sup>411</sup> Ames and Hall translate this as: “A tree with the girth of a person’s embrace, grows from the tiniest shoot. A pavilion nine stories high rises from one basketful of earth. A thousand foot wall begins from the soil under one’s feet.” Ibid., 77–78. Henricks renders this as: “A tree so big that it takes both arms to surround starts out as the tiniest shoot; a nine-story terrace rises up from a basket of dirt. A high place one hundred, one thousand feet high begins from under your feet.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 33. The Wangbi text differs in several places: “合抱之木，生於毫末；九層之臺，起於累土；千里之行，始於足下。” Lau translates it: “A tree that can fill the span of a man’s arms [g]rows from a downy tip; [a] terrace nine storeys high [r]ises from hodfuls of earth; [a] journey of a thousand miles [s]tarts from beneath one’s feet.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 92–95.

the world—from Venice and Amsterdam in Europe to Abu Dhabi in the Gulf Region to Jakarta, Indonesia and Manila, Philippines.<sup>412</sup> Climate change raises other risks such as health and security risks, as well as food production risks.<sup>413</sup> In a recent report released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the year 2018 was recorded to be the fourth hottest year on record for the globe, the three hottest years being 2016, 2015 and 2017.<sup>414</sup> NOAA’s findings are supported by analyses conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the United Kingdom MET Office and the World Meteorological Organization.<sup>415</sup> The environmental crisis that we face today is far worse than it was in the 1950s and 1960s, when the first stirrings of the environmental movement were felt. What is the root cause of this crisis? Why have we not been able to overcome it?

I made the argument in the first chapter of this dissertation that the environmental crisis can be traced to the loss of our sense of place in the world. This loss of our sense of place has

---

<sup>412</sup> J.A. Church et al., “2013: Sea Level Change,” in *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, ed. T.F. Stocker et al. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1137–1216; Susmita Dasgupta, “Risk of Sea-Level Rise: High Stakes for East Asia & Pacific Region Countries,” *East Asia & Pacific On the Rise*, last modified 2018, accessed March 23, 2019, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/risk-of-sea-level-rise-high-stakes-for-east-asia-pacific-region-countries>.

<sup>413</sup> Earth Science Communications Team, “How Climate Is Changing,” *Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet*, last modified 2019, accessed February 18, 2019, <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>; U.S. Global Change Research Program, *Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I*, ed. D. J. Wuebbles et al. (Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2017).

<sup>414</sup> NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, “Global Climate Report for Annual 2018.”

<sup>415</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “2018 Was 4th Hottest Year on Record for the Globe,” *NOAA Press Release*, last modified 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2018-was-4th-hottest-year-on-record-for-globe>. The World Meteorological Organization report states: “A consolidated analysis by the World Meteorological Organization of five leading international datasets showed that the global average surface temperature in 2018 was approximately 1.0° Celsius (with a margin of error of  $\pm 0.13^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) above the pre-industrial baseline (1850-1900).” World Meteorological Organization, “WMO Confirms Past 4 Years Were Warmest on Record,” *WMO Press Release* (Geneva, 2019), last modified 2019, accessed February 19, 2019, <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/wmo-confirms-past-4-years-were-warmest-record>.

been brought about by a complex of factors. One of these factors is a shift from the way we view and relate to the world from place to space. Prasenjit Duara argues that this shift was brought about by the hegemonic mindset of Western Enlightenment. The subject-object dichotomy highlighted by modern philosophy changed the way we view the natural environment. The Industrial Revolution, powered by modern science and technology, forever altered the human footprint on the world as it gave us the power to build and extract raw materials from nature on a larger scale than ever before. The natural environment became for us a resource waiting to be exploited to fuel human progress. We have not looked back since, and the effects on the environment continue to add up today as we continue down the path of progress that the Industrial Revolution envisioned and enabled. On the evidence of history, we can agree that there is truth to Duara's claim. Given the scale and power that modern science has allowed us to affect and change the world, it does stand out as an easy target for blame. I think, though, that if we put the blame for our environmental crisis solely on these factors, we would be taking an unfair and rather narrow view on the influence and effect of modernity and science, and of Western civilization for that matter, on the natural environment. This negative view of modernity and of science is an unfair characterization as the negative effect of modernity is only half the story of the influence of this period in history. Much of the advances of science have also allowed us to study and understand the workings of the natural world. The knowledge and insights that we gain from this study have actually been invaluable to us in conservation efforts and continue to guide our best efforts towards finding solutions to the environmental crisis. Climate scientists and conservation biologists, for instance, are helping us

better understand the problems and challenges as well as the measures that we need to take to mitigate the effects of climate change and also to find ways towards a more sustainable future.

It is also unfair to claim that our environmental ills are caused by Western modernity. For its part, China—which has given us Daoist philosophy, from which I draw the Daoist sense of place and ethics of the environment (*weiziran* 為自然)—has not been the best example of environmental consciousness. In its economic reforms beginning in the late 1970s, China has seen the devastating effects of its modernization on the natural environment with loss of biodiversity and pollution, especially in urban and industrial centers.<sup>416</sup> A recent study of environmental degradation comparing urban areas (UA), expanded urban areas (EUA) and fringe urban areas (UFA) over a 20-year period from 1992 to 2012 finds that “approximately 52% of the EUA1992–2012 [expanded urban areas between 1992 to 2012] experienced environmental degradation or moderately [sic] environmental degradation. These values were 30% for the UA1992 and 42% for the UFA2012.”<sup>417</sup> This shows a 22 percent increase in the level of environmental degradation over the twenty-year period, mostly as a result of urbanization and industrialization. The causes of environmental degradation are not to be located in a West versus East debate nor in a scientific versus traditional society debate. The underlying attitudes of human greed and avarice are present in each context. Thus, I am not valorizing the “noble savage” while maligning the “modern person of science.” What I am

---

<sup>416</sup> Chunyang He et al., “Environmental Degradation in the Urban Areas of China: Evidence from Multi-Source Remote Sensing Data,” *Remote Sensing of Environment* 193 (May 1, 2017): 65–75; Fengshi Wu and Richard Edmonds, “China’s Three-Fold Environmental Degradation,” in *Critical Issues in Contemporary China*, ed. Czesław Tubilewicz, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 105–119.

<sup>417</sup> He et al., “Environmental Degradation in the Urban Areas of China: Evidence from Multi-Source Remote Sensing Data,” 71.

getting at is that, as a result of the complex of factors, we have lost our sense of place in the world. Our world, which used to be experienced as a place, a home where we dwell, through the modern turn has become quantifiable space. The environmental crisis being a global reality, our response should be one that is as capacious and representative as possible. The question that I have sought to ask in my reflection on the loss of our sense of place is a question of identity: Who are we in relation to the natural environment?

In my search for an answer to this question—the question about our place in the natural environment—I explored the reflections of a number of humanistic geographers on place, namely, Yi-Fu Tuan, Tim Cresswell and Edward Relph, as well as the thought of philosophers, Martin Heidegger and Edward S. Casey. Tuan emphasizes the embodied experience of place that endows physical places with value.<sup>418</sup> Tuan writes: “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.”<sup>419</sup> Feeling, he says, “designates qualities felt *on* things, *on* persons, and *on* the world.”<sup>420</sup> Our emotions are directed at those people or things beyond ourselves that we are experiencing. An important insight of Tuan’s is that “place is pause.”<sup>421</sup> A particular space becomes place for us when we become familiar with it, and familiarity develops as we spend more time in a particular location. When we are able to *pause* in a location, we develop ties to and a connection with it.

---

<sup>418</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 6.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 9. Emphasis in original

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 6.

It slowly ceases to be merely a location as we develop a relationship with it. In other words, our sense of place allows us to relate to the natural environment with a quality of depth. Cresswell points out that having a sense of place also involves an experience of breadth, with his example of astronauts looking back at the earth from outer space and realizing that their sense of place extends beyond local places to encompass a global sense of place.<sup>422</sup> Relph, for his part, contributes to our understanding of sense of place by connecting sense of place to our living an authentic existence. He explains that this is because to live authentically is to live with deep ties to places that bear meaning and value.<sup>423</sup> The experience of place as breadth and depth is brought together in Heidegger's description of place as dwelling. In his essay, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," he reminds us that "to be is to dwell and to care for the earth."<sup>424</sup> In his reflection on the inseparable link of building, dwelling and thinking, he asks a question about the "proper plight of dwelling": "What if [the human being's] homelessness consisted in this, that [the human being] still does not even think of the *proper* plight of dwelling as *the* plight?"<sup>425</sup> His response to the question is that we must "answer this summons...by trying...to bring dwelling to the fullness of its essence," which can only be accomplished when we "build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling."<sup>426</sup> Our response to the question of the plight of dwelling—what Casey calls the crisis of

---

<sup>422</sup> Cresswell, "Place," 170.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.; Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 44.

<sup>424</sup> Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 348–349.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 363. Emphasis in original.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

unimplacedness, needs to be capacious enough to address the root of the environmental crisis in a spirit of dialogue.

The philosopher J. Baird Callicott opened the door to dialogue by engaging the question of environmental ethics through comparative philosophical reflection, bringing together environmental ethicists and philosophers of non-Western traditions to reflect together on common ground for advancing towards a solution together. This global approach to the environmental crisis is essential because we are facing a global problem. Thus, our solutions must be capacious and representative of the traditions and ways of thinking and living that we find across cultures. My research project aims to do this by bringing together Daoist philosophy and Hawaiian ecological wisdom into this ongoing discourse that Callicott initiated. Drawing on the key insights and ways of understanding and living of these two traditions reveals a Daoist sense of place and a Hawaiian sense of place. The Daoist sense of place, as we have seen in chapter 3 above, is grounded on *dao* (道) and *de* (德) as continuity and multiplicity of the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物), which are not static but are involved in a harmonious ongoing symbiosis (*he* 和). This dynamic ongoing process of the natural environment, of that which is naturally so (*ziran* 自然)—the placemaking of the natural world—is what we are called to emulate and to participate in through our thinking (*wuzhi* 無知), desiring (*wuyu* 無欲) and acting (*wuwei* 無為) in relation to the natural environment. The Hawaiian sense of place, *aloha ʻāina*, is centered on *pono*, which emphasizes that which is



appropriate.<sup>427</sup> *Pono* reflects appropriate disposition and conduct, and resonates well with the Daoist disposition of *wu* (無). One who lives according to *aloha ‘āina* does so by acting appropriately and in a beneficial manner with *‘āina* (the land). The ancestral Hawaiian connection to the land places the human person (*kanaka*) in a concentric-radial relation to one’s locale as well as to the Earth. This means that, through the Hawaiian sense of place, when we care for the land (*mālama ‘āina*) we are also called to care for the Earth (*mālama honua*). The Hawaiian sense of place is given meaning through narrative (*mo ‘olelo*) and genealogy (*mo ‘okū ‘auhau*), and strengthened through the bonds of ritual and religion by which the gods (*akua* and *aumākua*) are made manifest in the natural world through physical form (*kinolau*). The Hawaiian sense of place thus leads us to love and reverence the Earth (*aloha honua*). Through the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, I sought to ground my proposal for a Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment: *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*.

## ***5.2 Resonance between the Daoist Sense of Place and the Hawaiian Sense of Place, and Weiziran (為自然) and Aloha ‘Āina***

Further reflection on the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, and *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*, the Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment, reveals a number of important resonances between them. The first is that both the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place offer a conception of the world through a process cosmology, that is, the world is involved in a dynamic and continual becoming. The second resonance is that the human being’s relation to the world is

---

<sup>427</sup> I render *pono* into English as: “appropriateness,” or “that which is appropriate.” Refer to the discussion of this translation in relation to a Hawaiian sense of place in section “4.8 *Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka ‘Āina I Ka Pono*.”

at once local and global, as seen in the Hawaiian sense of place as concentricity-radiality and the Daoist sense of place as continuity-multiplicity. Third, there is, in both traditions, a vital relationality between the human being and the natural environmental. A fourth resonance is in the way that both present a narrative sense of place. Fifth, the human being is called to act as a placemaker, and, finally, we ought to be attentive in knowing and understanding the world through *'imi loa* and *wuzhi* (無知).

### *5.2.1 Process Cosmology in the Daoist Sense of Place and the Hawaiian Sense of Place*

The Daoist sense of place and Hawaiian sense of place offer us a conception of the centeredness and rootedness of placemaking that is at the same time dynamic and open to the continual becoming of the natural world. They both challenge the various boundaries that come with substance ontology, which posit a separation between the human subject and the world as object. The classical Greek thinkers' search for "the discrete and quantitative" truth that corresponds to Being leads to the dualism between self and world. The classical Chinese thinkers' search for the most efficacious way to make the most of ever-changing circumstances, on the other hand, leads to a realization of the human-world relationship as both "qualitative and continuous."<sup>428</sup> As Angus Graham writes in *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*:

In seeking the One behind the many, as also in seeking the constant behind the changing, *Lao-tzu* is using concepts that seem fully identifiable with our own. There is however an important difference from the Western tradition, that no Chinese thinker conceives the One and the constant as Being or Reality behind the veil of appearance.... If we ourselves would prefer to think of it as absolute Reality that is because our philosophy in general has

---

<sup>428</sup> Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, 218–220.

been a search for being, reality, truth, while for the Chinese the question was always, ‘Where is the Way?’ Chinese thinkers want to know how to live, how to organize community, and at the very end of the pre-Han period, how to relate community to the cosmos.<sup>429</sup>

The process cosmology of the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions allows for a relational conception of the human being, in which the person is an inclusive self. In the chapters on Daoist sense of place and Hawaiian sense of place, I argued for this inclusive self (自 *zi*) of classical Chinese “locates the person gerundively as the embodied, social activity of thinking and feeling within the manifold of relations that constitutes family, community, and the natural environment.”<sup>430</sup> The Hawaiian inclusive self is one who lives within a radial relation linking the person (*kanaka*) with one’s land (‘*āina*) through one’s genealogy. The human person is a descendant of the land. The *Kumulipo* locates the birth of human beings in the Eighth *Wā* (Era), after the birth of the flora and fauna in the seas and on land—from the coral polyp (‘*Ukuko ‘ako ‘a*) to all lifeforms in the sea, in the rivers and streams, on land and in the air. The *Kumulipo* depicts the birth of human beings in the following manner in the first few lines of the Eighth *Wā* (Era):

*A kama auli ‘i, auli ‘i anei  
O kama i ke au o ka po kinikini  
O kama i ke au o ka po he ‘enalu mamao  
Hanau kanaka o mehelau...*

Rubellite Kawena Johnson translates it thus:

From embryo the infant child has formed until now,

---

<sup>429</sup> Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*, 222–223.

<sup>430</sup> Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, 213.

A child in the time forty-thousand times forty-thousand fold night(s) ago  
The child in the time of night that passed afar  
Mankind born by generations...<sup>431</sup>

The order of the birth of the human being in the *Kumulipo* emphasizes the human being's place within the relationship with the natural environment: we are not masters—in Leopold's words “conquerors”—of the world. Rather, we are the children of the land (*kama 'āina*) and younger siblings to the plants and animals in the sea, on the land, and in the air. Our identity is one of belonging to the land. This inclusive identity points to the second important insight of the resonance between the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, that is, the human being's relation to the world is at once local and global, as seen in the Hawaiian sense of place as concentricity-radiality and the Daoist sense of place as continuity-multiplicity.

### *5.2.2 Concentricity-Radiality of the Hawaiian Sense of Place ('Āina—Honua) and Continuity-Multiplicity of the Daoist Sense of Place*

From this process cosmology and relationality, I find the idea of concentricity-radiality in the Hawaiian sense of place resonating with the continuity and multiplicity that we discover in the Daoist sense of place. Concentricity-radiality in the Hawaiian sense of place highlights the point that we cannot separate caring for the local from caring for the global environment. In the worldview of the native Hawaiian, the individual is related to the global via relations of expanding concentric circles, radiating from the center. According to this view, which I described in the previous chapter on Hawaiian sense of place, *'āina* (land) is understood to extend in concentric circles in the relation of *hale* (house) → *kuleana* (small piece of property or

---

<sup>431</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*, 25.

land that he is responsible for) → *ahupua‘a* (land division extending from the uplands to the sea) → his *moku* (district) → *mokupuni* (island) → *pae ‘āina* (archipelago) → and the interactions of the culture of that archipelago (e.g. Hawai‘i) with the other Polynesian nations of *Moana Nui* (the greater Pacific Polynesian root culture).<sup>432</sup> Thus, as we have seen, *mālama ‘āina* (care for the land) necessary presupposes and includes *mālama honua* (care for the Earth). We cannot have one without the other. The Daoist relationality found in the notion of *yiduobufen* (一多不分) emphasizes the continuity that binds together the multiplicity of events in our experience of the world. *Yiduobufen* (一多不分) resonates with the relation of particularity and totality that is expressed in the relation of *de* (德) and *dao* (道). A most apt example of this Hawaiian and Daoist sense of place that is at once local and global, and expresses particularity and totality is the *Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage (the voyage to care for our Island Earth) of the traditional Hawaiian vessel, *Hōkūle‘a*, and its sister vessel, *Hikianalia*. The worldwide voyage that began with a *Mālama Hawai‘i* sail throughout the Hawaiian archipelago in 2013, and continued with a circumnavigation of the globe from 2014 to 2017, highlights the argument of Epeli Hau‘ofa of Oceania as “a sea of islands”.<sup>433</sup> In the light of the insight into radial relationality of the Hawaiian sense of place and *daode* (道德) relationality of the Daoist sense of place, we can extend Hau‘ofa’s vision to encompass the Earth as a sea of islands and continents. Therefore, we are not isolated from one another; rather, we are connected by the oceans and

---

<sup>432</sup> Gon III, “‘Āina as Concentric Set of Places.” See section “4.4.1 Concentricity-Radiality of the *Kanaka* Relation with ‘Āina.”

<sup>433</sup> Hau‘ofa, “Our Sea of Islands.”

waters as arteries that carry the lifeblood of our common concerns. Throughout the *Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage, the crew of the *Hōkūle‘a* and the *Hikianalia* brought the message of “care for our Earth” to 23 countries and territories, stopping at more than 150 ports, as well as eight of UNESCO’S Marine World Heritage sites. One of the key missions of the more than 245 crew members, which included both formal and informal educators, was to take the opportunity to engage with local communities across the globe in each of their landing ports on ways to live sustainably. During this voyage, the crew connected with “more than 100,000 people throughout the world in communities across the South Pacific, Tasman Sea, Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, including Samoa, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia, Indonesia, Mauritius, South Africa, Brazil, U.S. Virgin Islands, Cuba, the East Coast of the United States, Canada, Panama, and the Galapagos Islands.”<sup>434</sup>

### 5.2.3 Vital Relationality between the Human Being and the Natural Environment

The Daoist ethics of the environment, *weiziran* (為自然), invites us to care for the natural environment, to dwell, to be placemakers. *Daodejing* 25 presents a vision of the human being’s relation to the world that is rooted in an understanding of our place and in our role in placemaking.

道大，天大，地大，王亦大。國中有四大，而王居一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。<sup>435</sup>

---

<sup>434</sup> Polynesian Voyaging Society, “*Hōkūle‘a*: The *Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage Continues into 2018,” *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage*, accessed February 17, 2019, <http://www.hokulea.com/worldwide-voyage/>.

<sup>435</sup> DDJ 25. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115.

*Dao is great, the heavens are great, the earth is great, the king is also great. Within the realm, there are four greats, and the king dwells as one.* Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate *dao*, *dao* emulates what is naturally so.

*Weiziran* (為自然) calls on us to mirror and emulate the placemaking that we observe in the natural world. In the passage of the *Daodejing* above, the human person emulates the earth (*di* 地), which emulates the heavens (*tian* 天), which emulate *dao* (道).<sup>436</sup> From this we see that by emulating *dao* (道), heaven (*tian* 天), and earth (*di* 地) the human being (*ren* 人) attains *ziran* (自然). Read in another way, this is an invitation to the human being to emulate nature by not overdoing (*wu* 無).<sup>437</sup> The natural world works through processes of interactions among the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物)<sup>438</sup>, and the human being is called to act within a natural limit of checks and balances (emulate the earth 地...heaven 天...*dao* 道...*ziran* 自然)—to act according to *wuwei* (無為), *wuzhi* (無知), and *wuyu* (無欲). Acting, knowing and desiring in this manner involves not overdoing any of these aspects. By living according to *wu* (無), we will follow the mutually entailing and enriching relation of the human person and the natural environment.<sup>439</sup> This is an invaluable course correction to the destructive attitude brought about by the loss of our sense of place, which, as I have pointed out, is a core factor for the environmental crisis.

---

<sup>436</sup> *DDJ* 25. Ibid.

<sup>437</sup> See, for example, *DDJ* 9, 23, 77.

<sup>438</sup> See, for instance, *Daodejing* 34, 42, 51, 52.

<sup>439</sup> We find a similar notion in *Zhuangzi* 19: *xiang tian* (相天).

*Aloha ‘āina*, the Hawaiian ethics of the environment, resonates with the emphasis that *weiziran* (為自然) places on the close relation between the human person and the natural environment. As Noenoe Silva points out, *aloha ‘āina* involves recognizing the profound bond between the human person and ‘āina.<sup>440</sup> The deep bond that we share with the earth is reinforced by *kinolau*, which Johnson explains, “‘personif[ies] the *akua* and the ‘*aumakua* in nature and...establish[es] an avenue of visible or audible contact with them in the whole of nature.”<sup>441</sup> Placemaking, in the Hawaiian worldview, involves the vital relationality of the human (*kanaka*) and divine. The personification of winds, rains, stones, living plants and animals as *kinolau* of *akua* and ‘*aumakua* gives these natural elements the power of placemaking. Participation and relationality in Hawaiian culture includes the interaction with the natural elements of the world, imbued with the power of the divine. The Hawaiian response and injunction in this relationship with the natural environment is to *mālama ‘āina*, care for the land. *Mālama ‘āina* is the human person’s responsibility (*kuleana*), which is mutually entailing responsibility. By fulfilling the mutual *kuleana* the Hawaiian sense of place is lived through the people’s care for the land (*mālama ‘āina*) for which the land cares for the people. Kame‘eleihiwa puts it this way: “[I]t is

---

<sup>440</sup> Silva writes: “*Aloha ‘āina* is a complex concept that includes recognizing that we are an integral part of the ‘āina and the ‘āina is an integral part of us.” Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*, 4.

<sup>441</sup> ‘*Aumākua*: “Family or personal gods, deified ancestors who might assume the shape of sharks (all islands except Kaua‘i), owls (as at Mānoa, O‘ahu and Ka‘ū and Puna, Hawai‘i), hawks (Hawai‘i), ‘*elepao*, ‘*iwi*, mudhens, octopuses, eels, mice, rats, dogs, caterpillars, rocks, cowries, clouds, or plants. A symbiotic relationship existed; mortals did not harm or eat ‘*aumākua* (they fed sharks), and ‘*aumākua* warned and reprimanded mortals in dreams, visions, and calls.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “‘*Aumākua*.”



the duty of Hawaiians to *Mālama ‘Āina*, and as a result of this proper behavior, the *‘Āina* will *mālama* Hawaiians.”<sup>442</sup>

#### 5.2.4 Narrative Sense of Place in the Hawaiian Sense of Place and the Daoist Sense of Place

When we begin from the primacy of vital relationality, our reflection on sense of place and our relationship with the natural environment leads us to a realization that we are always “relating to” the Earth. “Relating to” reminds us of how meaning and sense of place is invariably tied to the stories of our experiences of places and of placemaking. In his reflections on place, Yi-Fu Tuan mentions the importance of remembering the stories of our embodied experiences of places where we live. Vital relationality, therefore, involves a narrative understanding of place. It is about the taking place of a story.<sup>443</sup> *Weiziran* (為自然) in Daoist placemaking is, thus, the taking place of the story of the human being’s relation with one’s place. It is, as Heidegger points out, about knowing how to dwell within one’s locale, but with a knowing-whence as we learned from our discussion of *Daodejing* 47.<sup>444</sup> Knowing-whence involves a disposition of knowing the world wherein one is attendant to the natural environment as placemaking: what the *Daodejing* calls *wuzhi* (無知). Such knowing emphasizes an understanding of the narrative that is taking place in the world of the myriad things that are continually becoming (*wanwu* 萬物).

---

<sup>442</sup> Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Shall We Live in Harmony (Ko Hawai‘i ‘Āina a Me Nā Kōi Pu‘umake a Ka Po‘e Haole: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai?)*, 25.

<sup>443</sup> Roger T. Ames, “Vital Relationality as Narrative Understanding and Taking Place,” 2018.

<sup>444</sup> DDJ 47. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 150–151. See section “3.10 Placemaking is Knowing How to Dwell Rightly.”

The Hawaiian sense of place—the human person’s connection to *‘āina* and *honua*—is told in the narrative of the *Kumulipo* and through *mo‘okū‘auhau* (genealogy). As Silva points out, Hawaiians learn of and maintain their connection to the land through the narratives about places as well as place names.<sup>445</sup> The *Kumulipo* chant of creation establishes the ruler and the people in relation to the water and land from which they were born, and points to a beginning as well as a continuation of that unbreakable bond. The story of the Hāloanaka, the kalo, and Hāloa, his younger brother fixes in the understanding of the listener the mutual *kuleana* of *mālama ‘āina* as *pono* (appropriate action). These Hawaiian narratives of origins and genealogy form the basis for answering the questions: “Where are we from? Where are we now? Where are we going?” Going beyond the Daoist narrative sense of place of knowing whence and whither, the Hawaiian narrative sense of place further establishes their identity as descendants of *ka pae ‘āina Hawai‘i* (the Hawaiian Archipelago). Thus, the Hawaiian narrative sense of place further answers the question: “Who are we?” This question is bound to the questions: “Whence and whither are we?” The Hawaiian sense of place establishes the Hawaiian narrative identity as *kama‘āina* (children of the land).<sup>446</sup>

### 5.2.5 We are Called to be Placemakers

As *kama‘āina*, we are given the injunction to *mālama ‘āina* (care for the land) and to *mālama honua* (care for the Earth). This is our responsibility: to be placemakers who are

---

<sup>445</sup> Silva, *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*; Oliveira, *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies*; Oliveira, “*Wahi A Kahiko*: Place Names as Vehicles of Ancestral Memory.”

<sup>446</sup> The *Hawaiian Dictionary* translates *kama‘āina* as: “Native-born, one born in a place, host.” It literally means, “land child.” Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, s.v. “*Kama‘āina*.”

involved, through *wuwei* (無為), *wuzhi* (無知), and *wuyu* (無欲), in the harmonious ongoing symbiosis of the natural environment by our attentiveness to the needs of the Earth. The story of the gray wolf at Yellowstone National Park is a good illustration of such placemaking. The *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage highlights the need for the care and attentiveness that goes into placemaking. There is a Hawaiian proverb that goes: “*He wa ‘a he moku, he moku he wa ‘a*” (A canoe is an island, an island is a canoe). The *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage shines a light on the Earth as “a sea of islands.” As the crew of a voyaging vessel live on an island in the sea with a finite supply of food and resources, we who live in a sea of islands also live with a finite supply of food and resources. Thus, as we live in “a sea of islands”—as we become more aware of our connectedness, we need also to recognize the finiteness of what the lands and oceans provide for us. We are called to learn to live sustainably, to think globally and act locally, and to think locally and act globally (vis-à-vis concentricity-radiality of the human being’s relation to the land). This awareness, in order for it to be enduring, ought to be pursued as *‘imi loa* and *wuzhi* (無知).

#### 5.2.6 Attentiveness in Knowing and Understanding the World: *‘Imi Loa* and *Wuzhi* (無知)

Nainoa Thompson said of the *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage, “*Hōkūle‘a* and her crew have been crossing the ocean for over 40 years in the wake of our ancestors, committed to showing the world that old knowledge can be made new again, and that traditional ecological understanding holds the key to solving some of Earth’s greatest problems.”<sup>447</sup>

---

<sup>447</sup> Thompson, “Traditional Knowledge for Today’s Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress.”

Nainoa's words and mission illustrate the Hawaiian epistemological stance of *'imi loa* (searching far and deeper). Living *aloha 'āina*, the Hawaiian ethics of the environment, involves a looking back at our core values while looking ahead in search of answers to our present-day needs and realities. This is not a glorifying of the past, but a continual reflective disposition that allows us to take what is best from our wealth of experience as a people and to keep adapting and applying that to our present circumstances. Not all of the past ways of doing things will work for us today, but this does not mean that the core values attached to those ways of doing things are wrong or that they are not valid. Rather, it most likely means that we need to be attentive to our context and to the placemaking of the world around us. This attentiveness to our ever-changing context and reality is what the Daoist disposition of *wuzhi* (無知) is about. By continually striving to be faithful to what is known (*wuzhi*, 無知), we prevent ourselves from being stuck in ossified ways of thinking and seeing the world, and, thus, become more attuned to the present context and needs that are before us. This enables us to act appropriately in response to the needs of our time.

### ***5.3 Differences between Weiziran (為自然) and Aloha 'Āina***

The six points of resonance presented above between *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha 'āina* offer valuable insight in support of the contribution of these two complementary ethics to the ongoing discourse on comparative environmental ethics. However, in my consideration of these two traditions I must admit that there are also differences between them, which need to be mentioned. These have to do with: (1) reference to concrete places, (2) metaphorical versus literal cosmogony, and (3) the role of religion in relation to each of the views.

### 5.3.1 Daoist Texts Do Not Mention Concrete Places, while Hawaiian Texts are Replete with Place Names

One obvious difference is on the reference to actual places and ancestors in both traditions. The *Daodejing* makes no mention of an actual concrete place and, although the Daoist text presents a genealogical view, it makes no mention of actual ancestors. The Hawaiian view is clearly grounded in the lived experiences of *kanaka maoli* (native Hawaiians) on their land, *ka pae ‘āina Hawai‘i* (the Hawaiian archipelago). In our discussion of the Hawaiian sense of place, we learned of the absolute importance of place names and of the literal genealogy for the Hawaiian sense of identity. The Hawaiian is one who is descended from the land, a younger sibling with *kuleana* (responsibility) to *mālama ‘āina* (care for the land). The *Daodejing* might be addressing an audience that has already been uprooted from their land and is moving from place to place, given the context of the Warring States during which much of the text is believed to have been redacted.<sup>448</sup> Another possibility is that, as some commentators on the *Daodejing* point out, the extant text of the *Daodejing* might be a sort of prolegomenon to a more detailed text that present more fleshed out discussions of the key insights found in the *Daodejing*.<sup>449</sup>

---

<sup>448</sup> Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 1–10; Liu, “From Bamboo Slips to Received Versions: Common Features in the Transformation of the ‘Laozi’”; Hsiu-Chen Chang, “On the Historicity of the ‘Tao Te Ching,’” *Comparative Literature Studies* 35, no. 2 (1998): 146–173.

<sup>449</sup> I owe a debt of gratitude to Roger T. Ames for this insight. Ames discovered a similar function in the extant text of Sunzi’s *The Art of Warfare*. See Roger T. Ames, *Sun-Tzu: The Art of Warfare* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993).

### 5.3.2 Daoist Cosmogony is Metaphorical, while Hawaiian Cosmogony is Literal

A second difference between the Daoist and Hawaiian views is in their understanding of cosmogony. The Daoist cosmogony is metaphorical while the Hawaiian cosmogony is literally genealogical. A principal source of the Hawaiian genealogy is the *Kumulipo*. We learned in “Chapter 4: Hawaiian Sense of Place” of the vital relationality that the human person feels with the land (*‘āina*) and the gods (*akua*) because they are linked by a genealogical bond.<sup>450</sup> The Daoist cosmogony, as it is presented in texts such as the *Huainanzi* (淮南子) and *The Great One Gives Birth to the Waters* (太一生水 *Taiyishengshui*) is metaphorical.<sup>451</sup>

### 5.3.3 Hawaiian Sense of Place is Heavily Reliant on Religion, while the Daoist Sense of Place Does Not Appeal to Religion

A third difference that we can identify between the two viewpoints is in their divergence in terms of religion. The Daoist view does not include any discussion or appeal to religion or to any gods or a god. In fact, as Roger T. Ames points out in *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, the classical Chinese cosmogonic myths allude to “genealogical birthings” that are part of a “procreative process” that takes place in the world.<sup>452</sup> As I discussed in “Chapter 3: Place in

---

<sup>450</sup> Johnson, *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*; Beckwith, *Hawaiian Mythology*.

<sup>451</sup> See, for example, the 俶真訓 chapter of the *Huainanzi* (淮南子). D. C. Lau, *Huainan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin: A Concordance to the Huainanzi* (Hong Kong: Commercial Press (Shangwuyin Shuguan), 1992), 10–18; An Liu, *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, ed. John S. Major et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 77–107. Ames and Hall discuss *The Great One Gives Birth to the Waters* in the Appendix of their translation of the *Daodejing*. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 225–231.

<sup>452</sup> Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, 225–231; Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 13–21.

Daoist Thinking,” the Daoist sense of place emphasizes an immanent processual view of the natural world. The Hawaiian view, on the other hand, draws from native Hawaiian gods’ close relationship to the land. We have seen in our discussion in the previous chapter that the manifestation of the *akua* and *aumākua* as *kinolau* instills in the Hawaiian their reverence (*aloha*) for the natural environment.<sup>453</sup> This close relation between gods and the land allows the native Hawaiians to deepen their sense of place.

Reflecting on the differences between the two traditions, I can see that, by bringing them together in dialogue, what is missing in one tradition is provided for by the other. This, I put forward, is actually more a strength than it is a weakness in the dialogue. Taken together, with their resonances and differences, the Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment offer an efficacious and capacious contribution to our discourse.

#### **5.4 Objections to *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha ‘Āina***

As we have considered the efficaciousness of the Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment, we should also consider possible objections to them. A first objection that may be raised is that the Daoist and Hawaiian perspectives are limited in scope and may not be as capacious as I claim them to be. Another objection can be raised in the form of a question: “Must we reject modernity and science in order to embrace *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina*?” A third objection that may be raised is about the sense of place that underpins the Daoist and

---

<sup>453</sup> Refer to section “4.6 Hawaiian Sense of Place in Relation to Hawaiian Religion, Ritual, and Gods.”

Hawaiian ethics of the environment: “Does a sense of place require some objective relationship with nature or can one have a sense of place in any circumstance?”

#### *5.4.1 Daoist and Hawaiian Perspectives are Limited in Scope and Not As Capacious As Claimed*

The first objection is that the views presented by the Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment are limited in scope and not as capacious as I claim them to be. One may argue that these views are merely two narrow perspectives among a host of other perspectives and, thus, are not representative of the majority of cultures or perspectives. In this way, it is wrong to think that they can be applied to other cultures or realities. Another aspect of this objection is that both of these perspectives on thinking about and relating to the natural environment are outdated, and so are no longer applicable to contemporary realities.

In response to this objection that *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina* present only a limited perspective, recall that the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions are not isolated as we have seen in the justification for choosing the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place, and, subsequently, the ethics of the environment that arise from them. On the contrary, the Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place resonate deeply and, taken together, present a more capacious and enduring view of the world. Further, the spirit of this objection focuses on cultural differences, which understandably do divide and present limitations for applying *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ‘āina* to our present-day environmental crisis. However, I think the objection misses the point of the enduring environmental ethic, which is its capaciousness and its underlying value, namely, our sense of place in the world. Consider the Hawaiian insight into the concentricity-radiality of place. The concentricity-radiality of place proceeds from a central focus outward to an ultimately



boundless field, which is also an assumption in Daoist cosmology. Relationality, in this view, has an extension that is potentially boundless. Therefore, any particular in this relation implicates the totality of relations. Such a conception of relationality is not found only in the Hawaiian and Daoist traditions. In fact, as Callicott highlighted in his work in comparative environmental ethics, various cultures across the world have similar relational insights.<sup>454</sup>

Another way to respond to this objection is by pointing to recent studies that show that conservation efforts are more successful when these efforts involve indigenous communities. One of the key reasons for this is that indigenous peoples, who have a long relation with the land possess an intimate knowledge of the land that scientists lack. One such study conducted by Claudia Sobrevila makes the argument that indigenous peoples “are a source of knowledge to the many solutions that will be needed to avoid or ameliorate [the] effects [of climate change]. For example, ancestral territories often provide excellent examples of a landscape design that can resist the negatives effects of climate change. Over the millennia, Indigenous Peoples have developed adaptation models to climate change. They have also developed genetic varieties of medicinal and useful plants and animal breeds with a wider natural range of resistance to climatic and ecological variability.”<sup>455</sup> In conservation efforts, Sobrevila recommends strengthening cultural integrity. She writes:

Indigenous communities that have strong historical continuity and cultural and spiritual heritage should be supported. These communities are more determined to preserve,

---

<sup>454</sup> Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*.

<sup>455</sup> Claudia Sobrevila, *The Role of Indigenous Peoples in Biodiversity Conservation: The Natural but Often Forgotten Partners* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2008), xii.

develop, and transmit their ethnic identity and ancestral territories to future generations as the basis of their continued existence as peoples and in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems. Contributions to cultural revitalization (traditional knowledge and spiritual beliefs) can therefore reflect back well on improved conservation efforts.<sup>456</sup>

Thus, there is strong support for appealing to a Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment.

#### 5.4.2 *Must We Reject Modernity and Science in Order to Embrace Weiziran (為自然) and Aloha 'Āina?*

The second objection may be presented in this manner: Even if the argument of the Daoist and Hawaiian ethics of the environment is shown to be a sufficiently representative view, it may not be a viable solution because it assumes that parts of the world have to transcend their deeply-ingrained perspectives, which seems impossible or at the very least implausible. For instance, are we to reject modernity and modernization? Are we supposed to reject science and return to a traditional, pre-scientific way of life? Or, how can we think like a Daoist or a Hawaiian?

To address this objection of the implausibility of thinking or seeing beyond one's own perspective or paradigm, we can recall the idea of paradigm shifts presented by Thomas Kuhn in his groundbreaking work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn explains that paradigm shifts occur in time of crisis.<sup>457</sup> As has been borne out in human experience, what seems implausible is not necessarily impossible. We have witnessed paradigm shifts in the past, and

---

<sup>456</sup> Ibid., xiv.

<sup>457</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

there is no denying the possibility of a paradigm shift in our search for an enduring environmental ethics. Perhaps what we need to do arrive at an enduring ethics of the environment—to live *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha 'āina*—is to keep pushing the envelope, keep the discourse alive and continue to bring the movement towards a critical mass, to a tipping point. There are no guarantees that it will work but the worsening environmental crisis is an urgent call to action and to continue to work out the most efficacious way forward towards a more capacious and an enduring ethics of the environment. Another way to respond to this third objection is demonstrated by our approach in this study, which is, one of an expansive, inclusive, capacious attitude. Perhaps the real challenge and invitation is not to pit one perspective or worldview against another. Rather, it is for us to broaden and enrich our worldview to advance the discourse and search for an enduring ethics of the environment.

Second, as I pointed out in my discussions in previous chapters, my proposal of *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha 'āina* is not one that calls for a rejection of modernity or science. When we consider science and technology, the question that we need to address is not about the tools themselves (science and technology), but about how we make use of these tools. I am not rejecting modernity and science and technology. In fact, science and technology have a lot to offer in our efforts to address the environmental problems that we face. Take, for instance, renewable energy technology that seeks to address our energy needs in a sustainable manner, and geo-engineering technology that seeks to sequester excess carbon dioxide from the environment in order to mitigate the problem of global warming by reducing the level of greenhouse gases. It is not science that is blame. Science and technology are but methods and tools. Rather, what we must address are the underlying attitudes and dispositions: avarice and greed, forgetfulness of

our place in the world, the loss of our sense of place. The *Hōkūle‘a Mālama Honua* Worldwide Voyage represents the best of traditional and modern-day knowledge. It shows, in the words of Nainoa Thompson, “that old knowledge can be made new again, and that traditional ecological understanding holds the key to solving some of Earth’s greatest problems.”<sup>458</sup> At the same time, it also showcases the power of twenty-first century technology to bring the message of the Hawaiian sense of place to the world, into classrooms and the lives of individuals and communities around the globe. Throughout the worldwide voyage, *Hōkūle‘a*, the traditional Hawaiian voyaging vessel, was accompanied by her sister vessel *Hikianalia*, a modern voyaging canoe equipped with “technology to link [the voyage and crew members] to classrooms and individuals around the globe through [the] hokulea.org website.” This allowed *Hōkūle‘a* and *Hikianalia* to become “‘floating classrooms’ that demonstrate the potential of project-based learning on a global scale.”<sup>459</sup>

Finally, it may ultimately occur that the turn to this way of engaging the environment will not depend on human wisdom. At some point, necessity itself will require that human beings change our course and learn to dwell rightly or face the possibility that we might disappear as a species. Aldo Leopold makes this point in his argument that “ecological necessity” might just compel us to embrace a “land ethic.”<sup>460</sup>

---

<sup>458</sup> Thompson, “Traditional Knowledge for Today’s Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress.”

<sup>459</sup> Polynesian Voyaging Society, “The Education Movement,” *Hōkūle‘a*, accessed March 24, 2019, <http://www.hokulea.com/movement/>.

<sup>460</sup> Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*, 202–205.

#### 5.4.3 Does a Sense of Place Require Some Objective Relationship with Nature, or Can One Have a Sense of Place in Any Circumstance?

This question is very relevant to us, especially when many of us spend our lives in urban settings, and have little or no experience of nature beyond the city or community parks or lakes that we have access to. It is difficult to see how we could gain a Hawaiian sense of place without actually spending our lives in a specific place and with a specific connection to the natural environment as the *kanaka maoli* (native Hawaiians). If we want to develop a sense of place, are we required to settle down in one place and get to know the land? Can people who travel regularly and move between cities, countries, continents and cultures find a sense of place?

In response, I venture to say “yes, we do need to have an objective relationship with the natural environment if we are to develop a sense of place.” From the point of view of the Hawaiian sense of place, it is obvious that a life lived in engagement with the land, with concrete places, experiencing and being open to the placemaking that happens every day is a necessary ingredient in the making of a sense of place. Yi-Fu Tuan’s reflections on space and place underscore this point: “[P]lace is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.”<sup>461</sup> Edward Casey, discussing the undeniable effect of our embodiment on emplacement, affirms that we are “bound by the body to be in place.”<sup>462</sup>

Yet, how do we recover a sense of place if we live in an urban setting, with no or very limited access to nature? I think that it will be difficult, but not impossible. One way to rediscover, recover, or develop a sense of place is through the power and efficaciousness of

---

<sup>461</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 6.

<sup>462</sup> Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, 104.

narratives. We live in an age in which we have access to the narratives of place at our fingertips. Social media is replete with narratives, stories, memes, and videos about both the very real environmental problems that we face and the inspiring stories of persons and communities who live in harmony with nature. The mass media—through movies and documentaries—can transport us to those places that our feet may not be able to take us. It is true that these mediated experiences of the natural environment are clearly not the same as living in the midst of nature. But, this does not mean that they cannot be a source to spark within us a genuine appreciation of, and love and reverence for the beauty and fragility of the natural world. Education is another important means to bring us closer to the natural world, through experience-based learning programs. The insight into the concentricity-radiality of our relation with the world can make much sense to those of us who live in an urban setting. If we are able to see that when we walk through a city park and breathe the fresh air, touch the grass and watch the squirrels scurry about, that by engaging with nature in our home city we are, at the same time, encountering the Earth, we might just understand our responsibility to care for the Earth. If, by watching a short video clip on our Facebook feed, we are made acutely and personally aware of the effect that our use of plastics has on life in the oceans, we might just understand that we are, in some way, personally and collectively responsible for the growing Great Pacific Garbage Patch and make a decision to live sustainably.

Perhaps, the Daoist insight of knowing-whence can be applied to our reflections here. The knowing-whence that *Daodejing* 47 advocates resonates with what Ames calls “knowing as performative and participatory wisdom.” In *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, he explains: “Such knowledge is not only cognitive and discursive, but is also a kind of *know-how*—a

practicable doing. It entails both a realizing *how* and an *acting upon* such a realization. That is, it is a knowing how to apply one's best insights and feelings to get the most out of the existing possibilities."<sup>463</sup> Ames' insight resonates with my proposal for a Daoist ethics of the environment, namely, *weiziran* (為自然), which is a call to act with (*wei* 為) and for the sake of (*wei* 為) that which is naturally so (*ziran* 自然). It also resonates with the Hawaiian ethics of the environment, *aloha 'āina*, which enjoins us to love and reverence the Earth, and care for the Earth (*mālama honua*) by acting appropriately.<sup>464</sup>

How do *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha 'āina* guide us toward an efficacious relationship with the natural environment? They charge us to refrain from decisions and actions that are harmful to the harmonious ongoing symbiosis of the earth. By placing us back within the placemaking of the earth, and reinvigorating—and in some instances, reviving—our sense of place, *weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha 'āina* bring to the forefront the interconnectedness of the human person and the natural environment. This means that our economic, political, and social decisions and actions must be directed towards the most efficacious fulfillment of our bond to the Earth. It means, for instance, that we seriously rethink our dependence on fossil fuels, and work together towards the development of sustainable energy methods. It also means that we make biodiversity preservation and protection of ecosystems a key component of all planning—be it on the local, national, regional or global level. It also means that the global community

---

<sup>463</sup> Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*, 220.

<sup>464</sup> *Ua mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono.*

work sincerely towards meeting the intergovernmental environmental goals that we have committed ourselves to.

*Weiziran* (為自然) and *aloha ʻāina*, as ethics of the environment, emphasize that our affective reconnection with the natural environment is one that necessitates action. Recovering our sense of place is not a purely intellectual exercise. In fact, the very meaning and experience of our sense of place involves the way we dwell. Recovering our sense of place involves our love and reverence for the land (*aloha ʻāina*) and necessitates our acting with and for the sake of that which is naturally so (*weiziran* 為自然) through our caring for the Earth (*mālama honua*). To recover our sense of place means to recover our connectedness with and responsibility to care for the Earth. To have an authentic sense of place necessitates the desire to care for the land.

This is a serious challenge, but we must take it one step at a time from where we are: realizing the problem and recognizing a way forward, continuing the dialogue and taking action as placemakers. It has to start from where we are:

“合抱之木，作於毫末；九成之台，作於蘊土；百仞之高，始於足下。”<sup>465</sup>

“A tree whose trunk is as wide as a person’s embrace, is born of the smallest tip; a nine-story tower, is started with a basketful of earth; a lofty hundred-foot structure, is begun at the soil beneath one’s foot.”<sup>466</sup>

---

<sup>465</sup> DDJ 64. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 177.

<sup>466</sup> Ames and Hall translate this as: “A tree with the girth of a person’s embrace, grows from the tiniest shoot. A pavilion nine stories high rises from one basketful of earth. A thousand foot wall begins from the soil under one’s feet.” Ibid., 77–78. Henricks renders this as: “A tree so big that it takes both arms to surround starts out as the tiniest shoot; a nine-story terrace rises up from a basket of dirt. A high place one hundred, one thousand feet high begins from under your feet.” Henricks (trans.), *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*, 33. The Wangbi text differs in several places: “合抱之木，生於毫末；九層之臺，起於累土；千里之行，始於足下。” Lau translates it: “A tree that can fill the span of a man’s arms [g]rows from a downy tip; [a] terrace nine storeys high [r]ises from hodfuls of earth; [a] journey of a thousand miles [s]tarts from beneath one’s feet.” Lau (trans.), *Tao Te Ching*, 92–95.



### 5.5 Final Considerations: Ecological Ethics of *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha ‘Āina*

As I come to the end of my reflections on a Daoist and Hawaiian sense of place and ethics of the environment, I believe that it might be appropriate to make a course correction. Instead of calling it an ethics of the environment, perhaps we should call it an Ecological Ethics of *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha ‘Āina*. The term ecology (*Oecologie*), which was first coined by the German zoologist, Ernst Haeckel, back in 1866, is derived from the Greek words *οικος* (*oikos*) and *λογος* (*logos*). *οικος* (*oikos*) can mean “house,” “household,” “dwelling place,” or “family.” Meanwhile, *λογος* (*logos*) is translated to mean “word,” “language,” “language of reason.”<sup>467</sup> *λογος* (*logos*) is often used in the sense of “a study of” a particular subject matter; in this case, the study of *οικος* (*oikos*). The Greek root of ecology, from which ecological ethics is formed, can thus be understood as a study of the house, household, dwelling place or family. I think the meaning that is most appropriate to our inquiry is that ecology reflects the language of our dwelling place, our home. Therefore, to be ecological is to with one another through “the language of our dwelling place, our home.” This rendering of ecology as “language of our dwelling place, our home” resonates perfectly with *aloha ‘āina*, the Hawaiian sense of place and ethics of the environment. *Aloha ‘āina* is, after all, a call to love and reverence our land and home, the Earth. It also resonates closely with the Daoist sense of place and ethics of the environment, *weiziran* (為自然), which invites us as multiplicity and particularity (*de* 德) in relation to the continuity and totality (*dao* 道) of the myriad things that are continually

---

<sup>467</sup> Astrid Schwarz and Kurt Jax, “Etymology and Original Sources of the Term ‘Ecology,’” in *Ecology Revisited* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011), 145–147.

becoming (*wanwu* 萬物) to act without overdoing (*wuwei* 無為), to desire what is appropriate to the most efficacious outcome for the totality (*wuyu* 無欲), to know while being faithful to what is known (*wuzhi* 無知). In other words, to act with (*wei* 為) and for the sake of (*wei* 為) the harmonious ongoing symbiosis that makes up the natural environment (*ziran* 自然).

My search for an enduring ethics of the environment, through my reflections on place, drawing on the wisdom of the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions, leads us to an Ecological Ethics of *Weiziran* (為自然) and *Aloha 'Āina*, through which we are reminded that the Earth is our home, our dwelling place. Dwelling—as Heidegger says, and which the Daoist and Hawaiian traditions emphasize—is an indispensable part of our identity as human beings. Our responsibility as dwellers is to participate efficaciously in the placemaking of the Earth.

*Hānau ka 'āina, hānau ke ali 'i, hānau ke kanaka.*

Born was the land, born were the chiefs, born were the common people.<sup>468</sup>

人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。<sup>469</sup>

Human beings emulate the earth, the earth emulates the heavens, the heavens emulate *dao*, *dao* emulates what is naturally so.

---

<sup>468</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui points out that this proverb emphasizes that “[t]he land, the chiefs, and the commoners belong together.” *‘Ōlelo No ‘eau* 466. Pukui (trans.), *‘Ōlelo No ‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*, 56.

<sup>469</sup> DDJ 25. Ames and Hall (trans.), *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*, 115.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ames, Roger T. *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011.
- . *Sun-Tzu: The Art of Warfare*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1993.
- . "The Great Commentary (*Dazhuan* 大傳) and Chinese Natural Cosmology." *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 2, no. 1 (2015): 1–18.
- . "Vital Relationality as Narrative Understanding and Taking Place," 2018.
- Ames, Roger T., and David L. Hall (trans.). *Daodejing Making This Life Significant: A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine, 2003.
- Aristotle, and C.D.C. Reeve (trans.). *Metaphysics*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2016.
- Asner, Gregory P., Andrew J. Elmore, R. Flint Hughes, Amanda S. Warner, and Peter M. Vitousek. "Ecosystem Structure Along Bioclimatic Gradients in Hawai'i from Imaging Spectroscopy." *Remote Sensing of Environment* 96, no. 3–4 (2005): 497–508.
- Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- BBC News. "Hurricane Michael: Death Toll Continues to Rise Amid Searches." *BBC News*. Last modified 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45893486?intlink\\_from\\_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cn7pgq7159jt/hurricane-michael&link\\_location=live-reporting-story](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45893486?intlink_from_url=https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cn7pgq7159jt/hurricane-michael&link_location=live-reporting-story).
- Beckwith (trans.), Martha Warren. *The Kumulipo: A Hawaiian Creation Chant*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1972.
- Beckwith, Martha Warren. *Hawaiian Mythology*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1970.
- Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Brennan, Andrew, and Yeuk-Sze Lo. "Environmental Ethics." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/ethics-environmental/>.
- Broda, Johanna. "Astronomy, Cosmovision and Ideology in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 385, no. 1 (1982): 81–110.
- Callicott, J. Baird. *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

- . *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.
- . *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- . "Multicultural Environmental Ethics." *Daedalus* 130, no. 4 (2001): 77–97.
- . *Thinking Like a Planet: The Land Ethic and the Earth Ethic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Callicott, J. Baird, and Roger T. Ames, eds. *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Callicott, J. Baird, and James McRae, eds. *Environmental Philosophy in Asian Traditions of Thought*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014.
- Casey, Edward S. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Edited by Edward S. Casey. 2d ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- . "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 13–52. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996.
- . *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.
- CBS News. "Florence Gone but Its Flooding a Crisis in Parts of North Carolina." *CBS News*. Last modified 2018. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/hurricane-florence-aftermath-weather-flooding-power-outage-death-toll-fema-latest-forecast-live/>.
- Chang, Hsiu-Chen. "On the Historicity of the 'Tao Te Ching.'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 35, no. 2 (1998): 146–173.
- Charlot, John. *Chanting The Universe: Hawaiian Religious Culture*. Honolulu: Emphasis International, 1983.
- Church, J.A., P.U. Clark, A. Cazenave, J.M. Gregory, S. Jevrejeva, A. Levermann, M.A. Merrifield, et al. "2013: Sea Level Change." In *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex, and P.M. Midgley (eds.), 1137–1216. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

- Cochrane, Alasdair. "Environmental Ethics." *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed April 16, 2018. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/envi-eth/>.
- Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004.
- . "Place." *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. Elsevier, 2009.
- Curry, Patrick. *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011.
- Dasgupta, Susmita. "Risk of Sea-Level Rise: High Stakes for East Asia & Pacific Region Countries." *East Asia & Pacific On the Rise*. Last modified 2018. Accessed March 23, 2019. <http://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/risk-of-sea-level-rise-high-stakes-for-east-asia-pacific-region-countries>.
- Delva, Joseph Guyler, and Scott Malone. "Hurricane Matthew Kills Almost 900 in Haiti before Hitting U.S | Reuters." *Reuters*. Last modified 2016. Accessed August 1, 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-storm-matthew-idUSKCN1250G2>.
- Drengson, Alan R., and Yuichi Inoue, eds. *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995.
- Duara, Prasenjit. *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Dudley, Michael Kioni. *Man, Gods and Nature*. Waipahu, HI: Nā Kāne O Ka Malo Press, 1990.
- Dussault, Antoine. "Ecological Nature: A Non-Dualistic Concept for Rethinking Humankind's Place in the World." *Ethics & the Environment* 21, no. 1 (2016): 1–37.
- Earth Science Communications Team. "How Climate Is Changing." *Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet*. Last modified 2019. Accessed February 18, 2019. <https://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>.
- Elbert, Samuel H., and Noelani Māhoe. *Nā Mele o Hawai'i Nei: 101 Hawaiian Songs*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1970.
- Escobar, Arturo. "Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization." *Political Geography* 20, no. 2 (2001): 139–174.
- Gon III, Samuel M. "'Āina as Concentric Set of Places," 2018.
- . "Lessons from a Thousand Years of Island Sustainability." In *TEDxMaui*. Maui, 2014. Accessed February 28, 2017. <http://tedxmaui.com/sam-ohu-gon-iii-phd-lessons-from-a-thousand-years-of-island-sustainability/>.

- Gon III, Samuel M., Stephanie L. Tom, and Ulalia Woodside. “‘*Āina Momona, Honua Au Loli*—Productive Lands, Changing World: Using the Hawaiian Footprint to Inform Biocultural Restoration and Future Sustainability in Hawai‘i.” *Sustainability* 10, no. 10 (2018): 3420.
- Graham, A.C. *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989.
- Griffiths, James, Joshua Berlinger, and Ben Westcott. “Typhoon Haima: Philippines Hit by Second Storm in a Week - CNN.Com.” *CNN*. Last modified 2016. Accessed August 1, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/18/asia/typhoons-haima-philippines/>.
- Gutmanis, June. *Na Pule Kahiko: Ancient Hawaiian Prayers*. Honolulu: Editions Limited, 1983.
- Hall, David L. “On Seeking a Change of Environment.” In *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, edited by J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames, 99–112. New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Hau‘ofa, Epeli. “Our Sea of Islands.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 148–161. Accessed May 16, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23701593>.
- Hawai‘i, Government of the State of. “State Motto.” *Hawaii Revised Statutes*. Last modified 1959. Accessed December 8, 2018. [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01\\_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0005/HRS\\_0005-0009.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0005/HRS_0005-0009.htm).
- He, Chunyang, Bin Gao, Qingxu Huang, Qun Ma, and Yinyin Dou. “Environmental Degradation in the Urban Areas of China: Evidence from Multi-Source Remote Sensing Data.” *Remote Sensing of Environment* 193 (May 1, 2017): 65–75.
- Heidegger, Martin. “Building Dwelling Thinking.” In *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell, 343–363. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.
- Henricks (trans.), Robert G. *Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Mawangdui Texts*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.
- Holdridge, L. R. “Determination of World Plant Formations From Simple Climatic Data.” *Science* 105, no. 2727 (April 4, 1947): 367–8.
- Hourdequin, Marion, and David B. Wong. “A Relational Approach to Environmental Ethics.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005): 19–33.
- Hua‘ōlelo, Kōmike, Hale Kuamo‘o, and ‘Aha Pūnana Leo. *Māmaka Kaiao: A Modern Hawaiian Vocabulary*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003.

- Hviding, Edvard. "Both Sides of the Beach: Knowledges of Nature in Oceania." In *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, 245–275. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2003.
- Jenni, Kathie. "Western Environmental Ethics: An Overview." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32, no. 1 (2005): 1–17.
- Ji, Cheng, and Alison Hardie (trans.). *The Craft of Gardens*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Johnson (trans.), Rubellite Kawena. *Kumulipo: The Hawaiian Hymn of Creation*. Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing Co., Ltd., 1981.
- Johnson, Rubellite Kawena. *The Kumulipo Mind: A Global Heritage in the Polynesian Creation Myth*. Honolulu: [Publisher not identified], 2000.
- Jullien, François. *The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China*. New York: Zone Books, 1995.
- Kame‘eleihiwa, Lilikalā. *Native Land and Foreign Desires: How Shall We Live in Harmony (Ko Hawai‘i ‘Āina a Me Nā Koi Pu‘umake a Ka Po‘e Haole: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai?)*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992.
- Kant, Immanuel, and Norman Kemp Smith (trans.). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Koyré, Alexandre. *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*. Reprint. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Langer, Susanne K. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*. New York: Scribner, 1953.
- Lau (trans.), D.C. *Tao Te Ching*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2001.
- Lau, D. C. *Huainan Zi Zhu Zi Suo Yin: A Concordance to the Huainanzi*. Hong Kong: Commercial Press (Shangwuyin Shuguan), 1992.
- Lau, D. C., and Roger T. Ames. *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to Its Source*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1998.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949.

- Liliuokalani, Queen of Hawaii. *The Kumulipo: An Hawaiian Creation Myth*. Kentfield, CA: Pueo Press, 1997.
- Liu, An. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*. Edited by John S. Major, Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer, and Harold D. Roth. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.
- Liu, Xiaogan. "From Bamboo Slips to Received Versions: Common Features in the Transformation of the 'Laozi.'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 63, no. 2 (2003): 337–382.
- Mao, Julie S., Mark S. Boyce, Douglas W. Smith, Francis J. Singer, David J. Vales, John M. Vore, and Evelyn H. Merrill. "Habitat Selection by Elk Before and After Wolf Reintroduction in Yellowstone National Park." *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 69, no. 4 (October 1, 2005): 1691–1707. Accessed August 21, 2018. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2193/0022-541X%282005%2969%5B1691%3AHSBEBA%5D2.0.CO%3B2>.
- Martin, Eric C. "Science and Ideology." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ISSN 2161-0002, n.d. Accessed March 18, 2019. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/sci-ideo/#H6>.
- Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.
- Mueller-Dombois, Dieter. "The Hawaiian *Ahupua'a* Land Use System: Its Biological Resource Zones and the Challenge for Silvicultural Restoration." *Bishop Museum Bulletin in Cultural and Environmental Studies* 3 (2007): 23–33.
- Myers, Fred R. *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Næss, Arne. *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Næss*. Edited by Alan R. Drengson and Bill Devall. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2010.
- Næss, Arne, and David Rothenberg. *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Nash, Roderick Frazier. *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "2018 Was 4th Hottest Year on Record for the Globe." *NOAA Press Release*. Last modified 2019. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://www.noaa.gov/news/2018-was-4th-hottest-year-on-record-for-globe>.
- Nelson, Michael P. "J. Baird Callicott." In *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, edited by Joy A. Palmer, 290–295. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.



NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. "Global Climate Report for Annual 2018." Last modified 2019. Accessed February 19, 2019.  
<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/global/201813>.

Oliveira, Katrina-Ann R. Kapā'anaokalāokeola Nākoa. *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2014.

———. "Wahi A Kahiko: Place Names as Vehicles of Ancestral Memory." *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 5, no. 2 (2009): 100–115.

Pachauri, Rajendra K., and Leo A. Meyer (eds.). *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Geneva, 2014.

Pachauri, Rajendra K., Leo Meyer, Jean-Pascal Van Ypersele, Sander Brinkman, Line Van Kesteren, Noémie Leprince-Ringuet, and Fijke Van Boxmeer. *Future Climate Changes, Risks and Impacts. Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Parkes, Graham. "Lao-Zhuang and Heidegger on Nature and Technology." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 39 (2012): 112–133.

———. "Winds, Waters, and Earth Energies: Fengshui and Sense of Place." In *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, edited by Helaine Selin, 185–209. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.

Polynesian Voyaging Society. "Hōkūle'a: The Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage Continues into 2018." *Hōkūle'a Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage*. Accessed February 17, 2019.  
<http://www.hokulea.com/worldwide-voyage/>.

———. "Nainoa Thompson." *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*. Accessed August 1, 2016.  
[http://archive.hokulea.com/index/founder\\_and\\_teachers/nainoa\\_thompson.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/index/founder_and_teachers/nainoa_thompson.html).

———. "The Education Movement." *Hōkūle'a*. Accessed March 24, 2019.  
<http://www.hokulea.com/movement/>.

Porkert, Manfred. *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine: Systems of Correspondence*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1974.

Pred, Allan. "Place as Historically Contingent Process: Structuration and the Time-Geography of Becoming Places." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 74, no. 2 (1984): 279–297.

Pukui (trans.), Mary Kawena. *Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1983.

- Pukui, Mary Kawena, and Samuel H. Elbert. *Hawaiian Dictionary*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1986.
- Pukui, Mary Kawena, Samuel H. Elbert, and Esther T. Mookini. *Place Names of Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1974.
- Pukui, Mary Kawena, E. W. Haertig M.D., and Catherine A. Lee. *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume I*. Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1972.
- . *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Volume II*. Honolulu: Hui Hanai, 1972.
- Ray, Robert. “Hurricane Matthew Leaves North Carolina Town under Water - CNN.Com.” *CNN*. Last modified 2016. Accessed August 1, 2016.  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/10/15/us/north-carolina-matthew-flooding/>.
- Regan, Tom. “The Case for Animal Rights.” In *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, edited by Frederik A. Kaufman, 156–163. 1st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- . “The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic.” In *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, edited by Frederik A Kaufman, 87–92. 1st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion, 1976.
- Ripple, William J., and Robert L. Beschta. “Trophic Cascades in Yellowstone: The First 15 Years after Wolf Reintroduction.” *Biological Conservation* 145, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 205–213. Accessed August 21, 2018.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320711004046>.
- Sambursky, Samuel. *The Physical World of Late Antiquity*. Edited by Samuel Sambursky. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962.
- Schwarz, Astrid, and Kurt Jax. “Etymology and Original Sources of the Term ‘Ecology.’” In *Ecology Revisited*, 145–147. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011.
- Silva, Noenoe K. *The Power of the Steel-Tipped Pen: Reconstructing Native Hawaiian Intellectual History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation: The Definitive Classic of the Animal Movement (40th Anniversary Edition)*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009.
- Sobrevila, Claudia. *The Role of Indigenous Peoples in Biodiversity Conservation: The Natural but Often Forgotten Partners*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2008.

Tang, Junyi. "Zhongguo Zhexue Zhong Ziranyuzhouguan Zhi Tezhi 中國哲學中自然宇宙觀之特質 (The Distinctive Features of Natural Cosmology in Chinese Philosophy)." In *Zhongxi Zhexue Sixiang Zhi Bijiao Lunwenji 中西哲學思想之比較論文集 (Collected Essays on the Comparison between Chinese and Western Philosophical Thought)*. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1988.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). "Biodiversity and Nature's Contributions Continue Dangerous Decline, Scientists Warn." Last modified 2018. Accessed April 16, 2018. <https://www.ipbes.net/news/media-release-biodiversity-nature's-contributions-continue-dangerous-decline-scientists-warn>.

Thompson, Nainoa. "A Challenge to Learn." *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*. Last modified 1999. Accessed October 20, 2016. [http://archive.hokulea.com/hoonaaauao/intro\\_hoonaaauao.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/hoonaaauao/intro_hoonaaauao.html).

———. "On Wayfinding." *Hawaiian Voyaging Traditions*. Accessed August 1, 2016. [http://archive.hokulea.com/ike/hookele/on\\_wayfinding.html](http://archive.hokulea.com/ike/hookele/on_wayfinding.html).

———. "The Star Compass - Hōkūle'a." Accessed May 26, 2018. <http://www.hokulea.com/education-at-sea/polynesian-navigation/the-star-compass/>.

———. "Traditional Knowledge for Today's Obstacles | IUCN World Conservation Congress." *IUCN World Conservation Congress*. Last modified 2016. Accessed August 1, 2016. <http://iucnworldconservationcongress.org/news/20160721/article/traditional-knowledge-todays-obstacles>.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

U.S. Global Change Research Program. *Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I*. Edited by D. J. Wuebbles, D. W. Fahey, K. A. Hibbard, D. J. Dokken, B. C. Stewart, and T. K. Maycock. Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2017.

Varner, Gary. "Biocentric Individualism." In *Foundations of Environmental Philosophy: A Text with Readings*, edited by Frederik A Kaufman, 226–237. 1st ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Westbrook, C. J., D. J. Cooper, and B. W. Baker. "Beaver Assisted River Valley Formation." *River Research and Applications* 27, no. 2 (February 1, 2011): 247–256. Accessed August 21, 2018. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/rra.1359>.

White, Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–1207. <http://www.jstor.org.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/stable/1720120>.

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Science in the Modern World*. New York: MacMillan, 1925.

World Meteorological Organization. “WMO Confirms Past 4 Years Were Warmest on Record.” *WMO Press Release*. Geneva, 2019. Last modified 2019. Accessed February 19, 2019. <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/wmo-confirms-past-4-years-were-warmest-record>.

Wu, Fengshi, and Richard Edmonds. “China’s Three-Fold Environmental Degradation.” In *Critical Issues in Contemporary China*, edited by Czesław Tubilewicz, 105–119. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2016.