

# The International Journal for Field-Being

## **The Art of Appropriation: Towards a Field-Being Conception of Philosophy**

by **Lik Kuen Tong**

Fairfield University  
Fairfield, CT, USA

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### **1. Philosophy as *dao*-Learning: The Supreme Art of Appropriation**

- ¶1. Philosophy is the human pursuit of *dao*-learning carried to the limits. It is at the limits of our perspectivity that philosophical wisdom manifests.
- ¶2. What is *dao*-learning? And what do we mean by *dao*? *dao* means "the Way." *dao* is the Way things are, the Way Being itself is. *dao*-learning is a learning that is itself an occurrence in *dao*, an activity that directs itself perspectively and transcendently to the Way. It is not a science, but an art-the supreme art of appropriation.
- ¶3. Appropriation is an activity, which in directing itself the way it does, makes itself its own. It articulates itself in *virtue of* the form of its own becoming. Appropriation then is self-affirmation and self-definition. An activity in thus affirming and defining itself in its self-becoming does something most proper, right, and appropriate to itself: it gives itself its form, its ownness, its unique identity. But self-appropriation is inseparable from the appropriation of otherness. In affirming and defining itself in its self-becoming, an activity must execute or conduct itself appropriately in relation to the world, to its transcendental endowment as well as to its environmental heritage-to the other activities that collectively constitute the field complement of its being. The activity that says "I" can only do so by addressing itself to the "non-I." For the *I am* is only possible in connection with the *they are*.
- ¶4. We describe the art of appropriation as the "supreme art" because it is the art of all arts-the art that constitutes the innermost nature or essence of all activities. It is what the *dao* itself is. For the Way things are, the Way Being itself is, is none other than the Way of activity. The *dao* is activity itself.

- ¶5. *dao*-learning then is not just any activity, an activity among activities. No, it is rather the inner activity that constitutes the very nature of activity itself. Every particular type of activity has its own *dao*, the Way that particular type of activity appropriates itself. Thus the *dao* of carpentry is the Way the activity of carpentry appropriates itself, the *dao* of singing is the Way the singing activity appropriates itself, the *dao* of government is the Way the activity of governing appropriates itself, and so forth. Insofar as each particular type of activity is an instantiation of the supreme art of appropriation, there is a kind of *dao*-learning appropriate to the particular type of activity under consideration. The *dao*-learning of carpentry belongs properly to the activity of carpentry, just as the *dao*-learning of government goes properly with the activity of governing. The question now is, What then is the *dao*-learning in terms of which philosophy is defined, the *dao*-learning that is proper to the philosophical activity?
- ¶6. The answer to this question may be said to have both a transcendental and a horizontal sense. In the transcendental sense, philosophy as *dao*-learning is an activity that directs itself to the innermost nature of activity, to the art of appropriation as such which is inherent in all activities. This is what we mean by describing an activity as "transcendental." And philosophy, transcendently understood, is necessarily a reflexive activity—an activity that folds or bends back upon itself. The self-appropriation of the philosophical activity occurs in the reflexivity of activity.
- ¶7. Now philosophy is not just a transcendental affair, but is also a horizontal affair. Every activity occurs within a horizon of activity, much like a ship sailing towards a horizon in an ocean. More exactly, we conceive the horizon of an activity as that which sets the dynamic stage of appropriation in its process of self-becoming. The horizon towards which an activity directs itself is a function of its situatedness in the dynamic order of things, its topological region, as we may call it, in the Great Ocean of Becoming. What distinguishes the philosophical activity from other types of activity lies not just in its transcendental character but also in its horizontal-topological conditionality. For while all particular activities appropriate themselves in their own situatedness, philosophical activity directs itself consciously and emphatically in its self-appropriation to the utmost limits. But just what is it that reveals itself at the horizontal limits? It is none other than the inmost nature of *dao*, the supreme art of appropriation that reflexively and topologically consummates itself. The limits of *dao*-learning then constitute the point of intersection between the transcendental and the horizontal limits of activity. This is what we mean by the limits of perspectivity.

- ¶8. Hence philosophy, as we conceive it here, is a rather unique kind of activity, an activity that is transcendently and horizontally immanent in all human activities. For any human activity is philosophical insofar as it is a pursuit of *dao*-learning carried to the limits. And at the limits of *dao*-learning there are no things as such, for everything in the universe has turned into a "thing-in-itself," an "instance of eternity," as we would characterize it, which is no longer merely this or that particular thing in separation from other things, but is Being itself in its unique absoluteness as viewed from the standpoint of a field-topological region. The limits of *dao*-learning are the point at which particularity commands and embodies the truth of universality in the unique integrity of its own perspective. It is at the limits of our unique perspectivity that the wisdom of *dao*-learning gives rise to itself.
- ¶9. In Field-Being Philosophy (FBP), here presented both as a vision of life and reality and as a thought experiment, "Being" means the *One Being*, that is, the boundless plenum of activity that encompasses all and generates all. The Way is the Way of the *One Being*. Every perspective is a perspective of the *One Being*. *dao*-learning is a learning that directs itself to the *One Being*. And what we mean by the supreme art of appropriation, the art of all arts, is none other than the art of the *One Being*. For the art of appropriation, we will recall, is the art of activity itself.

## 2. Truth, Reality, and the Good: The Three Worlds of Field-Being

- ¶10. In this postmodern age the term "*One Being*" certainly sounds strange and antiquarian to our ears. Insofar as the Western tradition is concerned, no great philosophers in the twentieth century embrace it. The notion of the *One Being* is found neither in Husserl, nor in Heidegger, nor in Dewey, nor in Whitehead, and certainly not in Wittgenstein. This is understandable in light of the fact that the oblivion of the *One Being* is precisely what characterizes the philosophical soul (at least in the West) of the modern era. But this oblivion, let us hasten to add, is not to be equated with the Heideggerian "forgetfulness of Being." Heidegger conceives Being exclusively in terms of the truth-process, the *aletheia* or unhiddenness of beings, and fails to fathom to the ultimate source and ground of the truth process itself. The notion of the *One Being* conceived as the ultimate reality is entertained neither by Heidegger nor by Whitehead. Both philosophers are fundamentally pluralistic thinkers. Just as in Heidegger, the *One Being* has been replaced by the truth process as the principle of significance, whereby the plurality of phenomenal beings become meaningfully disclosed, so in Whitehead the *One Being* turns into creativity as the principle of the reality process in *virtue of* which the plurality of actual entities (including God as a nontemporal actual entity) become dynamically consummated. To be sure, there is a kind of holism in their ontological or cosmological outlook—a unity of beings in Heidegger's world and a unity of actual entities in Whitehead's universe. But this holism or unity of Being remains for both thinkers a unity that is founded on a fundamental plurality: it is a unity of the fundamental plurality. Moreover, their

holism is conceived one-sidedly either as a holism of significance underlying the plurality of meaning or a holism of work as the efficacy of power derived from the plurality of actualities. From the Field-Being standpoint, this one-sidedness needs to be corrected. The unity of Being is as much a unity of significance as it is a unity of work. This unity is, to be sure, a unity of plurality, but it is a unity of plurality only because the plurality is the plurality of an underlying unity—that is, of the *One Being* that pervades all and gives rise to all.

- ¶11. That the unity of Being has its ultimate source in the *One Being* and that all unity of plurality is founded on an undivided wholeness, an underlying unity derived from the *One Being* is what we call the "Field Principle." The Field, as we understand it here, is the universal matrix of all existence: it is that wherein unity and plurality, the *One Being* and its diverse manifestations or emanations are diremptively trans-differentiated. FBP is, to be sure, a Radical Monism insofar as it affirms the reality of the *One Being* at the root of all things. But this monism is also a Universal Perspectivism that recognizes the uniqueness and reality of all things in *virtue of* the Field Principle. Every being or thing in the Field-Being universe has its own topological region of existence which is the same as the Field or universal matrix perceived from its own standpoint or perspective. My topological region is the Field for me, your topological region is the Field for you, and the topological region of a kangaroo or tree or star is the Field for each of them. But the Field for me and the Field for you are not two separate fields, but are the same universal matrix of existence in which both you and I (and the kangaroo or tree or star) are perspectively situated.
- ¶12. Now we call the universal matrix the world of significance to the extent it is unhidden or meaningfully disclosed to us, that is, experienced in the sense of being physically felt or conceptually understood in a certain way. The process wherein the world of significance is revealed is what we mean by the truth process. Let us observe immediately that there can be no unhiddenness apart from experience, or outside the perspectivity of percipient subject or energy. Since for us experience is both a physical and a conceptual matter, involving the perception of both physical and conceptual meanings, the truth process is not confined merely to the conceptual dimension, as Heidegger would have it. Anything is significant if it is physically felt or conceptually understood. But the world of significance is not separable from the world of work, that is, the Field wherein facts and effects are continuously made or produced by *virtue of* the work or dispensation of power, that is, of matter-energy. Here, the term "matter-energy" is to be taken in a special sense, not to be identified with its usual signification in the physical sciences. "Matter-energy" is an abbreviation for vibrant energy and karmic matter, the latter referring to the accumulated effects or products of past actions. The appropriation of karmic matter by vibrant energy, which consists in the creative transformation of karmic matter through karmic labor, is what defines the meaning of subjectivity in Field-Being. The process of this creative transformation, which is the same as the process of becoming, is what we mean by the reality process, a dynamic movement marked by the

cocoonization of power concrescence. What is cocoonized is the emergent reality of a transfinite subject, a karmic laborer procuring self-transcendence in *virtue of its* primordial ingression in the karmic warp, the state of activity in the plenum defined by the limitation of the possible by the actual. (See section 7 below for more on the karmic warp.) This conception of subjectivity in terms of karmic labor and creative transformation implies the inseparability of the truth process and the reality process with the process of the good, wherein the universal matrix takes on a third dimension as the world of importance. Just as the world of significance is based on the articulation of meanings (both physical and conceptual) and the world of work arises from the configurations of matter-energy, so the good and the world of importance is the articulate totality of consummated rightness and values. The good is indeed the work of significance and the significance of work. In general, anything is good in proportion to its measure of rightness and importance to an appropriating subject or a community of appropriating subjects. While endorsing the universality of the good, we also emphasize the subjectivity and relativity of all values. For activity is in essence appropriation wherein truth, reality, and the good are inseparably intertwined.

- ¶13. Hence, the three worlds of Field-Being are not three separate worlds, but are distinguishable yet inseparable aspects of one world, the same Field or universal matrix of existence. There can be no consummation of rightness and values except in terms of the aesthetic complexity of experience, matter-energy, and meaning, the three intertwining components of aesthetic power which define the concept of substance in the Field-Being sense. This is to be sharply differentiated from the entitative conception of substance and power in traditional Western metaphysics. In Field-Being parlance, the substance of things is their aesthetic power which consists in the intertwining and interplayful complexity of experience, matter-energy, and meaning. Thus understood, aesthetic substance or power is the concrete medium of activity, the fundamental stuff out of which all things are made.

### 3. The Plenum of Field-Being: The Ultimate Activity as Field Potential and as Act

- ¶14. Field-Being Philosophy, then, is at heart an aesthetic and field-topological theory of activity. The term "aesthetic" here has two basic connotations: (a) the interplayful unity of experience, matter-energy, and meaning and (b) the art of appropriation underlying and constituting the interplayful complexity and process. This process is the process of the becoming of transfinite subjects, the emanating souls of aesthetic power, each of which is constituted and shaped by a unique diremptive transaction of field individuals and field orders. In the Field-Being scheme, all individuals, in the primary sense, are field individuals, and all orders field orders. Field orders are systems of strains which, replacing the conception of universals (including Platonic forms and Whiteheadian eternal objects) in traditional metaphysics, are diremptive tensions in the Field constitutive of the pre-given formal conditions of becoming in the universal matrix. The form of a circular movement, for example, is the system of

strains or diremptive tensions whose resolution is responsible for the circularity of the movement. And the form of perceiving an apple is the system of strains or diremptive tensions wherein the possibility of an apple perception is embedded. The articulate action thus responsible for the resolution of diremptive tensions is what defines a field individual. More exactly, a field individual is a process of power concrescence in the universal matrix whose resolution of diremptive tensions is achieved through a union of vibrant energy and karmic matter. Out of this dynamic union is the emergence of a transfinite subject under the concrescencing conditions of cocoonization. The resolution of diremptive tensions is an agency of karmic labor determined by the energetic and creative transformation of karmic matter. The life of a transfinite subject is the life of a karmic laborer.

- ¶15. The Field then is the universal matrix conceived as the womb of all field individuals and field orders (the particulars and universals in traditional Western metaphysics), the two primary types of existence in the plenum of Field-Being. When we think of the Field as the source of all possibilities and existence in articulate action, it is identified as the field potential. Since the field potential makes room for all particularity—all particular roles and functions—and, hence, cannot be identified with any particular roles or functions, it is the nothing that lies at the root of all things, that is, the "Radical Nothing." But the field potential, as Radical Nothing, is also referred to as the "Let-Be," the ultimate activity that is the articulate source and ground of all existence in the universe.
- ¶16. In the Field-Being scheme, to be or exist is to be an emergent from the Radical Nothing; a being or thing is what is let to be by the Let-Be. This Act of letting be of the Let-Be, the ultimate activity, is what we mean by diremption, or the process or movement whereby the many emerge from the One. The Act of the Let-Be is, in other words, what articulates the field potential which, functioning in the state of absolute purity and simplicity, is what we have termed the "Radical Nothing." The Let-Be as such is not the Radical Nothing, nor the Act of letting be, but is both and neither. The reality of the Let-Be is ultimately paradoxical!
- ¶17. This notion of the ultimate activity entertained in terms of the paradoxicality of the Radical Nothing and the Act is by no means novel in the history of philosophy. Indeed, it is what lies at the heart of the perennial-global metaphysical tradition. Here the term "metaphysical" must be understood in its primordial implications. The metaphysical is what lies beyond the physical, that is, beyond what has emerged from the Radical Nothing, as implied in the original, etymological root of the Greek *physis*, meaning "to rise, to emerge"—a meaning which has nothing to do with what we mean today by the term "physical." And just what lies beyond the physical, the emergents as such and as a whole? It is none other than the ultimate activity in its Radical Nothingness, the source and ground of all existence (the Latin root of existence [*existere*] also means "to arise, to emerge"). Grasped in this primordial sense, metaphysics must be thought of as the conceptuality of the ultimate activity or the attempt to make sense of it. All great philosophical traditions in the world are

metaphysical in their origins. The ultimate activity is called *arche* by the pre-Socratics, which finds its counterparts in the *dao* of the *daodejing* and in the *Brahman* of the Upanishads. Insofar as the *daodejing* is concerned, the Radical Nothing is referred to as *wu*, whereas the Act is termed *you*. The paradoxicality of the *dao* is the paradoxicality of *wu* and *you*. And what is the paradoxicality of *Brahman* in the Upanishads? Is it not in the distinction between the *nirguna Brahman* and *saguna Brahman*, that is, between *Brahman* without qualities and *Brahman* with qualities, which correspond so closely to the distinction of *wu* and *you* in the *Daodejing*?

#### 4. The Field Principle: Reflexion, Articulation, and Ontological Identity

- ¶18. Now the region of reality and thought that embraces the paradoxicality of the ultimate activity we call the "inner dynamics of the Let-Be." As such, it must be recognized as the perennial source of all metaphysics. In Field-Being, the conceptuality of this notion is captured by the Field Equation, symbolized by the notational schema  $Q.Q = Q.q$ , where  $Q$  stands for the Let-Be or ultimate activity, and  $q$  the diverse manifestations or emanations (field individuals and field orders), the *emanata* that have emanated or emerged from  $Q$ . (The letter  $Q$  [ $q$ ] is chosen because the inner dynamics of the Let-Be is ultimately what is in question-what matters metaphysically and philosophically.)
- ¶19. The dot in the notational schema is capable of many interpretations, depending on how the symbols  $Q$  and  $q$  are conceived in relation to each other. We call the dot the "awesome field interface," inasmuch as it is that whereby all determinations (including all terms and distinctions) in the Field are trans-differentiated, that is, separated and yet held together, according to the requirement of the Field Principle. Thus, although both the field potential and the Act are designated by  $Q.Q$  on the left side of the equation, the dot will assume a different meaning in each case. If the ultimate activity is conceived in its absolute purity and simplicity, then the dot in  $Q.Q$  names the state of the Radical Nothing, the state of pure action. On the other hand, if the Let-Be is thought of in the diremptive movements of its Act, then the dot in question implies the articulate reflexivity of the ultimate activity, the state of articulate action. The Let-Be reflects, folds, or bends back upon itself in its Act of letting be wherein all that is let to be is articulated.

- ¶20. What is equated in the Field Equation, then, is the inner connection between two meanings of the Act, two moments of the diremptive field action, namely, of field action in the sense of reflexion (Q.Q) and of field action in the sense of articulation (Q.q). Reflexion is articulation; articulation is reflexion: that is what the Field Equation indicates. What is stated in the notational schema is simply this: The Let-Be (Q) acts upon itself, all things in the universe (q) are let to be. This unity of Being expressed in terms of the diremptive identity of reflexion and articulation we call the "ontological identity." Let us reinstate the notational schema to set forth this first stipulation of the Field Principle:

$$\text{Field Equation I: } \mathbf{Q.Q = Q.q}(\text{Ontological Identity})$$

The dot on the right side of the Field Equation is what expresses the general meaning of existence in Field-Being—that is, existence as a matter of articulation, manifestation and emanation. A thing or being is what is articulated in the Act of letting be; it is a manifestation of the field action, an emanation from the ultimate activity. Since field action is always a function of the inner dynamics, a dynamic relation of pure action and reflexive-articulate action, existence pertains to the diremptive affair of the ultimate activity. Existence is indeed diremption conceived on the side of things (q), of what has emerged in the diremptive field action. But what have emerged or emanated in the diremption of the ultimate activity, the *emanata* in the field action, are not things in the ordinary sense of the word. Strictly speaking, there are no things in the Field-Being universe. The universe in the Field-Being sense is not a collection of things in the sense of inert, substantial entities, but a plenum or continuum of activity. There is nothing outside this plenum: It has no otherness either without or within. There is no absolute time in which the plenum occurs, nor is there an absolute space in which the plenum is contained or situated. Time and space, like everything else in Field-Being, is a function or determination of activity, a role or state or character assumed or performed by the plenum. Thus time is the plenum performing the function of temporality, and space is the plenum assuming the role of spatiality. In short, in the Field-Being universe, there is nothing that we can think of or talk about which is not functional, that is, a function or determination of activity. Every concept is a concept of activity, and every word is a verb-word. In the primary sense, there is no time except as actional time, there is no space except as actional space, and there are no apples except as actional apples. In short, there is no difference between being and doing at all in the Field-Being scheme: being is doing, and doing being. For all is activity! All is activity!

## 5. Being as Nothing, as Becoming and as Thought: There Are No Opposites

- ¶21. Now if all is activity, then the traditional oppositions between being and nothing, being and becoming, and being and thought are no longer valid. In the Field-Being continuum, there is nothing that is really nothing. What we have called the "Radical Nothing" is not truly a nothing: it refers to the quiescent state of the field potential or activity in its absolute purity and simplicity. The nothingness of the Radical Nothing remains a functional or role concept: for the function that is presupposed by all particular functions is still itself a function, the role that makes room for all particular roles is still itself a role. The seemingly negativistic or nihilistic language of nonbeing (*wu*) or emptiness (*sunyata*) so characteristic and distinctive of Asian philosophy, notably in the Daoist and the Buddhist traditions, has often been misunderstood. The truth is nonbeing and emptiness are not negativistic or nihilistic at all. On the contrary, they are among the most positive and affirmative of all terms or concepts—those that point to the Radical Nothing which, coiling at the root of the diremptive field action, is the transcendental source of all existence.
- ¶22. Similarly, since all is activity, there can be no contradiction at all between being and becoming, an antithesis that is almost synonymous with Western metaphysics. How can the two categories be contradictory if being is activity and becoming belongs to the very nature of activity? Is it not obvious that being is becoming, and becoming being? The antithesis between being and becoming so fundamental to Western metaphysics arises only when being is thought of in terms of something that is not activity. This it does in fact by absolutizing activity—by concentrating on those real or imagined aspects of activity that are most palatable to the taste of the discriminating intellect: namely, activity as absolute permanence, absolute unity, absolute definiteness, absolute completeness, absolute clarity, absolute impenetrability, and so on. Yes, all these characteristics are in some sense attributable to activity itself. But the point is—that is not all to the nature of activity. We cannot think of activity merely in terms of its absoluteness, for relativity, too, belongs equally to the essence of activity. For in the final analysis—a point to be made emphatically, the nature of activity is what is uniquely paradoxical: it is absolute and yet relative, permanent and yet forever changing, unitary and yet diverse, definite and yet lacking in definiteness, complete and yet incomplete, impenetrable and yet penetrating. This paradoxical nature resides in the inner dynamics of the Let-Be, the dynamic relation between pure action and articulate action in the transcendental constitution of the ultimate activity. The characteristics of absoluteness belong to the ultimate activity as pure action, whereas as articulate action the Let-Be is incurably relative. Under the influence of the Ego Principle, the inherent tendency of articulate action to perpetuate itself, the discriminating intellect tends to favor the absoluteness of activity because it owes its satisfaction to its conceptual graspability. Superficially, the discriminating intellect may appear to be driven by the desire for adventure in relativity, but it is at heart intolerant of all that is relative: it is in fact goaded implicitly towards its negation. For the discriminating intellect is itself an instrument for the despotism of the Ego Principle, the desire for absolute control.

- ¶23. Once again, if all is activity, how can being be opposed to thought? Is not thinking a form of activity? Whether one equates thinking with consciousness or, as in Field-Being, with experience in general, there can be no separation between being and thought. In the Field-Being scheme, all experience is in some sense cognitive: it is an immediate or mediated reception and transmission of information, a determination of significance in *virtue of* the aesthetic complexity of physical and conceptual meanings. In this general sense, the experience of dolphins is no less cognitive than the experience of human beings. Since experience is an integral part of power in constituting the aesthetic complexity of activity, the Cartesian dictum *cogito, ergo sum* is to be reversed in Field-Being. It is not that I think, therefore I am, but that I am, therefore I think. For I am nothing but a center of activity: I am my activity. In being I am given to thinking (in the amplified Field-Being sense), that is, to the cognitivity of experience that is an integral component of my power, my aesthetic complexity.
- ¶24. It should be clear by now that in the Field-Being scheme not only is there no contradiction between being and nothing, being and becoming, and being and thought, there is actually no contradiction or opposition between any pair of the traditional opposites. For in the unity of Being, that is, the plenum of activity in its undivided wholeness, there are only distinctions, but no real opposites. What is asserted in the Field Principle, which we may also call the "Ontological Principle" from the methodological standpoint, is a Radical Monism of activity wherein all distinctions and opposites are harmonized and united in the inner dynamics of the ultimate activity. This is the only type of monism, let us submit, that does not exclude relativity and diversity: in fact, it requires it. For in Field-Being Radical Monism and Radical Perspectivism are one and the same.
- ¶25. This fundamental harmony that lies at the heart of the *One Being*, the plenum of activity, is what in the *Yijing* tradition is called "*taihe*," the Great Harmony. In the realm of the Great Harmony, all roles and all concepts are distinct and yet equivalent; all words and discourses are meaningful and yet redundant or tautological. For in the final analysis, there are no things, no substantial entities, there is only activity—ultimately the activity that is both field potential and field action, both the Radical Nothing and the Act of letting be. That is what ultimately matters, what ultimately is in question, and ultimately what we can and do talk about.

## 6. The Field Principle (II): The Surd or Ontological Difference

- ¶26. Critics of Field-Being are now impatient. Our way of talking about reality and the world does not seem to make much sense to them. For by "sense" they mean common sense. Whether it be the common sense of the people from the streets or the privileged common sense of the trained philosophical specialist, what is common in the common sense is the prevailing cognition of the phenomenological consciousness, the consciousness that sustains our existence and ordinary activities and practices in the life-world. It is common sense to recognize that there are things, there are entities. What right does the Field-Being thinker have in countering this prevailing cognition of common sense? What justification is there in negating the wise and loudly pronounced judgment of the phenomenological consciousness? Is the Field-Being thinker given to fancy and extravagant speculation in making the bold assertion that there are no things, there are no entities? Is he or she at all responsible and serious? What exactly is the basis of his or her uncommon sense?
- ¶27. To begin with, the denial of things and entities in our ordinary experience may seem at first incomprehensible and extravagant. But what is being denied here must be properly understood. There are of course thing-like or entity-like phenomena like apples, trees, machines, animal bodies, and so on in our everyday experience of ourselves and the world. They present themselves as enduring individuals that sojourn for a while in the world of appearance. The point is that these thing-like phenomena are not themselves things, that is, not the way we ordinarily attribute to them, and certainly not the way substantialist philosophers would make them to be. What the Field-Being thinker denies in the commonsense or prevailing cognition of things is not the phenomena themselves, not even their thing-like or entity-like appearance as such, but the conceptual constructions of rigid identity we habitually attribute to them. What is being denied here in Field-Being is not the phenomena themselves but the conceptual attribution to these phenomena. To be more exact, what Field-Being denies is the existence and reality of substantial entities, things or beings that are supposed to be in themselves complete wholes-inert, separate, self-contained, and independent, each endowed with a rigid identity. But there are no things in themselves: there are no self-complete wholes. There is only the fluidity of activity, but not the rigid identity of substance. The universe is not a collection of substantial entities but a boundless continuum of activity that is forever fluid and incomplete. The plenum is not itself a *digitum*, nor analyzable into a collection of *digiti*. That, from the Field-Being standpoint, is what the truth is, what the *One Being* reveals to us.

- ¶28. In fine, what is being denied then is not the phenomenal world as such but its substantialization or enticization. The point is not only is the plenum not digitizable into substantial entities or self-complete, self-contained wholes, the *digiti* in the substantialist universe, it is not even identifiable with the articulate totality of the emanata, represented by  $q$  in the Field Equation, which in Field-Being is what define the world, the emergent totality that is the original meaning of physis. The plenum is not a *digitum*, and is always greater than the world. For the boundless continuum of activity which forms the *One Being* is in itself inexhaustible in its procreativity. This difference between the *One Being* and the beings, between the Let-Be and what is let to be, between the *arche* and the physis-or, more precisely in Field-Being terms, between the field potential and the *emanata* of the field potential, we call the "surd" or "ontological difference." This is the second stipulation of the Field Principle in which the unity of Being is understood as a lack of completeness or self-identity in terms of the difference between field action as such and an articulate totality of field action. If we let  $(Q.q)$  stand for the articulate totality of field action (totality of the emanata), then this second formulation of the Field Principle may be represented as follows:

Field Equation II:  $Q.Q - Q.q = \text{Surd}(\text{Ontological Difference})$

The term "surd," from the Latin *surdus*, is in its mathematical sense a mistransliteration into Latin of the Greek *alogos*, which means "irrational" or "speechless" (according to the Oxford Dictionary). The Surd is the *alogos*, the irrational factor in Being that renders us speechless because it defies rational explanation. But what does rational explanation mean? In the substantialist tradition of Western metaphysics, rationality is no more than the technical expression or product of substantiality: the essence of rational explanation consists precisely in the substantialization of Being, in turning the plenum into the intellectually graspable, calculable, and practically controllable world of the *digiti*. This digitalization of reality which culminates in its most triumphant expression as the invention of the computer has been foreseen in its nature and implications by some of the great minds of the twentieth century, including notably Bergson, Dewey, James, Whitehead, and Heidegger. But these great critics of substantialism in the contemporary West still fall short of what is ultimately expected of a Field-Being or nonsubstantialist thinker, namely, the acceptance and embracement of paradoxicality as the authentic philosophical attitude. In spite of their yearning for departure from analytic thought, they (perhaps with the exception of Bergson) remain anchored with at least one foot in the rationalist-analytic tradition.

- ¶29. Now by "rationalist-analytic tradition" we mean to include any mode of philosophical thought that insists on the primacy of the rational at the expense of the paradoxical. Since for Field-Being the realm of the paradoxical belongs only to the plenum, the *One Being* that is also the Great Ocean of Becoming, any philosopher who shies away from or refuses to recognize the plenum is by necessity a nonparadoxical thinker and belongs properly to the rationalist-analytic tradition. And any thinker who remains anchored in rationalist-analytic thought will find him/herself haunted by the ghost of substantialism with its inaudible enchanting voice, claiming: there are only things, only entities!

## 7. Substantialism as Profiling Delusion: The Ego Principle and the Karmic Warp

- ¶30. But there are no things, there are no entities. There is only activity! The so-called things or beings in our ordinary experience are really enduring centers of activity whose articulate action is what brings forth the presencing of persons, animals, trees, apples, chairs, rocks, winds, oceans, stars, planets, galaxies-in short, the innumerable variety of things in the phenomenal world. I am an enduring center of activity, and so are all the organs, issues, cells, molecules, atoms that compose my body as well as all the thoughts and desires and feelings and the other mental contents that compose my mind. Actually what we ordinarily identify as beings and things are not the enduring centers of activity as such but their surface phenomena produced by the effects of their articulate action. Thus an apple as perceived is the effect of the articulate action that presents the surface phenomenon we identify as an apple, a computer keyboard as perceived is the articulate action that produces the effect and surface phenomenon called a "keyboard," and an experienced hurricane is the effect and surface phenomenon of a hurricane-producing articulate action, and so on, and so on. In Field-Being thought, these surface phenomena of articulate activity are recognized as dynamic profiles, that is, more exactly put, aesthetic and trans-differential profiles of power concrescence. A dynamic profile is a moving film of reality, a perspective reflexion of the universal flux or matrix in action. It is described as aesthetic because the moving film is a configuration of the aesthetic complexity of experience, matter-energy, and meaning. And it is trans-differential because the profiling of power concrescence is consummated in and through the perpetual transaction of field individuals and field orders underlying and constituting the relational web of field action that is the universal matrix in flux. This action web of trans-differentiation, as we may call it, is the basis of the Great Flow, the Great Ocean of Becoming wherein all dynamic filmings or profilings occur. Just as the ripples and waves which rise and subside on the surface of an ocean are not the centers of action that produce them, so the emergent surface phenomena in the Great Ocean of Becoming are not identifiable with the articulate field action that generates them. The profiling field action that presents the perceived apple, for example, is actually an enormously complex event of power concrescence involving the participation of countless centers of activity converging for the time being on that region in the action web topologically indexed

by the presencing of the perceived apple in question. The perceived apple is not itself a thing or substantial entity separable from the profiling field action. In itself, that is, abstracted from the field action, the perceived apple is a non-entity, a no-thing. As the Buddhists would say, the so-called things are in themselves empty, devoid of self-nature.

- ¶31. The attribution of thinghood or substantiality to the surface phenomena is thus the product of a profiling delusion, a mistaken identity brought about by the lure of definiteness and the inveterate disposition to grasp and to possess-the Ego Principle that is inherent in the nature of articulate activity. Every articulate action desires to perpetuate itself, that is, to continuously affirm itself in its own form of articulation. There is thus a will to power, as Nietzsche calls it, underlying each and every enduring center of articulate action. The enduring center is above all an ego center. It is indeed in *virtue of* the inherent Ego Principle or Will to Power that an enduring center derives its enduring character. The apparent stability, solidarity, and continuity of things are, in the final analysis, a function of the Ego Principle. Behind the uniformity of nature lies the Will to Power.
- ¶32. It is the Will to Power, which generally manifests itself as the will to grasp, to hold, and to control, that renders effective the lure of definiteness. In the presencing of an apple, for example, the percipient subject is habitually directed to the definite effects of the apple-articulating action rather than to the action itself. This withdrawal of the articulating act from the perception of the percipient subject is perfectly understandable inasmuch as the act of articulation is precisely that which cannot be grasped. What can be grasped in an articulation is not the articulating act itself but its form of articulation to the extent it is definitely presented in a perceived profile of its effects-the definite color, the definite shape, and the definite smell of the apple in appearance, for instance. The apparent character of the surface phenomenon, which is the combined profile of the articulated effects, depends partly on the perspectivity of the percipient subject. The apple that I perceived was not profiled the same way it was for you. And yet we both contributed to the articulate totality of the apple-presencing event in *virtue of* our own shares in the power concrescence that makes up the event-our own shares of the aesthetic complexity in the profiling of the underlying field action.

- ¶33. What is fundamentally at work in the power concrescence and profiling of articulate action is none other than the Ego Principle, the disposition, let us repeat, of an activity to perpetuate itself that is inherent in the nature of articulate action. It is the Ego Principle inherent in the center of activity which brings forth the surface apple phenomenon that is responsible for the endurance and continuity of the apple. The apple itself is nothing in abstraction from the enduring center of activity that articulates it. And the enduring center of activity in question is in no way separable from all the other centers of activity that have arisen in the plenum, in the Great Ocean of Becoming. For every center of activity is but a dynamic moment of the universal matrix, an aspect of an everlastingly self-reflecting, self-articulating, self-constituting, self-transforming, and self-profiling field action. The world as a dynamic and fluid articulate totality of field action is not to be digitized into a collection of substantial entities or assembled into a machine made up of mechanical parts, however intriguing and orderly that substantial or mechanical assembly is.
- ¶34. How, then, does the Ego Principle operate in the substantialization of reality-in the truncation, bifurcation, and enticization of the plenum into a *digitum*? How does the Will to Power will itself in the mechanical profiling of nature? The answer is: The Ego Principle comports itself both objectively and subjectively through the Samsaric Cycle of the Karmic Warp. By "karmic warp" we mean the topological limitation of the possible by the actual, that is, karmic matter or the accumulated effects of past action. The Field or universal matrix understood as the realm of existence in the grips of the karmic warp we call "Samsara," the realm of warped possibilities. But the realm of warped possibilities is also the realm of karmic labor constitutive of the becoming and self-appropriation of transfinite subjects, the union of vibrant energy and karmic matter. It is a process marked by the perpetual recycling of power through the interpenetration of energy and matter. There is, on the one hand, the objectification of vibrant energy into karmic matter and, on the other, the revitalization of karmic matter in vibrant energy made possible by the perpetual enfoldment of consummated subjectivity. This recycling of matter-energy in the realm of the karmic warp is what we mean by the Samsaric Cycle. It is here that we find the inner meaning of the Ego Principle. The inherent tendency in articulate activity towards self-perpetuation is always subject to the influence of karmic matter. The Ego Principle is indeed what shapes the realization of warped possibilities. Now the operation of the Ego Principle is an objective affair insofar as the subjection of the Ego Principle to the karmic warp expresses a uniformity of nature, and it is subjective to the extent the Will to Power is karmic bound in determining the subjectivity and perspectivity of transfinite subjects. Karmic subjection is, in other words, the commonality of objective uniformity and subjective orientation.

## 8. Karmic Conformation: The Two Wings of Subjectivity

- ¶35. More exactly, karmic influence takes place subjectively in two opposite directions. It is fundamentally a function of two appropriational attitudes and dispositions under the impact of karmic matter that we may refer to, respectively, as the Will to Conform and the Will to Deviate from Conformation. Karmic conformation means solidarity and continuity with the past, which expresses itself in the desire to repeat the forms of definiteness articulated in karmic matter, in the consummated reality of past action. Karmic nonconformity, on the other hand, expresses an attitude and disposition in the opposite direction; it is the desire for freedom and independence from the past, from the karmic establishment in past action. These two wings of subjectivity, as we may call them, may be combined in various ways in determining the dispositional constitution of the subject, capable of being analyzed into different levels and dimensions of attitudinal intensity and complexity. For the ease of exposition, we shall arbitrarily refer to the Will to Conform as the right-side wing, and the Will to Deviate from Conformation as the left-side wing. Thus conceived, the dialectic interpolation of the two wings is what determines the subjective operation of the ego center in activity. While Nietzsche tends to emphasize the efficacy of the left-side wing, Field-Being restores it to its full-fledged integrity: The Will to Power is a bipolar force, a two-winged reality.
- ¶36. But whether right-side or left-side, the Will to Power is a will to grasp, to hold on to a form of definiteness so as to perpetuate it in one way or another. This is the underlying motive force in the process of substantialization. Since it is what makes possible the survival and growth of a life-form within the samsaric sphere of the karmic warp, the Ego Principle is the principle of individuation in Field-Being. From this perspective, the substantialization of the world is in an important sense necessary and inevitable. We need a substantialized world in order to live.
- ¶37. But it is one thing to understand and recognize the practical necessity of substantialization as an instrument of individuation for survival and control, and another thing to be blinded by its delusive character in subscribing to the reality of the truncated world. In Field-Being a distinction is made between pragmatic substantialism and dogmatic substantialism as two fundamental world outlooks, depending upon one's attitude towards the substantialization of the world. Unlike the dogmatic substantialist, the pragmatic substantialist does not view the truncated world as real, but only as an expedient construction. The latter is cognizant of the truth, of Field-Being in its undivided wholeness: he or she is at heart a nonsubstantialist in his or her intellectual commitment.

- ¶38. And the truth is, the Ego Principle is not the only force inherently operative in an enduring center of activity. For deeper than the Ego Principle which is mostly at work at the superficial levels of articulate action is the Field Principle, now understood as the Force that speaks on behalf of the unity of Being which operates for the most part silently and unconsciously in the holistic center of activity. It is in the holistic center of our being that we are inwardly connected to the *dao*, to the inner dynamics of the Let-Be. While the Ego Principle or the Will to Power is disclosed to us through the prevailing cognition of phenomenological consciousness, the Field Principle or the Force is only revealed to us in and through the intuitive veins and transfinite connections of meditative consciousness, which will be cut off the moment they are enticed, the moment we attempt to grasp them. For the undivided reality of the *dao* can only be spontaneously intuited: it is precisely that which cannot be grasped.
- ¶39. The lure of definiteness loses its enchantment in the blissful quiescence of meditative action. There one is reconnected through the intuitive springs to the infinite reality of the *dao*, to the inner dynamics between the Radical Nothing and the Act in the field potential of the ultimate activity. This is the region wherein the Ego Principle itself is nourished and receives its creative vitality in the first place. For the Will to Power is itself grounded on the Field Principle as its principle of diremption and individuation. It represents an obligation of the Act to the Radical Nothing: The Will to Power arises from and is responsible to the Force.
- ¶40. This region of reality and thought wherein the connection between the Ego Principle and the Field Principle, between the Will to Power and the Force, is made or recognized is the realm of speculative consciousness. In speculative consciousness the truth and deception of phenomenological consciousness is examined and assessed under the illuminating light of meditative consciousness. This is the realm for the philosopher as a *dao*-learner, the realm of speculative philosophy in the Field-Being sense. It is in the realm of speculative consciousness that philosophy is the pursuit of *dao*-learning carried to the limits.

## 9. The Synthesis of Phenomenological Consciousness and Meditative Consciousness in Speculative Consciousness

- ¶41. Now *dao*-learning is, as we have stated at the beginning, an art, and not a science: it is the art of all arts, the supreme art of appropriation. It is in the realm of speculative consciousness in which the connection between phenomenological consciousness and meditative consciousness is established or reestablished and rendered whole, that the real meaning and intention of the supreme art comes to the forefront of human cognition and in the reflexive transparency of its truth. For that in essence is what the *dao* reveals itself to us. The Way is the supreme art of appropriation in truth, in reality, and in the good.

- ¶42. This notion of speculative philosophy as the pursuit and embodiment of the supreme art places Field-Being squarely in the perennial global-philosophical tradition and sets it apart from the substantialist straying from this tradition of Western metaphysics. What is primordial in the perennial global-philosophical wisdom is the fundamental intuition of Being in its undivided wholeness and the recognition of the paradoxical in the self-revelation of the ultimate reality. This is to be sharply distinguished from the rationalist-analytic outlook of the dominant substantialist strands of Western metaphysics which, in its truncated view of reality, has finally done away with the paradoxical. In the substantialist metaphysics an overinflated Ego Principle has usurped the reign of the Field Principle, the Will to Power has masqueraded as the Force. Heidegger was not without justification in calling Nietzsche the "last metaphysician."
- ¶43. Thus, in spite of the superficial resemblance between speculative philosophy in the Field-Being sense and the substantialist metaphysics that belongs to the Western rationalist-analytic tradition, there is really a world of difference in their respective quests for truth, reality, and the good. The former is committed to the speculative harmonization of the Field Principle and the Ego Principle, whereas the latter resides precisely in the lacunae of their disconnection. As a seeker of truth, the speculative philosopher in Field-Being is a shepherd of the paradoxical, whereas the substantialist metaphysician aspires towards its ultimate possession through the elimination of paradoxicality. The speculative *dao*-learner as a master aesthetician rides along with the Great Flow, self-appropriating at ease in the Great Ocean of Becoming. By contrast, the substantialist metaphysician seeks to conquer the truncated world in a self-deluded oblivion of becoming, building his artificial kingdom upon enticed and digitized effects of the endurable. For Field-Being philosophy is primarily a life-form to live by, whereas in the substantialist tradition it must be looked upon as basically an instrument of control.

## 10. The New Metaphysics and the Appropriation of Karmic Labor

- ¶44. In order to preserve the primordial meaning of the metaphysical (the paradoxical ultimate reality that lies beyond physis), we shall call speculative philosophy in the Field-Being sense the "New Metaphysics." Conceived in this vein, the new metaphysician is at heart a meta-aesthetician, a practitioner of *dao*-learning or the art of appropriation to the limits. This conception of speculative philosophy as meta-aesthetics may now be further elaborated in terms of its relationship to the three worlds of Field-Being. First, meta-aesthetics assumes the role of meta-episteme when the pursuit of *dao*-learning is viewed in the light of the truth process or for the world of significance. Here, the supreme art of appropriation manifests itself as the art of making sense. Speculative philosophy, as meta-episteme, is indeed the art of making sense pursued to the limits. But the world of significance, as we have noted, is inseparable from the world of work, and the truth process from the reality process.

When meta-aesthetics is viewed in the dimension of karmic reality as defined by the work of karmic labor, the art of appropriation turns into the art of meta-pragmatics, the general art of organized power which directs itself to the practical relation of the human life-form to its environmental or karmic heritage. The relationship between meta-episteme and meta-pragmatics then is the relationship between the activity of making sense and the activity directed to the practical use of power. This corresponds roughly to the traditional distinction between theory and practice in Western philosophy, although the distinction in the Field-Being context must be seen in the light of the opposition between substantialism and nonsubstantialism, and of the great emphasis placed on the notion of karmic heritage and karmic labor. Indeed, the characterization of the *dao*-learner as essentially a karmic laborer is distinctive of the Field-Being conception of the speculative philosopher.

- ¶45. For just as the truth process and the reality process are united in the process of the good wherein the realization of rightness and values is to be measured in terms of the creative transformation of karmic matter, so correspondingly the pursuits of meta-episteme and meta-pragmatics are to be envisioned in their aesthetic harmony in the practice of meta-ethics as the supreme art of appropriation in the world of importance. This is the ultimate and all-arounded calling of speculative philosophy, the calling of the meta-aesthetician as meta-ethicist, that is, as the artisan of rightness and values in the appropriation of karmic labor. It is indeed in the conception of the speculative philosopher as karmic laborer that truth and reality are united in the good, and that the inner connections between subjectivity, life, and existence are revealed in their transparent integrity.
- ¶46. In the Field-Being scheme, subjectivity, life, and existence are all defined in relation to the notion of karmic labor. First, karmic labor is the labor of all transfinite subjects who, as we have noted, owe their emergent being to the union of vibrant energy and karmic matter. The subjectivity of a transfinite subject is thus the subjectivity of a karmic laborer, which consists in the way it executes and comports itself in the energetic and creative process of karmic transformation. This process is the process of self-becoming wherein transfinite subjects consummate themselves in *virtue of* their respective cocoonization of power concrescence. Cocoonization is the process whereby an articulate activity transcends itself in its self-becoming in *virtue of* its own self-confinement and self-limitation. The butterfly that emerges from the cocoon is the same articulate activity that builds the cocoon. In building the cocoon and confining itself to it, the underlying action has brought about its own transcendence as an emergent self (the butterfly) in *virtue of* its own self-limitation. This inner connection between self-limitation and self-transcendence metaphorically expressed in the concept of cocoonization is, we submit, what life is all about. Hence, generally speaking, a life-form is a pattern of cocoonization, a conception which cuts across the ordinary, scientific conception of life in terms of the distinction between organic and inorganic matter. In the Field-Being conception, life-form belongs to all transfinite subjects and exists at all levels of matter-energy, organic or otherwise.

- ¶47. The meaning of existence in Field-Being may now be more sharply and properly determined. Existence, as we have indicated earlier, expresses the internal relation between Q and q, that is, between the Let-Be, the ultimate activity, and what is let to be, the emanata. Since the *emanata* consist primarily of field individuals (transfinite subjects) and field orders (systems of strains), whose transaction and trans-differentiation are what constitute the Field as the universal matrix in flux, to exist is to participate in the dynamic process of field action, and to play a role in the self-becoming and karmic labor of transfinite subjects. It is in and through their respective karmic labor that transfinite subjects become what they are. The reality of karmic labor is the reality of their existence as *emanata* in the plenum of Field-Being. All *emanata* are field topologically conditioned in the dynamic network of the universal matrix, in the Great Web of trans-differentiation that bears the diremptive topology of field action. All karmic labor occurs in the Great Web and in a topological arena of the cocoonization of power concrescence. And the mode of transfinite immersion in the web affair on the part of karmic laborers is a matter of field-topological management, a function of transcendental freedom and karmic necessity. This, in the final analysis, is what karmic labor and transfinite subjectivity are all about. The story of self-becoming is the story of web immersion.

## 11. The Field-Topological Conception of *Dasein*: A Critique of Heidegger

- ¶48. In the Field-Being vision, all transfinite subjects in the transcendental phase of their existence emanate freely and spontaneously as pulsations of pure energy from the Radical Nothing. Their emergent existence in the world begins at the moment of fate marked by the transcendental ingression of pure energy in the universal matrix in flux under the conditions of the karmic warp. This is the primordial beginning of karmic labor at which point the fatefully fielded transfinite subject is given an address in the Great Web, the field address of its own topological region. This owning of a field address and the occupation of a topological region is what determines the concrete meaning of its transfinite existence. The term transfinite implies the traversal of finitude from the transcendental to the primordial, and from the primordial to the phenomenal phase of articulate action. It is a movement or process of transition which leads from the givenness of transcendental endowment to the givenness of environmental-karmic heritage. To adopt a term from Heidegger, we may call this concrete existence of a transfinite subject its "*Dasein*." The Da in the *Dasein* of a transfinite subject is the place or locus of its Field-Being (Sein), namely, its field address or topological region. The life of *Dasein* or transfinite existence thus has the meaning of field-topological occupation. My *Dasein* is my field-topological occupation, your *Dasein* is your field-topological occupation, and the *Dasein* of a kangaroo is the kangaroo's field-topological occupation. All transfinite subjects are unique by *virtue of* the uniqueness of their respective field-topological occupations, each of which is not merely distinct in terms of the distinctness of its life-form or the character of its cocoonization, but also distinct in terms of the uniqueness of

perspectivity from its own topological standpoint. And yet the uniqueness of transfinite subjects is not incompatible with their universal affinity. There is a commonality of field-topological occupations shared by all transfinite subjects: namely, they are all karmic laborers essentially engaged in the energetic and creative transformation of karmic matter.

- ¶49. Needless to say, this conception of *Dasein* as field-topological occupation is quite different from the meaning of *Dasein* in Heidegger's philosophy. For Heidegger, *Dasein* belongs exclusively to human beings: only human beings are Daseins. By contrast, there are in Field-Being as many Daseins as there are transfinite subjects. Moreover, insofar as all transfinite subjects are essentially karmic laborers, the human *Dasein* is no more ontologically privileged, as it is for Heidegger, than the kangaroo or other nonhuman Daseins. In fact, since every field-topological occupation is internally connected to each and every other field-topological occupation, as required by the Field Principle, one cannot give ontological privilege to one without conferring it to all the others. Every field-topological occupation is ontologically privileged in *virtue of* the uniqueness of its own perspectivity. For every *Dasein*, human or nonhuman, reflects in its own way the field-topological unity of Being from its own unique standpoint.
- ¶50. Thus, the opposition of *Dasein* and non-Dasein entities in the Heideggerian ontology, with the former given an exclusively privileged ontological status, is not acceptable to Field-Being. Relying solely on the efficacy of phenomenological consciousness, Heidegger fails to see or refuses to acknowledge that what he calls "entities" are not really entities, but are in themselves enduring centers of activity: they are Daseins in their own right. Their enticization and substantialization in phenomenological consciousness is the consequence of our own profiling delusion, not the way they are in themselves. The hammer that we perceive and use as a seemingly inert object, a mere thing, is not the hammer in reality, but the hammer of our own construction, our own making. The truth is, the hammer that I work with is a pragmatic correlate of field action; it is the effect of a power concrescence involving both the hammer and myself as contributing centers of activity. The hammer enticized as a separate thing is just an abstraction from the enormous complexity of power concrescence—a shorthand in the pragmatic language of phenomenological consciousness.
- ¶51. Field-Being, then, does not speak of Daseins and entities, but of human *Daseins* and nonhuman *Daseins*. When we do speak of entities, they are to be thought of as abstractions, shorthand's, or profiling delusions. Now the Heideggerians may counter at this point, that even if there are primarily only *Daseins* in the Field-Being universe, still the fact remains that it is the human *Daseins* who ask the question pertaining to the meaning of Being, and not the kangaroos. How can there be any ontological understanding of Being apart from the existence of human *Daseins*?

- ¶52. Whether or not there are nonhuman *Daseins* whose interrogation of Being resembles that of human *Daseins*, we do want to emphatically submit that the truth process is not confined to human beings, as it is for Heidegger. The unhiddenness of beings in their Being which for us is an aspect of the *dao* is given in each and every form of transfinite experience and cognition. Every center of activity perceives, interprets, and appropriates itself to the *dao* in its own way and within the experiential givenness of its own perspective. In Field-Being philosophy, conception-and, therefore, understanding and knowledge-means organized information; a concept is a configuration of organized information. Our position here is that conception or understanding in this amplified sense is a capability inherent in all life-forms, an integral component in the aesthetic power and complexity of activity. Hence, we may say that every *Dasein*, human or nonhuman, has its own conception and understanding of Being.
- ¶53. But since all experience is the experience of a perspective, all conception and understanding is limited by the experiential givenness of its own perspectivity. It is simply a truism to say that the Being-understanding of a human *Dasein* is distinct from the Being-understanding of a nonhuman *Dasein*. And yet-this is fundamental to the Radical Perspectivism of Field-Being-all perspectives are perspectives of a commonality, that is, of the *One Being* that encompasses all and gives rise to all. This means that all beings are essentially interdependent and mutually constituted: they are ontological complements to each other. Just as every wave or ripple in an ocean is inseparable from every other wave or ripple or oceanic movement, but is just one aspect of the same underlying oceanic field action, so every human action or experience is but one side or moment of the universal matrix in the Great Ocean of Becoming. Thus the Being of nonhuman *Daseins* does not depend one-sidedly on the Being-understanding of human *Daseins*, as Heidegger's philosophy actually implies. On the contrary, since all *Daseins* are ontological complements and mutually constituted in their Being, it is just as accurate to say that the Being of the human *Dasein* depends on the Being-understanding of the nonhuman *Daseins* as to say the reverse. This is simply a restatement of the Field Principle as applied to the truth process.

## 12. *dao*-Learning and the Unity of Field Apperception

- ¶54. The perception and understanding of the ontological interdependence of all *Daseins* is an aspect of what we call the "Unity of Field Apperception." Field apperception is the unique perspectival apperception of field-topological reality belonging in various degrees of reflexivity to the experiential power of every transfinite subject. As such, the unity of field apperception is not, as formulated in Kant's transcendental analytic, a transcendental principle governing a self-enclosed and autonomous domain of human cognition, but is the unity of transfinite intersubjectivity which for Field-Being is the fountain spring of meta-episteme, the ultimate revelation of the universal consciousness. Just as the reality process arises in the Field-Being continuum from the Great Warp, the womb of karmic matter and warped or karmicized possibilities in the universal matrix, so the plenum as the truth process reveals itself in the Great Mind or universal consciousness, that is, the universal matrix in its self-reflexive transparency. And just as the reality of a transfinite subject is an enfolded contour of the Great Warp in relation to its field-topological region, so the transfinite consciousness is a field-topological moment of the Great Mind or universal consciousness. The conception of mind as self-enclosed substance in the substantialist metaphysics is here completely abandoned.
- ¶55. Now once again we must not separate the truth process and the reality process from the process of the good. Indeed, it is in the process of the good that the truth and reality of Field-Being are united. For all articulate action is in essence appropriation, a matter of rightness and values. All beings in the Field-Being universe are field-topologically appropriated in the Great Web, in the universal matrix conceived as the all-encompassing horizon of transdifferentiation. In the Great Web, all rightness and values are feats of accomplishment arising from the internal demands of transfinite existence. These feats of accomplishment which constitute concretely the world of importance are appropriated transdifferentially in accordance with the internal connectivity of their respective topological regions. The good is the world of importance in its undivided wholeness, the appropriated articulate totality of all rightness and values. The *dao* is the good transdifferentially understood.
- ¶56. The activity that we call "philosophy," the pursuit of *dao*-learning carried to the limits, may now be given a summary description. As meta-episteme, philosophy is a pursuit of significance, an activity of sense-making in the light of truth. As meta-pragmatics, it is a pursuit of efficacy in the reality process, an activity of making work by *virtue of* the aesthetic complexity of power. Finally, as meta-ethic, the philosophical activity is a pursuit of importance, an activity of making right in the undivided wholeness of the good. But making sense, making work, and making right are but different aspects of the same underlying activity, of *dao*-learning as meta-aesthetic, or the inner activity of appropriation that is the art of all arts.

- ¶57. This inner activity of appropriation is, moreover, the appropriation of karmic labor. In the appropriation of karmic labor, the philosopher as *dao*-learner is, like all other transfinite existents, perpetually engaged in field-topological management in which transcendental freedom is excised under the weight of karmic necessity. It is here, in the field-topological harmony of transcendental freedom and karmic necessity, that the acme of transfinite subjectivity is to be sought in the unity of field apperception. It is here, too, at the limits of appropriation and apperception that the real meaning of the philosophical pursuit of *dao*-learning is to be understood.
- ¶58. We have earlier defined the unity of field apperception in terms of the ontological interdependence of *Daseins*, or as the unity of transfinite intersubjectivity. But this is only a partial meaning of what we intend by the phrase. For by unity of field apperception we mean, more inclusively, the unity of the Great Mind or universal consciousness which is field action in its self-reflexive transparency. It is the Great Mind in us that apperceives, although its unity of field apperception is always deflected by the regional or local conditions of aesthetic complexity underlying the small minds of transfinite subjects, each of which is a field-topological moment of the universal consciousness. It is in the field-topological unity of field apperception that the three worlds of Field-Being intersect each other in the transfinite process of becoming. What is thus apperceived is a unity of truth, reality, and the good.

### 13. The Field Principle (III): Ontological Equivalence-The Thing-in-Itself as Instance of Eternity

- ¶59. The question remains: What exactly reveals itself in the field-topological unity of field apperception as the acme of transfinite subjectivity? Or, what is the meaning of *dao* at the limits of appropriation at which philosophical wisdom is said to manifest itself?
- ¶60. The answer is this: What reveals itself in the field-topological unity of field apperception and at the limits of appropriation is the thing-in-itself, or the unity of Being as an instance of eternity. This is the true meaning of *dao* that is the goal of the philosophical pursuit of *dao*-learning. To carry the pursuit of *dao*-learning to the limits is to seek to see things ultimately in the true light of *dao* and to live authentically in the unity of field apperception. But what is the thing-in-itself? And what do we mean by an instance of eternity?

- ¶61. In the Field-Being sense, the thing-in-itself is not a thing, not a substantial entity. It is neither a Lockean "I-know-not-what" nor a Kantian limit of transcendental subjectivity. The thing-in-itself in Field-Being is simply the plenum itself as borne by the karmic labor of a transfinite subject in the moment of absoluteness, that is, the moment at which it consummates itself field-topologically in its self-becoming in *virtue of* its creative resolution of diremptive tensions. It is at the moment of absoluteness that the life of the karmic laborer turns into an instance of eternity through its unique procurement of transfinite integrity. It is also the point at which the awesome field interface that both separate and unite the Let-Be and what is let to be, the ultimate activity and the *emanata* in the process of diremption, has bequeathed to the world a niche of ownness. The third formulation of the Field Principle may now be presented as follows:

Field Equation III:  $(Qq)_i = (Qq)_j$  (Ontological Equivalence)

In this notational schema what is equated are two instances of eternity, designated respectively by  $(Qq)_i$  and  $(Qq)_j$ , each being a perspective of the unity of Being from the unique standpoint of their own topological region in the Field, represented, respectively, by the subscripts  $i$  and  $j$ , their field-topological index. What is implied in Field Equation III then is the ontological equivalence of any two perspectives of the plenum. Each perspective is a thing-in-itself or instance of eternity, as we have called it. Note that the awesome interface, represented by the dot in  $Q.q$  in Field Equations I and II, has disappeared. The bracket, signifying the niche of ownness that the awesome interface has given rise to replaces it in Field Equation III. What is enclosed in the bracket,  $Qq$ , is none other than activity in its paradoxicality, or, as we may put it, as a non-distinction-in-distinction:  $Q$  is and is not  $q$ , or  $q$  is and is not  $Q$ . This withdrawal of the awesome interface at the moment of absoluteness into a niche of ownness—a process we call "redemption"—is what marks the acme of transfinite subjectivity. This transfinite traversal of the way from diremption to redemption is in the *Daodejing* called "returning to the *dao*." In returning to the *dao* as an instance of eternity, the transfinite subject has reaped the reward of its karmic labor in procuring for itself a niche of ownness in the plenum. In the niche of ownness, pure unrealized transcendental freedom has become realized transfinite freedom. Here is the meaning of nirvana in the Field-Being sense, not as a state of freedom without karma (karmic labor and karmic necessity), whether or not that is at all possible, but as a state of freedom by *virtue of* karma. In this state of positive nirvana, as we would like to qualify it, the transcendental freedom of pure action has consummated itself in the transfinite freedom of articulate action. Hence, in the positive sense, nirvana is samsara, and samsara is nirvana, as the *Heart Sutra* puts it. For the attainment of nirvana is not outside the World, outside of the Samsaric Cycle, but in it.

## 14. Conclusion

¶62. What we have done in this essay is an attempt to lay bare in broad relief the Field-Being conceptual scheme and pinpoint the place of philosophy in it. Our exposition on this conceptuality is built on the fundamental intuition that all is activity and that the plenum of Being is diremptively an aesthetic and field-topological affair. This ontological theory centers round the explication of the Field Principle in terms of the three notions of ontological identity, ontological difference, and ontological equivalence as represented respectively by the three formulations of the Field Equation. This conceptual structure is further elaborated in terms of the opposition of the Ego Principle (the principle of individuation in Field-Being) to the Field Principle, and the Will to Power to the Force. This opposition, as we have seen, is the ontological basis for the opposition between substantialism and nonsubstantialism in thought. The central and unifying thread which cuts across this conceptual scheme is the theory of the becoming and self-appropriation of transfinite subjects or karmic laborers understood both as life-forms and as *Daseins* and in terms of, respectively, their cocoonization and field-topological occupation. It is in this elaborate conceptual framework that we attempt to understand the role and meaning of philosophy and its place in the Field-Being universe. The notion of philosophy, or more exactly, speculative philosophy, as the pursuit of *dao*-learning carried to the limits is here strategically entertained in relation to the inmost nature of activity and being, that is, as the supreme art and inner activity of appropriation. Our characterization of philosophy as the product of speculative consciousness wherein the connection between phenomenological and meditative consciousness is established or reestablished and rendered whole is crucial to the epistemic and methodological orientation of the Field-Being approach. For in contrast to the substantialist and rationalist-analytic tradition which relies primarily on the enticized experiences and presentations of phenomenological consciousness at the expense of meditative consciousness, the Field-Being approach is intended to correct this one-sidedness and embrace the middle way, the middle way of transdifferentiation between phenomenological consciousness and meditative consciousness, and between substantialism and nonsubstantialism. Indeed, the synthesis of phenomenological and meditative consciousness in speculative consciousness is, from the Field-Being standpoint, precisely what distinguishes the unity of field apperception in the philosophical *dao*-learner. It is important to note that Field-Being does not declare war on substantialism and the rationalist-analytic tradition. On the contrary, it recognizes its value and importance and seeks to appropriate it critically both in the interest of truth and for the optimal creativity of value. The middle way, properly understood, is the way of the good.

- ¶63. Now the way of the good is only realizable in the world, in and through the Samsaric Cycle underlying the becoming and self-appropriation of transfinite subjects. In the projected sequels to this essay we shall look more closely into the reality of the Samsaric Cycle and the basic elements that compose the perspectivity of the human *Dasein*. Whether in care or in wonder, in enjoyment or in hope, the human *Dasein* as a karmic laborer and *dao*-learner must traverse the trinity of *dao* from diremption to redemption in its becoming and self-appropriation. The trinity of *dao* are the three realms of Field-Being, called, respectively, the "Act in its firstness," the "Act in its secondness," and the "Act in its thirdness," which constitute the path of diremptive movement for all transfinite subjects and *Daseins*. From the transcendental arising to the moment of fate (firstness), from the moment of fate to the moment of absoluteness (secondness), and from the moment of absoluteness to the enfolded immortality (thirdness)-these phases of activity which define the trinity of *dao* are what make up the wheel of the Samsaric Cycle. In traversing the trinity of *dao*, the philosophical *dao*-learner will come to understand how the distribution and redistribution of power or matter-energy is tied to the systems of meaning determined by the interplay of the Ego Principle and the Field Principle, as well as the roles of the right-sided and left-sided appetitions in the formation of the motivational structure of his or her *Dasein* undertakings. But above all the philosophical *dao*-learner as a traverser of the trinity of *dao* will inevitably come to face the Holiest of the Holy, which, symbolized in Field-Being as the rounded square of taiji, is the region of reality and thought wherein rationality and paradoxicality are equally appropriated and transcended. This is the region of thought reserved for meta-theology, the discipline of *dao*-learning that directs itself to the Field-Being of the Holy. In Field-Being thought, a distinction is made between the Holy of the Ego Principle and the Holy of the Field Principle. The confusion of these two senses of the Holy in the popular religious consciousness and the failure to recognize it in much of traditional religious thought is a major concern for the meta-theologian.
- ¶64. Meta-theology then is meta-aesthetics in search of the Holy, understood in the Field-Being sense. How meta-theology is related to the meta-epistemic quest for significance, the meta-ethical concern for rightness, and the meta-pragmatic predisposition to efficacy is a topic which lies beyond the scope of the present essay. We are also not in a position here to attack one of the most intriguing and challenging topics in the Field-Being conceptuality, namely, the conception of Space-Time as the field-topological horizon and interface of karmic labor. These and numerous other issues amidst the enormous ontological and methodological implications of the Field-Being scheme must be left for other occasions. Committed to his or her vision and yet ever flexible and responsible in his or her intellectual and spiritual experimentation, the Field-Being thinker delights in the adventures of thought.

## END NOTES

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IIFB - Fairfield University - Fairfield, CT - 06430  
Tel: (203) 254-4000 Ext. 2857, 2851 Fax: (203) 254-4074  
[lktong@iifb.org](mailto:lktong@iifb.org) -- [cnaser@iifb.org](mailto:cnaser@iifb.org) -- <mailto:cnaser@iifb.org>

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