

Indigenous Beyond Exoticism

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It is the nature of the earth to lie 'wholly spread out under the sky': *hapasê hê hupo tô kosmô keimenê* (Isocrates);¹ and the sky determines *the World*. Indeed it is the same as *the World*, as Plato states in the final words of *Timaeus*: 'the World was born: it is the Sky, which is one and alone of its race' (*ho kosmos . . . gegonen heis ouranos hode monogenês ôn*). What is thus clearly 'one and alone of its race' dominates by its very nature what is subjected to it: the earth. With the coming of the age of modernity, and today more than ever, the West has indeed subjected the Earth and its peoples by imposing *its World* on them. But it is the nature of worlds, as it is of heavens, to be limited by a horizon; and there is no sky, nor world, that is not supported by an earth. By *the Earth*, we mean to say nature. This ancient certainty, this *primary metaphor*, has been inscribed in us since the first creatures to become human, standing with both feet on the ground and head turned towards the sky, first saw the horizon. As paleo-anthropology tells us, it is in effect in the same movement that they began to create technical and symbolic systems from which the ecumene would spring;² and this prime metaphor that was the basis for the ecumene and its worlds has continued to work on the generation of secondary metaphors that govern the history of human thought through the unconscious³ – from Aristotle when, inventing the notion of subject, he called it *hupokeimenon*, 'what lies below' (as the earth lies below the sky), to Heidegger when he imagined *The Origin of the Work of Art* as a 'dispute' (*Streit*) between a world and the earth. Indeed there is *Streit* because the earth denies itself and withdraws into its interior, in the very exteriorization that opens it into a world.⁴

I. If the West has indeed claimed to have substituted, under the name of modernity, the world that was its own for the worlds of all the Earth's indigenous peoples, it has nevertheless created cultural relativism too. In fact we had to colonize – or as near as damn it – the whole Earth, and send our anthropologists out there, in order to realize that every people believes they are the True Humans, and so the ecumene is always the earth we ourselves live on. This relationship is inalienable; it is inscribed

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in the metaphor on which the humanity of each of us is based, even though those who control *the* World claim the quality of humans *par excellence*. Thus modernity is impregnated with the aporia by which the West, while reducing the Earth to its own world, that is, universalizing it to make it *the* contemporary World, has itself come to recognize its uniqueness, and even to exoticize itself in the eyes of its own social sciences. In reality the ruse is not only that, seen from elsewhere (the East, for example), this self-exoticization is nothing but a westerner's alibi – as if in fact the West could be 'elsewhere' (*alibi*) but in its own world! It is that our social sciences, by relativizing this world that our history absolutizes, have come to deny the very base that supports it just as it supports other human worlds; the base that is none other than the Earth, or nature. As if humans, having become monocephalous⁵ and hovering freely in the sky of their own worlds, no longer needed the communal earth that universally supports our feet!

II. In raising themselves up towards the sky, the creatures becoming human acquired the faculty of speech; that is, the ability to predicate *the* Earth on *a* world, the very one they were simultaneously constructing with their techniques. Indeed our world does not possess the universality of nature; it is simply the particular way we have of feeling, saying, thinking and doing things on the surface of the Earth, which is its *hupokeimenon*: the basis of this predicate being that it is as other human worlds are. Thus each world is the unique predicate of a universal subject: nature. But reality, which is historically produced in this relationship, only ever appears to us on this side of the horizon of our own world. This is why, merging subject into predicate, human beings are inclined to say *the* World (as if there were no other possible predication) and *the* Reality (as if others' reality were just an illusion). We mistakenly posit the equation S (subject) = P (predicate), whereas the reality is only S/P : a predication relationship between *the* Earth and *a* certain world. We quite correctly call this predication relationship *history*: a way of relating things (S/P) that claims to be the way they happened ($S = P$). Thus the World's reality is historical and not natural. But history by definition belongs to the past; so what about the present? The historical *relation* (the way we relate the past) is linked to the ecumenal *relation*: the way we experience in the present the predicate relationship between *the* Earth and *our* world. And so the ecumene (S/P) is neither the Earth (S) nor the World (P); it is what causes there to be a world, because we are standing on the Earth.

III. However, in these matters the West began by assuming, with Aristotle's logic, that the subject is *ousia*: being, essence, existence, the reality of *substance* – a term whose etymology is related to the same image as *hupokeimenon* and *subjectum*: it is what there is below, the base. As for the predicate, it does not really exist. It is not substantial. At the same time Plato's ontology made being an absolute whose existents in the perceptible world (*kosmos aisthētos*) are merely image, but which is accessible to the intellect. This was an outline of the paradigm that was to usher in the scientific revolution by instituting the object as *the* Reality (R), ignoring the illusions of *aisthēsis* ('feeling' according to Descartes). In so doing, modernity constructed objective systems that were, as gradually became clear, alien, exotic to the historical realities (r) of the human world.⁶ Hence the reaction in the last century

represented on the one hand by phenomenology and Heidegger's ontology and on the other by constructivism in the social sciences. With Derrida's theory of the sign in particular, this strand went so far as to profess a *metabasis* in which social reality (*r*), decoded by the social sciences, is cut off from any basis in nature: *r* became alienated from an *R* that physics (in the general sense of 'hard' science) nevertheless continued to pursue. This divorce is nothing but an avatar of Cartesian dualism; with the reservation that since our metabasis has lost any divine hypothesis as well as any materialism, being based on nothing, decosmized, it has even lost the will to link history with physics – which is now the only repository of *ousia* since, being the daughter of both Plato and Aristotle, it posits that $R = S$, leaving *r* and *P* to the chattering illusions of worldliness.

IV. But to try to ignore worldliness is to deny human existence. It is to make the object into an absolute alien to all predication. This is not only a logical impossibility (since, however objective it may be, science remains a human predicate⁷), but forecloses⁸ all human truth (since truth, like the *ecumene* and history, is a certain relationship between *S* and *P*) and all *raison d'être* (since *R* is forever closed off from human feeling). This is the impasse of modernity: indeed there remains only the irony of postmodernism combined with the cynicism of the power of our object systems.

V. As for the East (here meaning the cultural areas influenced by India and China), it followed another path. The difference basically lies in that there, instead of the West's substantialist paradigm, a relational thinking developed in which the *hupokeimenon* question became secondary and was even radically dismissed by the Buddhist Void (*sunya*) as well as the Taoist There-is-not (*wu*). This is the main reason why it was not in the East that the scientific revolution occurred, nor the modernity that was founded on it; on the other hand it is also the reason why the East has continued to fascinate westerners. Indeed they think that there they discover a world where feeling and reality may not be mutually exclusive. A world that is a stranger to dualism.

VI. However, to the extent that the eastern message is not compatible with the paradigm of modern rationality, accepting it can only be akin to mysticism. It is true that this is what many westerners are looking for in the East, but that does not in the least resolve the impasse of modernity; for, contrary to the assumptions of cultural relativism, the physics on which it is based is not an exoticism that can be rejected in favour of a different one:⁹ we can only accept or go beyond the modern world.

VII. It was explicitly as a 'going beyond modernity' (*kindai no chōkoku*) that the so-called Kyōto school of philosophy (*Kyōto gakuha*) was presented, centred on the great figure of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945). He aspired to achieve a synthesis that would go beyond the antinomy between the eastern spiritual heritage in which he had been brought up (Zen, in particular) and western philosophy, mother of modernity, with which he was thoroughly acquainted. He rightly took, as the principal aim of this going beyond, the Aristotelian logic of identity (on which the rational inferences of

science are based); with this he contrasted a 'logic of the predicate' (*jutsugo no ronri*), also called 'logic of place' (*basho no ronri*).¹⁰ It is true that, in implicit agreement with Aristotle, Nishida believes the subject (*shugo*) to be related to being (*u*), unlike the predicate, which in his view is a 'relative nothingness' (*sôtai mu*); on the other hand he is diametrically opposed not only to Aristotle but also to the main choice of western thinking, in that he absolutizes nothingness and relativizes being. Indeed, according to him the subject 'is absorbed' (*botsunyû suru*) into the predicate, which is a relative nothingness; and this in turn is absorbed into a more nothingy predicate until its final negation in the 'absolute nothingness' (*zettai mu*). This vision is in a way the mirror image of the Platonic vision: they both agree as to the relativity of the beings in the perceptible world (*kosmos aisthêtos: kankaku sekai*), but while Plato makes them imperfect images of the absolute being, Nishida makes them the product of the negation of absolute nothingness by itself.

VIII. I shall highlight the fact that these two opposite visions both contain a radical logical defect: on the one hand an absolute being that has an 'image' (*eikôn*) is not absolute;¹¹ and on the other, the negation of being by relative nothingness can in no way result in absolute nothingness, but merely carry on in a recession of being *ad infinitum*. Absolutizing either being or nothingness is not part of logic but a mystical choice. Nevertheless the immense difference between the Platonic system and Nishida's is that the latter results in the absolutization of the perceptible world. Indeed – and I think this is Nishida's crucial contribution – according to him the world is predicative by nature. It is not that exotic, external in-itself that is Descartes' *res extensa* but an entity within which there is always implied the I of the human subject feeling, speaking, thinking and acting through history. This idea of the predicativity of the historical world (*rekishi sekai*) makes Nishida not only the forerunner but the radical thinker of postmodern constructivism. Radical, first of all, in that he shows that worldliness is not related to the substance of the *hupokeimenon*, but to a network of predicative relations; radical in particular because, since that predicativity is caused in the final analysis by absolute nothingness, the world is baseless: *mukitei*. Thus being based only on itself, it is itself absolute.¹²

IX. This absolutization of the world is a mystical leap as a result of which, as it turned out, Nishida's philosophy linked up with the extremist nationalism of his time.¹³ Because of this, his philosophy provides the proof, additionally but unintentionally, that worldliness, left to itself (*P* subsuming *S*), tends to make any human milieu the only milieu on the Earth. The fact that every people in the history of the world has indeed seen itself as the true Humans is related exemplarily to the logic of place; but what we absolutize today as *the World*, the *globe of globalization*, is equally part of that logic. That world, like any other world, is predicative by nature. It is not *the Earth*, that *hupokeimenon* that it is trying to absorb – by both raping the environment and wiping out indigenous cultures – but a certain sky, that is, illuminating a certain predicate that, like all worlds, claims to be the 'one and only of its race'.

X. It is no coincidence that Nishida was a Japanese philosopher: he was a son of the eastern country that was the first in the history of the World to assimilate western

modernity, and, having done so, tried twice in the 20th century to supplant the West itself at the helm of the World (first by means of war, then by means of the market). The double failure that history dealt Japan means that Nishida's philosophy remains exotic: despite translations, which are increasing in number, in the West – and therefore in *the World* – it is still a matter for orientalists only, rather than philosophers;¹⁴ the most metabasist of these, who teach us how to think the postmodern, are the first to be unaware of him. Nevertheless, what is certain is that the 21st century, when, because of environmental pressure, thinking about the Earth cannot but grow more prominent, will be brought to rediscover that *the World*, this world that we think is the only one, is merely a certain predicate, born of human history; and that it is therefore only up to us to predicate in another way the base common to us all. Far from being exotic, this base is alive everywhere in the ecumene.

XI. But we have to be able to think the ecumenal relationship that means human beings are part of both the Earth and the World. In this respect modern dualism, and its metabasist offshoots, has only managed to reduce the human to mechanisms of nature (that is what we call *scientism*), or turn culture – for example, in the dominant views about semiotics – into an air-balloon detached from any earthly mooring; which is nothing but an nth expression of the Cartesian dichotomy *res extensa/res cogitans*, and comes down to opting either for the Earth or for the World. As if the horizon did not connect one to the other! The first person to go beyond this obtuse alternative was another Japanese philosopher, Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960). And he did this, even more than Nishida, because he was a modern Japanese philosopher: a native of the East but thoroughly acquainted with western philosophy. Indeed he was around 20 years younger than Nishida, who never left Japan. Not only did Watsuji spend time in Europe, but he was one of the first people to read *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) on the spot when it came out (1927). From his reading of it, which enlightened him, there was to emerge as a reaction his theory of human milieu, from which flows my own thinking about the ecumene. He explained it in a book published in Tokyo in 1935, *Fūdo* (*Human Milieu*). I see it as symbolic that this term *fūdo*, for which I think the French '*milieu (humain)*' is the aptest translation,¹⁵ is made up of two ideograms 'wind' (*fū*) and 'earth' (*do*) – in other words it embodies the cosmic 'dispute' between Sky/World/Culture¹⁶ and Earth/Nature.

XII. Watsuji interprets the essence of this relationship as the 'structural moment¹⁷ of human existence' (*ningen sonzai no kōzō keiki*); and he expresses it through the concept *fūdōsei*. This corresponds, in terms of space, to what historicity (*rekishisei*) is in terms of time: the milieu (*fūdo*) embodies history (*rekishi*), which animates and generates the milieu. This idea occurred to Watsuji as a reaction to the emphasis Heidegger placed on temporality; indeed for him spatiality is no less influential in the being of humans.¹⁸ Correlatively he stresses the sociality of being. In this sense he is introducing into the ontological area what Leroi-Gourhan¹⁹ was to demonstrate 30 years later when he interpreted the emergence of the species *Homo* as a process of exteriorization of the functions of the *animal body* into a *social body*, composed of our technical and symbolic systems, without which we could not be human or even just live. This is why I translate *fūdōsei* as *médiance* – from the Latin *medietas* (half), meaning that the

human being consists half of an individual body and half of an eco-techno-symbolic milieu;²⁰ the set of milieux makes up the ecumene: the human relationship with the wide expanse of the earth.

XIII. It seems to me that, with this in mind, we shall be in a position, now in the 21st century, to think the creative 'dispute' between the Earth and the World. This no longer has anything to do with the *doxa* we inherit from the modern paradigm: this arbitrary and almost Brownian movement of individual rootless entities moving about on the spherical surface of a Cartesian *extensio* that is infinitely exoticizable. Because of our mediance the Earth and the World are alive within us. They are indigenous to us, and – the precise opposite of metabasism and scientific reductionism – it is through this very fact, through the 'dispute' that takes place in every human creation and the whole of the ecumene, that we can be creative. Freely, which does not mean arbitrarily, but in the direction and sense of a milieu (a *mediance*) and following the thread of a history (a historicity).²¹

XIV. Without writing an epilogue on the thinkers I have quoted above, I would just like to emphasize, in order to end thoroughly in the spirit of this issue of *Diogenes*, that this ecumenal perspective might never have been opened up without the dialogue between East and West, ricocheting back and forth, that started up during the 20th century; and this was largely due to Japan's deliberate westernization after Meiji's restoration. The creative 'dispute' between the Earth and the World is taking place there as well! After all, the fact that the Earth denies itself, and withdraws into its interior – re-indigenizes itself – through the very exteriorization that opens it onto a world, is that not a fine metaphor for the work of gestation of cultural identities in their relationship of conflict with globalization? And we are still only at the frontier of the time when the western world, having gone around the Earth and, unlike exoticism, has no more horizon but to open up, from the interior of itself, to those it had tried to absorb . . . Then, recovering the structural moment of human existence – and this time assuming it consciously²² – we may perhaps become true Humans again.²³

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Translated from the French by Jean Burrell

Notes

1. *Oratores attici*, 78.
2. This is recognizably related to the theory of André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le Geste et la parole*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1964, 2 vols, which links hominization to the development of technical and symbolic systems by the externalization of animal body functions. On the generation and ontology of the ecumenal relationship see my book *Ecumène. Introduction à l'étude des milieux humains*, Paris, Belin, 2000.
3. I am indebted for this idea to my reading of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York, Basic Books, 1999. However, the

- idea of 'prime metaphor' occurred to me from the combination of this and Leroi-Gourhan; it is something more fundamental than the 'primary metaphors' mentioned by these two authors.
4. To quote the crucial passage in this regard: 'That whither the work withdraws, and what it draws out by this withdrawal, we have named the earth. It is that which, emerging, takes back within itself (*das Hervorkommend-Bergende*). The earth is the tireless, indefatigable flow of what is there for nothing. On the earth and in it historical man bases his sojourn in the world. Bringing a world into existence, the work brings forth the earth (*Indem das Werk eine Welt aufstellt, stellt es die Erde her*). This bringing-forth should be thought of in a strict sense. The work carries and maintains the earth itself in the opening of a world. *The work liberates the earth so that it can be a world . . .* World and earth are essentially different from each other, and yet never separate. The world is based in the earth, and the earth emerges through the world.' Martin Heidegger (from the French translation by Wolfgang Brokmeier), *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*, Paris, Gallimard, 1962 [1949], pp. 49–50, 52.
 5. An image borrowed from Gilbert Durand, *Introduction à la mythologie*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1996, who stigmatizes (p. 78) 'the inadequacies, dead-ends, failures, ethical bankruptcy of the fragmented, monocephalous human sciences, deluded by the non-sense of semiotics and the arbitrary nature of the signifier'.
 6. Scientists (including social scientists) love presenting reality as 'paradoxical' and contrasting it with the illusions of popular opinion (*doxa*). This attitude is entirely Platonic; its most striking illustration was the Copernican revolution. We should note that among Heidegger's followers a distinction is made between the *historial* (relative to history experienced according to a world, *geschichtlich*) and the *historical* (relative to history as established by historiographic science, *historisch*). Personally I use *historical* for everything, since the plurality of worlds is in fact the result of objective history, and what is experienced is so in the present, in the ecumenal relation (in this respect I take the same attitude as Watsuji, whose critique of Heideggerian temporalism will be mentioned later).
 7. Which means that the physicist's *object* is simply the logician's *subject*: *S*. By reducing *S* (which is only as it is relative to *P*) to an object existing in and of itself, the vision of physics performs an operation that is the reverse of the founding metaphor of the ecumene's worlds: it 'reduces on this side' instead of 'carrying beyond' (*meta-pherô*). So in relation to *r* (i.e. *S/P*) the reduction $R = S$ is the mirror image of the common metaphor $S = P$. While the latter mythically makes reality into what we say it is, the reductionism of physics, by eliminating the matter of *P*, illusorily absolutizes an inhuman truth that ignores the human truth of the ecumene and history. Indeed it is here, insofar as it rests on physics, that modernity reaches its impasse: it cannot take account of the very principle of the human. In other words it reduces the world to a mechanical system, whereas the symbolism inherent in it stems from the metaphor S (for example, this thing) = P (for example, this word).
 8. This term is in general use only in law and psychoanalysis with meanings peculiar to them. I use it here in its primary sense: to put outside (*foris*) and close the door (*claudere*), an equivalent of the English 'lockout'. To exoticize reality compared with feeling, by the abstraction that reduces *S* to an object in and of itself, is to commit this kind of act, putting truth out of the reach of our existence as indigenous peoples. Thus there is a structural lack of truth in the modern world.
 9. In the context of Newtonian cosmology the margin of error of physics was already around $1/10^6$; in the context of Einstein's cosmology it was reduced to $1/10^{12}$ (a thousandth of a billionth). Insofar as a world, by definition, assumes a cosmology, and unless we opt deliberately for error (and so abandon all our technology), tomorrow's world can only rely on today's technology. Nevertheless – is it necessary to spell it out? – this precision of modern physics applies only to objects (i.e. *S* abstracted from its structural relationship to *P*). It ignores human existence and cannot take account of the symbolism inherent in the ecumene as well as history (see above, note 7). So though it is an essential element of our vision of the world, scientific cosmology is not by any means sufficient for it (it can be sufficient only for scientific reductionism).
 10. For a recent overview of these questions, see Augustin Berque (ed.), *Logique du lieu et dépassement de la modernité*, 2 vols, Brussels, Ousia, 2000; also Augustin Berque and Philippe Nys (eds), *Logique du lieu et oeuvre humaine*, Brussels, Ousia, 1997. I have detailed my personal views in *Ecoumène* (2000, *op. cit.*) as well as 'La logique du lieu dépasse-t-elle la modernité' and 'Du prédicat sans base: entre *mundus* et *baburu*, la modernité', pp. 41–51 and 52–61 in Livia Monnet (ed.), *Approches critiques de la*

pensée japonaise du XXe siècle, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2001. Nishida himself developed his ideas on the logic of place mainly in two books: *Basho* (Place, 1927) and *Bashoteki ronri to shûkyôteki seikaikan* (Logic of Place and Religious Worldview, 1945) reprinted respectively in vols IV and XI of his complete works: *Nishida Kitarô Zenshû*, Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1966 (from here on, NKZ).

11. The same observation of course applies to the God of the Bible: if God creates Man in his image, he supposes Man to be what he is: God. Being absolute Substance, God is in theory unpredicable; the fact that he is predicated by the human image relativizes him. The same aporia applies to the absolutization of the object in the modern paradigm, which in this respect emerges from the combination of Plato's metaphysics, Aristotle's logic and Christianity.
12. I quote some characteristic passages (my translation into French): 'The historical world is formed from itself (*jiko jishin wo keisei suru*) self-formatively (*jikokeiseiteki*), as willing active being (*ishi sayôteki u to shite*)', NKZ, XI, p. 391; 'The world . . . this does not mean a world opposed to our ego. It is no different from what wishes to express the absolute being-in-its-place (*zettai no bashoteki u wo arawasô to suru*), that is why it might be said it is the absolute (*zettaisha*)', NKZ, XI, p. 403; 'That it may comprise indefinitely this self-negation (*jiko hitei*), that is precisely the reason why the world exists of and by itself (*sore jishin ni yotte ari*), moves by itself, and why it can be seen as absolute existence (*zettaiteki jitsuzai*)', NKZ, XI, p. 457. And in this baseless world, 'by contradictory self-identity of what creates with what is created' (*tsukurareta mono kara tsukuru mono e to mujunteki jiko dôitsuteki ni*: NKZ, XI, p. 391), 'all things determine themselves without basis (*mukiteiteki ni jiko jishin wo gentei suru*), that is to say that they take their peculiar being from their very self-determination', NKZ, XI, p. 390.
13. On the connection between the Kyôto school and nationalism, see James Heisig and John Maraldo (eds) *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994; and more especially Pierre Lavelle, 'Nishida, l'École de Kyôto et l'ultranationalisme', *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, XCXII (1994), 4. However, these studies do not show what I believe to be the intrinsic link between the logic of place and the absolute ethnocentrism represented by Nishida's political choice; on this point see my position in *Ecoumène*, 2000, *op. cit.*
14. Fortunately there are a few exceptions! I am thinking, for instance, of the work by Bernard Stevens at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve. And it has been suggested by some, and supported in particular by Reinhard May, *Ex oriente lux: Heideggers Werk unter ostasiatischem Einfluss*, Stuttgart, Steiner Verlag, 1989, that the greatest 20th-century European philosopher was inspired, but did not say so, by Nishida's thought, with which he became acquainted indirectly through Japanese colleagues spending time in Germany. Personally I think light is thrown on the enigmatic 'dispute' between the Earth and the World in *The Origin of the Work of Art* if it is compared with the relationship between subject (= *hupokeimenon* = substance = base = Earth) and predicate (= World = *kosmos* = sky = Void – which in Japanese is written with the ideogram 'sky' = nothingness); see my article 'L'Art, et la terre sous le ciel', *Art press*, 2001, 22 (*Ecosystèmes du monde de l'art*), pp. 8–12. However, in Heidegger's thinking the withdrawal of the Earth into itself has no connection with the subject's absorption into the predicate, according to Nishida. It will be understood that in this matter I side with Heidegger.
15. The first translation of *Fûdo* into a western language, the one that was made under UNESCO auspices by Geoffrey Bownas in 1961 (reissued under the title *Climate and Culture: A Philosophical Study*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1988), rendered the term as 'climate'. Though there are reasons for this put forward by Watsuji himself (who refers to the German *Klima* in Herder), the context of Bownas's translation – which is not faithful or consistent – makes the philosophical intention that Watsuji expresses with *fûdo* incomprehensible in 'climate'. The translation into German by Dora Fischer-Barnicol and Okochi Ryôgi (*Fûdo – Wind und Erde. Der Zusammenhang zwischen Klima und Kultur*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992) is qualitatively far superior. I myself have translated into French the crucial theoretical chapter from *Fûdo* in *Philosophie*, 51 (1996), pp. 3–30; as well as another substantial extract: 'Sabaku (Désert) de Watsuji Tetsurô', in the journal *Ebisu* (Maison franco-japonaise, Tokyo), 29, 7–26. As for Watsuji's original text, which has been reissued many times, it is currently available in the paperback collection Iwanami Bunko (Tokyo).
16. On this matter the article by Ohashi Ryôsuke could usefully be read: 'Le vent comme notion de

- culture au Japon', pp. 257–74, in A. Berque and P. Nys (eds), *Logique du lieu et oeuvre humaine*, 1997, *op. cit.*
17. That is, a power of movement as in mechanics; an idea that Watsuji gets partly from the use of *Moment* in German philosophy, especially in Hegel's work.
 18. As Watsuji himself writes in the Preamble to *Fûdo* (pp. 1 and 2 in the edition mentioned above; my translation): 'Personally I started to think about the problem of mediance (*fûdosei*) in the early summer of 1927 in Berlin, when I was reading Heidegger's *Being and Time*. I found this attempt to apprehend as temporality the structure of being of humans (*ningen no sonzai*) extremely interesting. However, I wondered why this foregrounding of temporality as the structure of subjectal being (*shutaiteki sonzai kôzô* [*shutaiteki*: "subjectal", i.e. relative to subjectness, the quality of subject, is different from *shukanteki*: subjective, i.e. due to a subjective view]) was not paralleled by a stress on spatiality, also as the basic structure of being. Granted, even in Heidegger spatiality is not completely absent. Here German Romanticism's "living nature" appears to re-emerge in the observation of concrete space in human existence (*hito no sonzai*). But it is scarcely perceptible under the powerful light of temporality. It felt that this was the boundary of Heidegger's work. A temporality that is not rooted in spatiality is not yet truly temporality. If Heidegger stopped there it was because in the end his *Dasein* was only an individual (*kôjin*). As for me personally, I might have started to think about the problem of mediance in the middle of the summer of 1969 in Tokyo, when I was reading Watsuji's *Fûdo*; but at the time I approached it through the English translation, which put me off, since it simply showed me an argument for geographical determinism. Bownas did not even take the trouble to give a consistent translation for the central concept of *fûdosei* (which he renders by various words or phrases, depending on the context), or to make the link between Watsuji's purpose and Heidegger's ontology, since without an allusion to this *Fûdo* is incomprehensible . . . and indeed not understood by most of its commentators, who only grasp from it an environmental determinism explicitly dismissed by Watsuji from the very first page. Indeed *Fûdo* opens with these lines (my translation): 'What this book aims to do is elucidate mediance (*fûdosei*) as a structural moment in human existence (*ningen sonzai no kôzô keiki*). So we are not dealing here with how the natural environment (*shizen kankyô*) governs human life. What we normally understand by "natural environment" is a thing that has been extracted by objectivization from human mediance, its concrete ground (*gutaiteki jiban*). When we consider its relationship with human life, this too is already itself objectivized. Thus this viewpoint involves looking at the relation between two objects; it does not concern the subjecthood of human existence (human existence as subject). Our question deals with this. Even if we are continually asking questions here about medial phenomena (*fûdoteki* [which means: relative to milieu and mediance]), it is as expressions of human existence as subject, not as natural environment. I reject in advance any confusion in this respect.' It was only 10 or so years later, when I had read *Fûdo* in the original, that I began to think seriously about the topic, and only in 1985, in Tokyo again, that I came to translate *fûdo* as *milieu* and *fûdosei* as *médiance*. On this work of gestation, see my book *Japan: Nature, Artifice and Japanese Culture*, Yelvertoft Manor, Pilkington Press, 1997 [1986]. And I had to read *Sein und Zeit* and *Le Geste et la parole* (in other words repeat Watsuji's journey to Europe half a century on), without mentioning Nishida, in order to reach my present conception of mediance and the ecumene.
 19. See above, Note 2. Though he visited Japan before the war (to carry out ethnographic research in Hokkaidô), Leroi-Gourhan had not read Watsuji, nor does he refer to the notion of *Ausser-sich-sein* (*being-outside-oneself*) in Heidegger. His viewpoint has no connection with the latter's hermeneutic phenomenology. As for the most eminent of our Heidegger experts, they do not even know Watsuji's name and have not taken anything from Leroi-Gourhan's exteriorization theory.
 20. Since human milieu are not only technical and symbolic (that is the World) but also ecological (that is, linking the World with the Earth, and thus ecumenal), I am referring here to the *medial body* and not merely the *social body* like Leroi-Gourhan.
 21. As Watsuji writes (*op. cit.*, p. 26; my translation): 'Fundamentally the nature of our existence is not only to be charged [with a milieu and a past], it is freedom too. While already being, it anticipates its being, and while being charged, it is free. In this can be seen the historicity of our existence.

Nevertheless this historicity corresponds to a mediance; and if, as a result, our charge is not only a past, but consists of a milieu as well, medial regulation (*fūdoteki kitei* [which is radically different from *kankyōteki kettei*, environmental determination]) must also confer a certain character on the free actions of humans.'

22. That is, beyond the pre-modern subsuming of the subject in the predicate, but also beyond the modern separation between the subjective and the objective (which, as we have seen, illusorily ignores *P* by absolutizing *S* as an object in itself), assuming *trajective* reason as solely capable of taking account of the fact that human truth, the ecumene and history are *S / P*. This *trajective* reason combines the logic of the subject's identity (*IgS*) and the logic of the predicate (*IgP*). From this view-point mediance (the structural moment of human existence) may be represented by the formula (*IgS / IgP*) / (*IgP / IgS*), bearing in mind that the nature of humans is to be *subject predicate of oneself*. This topic is discussed in detail and illustrated with concrete examples in *Écoumène*, 2000, *op. cit.*; I summarize it in my articles 'Raison trajective et dépassement de la modernité. En hommage à Nakamura Yūjirō' [Nakamura is the Japanese philosopher who, in *Nishida Kitarō*, Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1983, demonstrated the metaphorical essence of the logic of the predicate], Tokyo, Nichi-Futsu tetsugak-kai, *Furansu tetsugaku shisō kenkyū / Revue de philosophie française*, V (2000), pp. 29–48, and 'Tsūtaiteki risei to kindai no chōkoku' [Trajective reason and going beyond modernity], Sendai, Nihon genshōgak-kai, *Genshōgaku nenpō*, XVI (2000), pp. 83–98.
23. By absolutizing *S* as an object in itself, the modern view produces a world without symbolism, that is, an increasingly mechanical one. In the market absolutism that currently rules us, 'the invisible hand of the market' (which is assumed to be purely objective) symbolizes this mechanicity; and this, by virtue of the fact that technical systems are inherently human (see above, preliminary and XIth sections), affects humans and transforms them into Cyborgs: beings mechanized by their mechanical world. Market absolutism is thus a machine absolutism based on the absolutization of *S* as object. On this topic, its relationship with fetishism and its expression in current trends towards reorganizing the ecumene (particularly its determination by the development of the system of objects of the automobile), see my articles 'Cybèle et Cyborg: les échelles de l'écoumène', *Urbanisme*, 314 (September–October 2000), pp. 40–2, also more especially 'On the Chinese origins of Cyborg's hermitage in the absolute market' and 'Research on the history of disurbanity – Hypotheses and first data', pp. 26–32 and 33–41 in Gijs Wallis de Vries and Wim Nijenhuis (eds) *The Global City and the Territory: History, Theory, Critique*, Eindhoven, Eindhoven University of Technology, 2001, and 'L'habitat insoutenable', *L'espace géographique*, XXXI (2002), 3, 241–51.