

Blitzkunst: Towards a Field-Being Conception of Creativity

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Lightning steers all things.

Heraclitus, *Diels fragment 64*

Wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf . . .

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*

When you know everything, you are like a dark sky. Sometimes a flashing will come through the dark sky.

Suzuki Shunryū, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*

Georges Bataille, in a curious and remarkable essay at the end of the third volume of *La parte maudite*¹ entitled “Nietzsche and Jesus”, claimed that sovereignty could be understood in the kōan-like claim that I am a deserted beach. What a strange thought! Writing on Nietzsche, but echoing both Heidegger and Mahāyāna Buddhism, Bataille argues that “On the beach I spoke of, nothing separates me from the immensity except for the certainty of being at issue: I have recognized my equality with the emptiness and boundlessness, for I know that at bottom I am this subjective and countless existence, but memory ties me to objects, to contents, in the midst of which I situate myself . . . I am an object *in question*, an object whose basic content is *subjectivity*, which is a question, and which its differentiated contents bring into play. As a subject I am NOTHING within the immensity that is NOTHING – as an object, in the feeling of being at issue that sets me against the self-sameness of the immensity, I rediscover an equivalence.”² For Bataille, the beach and I, as things, do not have much in common. As absolute subjects, as subjects whose being is at issue and fundamentally what Heidegger once called *fragwürdig* [question-worthy], we have nothingness itself in common. Our community is our shared nothingness.

In this essay I will pursue this thought by considering the relationship in creativity between the nothingness of the creator and its ironic manifestation in the creative emergence of objects. Just as lightning is the sudden and unplanned emergence of light from an inscrutable darkness. The creative flash is the serendipitous emergence in the enlightened lightning body, in its *Blitzkunst*, to coin a phrase. By bringing Nietzsche, Nishida, and certain more philosophical elements of Mahāyāna Buddhism into dialogue with each other. I will clarify this creative activity. In so doing, I hope to begin articulating some stepping stones towards a field being conception of creativity and aesthetics. *Blitzkunst*, lightning art, is the movement of an absolutely indeterminate subject in its creative life. After all, in a manner of speaking, nothing or no one is creative.

I. Ecce Nietzsche

In Nietzsche's autobiography of sorts, *Ecce Homo* (1888),³ written in the waning moments of Nietzsche's capacity to keep sane company, he contemplates, among other things, why he writes such good books. As he surveys these books, taking various accounts of their goodness, he comes to his magnum opus, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, written, he claims, under the tragic pathos, as he was “possessed to the highest degree by the *affirmative pathos par excellence*.”⁴ Yet, while the text was written in a state of great health, under a maximum of affirmation, Nietzsche then goes on to say that he did not invent or create *Zarathustra*, but rather, while walking along the coast of the bay of Rapallo, that Zarathustra “stole up on me/overcame me/assaulted me (*er überfiel mich*).”⁵ In fact, Nietzsche explicitly denies responsibility for *Zarathustra*, disowning authorship for the text. “The text, I may state expressly because a misunderstanding exists about it, is not by me: it is the astonishing inspiration of a young Russian lady with whom I was then friendly, Fräulein Lou von Salomé.”⁶ Yet Lou Salomé did not actually write a single word of the text. As is well known, Nietzsche had befriended her at this time and even asked her to marry him, only to be rejected. Indeed, Nietzsche admires this work, this tragic birth, the result of an “eighteen month pregnancy,” making

him a Buddhist female elephant [*ein Elefanten-Weibchen*],⁷ precisely because of its refusal to read pain as an argument against such pregnancy. “Pain does not count as an objection to life: ‘Have you no more happiness to give me, well then!, *still do you have your pain . . .*’”⁸ No more so was Zarathustra simply a disappointed love letter to Lou Salomé that somehow had the courage to grin and bear its failure. It was an incomparable birth, born of itself. Nietzsche did not inaugurate or write this text. He is not responsible for his magnum opus. He merely brought it to term.

Yet what kind of creative artist is this Lou Salomé, who impregnates Friedrich Nietzsche, making him Lou Salomé the pregnant elephant and, finally, bringing to term the tragic pathos and maximization of life that is Zarathustra? How can a woman, no less one who probably brought Nietzsche some measure of disappointment, make a man pregnant, let alone write a book in *abstentio*, as if by *actio in distans*? By the latter term Nietzsche names the lack of a *tertium quid* to unite cause and effect, actor and acted upon. *Actio in distans* is the “secret and uncanny [*heimlich-unheimlichen*] midnights of the soul in which cause and effect appear to be unhinged and any moment something can come into being ‘out of nothing.’” Like Wagner, one can give “speech to mute animals” and “as the Orpheus of all secret misery” one can articulate in the form of art what before had seemed inexpressible.⁹ Who then is Lou Salomé who acts without agency? How does she “overcome” Nietzsche in the figure of the birth of Zarathustra? *Überfallen*, after all, suggests something suddenly coming up, like sleep, or exhaustion, or sickness, or a feeling. It is to be overtaken by something, even to be assaulted or invaded by something, or, in the case of *actio in distans*, it is to be overcome by nothing. It announces itself precisely in an activity that overwhelms the subject’s purported agency. Of the many names that Nietzsche gave this activity, he here calls it by its Latinate appellation, “inspiration,” to be overcome by the spirit. Yet inspiration is not the loss of one’s agency to a foreign agency. It was not Lou Salomé the agent-author who wrote Zarathustra. It was rather the becoming elephant, the impregnation by an activity that remains in *abstentio*, acting without intermediary, in *distans*.

Nietzsche describes the elephantine pregnancy that he here names “inspiration” in some detail a couple of pages later. Since this argument is so critical to my analysis of mind-body creativity in both Nietzsche and certain strands of Mahāyāna Buddhism, I quote Nietzsche’s remarkable description at length:

Has anyone at the end of the nineteenth century a distinct conception of what poets of strong ages called inspiration? If not, I will describe it. – If one had the slightest residue of superstition left in one, one would hardly be able to set aside the idea that one is merely incarnation, merely mouthpiece, merely medium of overwhelming forces [*Medium übermächtiger Gewalten*]. The concept of revelation, in the sense that something suddenly, with unspeakable certainty and subtlety, becomes visible, audible, something that shakes and overturns one to the depths, simply describes the fact. One hears, one does not seek; one takes, one does not ask who gives; a thought flashes up like lightning [*wie ein Blitz leuchtet ein Gedanke auf*], with necessity, unflinching formed – I never had any choice. An ecstasy whose monstrous tension sometimes discharges itself in a flood of tears, while one’s steps now involuntarily rush along, now involuntarily lag; an incomplete being outside of oneself [*ein unvollkommenes Außer-sich-sein*] with the distinct consciousness of a multitude of subtle shudders and trickles down to one’s toes; a depth of happiness in which the most painful and gloomy things act, not as an antithesis, but as conditioned, demanded, as a necessary color within such a superfluity of light . . . Everything is in the highest degree involuntary but takes place as in a tempest of a feeling of freedom, of absoluteness, of power, of divinity.....¹⁰

The imagination in act, the inspired body, is ecstatic, standing outside of itself, no longer in possession of itself (as if it ever was), seeing, thinking, hearing as lighting, as light emerging without why from its dark precursor. There is nothing arbitrary about this creation. It emerges freely, yet it could not have been otherwise. “I never had any choice.” This is not like a scene from a horror movie in which one is possessed by an alien and demonic subject that subjugates one’s own agency. Rather, the activity of the imagination demonstrates that there never was an agent. In fact, the absence of an agent in the subject position is one of Nietzsche’s continuing concerns throughout his writings. In *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), for example, Nietzsche argues that belief in human agency is one of the four great errors, namely, that of a false

causality.

The ‘inner world’ is full of phantoms and false lights: the will is one of them. The will no longer moves anything, consequently no longer explains anything — it merely accompanies events, it can also be absent. The so-called ‘motive’: another error. Merely a surface phenomenon of consciousness, an accompaniment to an act, which conceals rather than exposes the *antecedentia* of the act. And as for the ego! It has become a fable, a fiction, a play on words: it has totally ceased to think, to feel and to will! .

...¹¹

The imagination is the non-dual reason of the body, its activity without agency: “your body and its great Reason: that does not say ‘I’ but does ‘I’” [*dein Leib und seine große Vernunft: die sagt nicht Ich, aber tut Ich*] (“On the Despisers of the Body”). Creation is the lightning flash of the non-dual body, coming from nowhere, *actio in distans* (otherwise than subject and object, otherwise than the creator creating the created). Creation does not presuppose an agent who inaugurates and completes a creative act that results in a work of art. Such a presupposition is an example of one of the four great errors. Furthermore, in attempting to think beyond this subject-object duality, creation by implication furthermore refuses the mind-body dualism in which the agency of mind (the artistic imaginary) guides the now docile body through the creative process. Creation is the non-dual movement of the holistic body (the mind and body are inseparable and never fully distinct from one another) as, to use Nishida’s phrase, “activity without agency.” Creation is not the unfolding of a matrix already at work. *Stictu sensu*, it is not a deed (i.e., something done by a doer). Nietzsche linked creativity with the lightning flash of the body that produces without subjectivity. No thing or no one is at work. Creativity, rather, was the *actio in distans*, the lack of an intermediary between cause (traditionally the artist or the thinker) and effect (the work produced).¹² Nietzsche called such production the will to power, the eternal return of the same, tragic pathos, the Dionysian (the absent ground beyond all form), and so on.¹³

At this point I would like to turn to a particular moment in certain strands of Mahāyāna Buddhism. I would like to do so by first acknowledging that such a moniker collects a wide and divergent body of literature and thinkers and that I do not claim to speak to the essence of Buddhism. The very term Buddhism is a Western invention and many Buddhists of all persuasions resist “isms” in principle. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge that Nietzsche was notoriously unsympathetic to Buddhism. Nietzsche regarded it as a form of passive nihilism in which the despair of the vanity of all human striving prompts the weak to escape into some narcotizing nothing, into some black night in which everything is nothing. All specificity disappears, and along with it, the specificity of suffering because of one’s own inherent absurdity. The passive nihilism of Buddhism was reminiscent of Hegel’s concern in the *Phenomenology* that the Absolute not vitiate all specificity, leaving thinking in a night when all cows were black. Rather, I agree with several fine studies of Nietzsche that claim that what Nietzsche knew of Buddhism was a very low grade caricature of Buddhism and that Mahāyāna Buddhism ironically concurs with Nietzsche’s insistence on an active nihilism and a pessimism of strength and a tragic joy (the ecstasy of field being, if you will). The problem of the death of God and the loss of an inherent and redemptive meaning to human suffering is not solved by a dogmatic return to such meaning nor is it solved by a collapse into despair in which all human strivings, devoid of inherent meaning, are simply vain, making no difference whatsoever [what Nietzsche called *das Umsonst*]. Satori, as well as the will to power, emerge after what Nishitani Keiji (in *Religion and Nothingness*) dramatically locates in Mahāyāna Buddhism as the *Great Doubt*, or, more pointedly, as the *Great Death*. As Nishitani claims in his early study of nihilism (*Nihirizumu/The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*).¹⁴ “Even though there may be in Nietzsche a radical misunderstanding of the spirit of Buddhism, the fact that he considered it in relation to nihilism shows how well attuned he was to the real issue.”¹⁵ And: “Ironically, it was not in his nihilistic view of Buddhism but in such ideas as *amor fati* and the Dionysian as the overcoming of nihilism that Nietzsche came closest to Buddhism, especially to Mahāyāna.”¹⁶ Both the Mahāyāna tradition and Nietzsche insist that nihilism is only overcome immanently, that the overcoming of nihilism is nihilism overcoming itself from within itself, moving from passive nihilism in which nothing matters, into active nihilism, in which the power of nothingness activates itself. And, I would add, the power of active nihilism is acutely activated in creativity.

II. Ecce Buddha

I will now return to my discussion of the imagination as the lightening flash of the body, without subjectivity, as it acts without agency. I will discuss briefly three thinkers, Zuangzi [Chuang Tzu], Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945), and the Sōtō Zen Master Suzuki Shunryū (1905-1971), all of whom speak to creativity as non-dual activity.

I turn first to the great Daoist Zuangzi. Although he antedates the arrival of Buddhism into China by several centuries, Zuangzi and Daoism in general shaped the reception of Buddhism, especially that of Ch’an Buddhism, which would be critical for any discussion of creativity and Mahāyāna Buddhism in this part of the world. But it is not my intent to make an historical point here. Rather, I turn to Zuangzi’s famous analysis of the Cook Ding as a rich example of the creativity of the lightning body.

Cook Ding was butchering an ox for Lord Wen-hui with such precision and rhythm and prowess that the Lord had to praise Ding’s marvelous skill. Ding sets down his knife and explains that it is not a question of skill, as if there were some technique to be mastered and then executed upon demand. “What I care about is Dao, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now – now I go at it by spirit and don’t look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants.”¹⁷ It is not that the Dao simply gives Cook Ding a variety of epistemic perspectives by which to consider the best way to butcher the ox. When Cook Ding was just a hack, all he could see was the ox. The ox was before him. Of course, the ox could not be in front of him if he was not already first himself and, as such, was somebody who could be before something else. Skill always belongs to a more proficient hack because it is a technique that belongs to someone, to a subject standing before an object. Cook Ding does not hack but rather cuts precisely because the ox is not before him and because there is no objective ox distinct from the butcher-agent. Rather the cutting is the activity of spirit, which transcends the agency of the cutter. Cutting is an activity of *ch’i* [Japanese *ki*] a part of a continuous movement between the abyssal formlessness of Dao and the emerging into form of the activity of cutting. It is a continuous movement that combines opposites into a whole, namely, the formlessness of Dao and the extraordinary form of cutting. Indeed, Lord Wen-hui learns from Cook Ding’s analysis not just the secret of cutting, but also the Dao of life. In this sense, Cook Ding is paradoxically creative in his discovery of the sinews. The creativity of discovery emerges when I become a beach or an ox.

Sun Quianli’s T’ang Dynasty classic, *Shu pu*,¹⁸ locates the Dao of calligraphy in the transcendence through mastery of the rules of calligraphy. “When one reaches complete mastery and the norms are clearly understood, the work will flow freely and easily; mental conception will come first and the brush will follow, casually and without effort; the ink will flow freely and the spirit will soar . . . Mastery is like Cook Ding’s eyes, which need not see the whole ox.”¹⁹

It follows that in the Dao, the life (the Dao) of things is a life beyond the duality of life and death. The latter suggests that things come into being and have their being and life until they lose it at death. Only when things are emptied of essence — and, as Nāgārjuna insisted, even emptiness must be emptied of itself — do they return to their original life. They return to their original life within - yet simultaneously beyond — the specious duality of life and death. It is the life of life,²⁰ so to speak, the life that surpasses the duality of life and death, but which expresses itself as the animation and emptiness of all beings.

I turn now to a consideration of the term *expressivity*, which I would use in the stepping-stones towards a construction of a Field Being aesthetics. I would by the same token eschew the term representation. The latter moves to recreate within the work an object that is outside the work. Expressivity is activity without agency as *Mushin* [Zen empty mind] expresses and paints and inscribes itself from within itself. In a discussion with the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (d. 1976) on *The Essence of the Arts* (May 18, 1958), Nishida’s student Hisamatsu argued that “In the West, the source somehow exists as form, it is

eidetic. In Zen, the root source is formless, nonbeing. But this ‘non’ is no mere negation. This nothingness is free of all form; formless, it can move and work freely and independently. This is the unhindered and independent movement out of which the work of art is produced.”²¹ Heidegger found himself sympathetic with Hisamatsu, who further went on to claim that abstract painting is still bound to the duality of form and non-form. It is still bound to form in that it looks for “something beyond” form. Heidegger confessed that “our ideas of art fall short of the point which the Japanese have already reached,” that is, they fall short of the transcendence of the duality of formal and abstract in Zen art.

It is therefore not a question of either preserving or destroying form. In fact, it is not a question of consciously doing anything at all. Rather it is a question of the Formless Self, the original face, *coming into expression as the work of art*. It is, to borrow Hisamatsu’s phrase, “the Fundamental Subject that is *Actively Nothing*.”²²

Mushin, itself formless activity, expresses itself as form in Zen art and does so in such a way that the form captures its formless root within the form. It is an expression of formless activity. It is not a question of striving either to perfect form or to denigrate and annihilate form or to imagine that one can somehow represent the formless. Zen art expresses the vibrant non-representability of *Mushin*. Zen calligraphy then is an *expression* of *Mushin* and, as such, has some things in common with elements of what came to be called Expressionism in the Twentieth Century. It is worth noting that some of the hard won insights in Modern Art are already ancient insights in the Zen tradition. When one thinks of the vital strokes of a Franz Kline or a Robert Motherwell, one can already begin to detect some similarities. *Mushin* is the fundamental subject of expression, although it is not a proper subject in the Western sense. It is a formless, non-substantial activity in the subject position that expresses itself — without becoming the same as — the vitality of artistic objects.

When Hisamatsu met with Paul and Hannah Tillich, the subject turned towards Hisamatsu’s defense of the term expressionism. Finding themselves sympathetic with Hisamatsu, the Tillichs brought up the example of Paul Klee as someone “expressive” in the Zen sense. Although Hisamatsu found himself sympathetic to the comparison, he was troubled by the agitated quality of Klee’s abyss. “In Zen, darkness is an illuminating darkness. But the darkness in this painting is frightening. Zen darkness is calming.”²³ Hisamatsu likened Klee’s work to the fierce demons and tantric imagery of Shingon Buddhism. While that may be unfair to Klee — and even unfair to Shingon Buddhism — it is clear that Paul Klee’s oeuvre is an important clue to an appreciation within a Western idiom of some aspects of the aesthetics inherent in Zen art. Paul Klee claimed that the artist does not “attach such coercive significance to these natural forms of appearance [*Erscheinungsformen*] as do the many critics who practice realism. The artist feels that these realities are not so restricted, for the artist does not see the *telos* of form [*Form-Enden*] as the essence of the natural process of creation. For the artist emphasizes the forming powers [*formende Kräfte*] rather than the *telos* of form.”²⁴ The artist does not depict or represent nature. The artist expresses the life of nature’s dark root. The artist “penetrates to some proximity to the secret ground where the primordial law of development feeds.”²⁵

III. Nishida

I now turn towards a preliminary consideration of two of Nishida’s major works, namely, *An Inquiry into the Good* (*Zen no kenkyu*, 1911)²⁶ and *Art and Morality* (*Geijutsu to dotoku*, 1923).²⁷ Nishida was the founder of the so-called Kyoto School, a syncretic cross-fertilization between the Zen tradition and contemporary European, mostly German, philosophy. What should already be striking about these very titles is the way in which they immediately link art and creativity to the ethical. Nishida is certainly not proposing a set of moral guidelines to restrict in advance the production of appropriate art. Rather, art itself is directly linked to the imagination and the latter is directly linked to the Good, the source of all values, which itself is beyond being, the formless source of all forms in their goodness and beauty and sublimity. The imagination stands in relationship to a Good beyond the manifest such that the aesthetic intuition is the emergence of art beyond agency and from the inscrutable depths of experience. The imagination is form

suffused with Bergson's *grand souffle de la vie*.²⁸

Critical to his argument is his insistence on the often-unrecognized primacy of direct or immediate or pure experience. Pure experience is not an experience *of something*. It is not intentional in structure. Rather, it is the undivided continuum, the plenitude of what Lin Chi (Rinzai) once called "the true person of no rank" or what Nishida called the Good. In an effort to further clarify this point, Nishida links pure experience to Schelling's intellectual intuition.²⁹ "There is no distinction between subject and object in any state of direct experience — one encounters reality face to face."³⁰ As such, direct experience precedes a denotative account of experience in which an experiencing subject experiences certain objects of experience. Pure experience is an intuition that all that is partitioned, discontinuous, and discrete, has been isolated from a pure state of awareness that always remains in excess of all judgments. Direct experience is not an experience of what individual things are. It is the discrimination of the identity of specific entities or of Being itself. It is not an intuition of the fundamental meaning of things. It is, rather, an experience of the *suchness* of things. Meaning emerges only in the betrayal of pure experience. "A truly pure experience has no meaning whatsoever; it is simply a present consciousness of facts just as they are."³¹ Meaning is the ineluctable diminution of pure experience. "Meanings or judgments are an abstracted part of the original experience, and compared with the original experience they are meager in content."³² Pure experience, the abyssal source of all judgments, gives rise to judgments while transcending those very judgments. In a certain sense, pure experience is the meaningless origin of all meaning, much in the same way that Nietzsche argued that origin of logic is illogic³³ and that error, which "arranges for ourselves a world in which we can live," is simply an act of faith, erroneous in nature, and contested by life [or pure experience] itself.³⁴

Pure experience, however, is not, as popular and obscurantist New Age Buddhism would have it, to take refuge in some fantasy land continuum, to absolve the rigors of the idea of the Good into a satori night in which all Buddhas are black. It is not the narcotic high of reactive nihilism. Beyond the subject-object dichotomy, beyond actors performing deeds, the Good individualizes itself, differentiates itself from itself, into ceaselessly flowing heterogeneities. Pure experience is the Dao, embraced in a doing of non-doing, in *wei-wu-wei*, in "activity without agency," in which the Good is welcomed and affirmed in the unabated flow of its singularities. "From this perspective, what the ancients spoke of as acting from morning to night without acting we might call a stillness in motion, a doing of non-doing. In this way we transcend both knowledge and the will, and in the intuition at their base we can discover their oneness."³⁵ The imagination is a continuous motion. "An artistic work differs fundamentally from a manufactured product. It is not made in accordance with a certain goal; it does not move from the many to the one. Rather it moves from the one to the many."³⁶ It is the nothing forming forms.

Nishida provides numerous examples of this, including Zen calligraphy and ink painting as well as German philosophy, literature and music. "Just as ordinary perception is considered merely passive, so is intellectual intuition considered a state of passive contemplation; however a true intellectual intuition is the unifying activity in pure experience. It is a grasp of life, like having the knack of an art or, more profoundly, the aesthetic spirit. For example, when inspiration arises in a painter and the brush moves spontaneously, a unifying reality is operating behind the complex activity. Its transitions are not unconscious, for they are the development and completion of a single thing."³⁷ And: "Each of the artist's exquisite brush strokes expresses the true meaning of the whole."³⁸ Art, for Nishida, has the unity of a lightning flash that holds together — as no longer simply two — darkness and light, difference and identity, in a single experience or moment. Art, indeed thinking itself, is what Nishida later called "the complementarity of opposites." The imagination is not agent driven production, but a "productive seeing. It is the development of content itself. As in Goethe's experience, from within the mental image of one flower, numberless new flowers emerge spontaneously. The intuition of the artist is an act of formation (*Gestaltungstätigkeit*)."³⁹

IV. Conclusion

I conclude by recollecting some of the remarkable ways that the incomparable Suzuki Shunryū articulated the question of what I think one could justly call a “field being approach to creativity.” In the justly celebrated series of talks given at the end of his life and collected as *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*,⁴⁰ Suzuki de-emphasizes satori and claims that Zen training acts to produce what he calls variously the empty mind, or the clear mind, or no mind, or thinking as the “dark sky.” “When you know everything, you are like a dark sky. Sometimes a flashing will come through the dark sky. After it passes, you forget all about it, and there is nothing left but the dark sky. The sky is never surprised when all of a sudden a thunderbolt breaks through. And when the lightning does flash, a wonderful sight may be seen. When we have emptiness we are always prepared for watching the flashing.”⁴¹ Hence Suzuki concluded that it “is absolutely necessary for everyone to believe in nothing. But I do not mean a voidness. There is something, but that something is something which is always prepared for taking some particular form, and it has some rules, or theory, or truth in its activity. By enlightenment I mean believing in nothing, believing in something which has no form or color, which ready to take form or color.”⁴² It is the non-dual nothing of the lightning body, the field being body, if you will, always nothing becoming something, inventively discovering and discovering new inventions.

Notes

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- 1 Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share, Volumes II and III*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1993). Henceforth AS.
 - 2 AS, 378.
 - 3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York and London: Penguin, 1979). I have made some minor emendations using the German edition, *Werke in drei Bänden*, volume two, edited by Karl Schlechta (Munich: Carl Hansler Verlag, 1955). Henceforth EH, with the English pagination followed by the German pagination.
 - 4 EH, 70/1129.
 - 5 EH, 71/1129.
 - 6 EH, 70/1129.
 - 7 EH, 69/1128.
 - 8 EH, 70/1129.
 - 9 *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, no. 87. *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974). Henceforth GS.
 - 10 EH, 72-73/1131-1132.
 - 11 *Götzen-Dämmerung, Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York and London: Penguin, 1990), 59.
 - 12 For a further and magisterial discussion of the imagination, see John Sallis, *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
 - 13 A small portion of another version of this discussion of Nietzsche also appears in my *Zen No Sho: The Calligraphy of Fukushima Keidō Rōshi* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2003). A small portion of another version of my discussion of Zuangzi and Suzuki also appears there as well. This book is, in a sense, another attempt to work out the stepping stones to a field being approach to aesthetics and creativity.
 - 14 Nishitani Keiji, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, trans. Graham Parkes and Setsuko Aihara (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). Henceforth N.
 - 15 N, xxxiii.
 - 16 N, 180. Robert Morrison, in his *Nietzsche and Buddhism: A Study in Nihilism and Ironic Affinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), takes a similar position, namely, that Nietzsche misunderstood Buddhism and that, ironically, he has substantive affinities with Buddhism. “One common and general feature shared by both Nietzsche and Buddhism is the centrality of man in a godless cosmos, in the sense that both look to man, and not any external power, being, or numinous source, for their respective solutions for what they perceive as the problem(s) of existence. Both see man as an ever-changing flux of forces . . . and within this flux there is no autonomous or unchanging

- subject corresponding to such terms as ‘self’, ‘ego’, or ‘soul’” (63).
- 17 This is from the third inner chapter. I am using Burton Watson’s translation, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 46-47.
- 18 *Two Chinese Treatises on Calligraphy*, trans. Chang Ch’ung-ho and Hans H. Frankel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
- 19 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 20 For further discussion of this phrase, see my *The Conspiracy of Life: Meditations on Schelling and His Time* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).
- 21 This conversation is collected in *Formless Self Awakening*, ed. Jeff Shore. This anthology unfortunately at this point remains unpublished. It originally appeared in *Listening to Heidegger and Hisamatsu*, ed. L. Alcopley (Kyoto: Bokubi Press, 1963).
- 22 Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, *Zen and the Fine Arts*, trans. Tokiwa Gishin (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1971), 51. This short discussion of Hisamatsu is a variation of my analysis of his argument in my *Zen No Sho*.
- 23 In *Formless Self Awakening*, 136.
- 24 Paul Klee, *Über die moderne Kunst* (Bern-Bümpliz: Verlag Benteli, 1945), 43. Translation is my own.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 26 Nishida Kitarō, *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Masao Abe and Christopher Ives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Henceforth IG.
- 27 Nishida Kitarō, *Art and Morality*, trans. David Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973). Henceforth AM.
- 28 AM, 25.
- 29 Hence the aesthetic intuition is in turn also derived from Post-Kantian thought: “The intuitive nature of the imagination lies in its internal creative nature, as Fichte and Schelling thought” (AM, 20).
- 30 IG, 31.
- 31 IG, 4.
- 32 IG, 9.
- 33 “How did logic come into existence in man’s head? Certainly out of illogic, whose realm originally must have been immense.” Friedrich Nietzsche, GS, aphorism 111.
- 34 “We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live – by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content; without these articles of faith nobody now could endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument” (GS, aphorism 121).
- 35 IG, 33-34.
- 36 AM, 26.
- 37 IG, 32.
- 38 IG, 33.
- 39 AM, 27.
- 40 Suzuki Shunryū, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*, ed. Trudy Dixon (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1970). Henceforth ZM.
- 41 ZM, 84.
- 42 ZM, 118-119.